

Eastford



This book belongs to:

Table of Contents

| | | |
|-----|-------------------------|----|
| 1. | Preface | 3 |
| 2. | Pre-Learning Activities | 4 |
| 3. | Native Americans | 6 |
| 4. | Eastford Becomes a Town | 11 |
| 5. | Town Government | 12 |
| 6. | Church Life | 16 |
| 7. | Going to School | 18 |
| 8. | A Working Community | 24 |
| 9. | Climate | 31 |
| 10. | Hard Times | 33 |
| 11. | A Famous Citizen | 37 |
| 12. | Maps and Map Usage | 42 |
| 13. | Glossary | 47 |

PREFACE

The Connecticut Social Studies curriculum framework requires that school districts include a study of a town's history as well as appropriate insights into the various local economies, climate, original inhabitants, and other topics that are related to that particular community. Most towns will integrate this study in the third grade as it coincides with the theme of community that is taught in grade three. This booklet is Eastford's attempt at developing a student/teacher document that will align with the state's standards. Care was given to maintain historical accuracy with the information available. Additionally, we intend to continually add, delete or modify information and activities as necessary. We would like to extend our thanks to Patricia Weisenseel who is responsible for most of the text. Kathy Healey, Nancy Mayhew, and Jane Grube acted as advisors and Stuart Neal and Lori Crocker-Lincoln devised the questions and activities.

Committee Members

Linda Loretz- Principal

Lori Crocker-Lincoln-Grade 3 Teacher

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Some things I know about Eastford



Eastford Town Office Building



Some things I would like to know about Eastford

Illustrate and color one of your ideas.

NATIVE AMERICANS

The authors of this booklet have chosen to discuss the Native Americans of Eastern Connecticut. Perhaps more specific information about the Native Americans in Eastford can be included in an updated version of this booklet. You have probably heard the names Pequot and Mohegan. Did you know that the Pequot and Mohegan were “sister” tribes and shared almost everything about their culture and way of life? The big difference was that the colonists considered the Mohegan “good Indians” and the Pequot “bad Indians.” This was because the Mohegan tried to get along with the English colonists and the Pequot often fought with the English people. [1.2, 3.1]

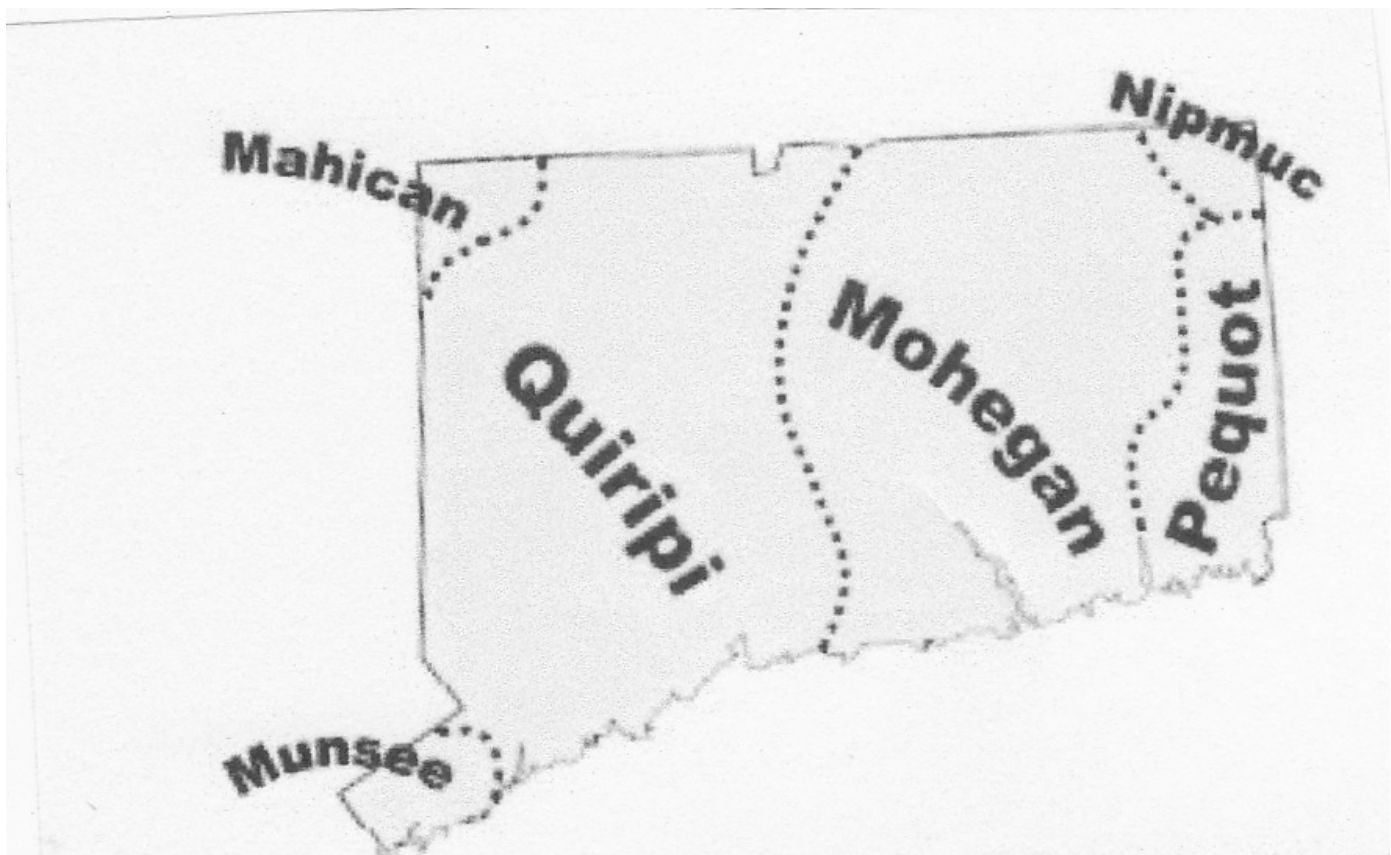
The word “Mohegan” means “wolf” and is from the Algonquin language. Connecticut is also an Algonquin word and means “Long River.” Algonquian is a common language spoken by many Native American tribes in the northeastern United States. [1.13]

The Mohegan occupied an area that is now part of Eastern Connecticut and a few miles from the Rhode Island border. They had a number of small villages in Eastern Connecticut. Some were in the greater Eastford area near the Natchaug River–Willimantic and Moosup. Many lived near the shore in the Groton area. [1.4, 1.6]

The Mohegan were farmers, hunters, and fishermen. They grew corn, squash, and tobacco. Many fished and collected shellfish in the rivers and near the seashore. The Mohegan lived in wigwams and larger longhouses made of pole frames and covered with bark. They often wore clothing made

from animal hides, but later adopted clothing made from cloth that they traded for with Colonial traders. [1.10, 1.11]

Like most Native Americans, the Mohegan caught Colonists' diseases. They also suffered when colonists waged war. By the time Eastford became a town in 1847, very few Mohegan remained in the area. After long court battles during the 1900s, the United States government gave some of their original land back to these Native Americans. Today, the Pequot and Mohegan have large entertainment areas in the New London area run by the descendants of both tribes. [1.2, 1.1]



[1.1, 1.6, 1.13, 1.2, 1.10, 2.1]

Mohegan Illustration

Based on the information on the previous pages, illustrate and color a scene from a Mohegan's typical day.



Reread the information about the Mohegan Native Americans. Would you like to be a Mohegan Native American or not like to be a Mohegan Native American? Explain your thinking using information from the text.

Native Americans

1. Which tribes lived in Eastern Connecticut during Colonial times?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sioux and Arapaho | <input type="checkbox"/> Mohegan and Pequot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apache and Pequot | <input type="checkbox"/> Sioux and Mohegan |

2. Whom did the English consider the “good Indians”?

3. The Native American word **Mohegan** means

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> bear | <input type="checkbox"/> turkey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wolf | <input type="checkbox"/> hawk |

4. Many area tribes spoke the _____ language.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Algonquin | <input type="checkbox"/> Huron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hopi | <input type="checkbox"/> Cherokee |

5. What Algonquin word means “Long River”?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New York | <input type="checkbox"/> Indiana |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delaware | <input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut |

6. Where did the Mohegan have small villages in the Eastford area?

7. Why do you think the Mohegan and Pequot people built homes made of wood and bark?

8. Look at the map of Connecticut Indians on page 7 in your booklet.

Which group lived in the Northeast corner? _____

Which group lived in the Northwest corner? _____

Which group lived in almost all of Western Connecticut? _____

9. The Mohegan and Pequot were hunters, fishermen and _____.

☐ farmers

☐ sailors

☐ factory workers

☐ merchants

10. Why were most of the Native Americans gone from the Eastford area by 1847?

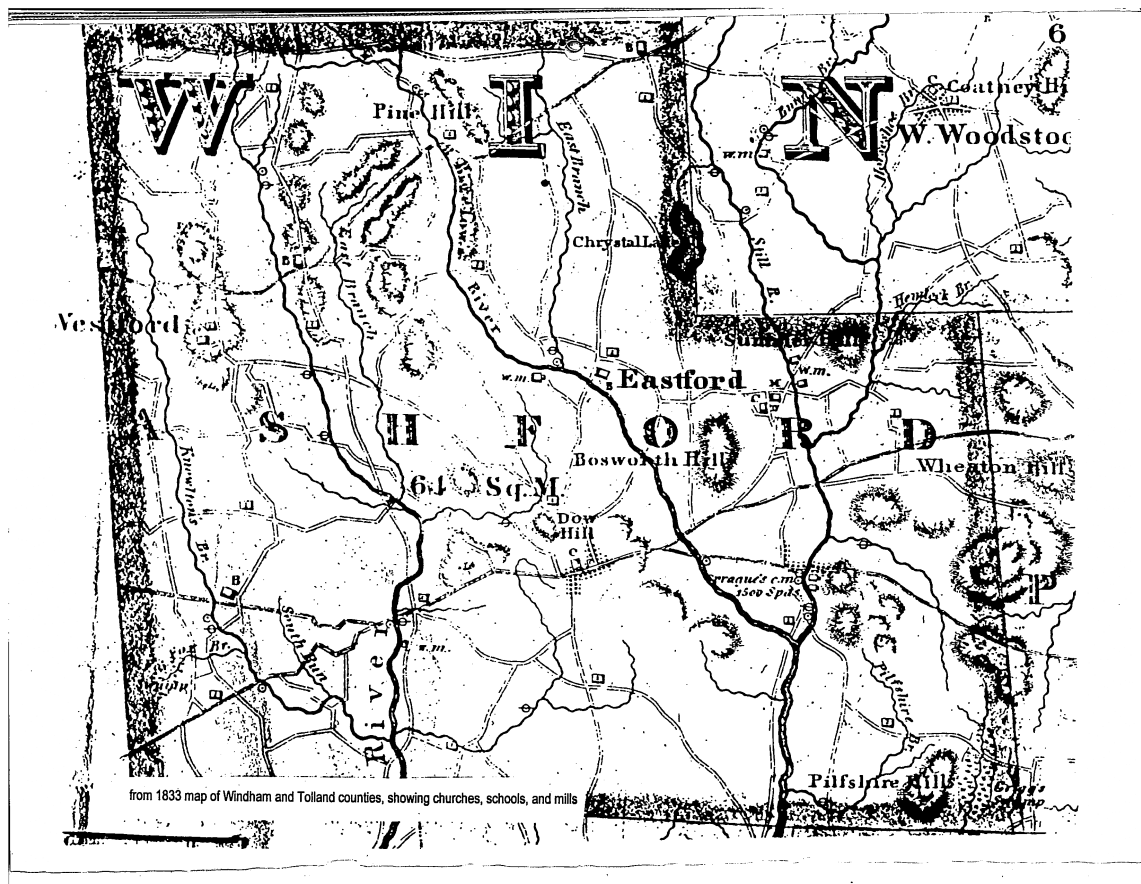


Mohegan Chief Uncas

EASTFORD BECOMES A TOWN

The town of Eastford was settled in 1711 and incorporated in 1847. In those days, Eastford was a small, agriculturally based settlement. Now, it is a community of over 1,618 people.¹ Eastford has one school, two churches, and a number of points of interest. This book will describe how Eastford used to be and how it has changed over the years. [1:2]

AN EARLY MAP OF EASTFORD



¹ According to the 2000 census.

Eastford was once part of Ashford. Eastford, or the eastern section of Ashford, was first settled by John Perry. Since automobiles were not invented yet, transportation was slow and inconvenient. Townspeople usually walked from place to place. Since it was difficult to move between Ashford and its eastern and western sections, each section developed independently. As the eastern section started to expand in population, economic wealth and religious differences, the townspeople began to want a town they could call their own. On April 12, 1847, the eastern section of Ashford was granted town privileges and on June 21, 1847 Eastford was officially organized. [1:2, 1:6, 1:9]

TOWN GOVERNMENT

The townspeople elected John B. Adams as Town Clerk and Jairus Chapman, James Trowbridge and Willard Lyon as Town Selectmen. These men became leading figures in the makings of Eastford's early political and economic responsibilities. The only requirement for membership into Eastford was social respectability. The government officials of early Eastford were elected by other townspeople based on merits or honor to act as they saw fit. Similar to other New England towns, Eastford was and continues to be governed by a board of three selectmen. Other governing officials included the Town Clerk, the Board of Assessors, the Board of Tax Relief, several constables, Justices of the Peace, a Probate Judge, elected school visitors, and other minor offices. Each official participated in annual or yearly town meetings usually held in October. These meetings were held according to breaks in the schedules of the farming community. Farmers made up most of Eastford's



early population. If the town meetings were held at any other time then the farmers would not have been able to attend. As Eastford developed, town meetings began to be held in the evenings. This new time was decided upon because more and more townspeople were working away from home and factory schedules required their workers to work fixed shifts. The newly developed Eastford was adapting to a commuter's way of life.

1. Do you know any of today's elected officials?

2. What do you think a modern town selectman thinks about before going to a town meeting?

Technology Activity

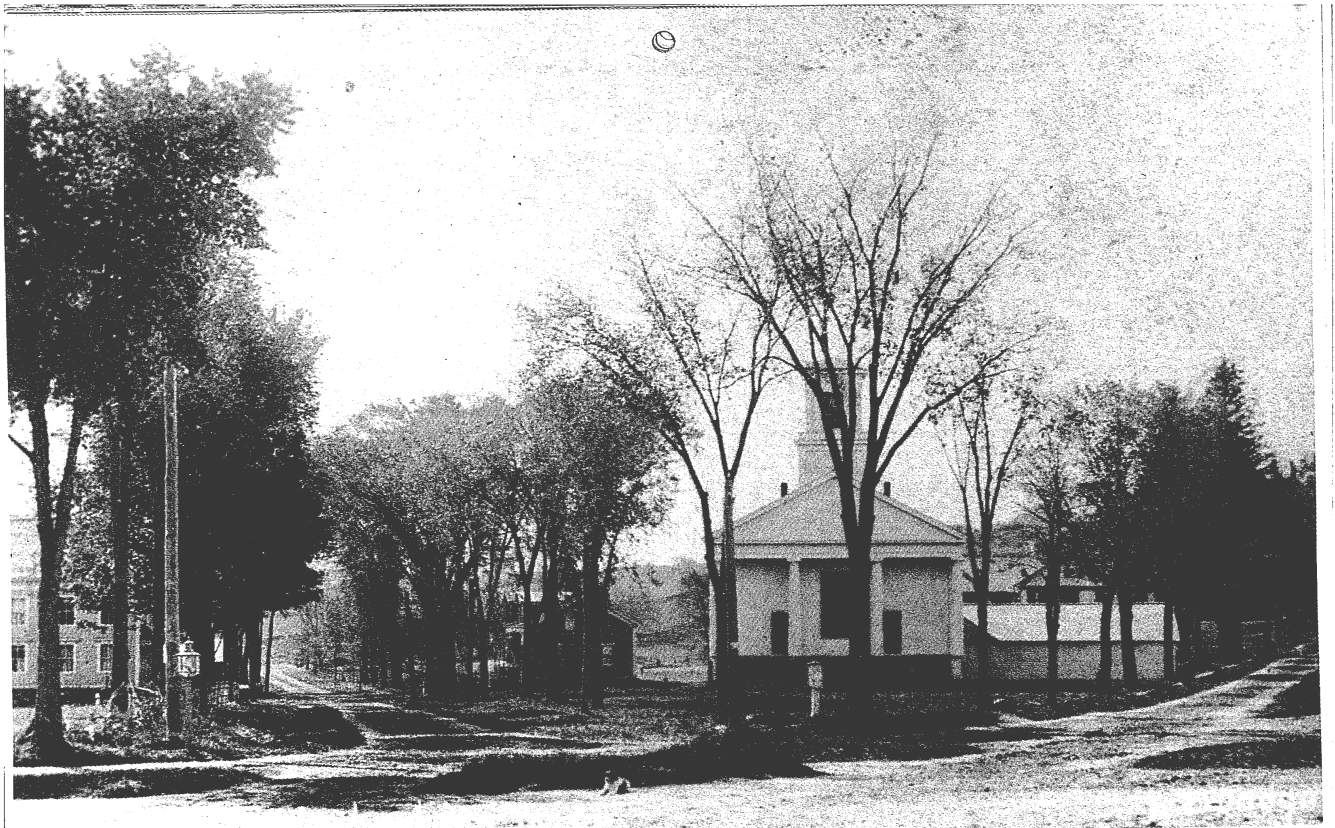
Let's find out more about the town of Eastford by investigating its website (<http://www.townofeastford.org/>).

1. Go to Safari or another web browser. You can find Eastford's website a number of different ways:
 - Type in the website address; or
 - Search for Eastford +CT; or
 - Click on the Town of Eastford link on the school's website.
2. Write down three facts you learn from Eastford's website.

3. Tell about a new opinion you have about Eastford after exploring its website.

At first, the town meetings were held in the Methodist Church. Later the meetings were held in the Congregational Church. Churches were used for the town meetings because they were considered a central location. A central location is a familiar place, which is also easy to get to by all townspeople. During these annual town meetings, much business was discussed. Town officers were elected. Taxes were collected. Laws were voted on. Money was distributed to improve roads, schools, and the library. However, town meetings were more than just discussions of government issues. Town meetings also served as social gatherings, where townspeople could share updates about life, marriages, births, and deaths. However, as it still is today, the major concern of every town meeting was roads, the budget, and education. [1:7, 1:8]

[1.1, 1.6, 1.8, 1.2, 1.7, 1.9]



Eastford Center, looking south; Methodist Church (1847) became Town Hall (1926)

Early Government

1. Eastford was first settled by

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> John Perry | <input type="checkbox"/> James Ellsworth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Robert Brown | <input type="checkbox"/> Henry Watson |

2. Eastford was once a part of the town of

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ashford | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodstock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pomfret | <input type="checkbox"/> Putnam |

3. Eastford became a town in the year

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1776 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1847 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1955 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1066 |

4. Eastford is governed by a

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> mayor | <input type="checkbox"/> selectman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> king | <input type="checkbox"/> town manager |

5. Eastford's early residents were mostly

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> farmers | <input type="checkbox"/> lawyers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> soldiers | <input type="checkbox"/> explorers |

6. In the mid 1800s, most people in Eastford got from place to place by

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> car | <input type="checkbox"/> horse-drawn carriage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> foot | <input type="checkbox"/> boat |

7. Early town meetings were held in

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> someone's house | <input type="checkbox"/> a school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a park | <input type="checkbox"/> a church |

8. The major thing(s) discussed at town meetings were

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> roads | <input type="checkbox"/> education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> town budget | <input type="checkbox"/> all three |

CHURCH LIFE

When Eastford was still part of Ashford, traveling the great distance to Sunday services in Ashford was very difficult for the townspeople of Eastford. In 1778, a Congregational Church of Eastford Society voted to build a church in their own town, instead of traveling to one in another town. There were 9 organizers and 99 members who were dedicated to having a church in town. However, there were two other churches in Eastford, which also served many of the town's residents. There was the Methodist Episcopal Church built in 1847 in Eastford Center at the Ivy Glenn Memorial, which is now the Eastford Library. The other church was the Eastford Baptist Church built in 1843 in North Ashford, which is now part of Eastford. Through the years, fewer people attended the Methodist Church because older members were dying and younger members were moving closer to Hartford. By 1916, the Methodist Church in Eastford no longer existed. The relationship between the only two churches left in town was quite friendly. In fact, Reverend Briggs of the Eastford Baptist Church and Reverend Trowbridge of the Congregational Church often exchanged pulpits. This means that they gave sermons at each other's churches. The youth groups of both churches were very active and are still quite active in town activities. [1:6][1.13]

CHURCH LIFE

1. In 1778, the Congregational Church of Eastford Society voted to

2. Two other churches in town back then were the

_____ and the _____

3. Fewer members were attending the Methodist Church because

4. In what year did the Methodist Church close? _____

5. What two men often read their sermons in the other's church?

6. What is a sermon?

7. Which thing below *most* determined where a church was built?

- ☐ where the rich people lived
- ☐ beside a river
- ☐ where most people could get to it
- ☐ near a restaurant like McDonald's

8. How is the building that was once the Methodist Church used

today? _____

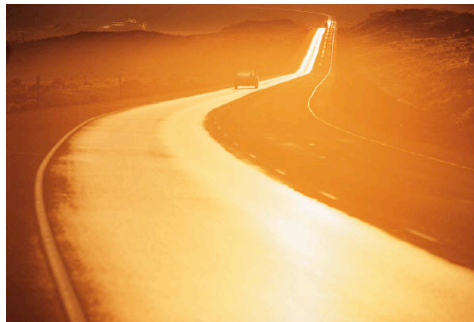
GOING TO SCHOOL

The children's school attendance was important to the town for both financial and educational reasons. Connecticut state supervision of schools began in 1909. With each passing year, reports from school visitors and the superintendent were full of comments concerned with attendance problems. These officials believed irregular attendance affected every student. Missed school days prevented students from learning important lessons. Absences interrupted class time and decreased the amount of money the Eastford School received from the state. The issue of regular attendance was so important that teachers were required to keep track of who was absent every day. Students who missed a day of school were required to make up missed lessons. Monthly attendance reports were sent home to parents. By 1915, "Parent's Days" became part of the school year. Every third Friday of the month, parents were invited to the schools to observe the students. In the 1920s, the schools began annual or semi-annual evening sessions where the parents learned more about the Eastford School District. In 1950, Eleanor Lewis, a much respected teacher, established a Mothers Club. This organization was the early PTA. It organized social and money-raising events and provided opportunities for parents to interact with teachers. By involving parents in school activities, Eastford improved student attendance.

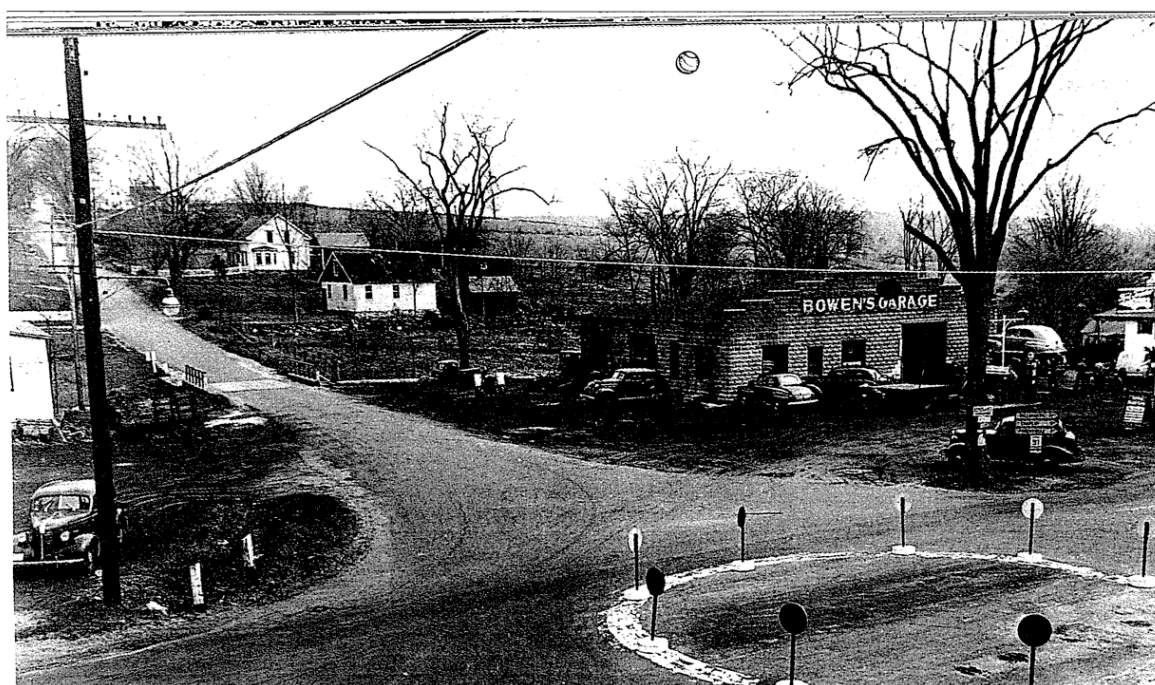
[1:7, 1:9]



As attendance increased, the Eastford school district received more money from Connecticut's Education Department. The school was then able to fund itself and buy teaching aids, such as globes, maps, and charts, to improve teaching methods. Even with increased state aid the Eastford School District still had to overcome the large distances students had to travel just to get to school – remember the basic means of transportation was walking. In the early 1900s, Eastford operated six schools. The location of these schools was meant to decrease the distances students had to walk to and from school each day. Each school was a one-room schoolhouse, except the two-room Center School. In each school, one teacher would teach grades one through eight. The teacher would teach one grade at a time while the other students completed assignments at their desks. The Center School was different. The Center School had two teachers, one teaching grades one through four and the other teaching grades five through eight. As roads improved, it became much easier to transport children to and from school by bus. It also became unnecessary to have six one-room schools houses open throughout town. Starting in the 1920s, Eastford began closing these schools. The former schoolhouses were then converted into homes. By 1937, only the Phoenixville and Center Schools were open. [1:5, 3:3]



With transportation improving, it became obvious to townspeople that the Center School, Eastford's main school, needed improving too. On May 14, 1948, the town voted on purchasing the 145 x 450 foot lot of land next to the Center School for \$2,000 from Alfred Warren. The new building was constructed very quickly because the 1949-1950 school year began in the new school. The building was more than big enough for the 74 students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade and the three teachers. The teachers that started in the new school were named Eleanor Lewis, Mary Morton, and Beatrice Buell. Three rooms were used as classrooms. The other room was used for school activities. The increased space in the new school allowed for the expansion of curriculum and a half-day kindergarten program. The playground was enlarged with new equipment for playing and climbing. Students even received new desks and chairs.



During the late 1940s and early 1950s, there was increased interest in teaching technology, art, and music. Movies, slides, and filmstrips were used along with records and record players for music appreciation classes. Field trips were taken more frequently. In the mid-1950s, seventh and eighth grade boys were taught manual arts or jobs that required special training. These jobs include car mechanics, woodworking, masonry, and plumbing. When the boys were being trained, the seventh and eighth grade girls were instructed in home economics. These lessons included instruction in cooking, cleaning, sewing, and behaving like a woman. [3:3]

Eastford had no buildings for a secondary school or a high school. Older students were sent to Putnam, Willimantic, Woodstock, or Thompson for further education. At first students were required to live in private homes in those towns. Students left Eastford on Monday morning in a Dodge bus driven by Oliver



Bowen of Bowen's Garage and would be taken to Putnam. During the week, they would live with families, babysitting or cleaning in exchange for room and board. On Friday, Bowen would return to Putnam. He would pick up the students who wanted to return to Eastford for the weekend, and bring them back to their homes. The town of Eastford paid for the students' transportation and tuition, but their room and board had to be provided by their parents.

Beginning in 1927, there was daily transportation to Putnam High School. Parents were no longer required to pay room and board in another town for their sons and daughters during the school week. In 1931,

Eastford discovered that the town could save \$15 per student by sending the high school students to Woodstock Academy instead of Putnam High School. Since then, high school students have attended Woodstock Academy. Tuition and transportation are still provided by the town through property taxes. [1:8]

The grade system was not established as it is today. Instead, early Eastford teachers would combine similar abilities in certain subjects and teach them to specific age groups. At first teachers only taught reading, writing, and basic math along with a small amount of geography and history. Soon enough, though, lesson plans expanded to include grammar, language, science, and agriculture. The teacher was also required to start a wood fire before the students arrived to heat the school or hire someone else to do it. Each week a different boy was selected to fetch water from the school well. Discipline was also very harsh. If a student said a bad word, the teacher washed his or her mouth out with soap or spanked the student with a belt.

Whenever the early Eastford School District was evaluated, the outcome was usually the same – the Eastford children were not up to the educational standards of the state. However, certain conditions were not taken into account. These included:

- the number of farm chores Eastford children were expected to complete before attending school;
- the location of the school and the difficulties of transportation; and
- the comparison of rural Eastford to the urban standards of nearby Hartford.

The early education standards of the Eastford community were based on religion because the town's religious matters were always important in the daily life and government of a developing Eastford. [1:2]

Going to School

1. Why did Eleanor Lewis establish a Mothers Club?

2. What things did the school purchase with money from the State of Connecticut?

3. Describe a problem for children attending school in Eastford.

4. Why was the Center School different from the other schools?

5. What special subjects were taught to boys in the 1950s?

6. What special subjects were taught to girls in the 1950s?

7. Where did high school students from Eastford go to school in the 1920s and 1930s?

8. Why did Eastford choose Woodstock Academy as its high school?

A WORKING COMMUNITY

As of 1850, Eastford, with a population of 1,127 people², thrived. Inns in Eastford provided rooms for rest for people traveling between Boston and Hartford or Providence and Hartford.



Eastford House in 1904; named "General Lyon Inn" after 1918, Waldo and Beatrice Kennedy proprietors

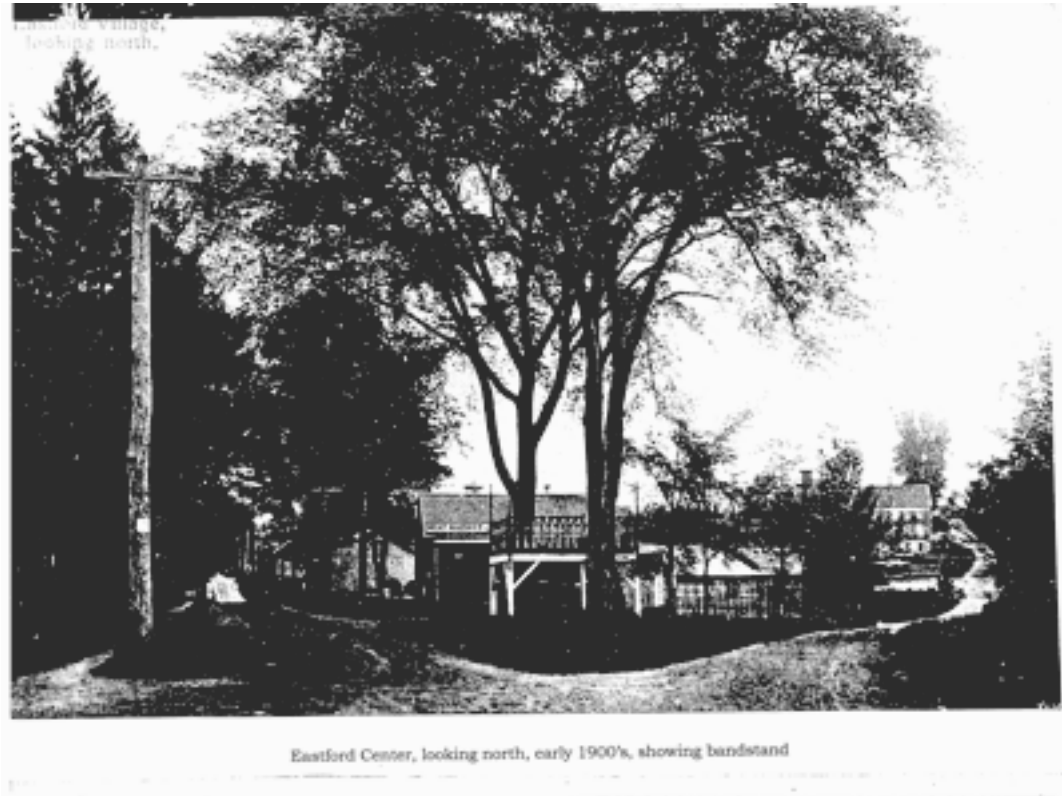
Eastford House in 1904; named "General Lyon Inn" after 1918,
Waldo and Beatrice Kennedy proprietors

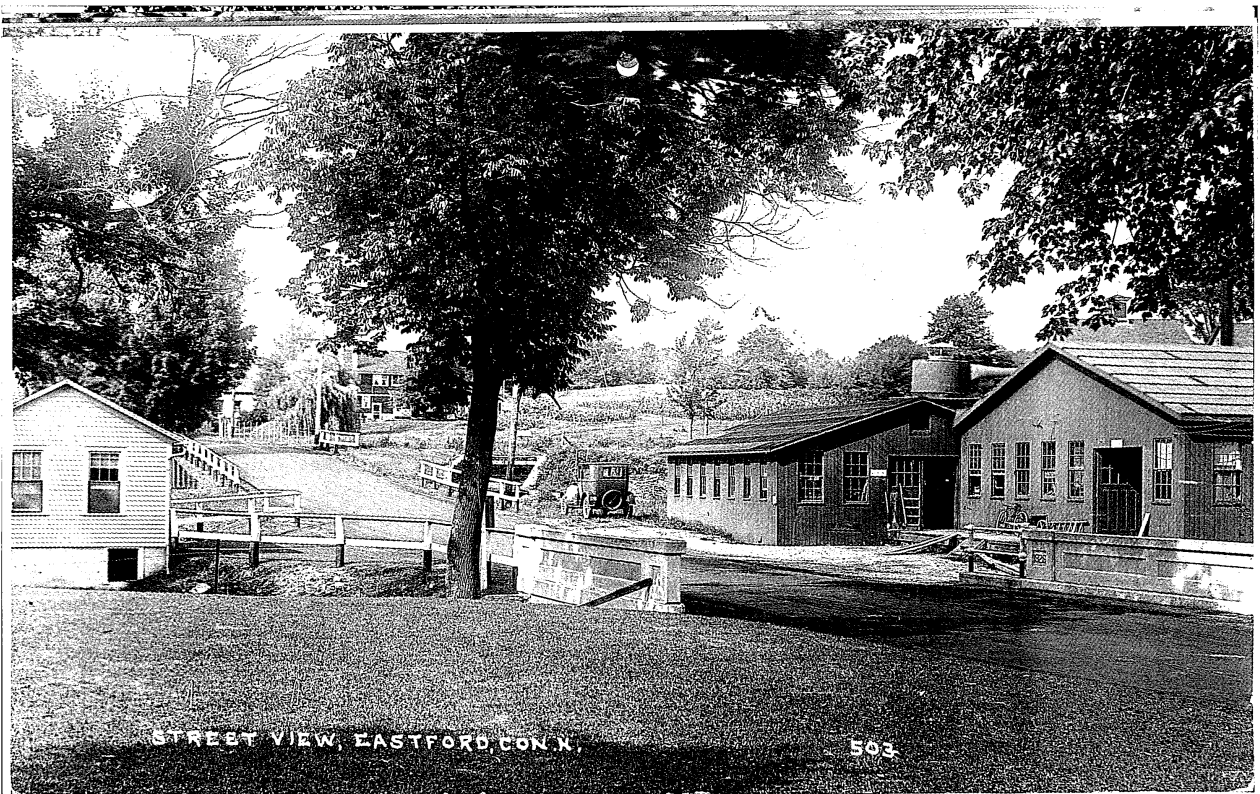
The town became economically diversified which means Eastford supported a variety of different moneymaking businesses. Eastford was mostly agriculturally based, providing food and material goods grown on local farms for the entire town. However, Eastford also grew to include small industry or wood and textile mills to sell household goods. Shopping and trading were done in one of several stores, which sold general merchandise such as cloth products and food. Mills and shops took advantage of the excellent waterpower provided by the rivers and streams in Eastford. [1:10, 1:5, 1:11]

² Taken from Cameron, Diane Maher. Eastford: The Biography of a New England Town. Connecticut: The Eastford Historical Society, Inc., 1976.

During this time in Eastford's history, the townspeople were able to satisfy nearly all of their needs within the town. Therefore, yearly or semi-annual trips to neighboring towns and cities were unnecessary. Eastford had successfully grown into a self-sufficient town.

If you lived in Eastford, you worked in Eastford. Some young men went to work at Tatem's the summer they graduated from grammar school. These men were only 14 years old, the same age as a typical eighth grader in Eastford Elementary School. Tatem employees worked 55-hour workweeks. Employees worked from 7 am to 12 noon, with a 45-minute break for lunch, and then worked again until 5:45 pm. They were only paid 15-20¢ per hour. On Saturdays, employees worked half a day.





J.M. Tatem Handle Company, c. 1928; near Eastford Center

Between 1880 and 1890 more and more factories, shops, and other businesses began to fail and the population dropped from 855 to 561.³ For many, the decline of the factories gave little choice but to leave Eastford and try to establish elsewhere. Distances were too great to maintain a residence in Eastford and commute to a city job. With the economy changing from focusing on small-town farming to large-scale industry, many of Eastford's youth felt that Hartford was a better place to seek employment and a future. Farming became impractical, especially with nationwide developments and new agricultural trends. Townspeople were now able to buy raw materials and finished products cheaper as the railroad replaced the dirt road network traveled by stagecoaches. There was no need to continue farming sheep for

³ Taken from Cameron, Diane Maher. Eastford: The Biography of a New England Town. Connecticut: The Eastford Historical Society, Inc., 1976.

wool or cattle for beef because people began to purchase wool and beef (after the invention of refrigerator train cars) cheaper than what it cost to raise the farm animals. It seemed the only perishable goods that Eastford farmers could continue to sell without going out of business was dairy products. Farming in Eastford continued to decline, though. Many farmers even abandoned their land. The lure of the west with its fertile soil and urbanization was too much for this small town, which only had a few remaining mills and no railroad. Eastford had barely any industry left to support the daughters and young sons of the farmers. [1:10, 1:11, 1:12]

There was a strong inflow of immigrants from Russia, the Ukraine, and Poland from 1910- 1915 to 1930 bringing Eastford's total population to include 40-49%⁴ of foreigners. Immigrants are people who have left one country to settle permanently in another. Immigrants migrated to the United States in search of better opportunities. Immigrants who migrated to Eastford bought the poorest farmland available. This land had been abandoned by previous farmers and was considered worthless by the other farmers of Eastford. Even though the land was not of the best quality, it was the start to a new life. [1:13]

Farming was a very difficult profession. Many farmers only farmed part of the time because they could not afford to buy more supplies. The men in farming families worked in mills or on the roads during the day and came home to farm chores such as hand plowing at night. The farmer's wife and children completed much of the work that needed to be done during the

⁴ Taken from Cameron, Diane Maher. Eastford: The Biography of a New England Town. Connecticut: The Eastford Historical Society, Inc., 1976.

day. The wife performed household tasks, such as baking, cleaning, and sewing, but she also helped in the fields. The children completed smaller tasks, often pruning or cleaning away twigs and dead leaves in the garden and collecting ripe fruit from the family's orchard. Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, cherries, and grapes grew in abundance Eastford. These wild fruits were then canned and preserved or turned into jellies for the families' own eating pleasure. The tradition continues today with apples, blueberries, and peaches grown for market in Buell's Orchard on Crystal Pond Road. Children also tried to find small jobs to help with the family income. Some received 25¢ for helping some townspeople clean their houses on Saturdays. Others picked up and delivered mail or milk to the neighbors. All of the hard work done on the farm was in an effort to expand the farm and make it self-sufficient. As more crops were sold, the family's income increased and they were able to afford two or three more cows, some chickens, and perhaps a pair of horses. Once a self-sufficient farm was reached, the only outside expenses were clothes, local taxes, some grain, and repair or replacement of farm equipment. One other expense that not all farming families could afford, but tried to save for was college tuition. Some families decided to spend any profit made from farming on their children's education rather than expanding the family farm. These parents believed that farming would always be a difficult way of making a living. Therefore, instead of having their children continue the farming tradition, parents saved and saved to provide an opportunity for their children to make a better life for themselves. [1:10, 1:5, 1:12]

A WORKING COMMUNITY

1. Why were trips to other towns to buy things unnecessary in the early days of Eastford?

2. How young were some of the mill workers?

3. Write a number sentence and answer this question. If a person worked a 55-hour week at the Tatem Handle Company and made 18 cents an hour, how much was his pay for one week?

4. Would you have liked to work in a mill as many people did years ago?
Explain your answer by using information in the chapter.

5. Why did many people leave Eastford when the economy changed?

6. Walking to places was replaced by

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> stagecoaches and trains | <input type="checkbox"/> automobiles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> airplanes | <input type="checkbox"/> boats |

7. A perishable good is one that will

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> last forever | <input type="checkbox"/> last for only a short time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> last for 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> last only in hot weather |

8. For a while, most farming in Eastford was _____ farming.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> pineapple | <input type="checkbox"/> tree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dairy | <input type="checkbox"/> wheat |

9. What two things caused many farmers to abandon their land in Eastford?

10. From 1910 to 1930, many immigrants from _____ came to farms in Eastford.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Ukraine | <input type="checkbox"/> Russia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poland | <input type="checkbox"/> all of the above |

11. List some chores that farming families had to do.

12. Which word best explains the idea that when families worked together, they could take care of all, or most, of their needs?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> self-sufficient | <input type="checkbox"/> dependent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> urbanized | <input type="checkbox"/> diversified |

13. Do you think you would have liked the farming life in Eastford? Explain your answer with information from the reading.

CLIMATE

Eastford's climate has always directly affected the farming community. As a New England town, Eastford's winters are usually very cold with many snowstorms. In the past, though, winters in Eastford were even harsher than they are today. The weather would be so cold it could freeze ponds and lakes two to three feet thick. Although these conditions were great for ice skating and sledding, the cold would sometimes be too severe for the men working outside at the mills. The entire day was spent exposed to the wind, freezing temperatures, and sleet or snow. By the time he would return home, his clothes would be covered with ice and he would be frozen. Before refrigerators were in every home, ice was taken during the winter months from frozen ponds. Large farms would hire groups of ten or twelve men to work together to cut the ice into smaller pieces. These men cut out pieces of ice by hand using large, six-foot long ice saws. Grooves or scratches would be marked out on the ice and as the edges of pieces of ice were cut, the rest would break away. These pieces of ice were often two feet wide, four feet long, and two or more feet thick.



During the winter months, enough ice was cut to keep icehouses on farms cold through to at least July. Oftentimes, at Fourth of July celebrations the last of the ice from the previous winter would be used to make ice cream. [1.5, 1.10]

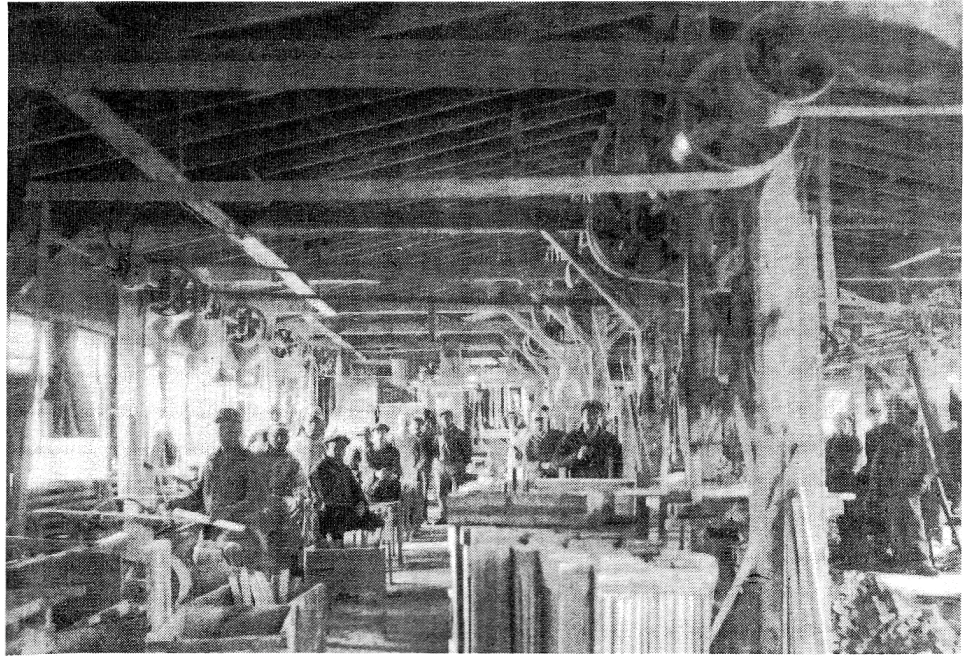
[1. 5]

CLIMATE

1. When we use the word harsher in a description, it means that New England winters were _____ than they are today.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> worse | <input type="checkbox"/> wetter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> better | <input type="checkbox"/> milder |
2. Men would use _____ that were _____ feet long to cut large blocks of ice. The ice would be stored in _____
3. Describe some of the fun things that families do during the winter months.

HARD TIMES



Interior of the Tatem Mill which burned in 1928

The stock market crashed in 1929 and it marked the beginning of The Great Depression. Many cities suffered from the fragile state of the economy. Families struggled to make a living. Even within a rural community, Eastford had to become very aware of its expenses and its need to save money. However, even with almost every family within the United States struggling, Eastford's friends and neighbors would not let each other go hungry or cold. They made sure no neighbor had to go to the welfare agencies for help. Tatem Mill helped secure job opportunities within town. The Mill tried to prevent layoffs during the Depression. It even tried to hire townspeople who were unable to find a job somewhere else. [1.2, 1.12]

Individual farmers or the town itself often hired Eastford's poor people. To help improve the economic state of the town, Eastford took advantage of Federal Government relief programs. These programs

provided work relief for individuals and encouraged small town building and improvement projects. One of these programs that provided work relief was called the Dirt Road Appropriation Act of 1929. Under this Act, \$17,500 was made available to each small Connecticut town for improving their roads for automobile use. The roads built with state funds were those that connected Eastford to the surrounding towns of Pomfret, Abington, and Hampton. These towns were important to Eastford because they had train stations. Train stations were part of mass transportation that had become very important to Eastford's social and economic community. Another program was called Rural Electrification Program. The power companies hired employees for work relief to run lines through small Connecticut towns. Nearly all Eastford homes were given electricity and families had electric lights. Greater mobility and technology provided townspeople with economic independence while commuting to work in the city. It also forced Eastford to become dependent upon the world outside its town lines. [1:8, 1:9, 1:12]



Barretts' Store at Eastford Center; built 1928 by Archa and Blanche Walker, now Eastford Village Store

The introduction of the automobile into the Eastford way of life began in the 1920s. Since then, automobile transportation has made it practical for a man to travel from the small towns of Eastern Connecticut to the industrial centers of the cities for a higher paying job. With this separation of work place and residence, suburbs began to grow. A suburb is residential community located just outside a major city. As more and more people began commuting to work, small communities such as Eastford preserved their small town character. When new comers arrived from the cities or suburbs, they were sometimes willing to conform to Eastford's traditions. Others tried to change or improve the town with methods and practices learned from their experiences in the cities. However, as Eastford developed a new way of life, the small town maintained many of its traditional characteristics. It continues to do the same today. [1.13]

[1.1, 2.3]

What do you think Eastford looked like during the early 1900s?

Hard Times

1. The Great Depression caused _____

2. The _____ Act gave towns money to improve roads.

3. The improvement of roads connected Eastford to the towns of

4. The automobile began to affect people's lives during the _____

☐ 1950s

☐ 1920s

☐ 1840s

☐ 1990s

5. Use information you have learned to describe how big cities *differ* from small towns.

6. What is one *traditional characteristic of Eastford that you like best*? Explain your answer.

A FAMOUS CITIZEN

Probably Eastford's most famous person is General Nathaniel Lyon. Nathaniel was born in what was then Ashford. As a boy, he did not like being a farmer and was always proud that many relatives had fought in the Revolutionary War. He decided to become a soldier and went to the United States Military Academy at West Point in New York. He later fought in the Mexican War and against Native Americans in the South and West. During this time, he learned to dislike slavery and became an **abolitionist**. In 1861, he was the leader of United States troops in Missouri. In an attempt to keep Missouri from joining the **Confederacy**, he was killed at the Battle of Wilson's Creek. He was the first general to die in a Civil War battle. Gen. Lyon has been honored with several counties in different states named after him as well as two forts. There is a monument dedicated to him in St. Louis, MO. and at his grave in Phoenixville.



NATHANIEL LYON

Born July 14, 1818

Died August 10, 1861

[2.3]



A FAMOUS CITIZEN

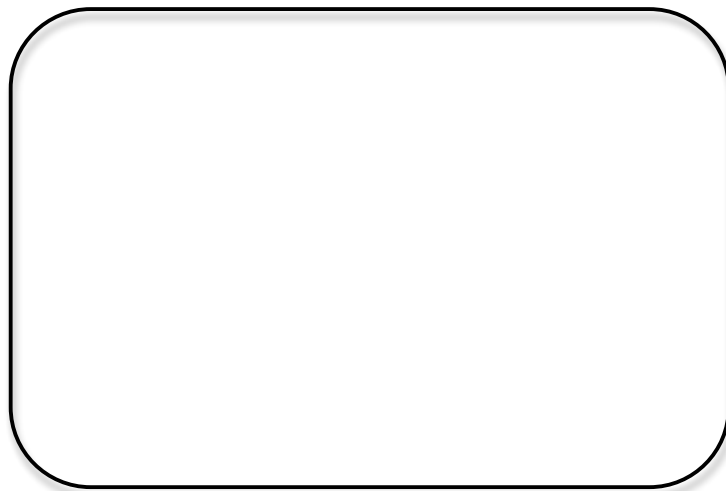
1. **Nathaniel Lyon** was a famous citizen who came from Eastford.

Can you name other famous citizens from Eastford?

2. Stamps are designed to honor famous people, places or things. If you had a chance to design a stamp to honor Eastford, what would you put on it?

3. List below the things you think are most important or special about Eastford.

4. Now try to put these ideas together to make an interesting, attractive stamp in honor of Eastford, our community.



THEN AND NOW

1. What parts of Eastford do you think have changed the most since 1847?

2. Which things were better in 1847?

3. Which things do you think are better now?

[3.2]

4. What do you think Eastford will be like 200 years from now?



Eastford in the Past

Find the oldest person you know who lives in Eastford. Conduct an interview.

Following are some questions you might use in the interview. Try to think of more.

1. How long have you lived in Eastford? _____

2. What streets have you lived on?

3. Where did/do you work? What town or city is it in?

4. Why did you decide to live in Eastford?

5. What are some of the biggest changes you have seen in Eastford since you came here?

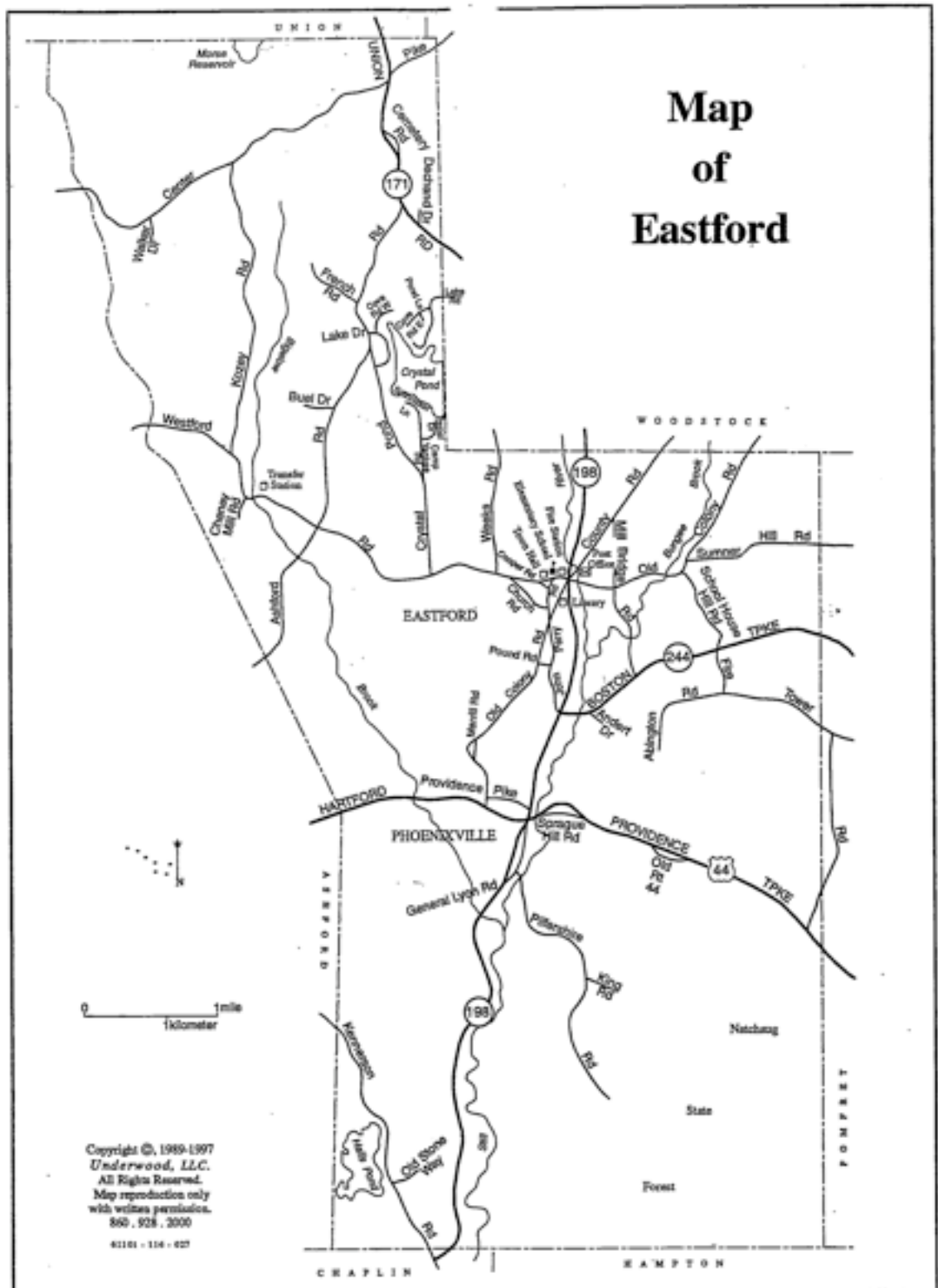
6. Please tell about something that happened when you were a child or when you first came to Eastford.

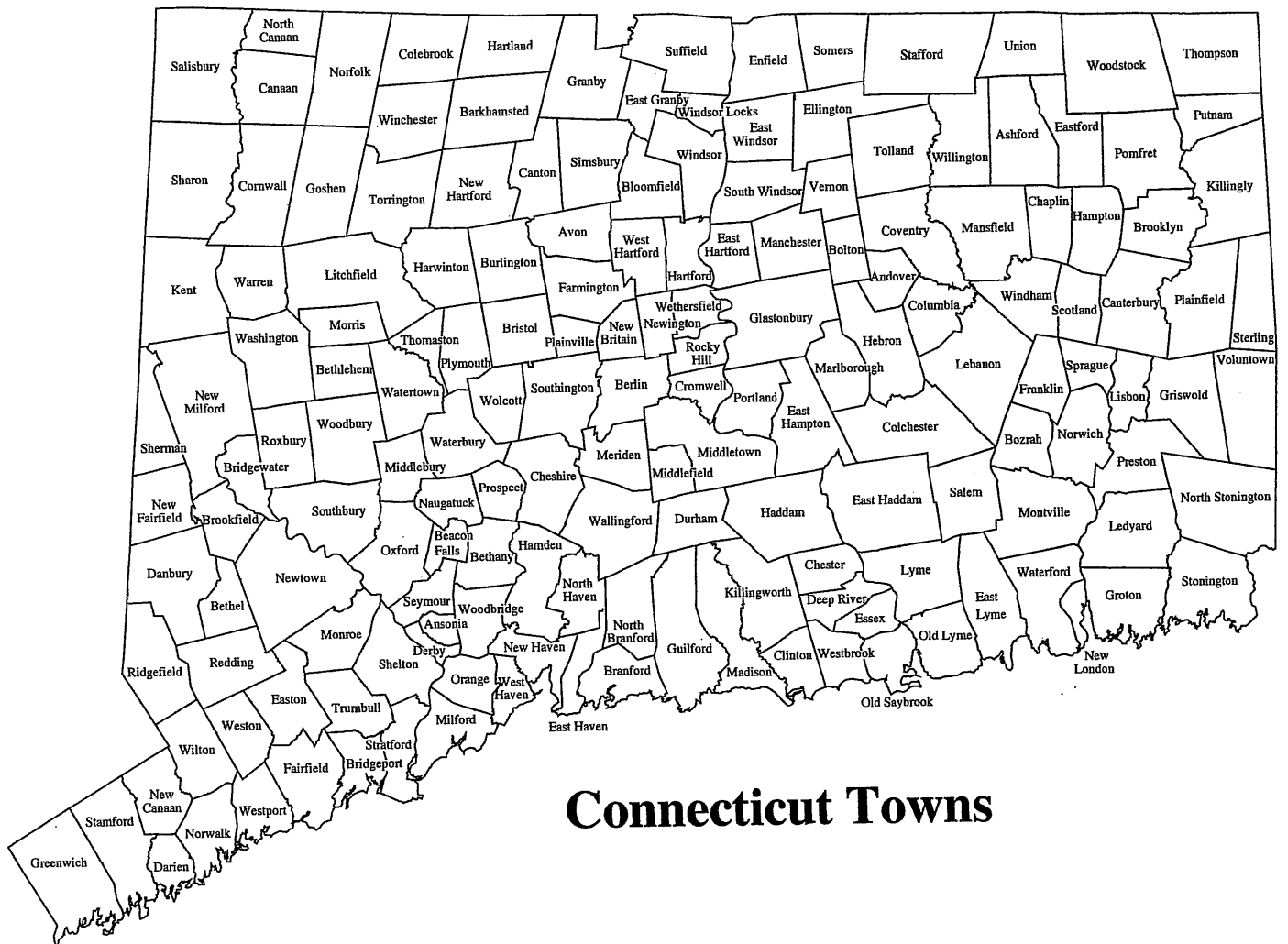
Now use this information to write a report about the person you have interviewed. Do not forget to include their name, and any other interesting things they may have told you that were not included in the questionnaire.

MAPS AND MAP USAGE

Windham County







Connecticut Towns

Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development 1006

