

3 CENTURIES OF SHELTON... IN A NUTSHELL

- The City of Shelton occupies part of the ancestral homeland of the Paugussett people. The Paugussetts lived on both sides of the Housatonic River in what is now known as Shelton and Derby.

-Around 1680, people of European descent began moving up from Stratford to the Long Hill and established a farming community. The settlement was known as Coram.

-1717 Coram petitions the colony to form a separate parish. Ripton Parish is established and the majority of residents were subsistence farmers.

-Between 1676 and 1740, 13 mills and 2 dams are established on the Far Mill River to take advantage of the water power. These mills included saw, grist, paper, woolen, and fulling mills for processing timber into lumber, grinding grains into flour, making paper and felting wool into cloth.

-In the late 1700's the Leavenworth family shifted from farming into shipbuilding. They made sloops and schooners which were used for coastal trade on the Eastern seaboard and for trade with the West Indies.

-By 1789 the Parish of Ripton had become large enough to incorporate as the town of Huntington. The town was named in honor of Samuel Huntington, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Governor of Connecticut.

-From the 1800 census, 30% of the free white population of 2616 was under the age of 10. There were 143 listed as "all other free persons except Indians not taxed". This category included indentured servants and free slaves. There were also 33 slaves listed as living in Huntington.

-From 1846 until World War I, Huntington Fair held yearly.

-From the 1860 census, most of the 206 farms in town had a team of oxen and one horse, two milk cows, and a couple of swine. Popular crops included rye, oats, Indian corn, hay, and Irish potatoes. Most farms also had orchards. From 570 milk cows 67,850 pounds of butter were churned.

-In 1863 the Ousatonic Water Company is formed to build a dam across the Housatonic River in order to take advantage of the water power. The first stone was laid for the Ousatonic Dam on July 17, 1867 and the dam was officially completed October 4, 1869. The construction of the dam and canal made Shelton a desirable place for industry due to a cheap power supply, an abundant local labor force, the availability of a railroad depot in Derby and the town's proximity to New York City and other major metropolitan areas.

-By the 1870's Shelton had become the unofficial name for the area along the river. Named after Edward N. Shelton, founder of the Shelton Company and of the Ousatonic Water Company, Shelton became the legal name of the borough in 1882.

-1888 railroad comes to Shelton.

-January 21, 1891 Ousatonic Dam washed out due to a backlog of ice and overflow of water. The steep drop of the dam also contributed to the undermining of the foundation and its collapse. The dam was rebuilt by October 1891.

-By 1896 over 25 manufacturers located along canal producing everything from "pins to pianos."

-1899 trolley line comes to downtown.

-From the 1910 census, 62% of the Borough of Shelton's population were immigrants. For Huntington, 52% of the total population were immigrants or the children of immigrants.

-1911 second track laid on Shelton railroad due to heavy volume of freight being moved.

-1919 Shelton is officially established as a city. Huntington is incorporated within it by popular vote.

-After World War II industry began to move south for cheaper labor.

-March 1, 1975 Sponge Rubber Factory fire

-By 1980's Shelton has developed into a combination of light industry and corporate headquarters, residential housing, open space, and farms.