

# Chronology of New Hampshire History

Adapted from Judith Moyer, *et al*, *A New Hampshire History Curriculum, Book 1* (Concord, NH: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1997) and *A New Hampshire History Curriculum, Book 2* (Concord, NH: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1999)

1. **Beginnings to 1623: Different Worlds Meet**  
Geological formation of the land; changes in prehistoric peoples; the beginnings of New Hampshire history; the coming of explorers from Europe; the first meeting of cultures
2. **1623–1673: Colonization and Settlement**  
Permanent English settlements; arrival of black Africans; human–landscape interactions; cultural exchange; colonial government; English, Native American, and French rivalries and warfare; differences with Massachusetts
3. **1754–1820s: Revolution and the New Nation**  
Differences among groups in revolutionary New Hampshire; Fort William and Mary; Battle of Bennington; Battle of Bunker Hill; the Revolution on the home front; state constitutions; US Constitution; social and cultural changes; the economy
4. **1801–1861: Expansion and Reform**  
Population changes; embargo; the Industrial Revolution; textile mills; transportation changes; farming and wage work; immigrant labor; politics; slavery; an era of reform
5. **1850–1877: Civil War and Reconstruction**  
Transportation changes; Civil War industry; the state in national politics; the Republican Party; abolition; wartime agriculture; New Hampshire people in the war; the peace movement; westward migration
6. **1870–1900: Development of the Industrial United States**  
Industrialization; immigration; people of color; changes in power sources; the economy; effects on the environment; politics and power; women in the public sphere; social welfare actions
7. **1890–1930: Emergence of Modern America**  
Populism; Spanish-American War; Russo-Japanese Treaty; national and international politics; women and the vote; Progressive Era politics and reform; changing technologies; World War I; Red Scare; people leave the countryside; foreshadows of the Great Depression
8. **1929–1945: The Great Depression and World War II**  
The Great Depression; surviving; governmental responses; Civilian Conservation Corps; World War II; wartime production; immigration
9. **1945–1970s: Postwar United States**  
Cold War; returning soldiers; woman’s place; middle class ideals; the consumer culture; conservative politics; the tax question; dissension of the 1960s
10. **1968–2000: Contemporary United States**  
Politics; taxes; the environment; industry; tourism; law and order; change; local rule; Seabrook; presidential primary; electronic communication’s effects on community; diversity; New Hampshire’s image

# Different Worlds Meet: Beginnings to 1623

## Highlights

- **Geological formation of the land**
- **Changes in prehistoric peoples**
- **Beginnings of New Hampshire history**
- **Coming of explorers from Europe**
- **First meeting of cultures**

Geological evidence suggests that the continents were once part of the same land mass. Current theory surmises that they broke apart, collided, and moved away from one another during the formation of the world as we know it. During the last two million years the Atlantic Ocean has grown, and continues to grow bigger. It has flooded the land we call New Hampshire and contributed soil. Faults, folds, and volcanic activity have formed great mountain ridges. In the last two million years, glaciers covered New Hampshire four times, the latest being the Wisconsin period of glaciation that ended about 10,000 years ago. The glaciers carved wide riverbeds and deep mountain notches. They lopped off the tops of mountains and redeposited soil and boulders across the landscape. Erosion, too, wore away at the land. As the climate became milder, New Hampshire became a habitat for humans and species of animals that we would recognize.

Archaeologists theorize that humans multiplied and spread south and east from their probable entry point to North America across a land bridge between Asia and Alaska at least 25,000 years ago. Current archaeological evidence of the coming of humankind to New Hampshire goes back about 10,000 years, after the last glacier melted and the climate warmed. Evidence suggests that at least two different prehistoric peoples have populated New Hampshire, the second representing the Native Americans found here by European explorers after 1500.

Native American pre-contact history in New Hampshire is divided into the Paleo-Indian (circa 11,000–9000 years Before Present), Archaic (9000–3000 BP) and Woodland (3000–400 BP) periods, and contact (400–200 BP).

Native American cultures diversified so greatly that no one description will represent their ways. Even within the land we call New Hampshire, the ways of Native Americans differed between tribes and changed over time. The Western Abenaki tribe subdivided into bands with different names, each band associated with a general geographical area. In general, hunting large game animals gave way to hunting smaller game, as the larger animals

Chronology of New Hampshire History

became extinct. Tribes tended to become more settled and less nomadic as time went on, though they did make limited seasonal migrations to gather and grow food. Because of climate and length of growing season, tribes in the north of New Hampshire probably engaged in more hunting while tribes in the south engaged in relatively more agriculture, although it is likely that agriculture never had the importance in pre-contact New Hampshire that it had further south in what we now call Massachusetts.



Passaconaway, Sagamore of the Pennacooks  
(from an 1800s drawing)

Early European explorers grazed the coast of New Hampshire. Evidence suggests that the first Europeans in New Hampshire probably did not go far inland, but rather used the Isles of Shoals as seasonal fishing camps for processing fish before taking it back to Europe. The early encounters between Europeans and Native Americans ranged from curious to friendly to warlike. The two worlds learned from each other, however, and the encounters changed both worlds forever.

New Hampshire events were part of a bigger picture. Western Abenaki homelands in New Hampshire and Vermont must be seen in relation to the territories staked out by the Eastern Abenaki in Maine to the east and the Iroquois to the west. Europeans came because of population pressures, political consolidations, economic ambitions, philosophical thought, Christian upheaval, and technological applications in Europe. The coming of Africans must be seen in the context of European expansion into Africa and the enslavement of Africans.

# Colonization and Settlement: 1623–1763

## Highlights

- **Permanent English settlements**
- **Arrival of black Africans**
- **Human–landscape interactions**
- **Cultural exchange**
- **Colonial government**
- **English, Native American, and French rivalries and warfare**
- **Differences with Massachusetts**

The first permanent English settlements in New Hampshire occurred later than those of the French to the north or the Spanish to the distant south. Europeans came to New Hampshire for economic reasons, looking to exploit the resources of the area, especially forests, furs, and fish. The placement of the first four English towns — Portsmouth, Dover, Exeter, and Hampton — along the coastal fall line demonstrates one of the many effects of the physical environment on human settlement. English settlers' cutting of timber along Great Bay is an early example of how European settlement affected the ecosystem.

In this era Native American, European, and African peoples from three continents converged. Colonial New Hampshire society was a complex product of cultural interaction. Cultural interaction, for instance, brought European diseases that wiped out up to 95% of the Native American population before most European settlers had arrived. Likewise both sides learned about new foods, articles of clothing, words, and ways of life.

England and France acted out their rivalries around the globe, and one of their troublesome battlegrounds turned out to be northern New England between 1500 and 1763. Native Americans were often drawn into the conflict as allies to one or the other side, even when they tried to remain neutral. Leaders such as Passaconaway and Wonalancet tried to formulate the best reaction to European intrusions on the Native American homeland, and those reactions varied from all out warfare to accommodation. The narratives of white captives during this conflict became a new American literary form, usually with religious overtones. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 marked the victory of England over France. After this, the interior of New Hampshire opened up to English settlement. Many Abenakis retreated into what is now Vermont and Canada as a result of pressure from the English population.

During the same period, in Africa, some tribal societies had grown into large and prosperous kingdoms. England participated in the African slave trade, and when English colonists came to America, slaves and free men came with them. The African slave trade, fired

by a need for labor in the New World, depleted and disrupted the populace in the interior of Africa, creating political imbalance on that continent. African slaves were brought to New Hampshire



Robert Rogers, founder of Rogers' Rangers

very early. The first recorded slave in Portsmouth appears in the records in 1645.

Economic investors, political contenders, the English Crown, Native Americans, Africans, and Massachusetts Bay Colony contended for control of the government during the New Hampshire colonial era. In that mix there were, however, ideas in law and government that would eventually form the bases for democratic rule. The Wentworths figured preeminently in New Hampshire colonial government for sixty years before the Revolution. Wentworth family rule hit its stride in 1717 when John Wentworth became lieutenant governor, continued through the twenty-five years that John's son Benning held the post of first royal governor of New Hampshire, and ended in 1775 when Benning's nephew Governor John Wentworth, fled his post under pressure from the Revolutionaries.

Differences between Massachusetts Bay Colony and New Hampshire also began in this era. In general, while the first New

Hampshire colonists pursued economic ends, the Puritan government of Massachusetts Bay pursued religious ends. At times, such as during the rule of Lt. Governor John Wentworth, New Hampshire was united with Massachusetts Bay. At other times, New Hampshire kept its autonomy. From the start, however, New Hampshire was both a refuge and a coveted object for Massachusetts Bay colonists. Religious dissenters from Massachusetts Bay settled Exeter: another group from Massachusetts Bay, who were not dissenters, settled Hampton. Both groups contended for control.

# Revolution and the New Nation: 1754–1820s

## Highlights

- Differences among groups in revolutionary New Hampshire
- Fort William and Mary
- Battle of Bennington
- Battle of Bunker Hill
- The Revolution on the home front;
- State constitutions
- US Constitution
- Social and cultural changes
- The economy

Connections between New Hampshire history and events outside the state could hardly be more evident than in this period. Divisions outside of New Hampshire led to divisions within. The class, economic, and religious ties of Loyalists and Revolutionaries separated individuals, groups, and regions. The Revolution in New Hampshire, as elsewhere, did not ride a unified ground swell of support; the state had revolutionary instigators as well as Loyalists.

After Governor John Wentworth left and in the absence of a viable royal government, the state of New Hampshire declared a provisional government in January of 1776. The New Hampshire delegates to Philadelphia signed the Declaration of Independence of the thirteen colonies later that same year. State documents illustrate the ideas of the time. There were two state constitutions as a response to revolution and statehood, one in 1776 and one in 1784. The 1784 Constitution, with amendments, forms the state constitution of today.

New Hampshireites contributed their share to military events of the Revolution. The 1774 bloodless raid on casually guarded Fort William and Mary came after Paul Revere rode north to Portsmouth to warn that the British were coming to remove the stores of gunpowder there. The Revolutionaries used that gunpowder later at the Battle of Bunker Hill. While no battles were fought in New Hampshire, the state's soldiers were active throughout the Revolution. In addition to fighting at Bunker Hill, John Stark and New Hampshire troops were critical in the victory at the Battle of Bennington. Some Loyalists stayed in the state, but others like John Wentworth left for safer ports. Privateers sailed in and out of Portsmouth, and smuggling flourished. When the campaign moved south, some New Hampshire troops went, too, while others returned to their farms and shops.

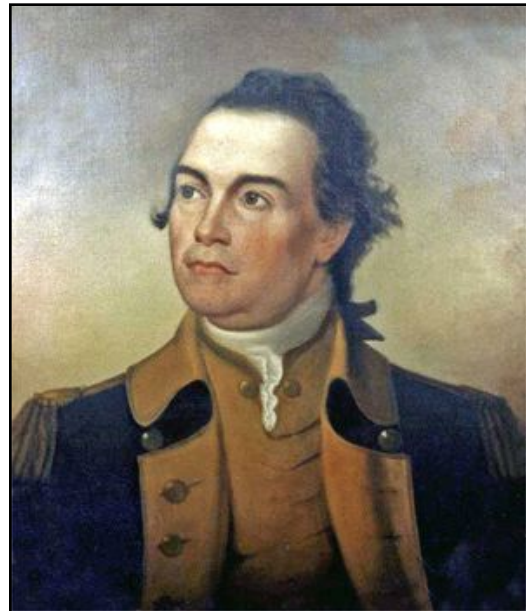
More people experienced the Revolution on the home front than on the battlefield. The home front can be traced through the activities and fortunes of women, slaves, children, Loyalists, men who stayed home, and government officials. For example, caught up in

the ideas of the Revolution, 20 NH slaves petitioned the NH legislature for freedom in 1779; their petition was tabled, even though it contained ideas similar to those found in the Declaration of Independence.

Social and political change brought anxiety. Some New Hampshire people depended on religion to accommodate and explain the upheavals they felt. The Shakers, the Baptists, the Universalists, and the New Lights were radical religious sects that formed around the edges of Revolutionary society.

New Hampshire was the ninth and deciding state to ratify the United States Constitution in 1788. New Hampshire voters just barely gave the edge to the Federalists, but there was always a strong feeling for states' rights in New Hampshire.

The successful fight for independence opened vexing questions: What was a citizen? What constituted virtue in citizens? How could the states ensure a supply of virtuous citizens? What should become of slavery? What



General John Sullivan, hero of the Revolutionary War and Governor of New Hampshire

place should be accorded to women and Blacks, neither of whom were allowed to vote? The people and the presses of New Hampshire pursued the questions and answers with as much zeal as people did in the rest of the new United States.

As a state with a busy seaport, New Hampshire was concerned about the new nation's trade and political relationships with Native Americans as well as European nations. The Napoleonic wars, Jefferson's Embargo, and the Louisiana Purchase suggested new questions and new answers.

Chronology of New Hampshire History

## Expansion and Reform: 1801–1861

While the country expanded westward, a bit of territory was added to New Hampshire through the settlement of the Indian Stream Republic disagreement in 1842 by the Webster-Ashburton Treaty. Overall, New Hampshire felt the nineteenth century westward drive toward territorial expansion as a drain on her population.

Overwhelmingly rural at the beginning of the 1800s, New Hampshire became more urban as it was affected by industrialization. The embargo of American trade with Europe in 1808 and the War of 1812 led to the decline of the hitherto healthy shipbuilding and trading port of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Yet the need for textiles formerly supplied by Europe led to the growth of the textile industry in New England.

The advent of the Industrial Revolution in New Hampshire came with textile machinery, powered by New Hampshire rivers. Textile mills built early in the century transformed the economic and demographic profile of the state. Farm work and wage work existed side-by-side for a while, as farm families worked in factories seasonally. Young, unmarried New Hampshire farm girls were a major source of labor for early textile factories, many of them in Massachusetts. The textile mill complex at Amoskeag in Manchester, NH, began during this period. Soon it became less expensive for households to buy machine-made cloth than to make it, and the woman's world of home textile production changed forever. The shoe industry also employed many workers. Southern New Hampshire women sewed shoe uppers as outwork for Massachusetts shoe factories.

As factory-made goods replaced the homemade or artisan-made, and as the need for cash increased in order to buy factory-made goods, capitalism transformed New Hampshire society. The switch from a barter, pre-capitalist economy toward an industrial, cash economy caused hardship for those such as small farmers who could not accumulate cash. Transportation changes in the form of canals and railroads tied the state to sources and markets south and

### Highlights

- **Population changes**
- **Embargo**
- **Industrial Revolution**
- **Textile mills**
- **Transportation changes**
- **Farming and wage work**
- **Immigrant labor**
- **Politics**
- **Slavery**
- **An era of reform**

west and hastened the flow of people and goods. Canals struggled briefly, soon replaced by railroads. New Hampshire contributed the popular Concord Coach to the transportation revolution. Abbot & Downing exported their coaches to the American West and all over the world.

As competition developed, less expensive immigrant labor, especially Irish, replaced native-born farm girls. By the end of the period, even though the foreign-born represented only 4.3% of the



Franklin Pierce, General in the Mexican War and future President of the United States

total NH population, and even though only 520 “free-colored” lived in the state, Nativism and Know-Nothings appeared, espousing sometimes violent opposition to foreigners.

Politics mediated between old ideas and new. Notions of Republican Motherhood and civic virtue translated into increased education for girls. Ideas of political democracy called forth pressure for universal male suffrage. Jacksonian Democrats were elected in the state. The nationally volatile slavery issue led the country, including New Hampshire, into the Civil War era. Anti-slavery forces in New Hampshire contributed to the formation of the Republican Party. Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster, a New Hampshire native, was a giant in the US Senate. In 1852 Franklin Pierce, a Democrat from New Hampshire, won the U.S. presidency by an electorate split by the question of slavery.

Partially fulfilled promises of democracy, coupled with religious fervor, female education, and the destabilizing effects of industrialization led to a great reform era that tackled all manner of social ills through applications of scientific thinking. This was an era when people formed many voluntary associations around special interests; barred from voting, women used such voluntary associations as their political arenas. The movement for abolition gained strength in the north, especially after adoption of the Fugitive Slave Law.

# Civil War and Reconstruction: 1850–1877

## Highlights

- **Transportation changes**
- **Civil War industry**
- **New Hampshire in national politics**
- **The Republican Party**
- **Abolition**
- **Wartime agriculture**
- **New Hampshire people in the war**
- **Peace movement**
- **Westward migration**

Transportation changes gained momentum in the mid 1800s, preparing for the industrial boom that was to come in the next fifty years. Canals, never fulfilling the hopes of their builders, declined; in 1854 only 11 miles remained in operation in NH. Railroads made the difference. In the decade before the war, railroad track mileage in New Hampshire increased 41 %, from 465 miles to 656 miles.

The Civil War focused New Hampshire on wartime production, national political issues, New Hampshire involvement in military campaigns in the south, and the effects of war on individuals.

The politics of the era featured the beginnings of the Republican Party. Franklin Pierce won election, the only United States president from New Hampshire. Democrat Pierce's position mollifying southern interests made him unacceptable to anti-slavery forces. Senator John P. Hale was a well-known mover in national politics and as a prominent abolitionist. Abraham Lincoln himself visited New Hampshire — his son attended Phillips Exeter Academy and, it is said, enthusiastic acceptance of Lincoln's speeches here convinced him that he could run successfully for the presidency. Renomination of Lincoln split the Republican Party in New Hampshire as well as nationally, but in the election Lincoln and Johnson narrowly won this state.

African-Americans felt the contradictions in New Hampshire attitudes toward racism and slavery. Significant battles over slavery occupied the state's politicians, and, while no slaves remained in the state, black author Harriet Adams Wilson wrote a novel. *Our Nig*. loosely based on her own unhappy experiences as an indentured servant in southern New Hampshire.

In 1850, agriculture employed, by far, the most workers: 47,440 free males 15 years and older to manufacturing's 27,082 males and females. By 1870, farms occupied 62.4% of New Hampshire, and more of the state was deforested than at any other time.

Both agriculture and manufacturing in New Hampshire responded to war needs. Mechanized shoe manufacturing and textile mills, for

instance, helped supply the Union Army, as did ammunition and firearm manufacturers. The industrial North prospered as a result of the war, and New Hampshire industry was no exception. On the agricultural side, New Hampshire farmers provided for war needs and made up for some war losses. Tobacco growing, for example, increased from 50 pounds in 1850 to 155,334 pounds in 1870. Southern cotton supplies for northern cotton mills fell victim to war, but that production problem for New Hampshire manufacturers could not be alleviated by local farmers. Local farmers could supply wool, however.

New Hampshire men served in Northern uniforms. Women such as Harriet P. Dame served as nurses on the battlefields. Other women who stayed home supported the war effort through their labor in the factories and through volunteer work.

Anti-war sentiment also had its advocates in the state, making the picture more complicated than the generalization that Northerners united wholeheartedly in the war to preserve the Union and free the slaves.

The 1870 census showed the only net population decline in New Hampshire since the official census began. Deaths and relocations from the Civil War as well as westward movement caused the state's population to drop from 326,073 in 1860 to 317,976 in 1870. It has risen in all subsequent censuses.



Medal commemorating New Hampshire's participation in the Battle of Gettysburg

# Development of the Industrial United States: 1870–1900

As the title suggests, industrial development defined the era. While attempts at Reconstruction in a devastated South struggled with the questions of a bi-racial society, New Hampshire, with much of the rest of the North, enjoyed a burst of industrialization following the Civil War. The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in Manchester, for instance, grew into the largest textile complex in the world.

Most of the state's population lay in the south, as did most of the manufacturing. A surge of immigrants from French Quebec rode the railroads into New Hampshire to work in the mills. By 1900, 2% of the state's population was foreign-born. Blacks and Asians numbered fewer than 1000 in a total New Hampshire population of 411,588.

Steam power had begun to replace waterpower by 1870, but by 1900 gasoline engines and electric motors foretold an even newer age of power to come.

During the latter third of the century, manufacturing became the dominant employer of workers in New Hampshire; agriculture would never again dominate the New Hampshire economy. Boots and shoes topped the leading industries, followed by cotton goods, once first but now second. Wool manufacturing, lumber and timber products, and paper and wood pulp followed in that order.

Railroads provided a way for raw materials and finished products to come and go between New Hampshire and the rest of the country. Local farming suffered from competition from midwestern products shipped in by the railroads, but, on the other hand, highly perishable local dairy products could be shipped to nearby city markets like Boston. Farms therefore turned more toward dairying. The railroads opened up the North Country to logging. Other technologies contributed. The adoption in 1877 of the production of paper from wood pulp rather than rags made Berlin the industrial center of the North Country, and Berlin eventually became the biggest producer of newsprint in the world. Record timber harvests alarmed some environment watchers, and

## Highlights

- **Industrialization**
- **Immigration**
- **People of color**
- **Changes in power sources**
- **The economy**
- **Effects on the environment**
- **Politics and power**
- **Women in the public sphere**
- **Social welfare actions**

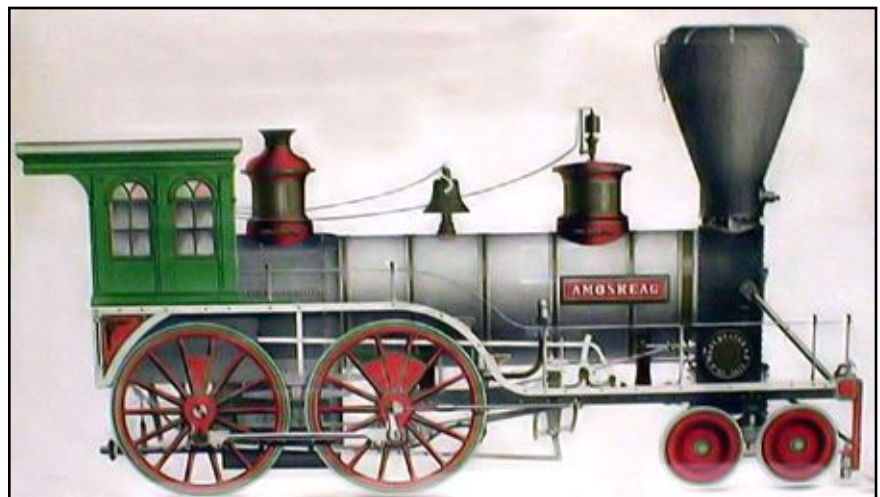
exuberant industry began to have adverse effects on water quality and availability. Immigrants came to work in both the logging and paper industries.

The railroads also led to the rapid expansion of tourism. The upper classes and moneyed vacationers patronized the large hotels in the White Mountains or on the shore, and middle class vacationers paid to stay with farm families who took in summer boarders from the cities.

Profits from industrialization led to new sections of cities built in spirited Victorian styles. These can still be seen today in most New Hampshire cities and towns.

Politically, the expansion of industry led to moves by industry to influence and control government. In this era, increasing political corruption and influence peddling was perceived to be against the interests of the “common people.”

Still not allowed to vote, women were finally accepted into the State Teachers’ Association and a few became practicing lawyers and doctors. The temperance and suffrage movements joined forces and regularly petitioned legislatures and constitutional conventions for action in favor of their causes. Many of the causes began as ideas for reform in the pre-Civil War era developed into social welfare action.



Amoskeag Locomotive (from a lithograph c. 1856)

## Emergence of Modern America: 1890–1930

### Highlights

- **Populism**
- **Spanish-American War**
- **Russo-Japanese Treaty**
- **National and international politics**
- **Women and the vote**
- **Progressive Era politics and reform**
- **Changing technologies**
- **World War I**
- **Red Scare**
- **People leave the countryside**
- **Foreshadowing the Great Depression**

The Spanish-American War signaled the new willingness of the United States to expand its sphere of influence globally. The signing of the Russo-Japanese Treaty of 1905 at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard brought diplomats to New Hampshire, international prestige to the United States, and the Nobel Prize to peace broker Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt's ties to the state continued, and, later, some prominent New Hampshire politicians encouraged and supported Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party.

Political change washed through the state. The 1902 NH Constitutional Convention passed a resolution to submit a proposal to the people allowing women to vote. It did not pass, but New Hampshire voters did ratify the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution in August 1919.

Urbanization, industrialization, immigration, and political corruption arising from the Gilded Age following the Civil War prompted an era of reform, the Progressive Era, that attempted to solve problems that many thought had grown out of hand. Prior to World War I, the state legislature passed much progressive legislation aimed at using the power of government to regulate business and ameliorate social ills: a law forbidding free railroad passes for government officials, establishment of a Public Service Commission, a Mother's Pension Law, a Family Desertion Act, protective labor legislation for women and children, help against tuberculosis, provisions for health inspections in schools, and a requirement to register motor vehicles. The state benefited from the Weeks Act that established the White Mountain National Forest, as part of the drive for conservation of resources. Overall, New Hampshire politicians embraced reform by government, unlike the later conservative trends in the state.

As new technologies were adopted, New Hampshire saw all aspects of daily life change. Technology also made war more brutal than ever. New Hampshire men served as soldiers in World War I, and some women joined the armed forces as nurses, office staff, and communications operators. Women replaced servicemen

in jobs left empty at home, such as shipbuilding and farming. In the decade after World War I, New Hampshire adopted technologies on a grand scale: radio, the telephone, electricity, automobiles. The wide use of technology shortened the social and psychological distance between New Hampshire and the rest of the world in a process that would gain momentum over the century.

Cynicism and fear, often referred to as the Red Scare, reached into New Hampshire after the war. Almost 300 suspected New Hampshire Communists and labor radicals were arrested in 1920 as part of U.S. Attorney General Palmer's nationwide raids on suspected Communists and agitators. The state took on a more active role in the education of New Hampshire students with the 1919 school reform, removing some of the power from local towns and attempting with regulation, organization, and money to equalize educational opportunities within the state.

Throughout the period, much of New Hampshire's population continued to drain from the rural countryside to the cities and to other states. Governor Rollins proclaimed Old Home Day in 1899 to promote the return of prodigal natives to their family origins. Many just stayed for the day, and by the 1920s the state was actively promoting tourism, which changed from long-term stays

by rail passengers to short-term visits by people traveling in automobiles. The introduction of skiing by immigrants from Scandinavia began an industry that supplemented the usual summertime tourism. By the end of the era, manufacturing concerns such as the former textile giant Amoskeag Manufacturing Company showed signs of weakness, foreshadowing The Great Depression to come.



World War I Troops (drawing by M.P. Rowell, c. 1918)

# The Great Depression and World War II: 1929–1945

The Great Depression and World War II once again demonstrate the necessity of understanding the greater context in order to understand local events. National events intruded on New Hampshire experience down to the personal level to an unprecedented degree. In New Hampshire, as elsewhere, rural populations had the option and habit of growing much of their own food while urban populations often did not. Circumstances challenged middle class family structures; looking for ways to help families survive, women took low paying jobs when men in the family had no work. Other families broke up and recombined as members went to find work. Life became a mixture of unrest, conflict, and mutual help. Both national and state governments were occupied with finding ways to weather the crisis, and the population at large began to expect more from government; legislation brought expanded social welfare to New Hampshire.

Governor John Winant shepherded New Hampshire through the beginning of the Great Depression, at first following the policies of President Hoover and then with policies and sentiments more akin to the New Deal. Elections in New Hampshire after that revealed mixed opinions when it came to federal aid to the state. One New Deal program that left a mark on the state was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). In the countryside, CCC camps brought in young urban men, and many stayed to marry girls they met who lived near the camps.

Mills in the state struggled and some died, unable to solve their supply and labor problems and compete in international markets. The demise of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in 1936 is an example. The failure of the Amoskeag mills hurt Manchester and the state severely. World War II brought New Hampshire and the United States out of the Depression; wartime production and military service provided jobs. Men and women who had never been out of the state suddenly found themselves in uniform, encountering the world. New Hampshire workers moved to jobs in munitions plants, sometimes in other states. Workers were brought

## Highlights

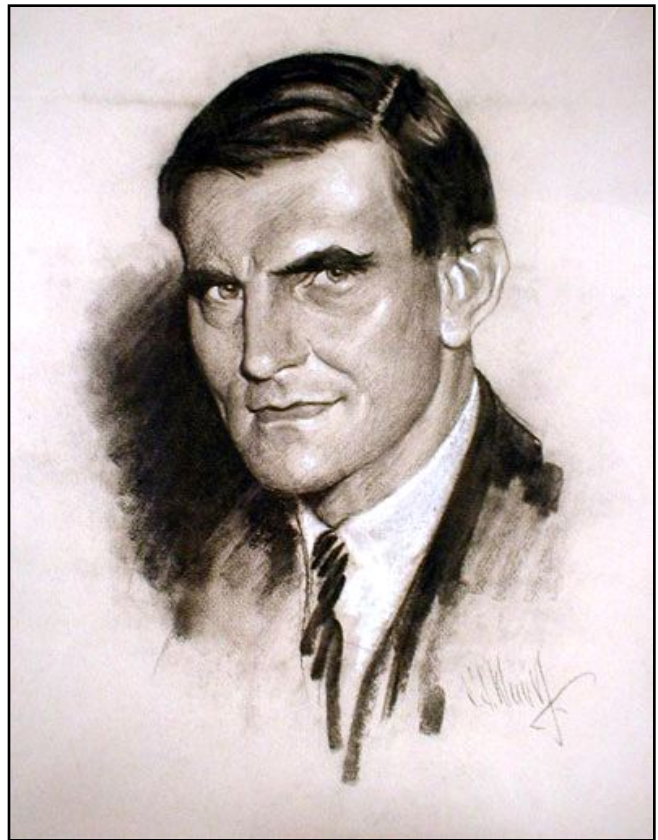
- **The Great Depression**
- **Surviving**
- **Governmental responses**
- **Civilian Conservation Corps**
- **World War II**
- **Wartime production**
- **Immigration**

into Portsmouth by the thousands to build submarines at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Three to four thousand women worked in the shipyard, an unprecedented number. Industries of all types contributed to the war effort. The need for uniforms, for example, gave knitting mills, textile mills, and shoe factories temporary new life.

Perhaps a less known aspect of World War II was the camp at Stark that housed German prisoners of war and Camp Simon on Mt. Kearsarge that housed conscientious objectors.

World disorder and the need for workers changed the state's demographics. French-Canadians topped the list of foreign whites in the state with the next closest category being English-Canadians, but there was an increase of other European and non-European immigrants. The state's nonwhite population remained very small, still under 1000.

Through it all, people found they had money to spend once again. The tide of consumer buying was held in check by wartime shortages, ready to expand into the consumer economy of the fifties and sixties once production changed from wartime to peace.



Governor John Winant (charcoal and chalk drawing by S.S.Woolf for a *Newsweek Magazine* article, October 10, 1936)

## Postwar United States: 1945–1970s

The big themes of this era center on the fears and hopes of post-war politics, economics, and technology set against a background of the atomic bomb and a growing mass consumer culture.

During the 1950s, New Hampshire was still finding out how national and international trends and forces would play out in the state. New Hampshire took part in the postwar economic boom. Soldiers came home, married, bought houses, and started families. As the men returned, women found that they had to leave many of the jobs they had held during the war. The dominant middle class social expectation was that women would return to the home and become homemakers.

The home became the center of consumerism. Household gadgets and appliances defined the modern household. While the ideal had the appearance of a consensus view, many individuals and families in New Hampshire could not afford or did not choose to follow the middle class ideal of the modern household; a higher percentage of women continued to work for pay than in the other New England states, and some households resisted modern gadgets to accomplish work done in more traditional ways.

Nonwhites in the state increased during the 1950s, until by 1960 there were 2,587, partially because of members of the armed forces at Pease Air Force Base. By 1970, the nonwhite population was 4575 and 2505 of those were black in a total population of 737,681.

The economic profile of New Hampshire changed. Once textiles had been the industrial backbone of the state, but now small manufacturing and electronics firms moved into the forefront in a resurgence of industry. Agriculture began an almost unnoticed rebirth with organic farming that would take thirty years to develop. Tourism grew to become a major part of the New Hampshire economy. Automobiles on improved roads moved tourists and sports enthusiasts to and from the state. Recreational visits became shorter and more frequent, unlike the extended

### Highlights

- Cold War
- Returning soldiers
- Woman's place
- Middle class ideals
- Consumer culture
- Conservative politics
- The tax question
- Dissension of the 1960s

sojourns of the nineteenth century, and this demanded different kinds of recreational services.

In politics, the Cold War reached into the state and New Hampshire became a kind of conservative bell-wether. William Loeb bought the Manchester Union Leader in 1946; as owner and editor of the only statewide New Hampshire newspaper, Loeb achieved a national reputation as the irascible conservative voice of dour Yankees. Under the influence of Loeb, taxes became the guiding issue for elections. By the 1970s, to win the governorship, candidates had to promise not to introduce broad-based taxes.

New Hampshire state politics kept a conservative Republican cast.



Presidential campaign button for Ohio Senator Robert A. Taft. 1952

The New Hampshire legislature created a commission in 1949 to investigate Communist activities in the state. In 1951 the legislature passed a Subversive Activities Act. Under the umbrella of this act, Louis Wyman, as New Hampshire Attorney General from 1953–1961, with the public support of the Manchester Union Leader, headed a government search to ferret out Communist sympathizers in the state. In the same decade, New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation presidential preference primary quickly became a national political barometer.

Cracks appeared in the public persona of the state, however. Issues such as what kind and quantity of taxes would pay for local schools arose every election year. In addition, nation-wide movements in the 1960s — Civil Rights, women's rights, peace, rock music, and flower children — chipped away at what some declared to be the New Hampshire way of die-hard conservatism.

## End of the Century: 1968–2000

Conflicts and struggles arose between those who had political power and those who wanted it, between those for and against specific issues such as the Vietnam War or broad-based taxes, between environmental concerns and industrial interests, between those who hold on to the old ways and those who welcome the new, between the maintenance of and challenges to law and order. These express the essence of this recent era.

Conflict between local rule versus large industrial and commercial interests was tested when the town of Durham successfully fought off an attempt by Governor Meldrim Thomson and Aristotle Onassis to build an oil refinery on Durham Point in 1974. Another battle, the building of the Seabrook nuclear power plant, was fought by many of the same people, but this time the plant was built.

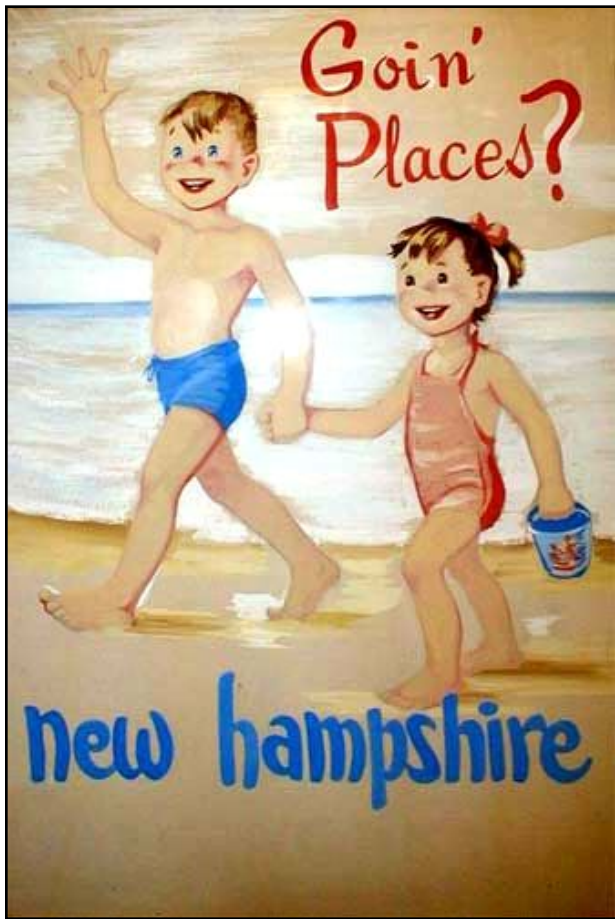
In politics, no matter what the election, taxes maintained a high profile as a pivotal recurring issue. “The pledge” not to champion a state sales or income tax became a prerequisite for successful candidacy for governor during the decades of ascendancy by the *Manchester Union Leader*. This was in question by the late 1990s when, in the Claremont school case, the New Hampshire Supreme Court declared local property taxes an unconstitutional means of supporting local schools.

The first-in-the-nation Presidential Primary ensured a place in the national media for New Hampshire every four years. Candidates traveled the state, meeting voters in stores, town meetings, diners, on the street, and in homes. Politics had a personal, face-to-face quality. The new influence of television in elections was not tested until the election of 1978. By the 1996 election, television advertising made the New Hampshire campaign much like that in other parts of the country, a media event of sound-bite-sized messages. The characteristic personal touch, possible because of New Hampshire’s relatively small area, was not quite lost, however. The first elected female governor in New Hampshire, Jeanne Shaheen, was elected in 1996.

### Highlights

- **Politics**
- **Taxes**
- **The environment**
- **Industry**
- **Tourism**
- **Law and order**
- **Change**
- **Local rule**
- **Seabrook**
- **Presidential primary**
- **Effects of electronic communication on community**
- **Diversity**
- **New Hampshire’s image**

The electronic communications revolution reduced the relative and real-time distance between the residents of rural farmhouses, city apartment dwellers, and the rest of the world. Old values and ways



Tourism poster of “Chippa Granite” and his little sister (from acrylic painting by Alice Cosgrove)

associated with New England and New Hampshire conflicted with the homogenizing effects brought by vehicles and electronics delivering people, attitudes, values, and products. Local battles in the 1990s over the coming of chain stores such as Wal-Mart and Rite-Aid forced communities to confront and debate related economics and quality-of-life questions.

Change and a mobile population loosened community cohesion. Paradoxically, a counter-force to community disruption was the determination of people to escape what they saw as the ills of large-scale urban living and to build ties in more manageable environments such as New Hampshire.

In another apparent paradox, economic and technological change in the context of global and regional events parlayed into a more ethnically and culturally diverse demographic landscape even while promoting homogenization by mass culture. In 1990 only 45.8% of the population was born in New Hampshire and 3.7% were foreign-born. The communication explosion has also given diverse people more means and contexts in which to express themselves, and that act has led to greater conflict as well as greater understanding.

The computer and other electronic communications now make another series of changes possible in the state. People can live in remote areas while working and talking to their colleagues and counterparts all over the world via high-tech channels. The social, cultural, and economic results remain to be seen.

More than ever, the state is tied to the fate of the larger whole, yet the tourist industry and media cling to an image of old values and semi-secluded quaintness. Evidence arguing against New Hampshire’s untouched quaintness shows that New Hampshire is more industrialized than Vermont, another state that banks on its country image. According to the census in 1990, 51.6% of New Hampshire lived in urban areas.

Chronology of New Hampshire History