

INTRODUCTION

# HISTORY AND TRENDS

*"The charm of history and its enigmatic lesson consist in the fact that, from age to age, nothing changes and yet everything is completely different."*

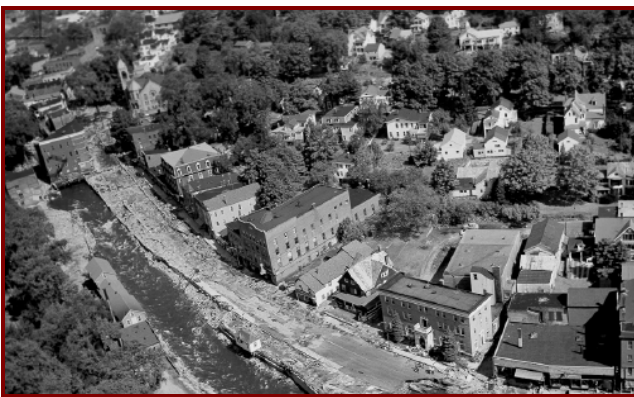
Aldous Huxley

Native Americans occupied parts of Northwestern Connecticut as long as 10,000 years ago. Torrington's native population was part of the Algonquian family of tribes and numerous stone points and stone tools have been found here documenting the presence of Native Americans over thousands of years. In 1732 the Colony of Connecticut granted to Windsor, Connecticut several townships including Torrington.

Ebenezer Lyman Jr. of Durham purchased land from one of the Windsor proprietors and in 1735 became Torrington's first settler. The first school, store, church and tavern were built high on the hills, west of the Naugatuck River, near the homes of the earliest settlers. The second area to be settled was the eastern hill known as Torringtonford.

These hills provided the best farmland for the settler's agricultural work. In October 1740, Torrington was given permission to incorporate as a town and organize its own town government and ecclesiastical society.

1955 Flood - Connecticut State Library



The Connelly Inn (above); The old armory building (below)



Postcards from www.cardcow.com

## Connecticut Freedom Trail in Torrington

*John Brown Birthplace*  
John Brown Road,  
Torrington, CT

Perhaps the most famous abolitionist of the Civil War era, Brown became renowned for his raid on Harper's Ferry, VA. His roots and his life, however, began in this home in Torrington.

*Isaiah Tuttle House*  
4040 Tarringford Street,  
Torrington, CT

A stop on the Underground Railroad. Currently a private home and not open to the public.

*Uriah Tuttle House*  
3925 Tarringford Street,  
Torrington, CT

A stop on the Underground Railroad. Currently a private home and not open to the public.

[www.visitconnecticut.com/freedom.html](http://www.visitconnecticut.com/freedom.html)

The rapidly moving water of the Naugatuck River was harnessed to provide waterpower for the early 19<sup>th</sup> century industries. Significant industrial growth began to occur here in 1813 when Frederick Wolcott erected a woolen mill.

The mill attracted a large workforce and created a demand for housing, goods and services. The small industrial village that grew up around the mill was called Wolcottville for many decades and is now the central business district of Torrington.

In 1834 Israel Coe and Erastus Hodges began the construction of two brass mills on the Naugatuck River. This was the beginning of the brass industry in Torrington, an industry that would later be synonymous with the entire Naugatuck valley.

When the Naugatuck Valley railroad was completed through Torrington in 1849, it linked Torrington with other population centers, ending its isolation and stimulating industrial development. Soon Torrington was producing a vast array of metal products including needles, brass, ice skates, hardware, bicycles, and tacks.

English, German and Irish immigrants contributed to the growth of the community in the mid nineteenth century. Torrington's growing industrial plants continued to attract immigrants through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As immigration from southern and eastern Europe increased, Torrington's population exploded from 3,000 to 22,000 between 1880 and 1920. New immigrants during this period included the Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians and Lebanese. In 1923, with a population of 23,000, Torrington was chartered as a city.

Torrington is the birthplace of the abolitionist, John Brown. Born here in 1800, he moved with his family to Ohio while still a young boy. The house that Brown was born in was destroyed by fire in 1918. Today, this historic site is part of the Connecticut African American Freedom Trail (see sidebar). Another famous Torrington resident was Gail Borden who developed and produced condensed milk here in 1856.



### Torrington Historical Society

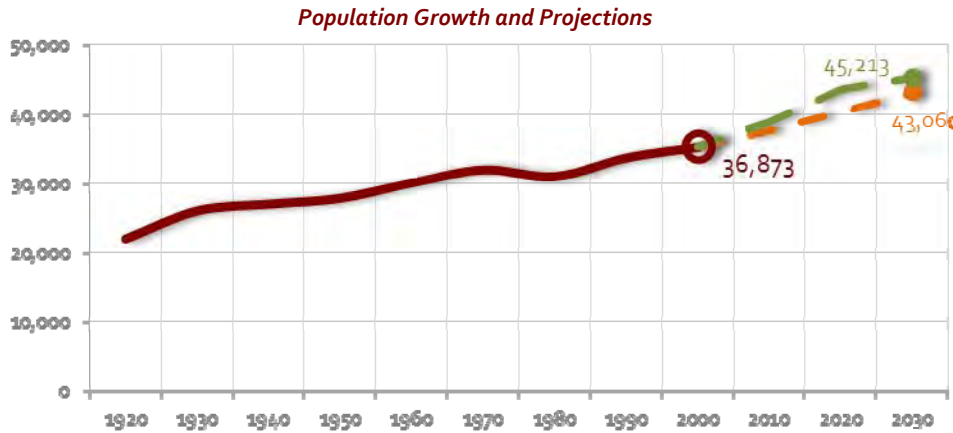
Within the Downtown National Register Historic District is the Hotchkiss-Fyler Estate, home of the Torrington Historical Society where the City's rich past is preserved and made available to the public.

Incorporated in 1944, the Historical Society is a non-profit educational institution.

[www.torringtonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.torringtonhistoricalsociety.org)

# POPULATION

In 2008, an estimated 36,873 people lived in Torrington according to the Connecticut Economic Resource Council (CERC). Population growth has slowed, with a very small increase of 1 percent since 2000. Despite this slow rate of growth, other demographic trends may influence future housing needs and demands in Torrington - specifically, an aging population and shrinking household size.



Torrington is projected to become a community where 50 percent of the total population is age 55 and over. This is an increase from 1980 where only about one third of the population was in this age cohort.

**Actual and Projected Age Composition in Torrington, 1980 to 2030**

Ages	ACTUAL			PROJECTED		
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
0-4	1,662	2,305	2,107	2,048	2,092	2,059
5-19	6,530	5,496	6,706	6,082	6,061	6,051
20-34	7,297	8,677	6,172	7,430	7,832	7,217
35-54	6,343	7,998	10,839	9,094	6,259	6,806
55-64	4,023	2,958	2,972	6,358	8,224	4,022
65 +	5,132	6,253	5,572	6,918	12,250	18,230
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,987</b>	<b>33,687</b>	<b>34,368</b>	<b>37,930</b>	<b>42,718</b>	<b>44,385</b>

1980 to 2000 Census and Connecticut State Data Center (CSDC), 2007

Torrington has seen its average household size shrink from 2.96 in 1970 to 2.33 in 2005. Part of the reason for a shrinking household size is the increase in single-person households. Torrington has a higher percentage of single-person households than the County or State and that percentage increased from 1990 to 2000.

**Single-Person Households**

	1990			2000		
	CITY	COUNTY	STATE	CITY	COUNTY	STATE
Overall	29%	23%	24%	32%	25%	26%
Owner-Occupied	20%	17%	18%	24%	19%	20%
Renter-Occupied	44%	39%	37%	47%	44%	40%

Census

**Population Change**

	Pop.	% Change
1920	22,055	--
1930	26,040	18%
1940	26,988	4%
1950	27,820	3%
1960	30,045	8%
1970	31,952	6%
1980	30,987	-3%
1990	33,687	9%
2000	35,202	4%
2008	36,873	5%

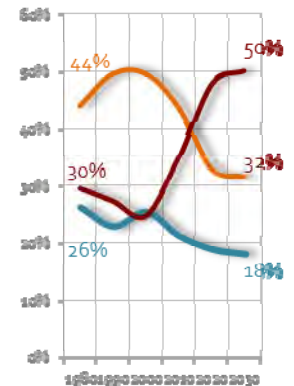
Census; CT State Data Center; City of Torrington, 1989 Plan of Development; CERC (2008)

**Population Projections**

	Estimate	% Change (over decade)
2010	37,580 - 38,758	6% - 9%
2020	40,320 - 43,546	7% - 12%
2030	43,060 - 45,213	4% - 7%

CSDC and CT Department of Transportation LU-27C, 2008

**Change In Age Composition Percent of Total Population**



Census

**Change in Average Household Size**

		% Change
1970	2.96	--
1980	2.55	-14%
1990	2.38	-7%
2000	2.33	-2%
2005 Census	2.33	--

**Commuting Patterns**  
into Torrington, from...

<b>Torrington</b>	<b>8,853</b>
Winchester	1,069
Harwinton	658
Litchfield	631
Waterbury	551
New Hartford	421
Watertown	316
Thomaston	300
Goshen	271
Bethel	200

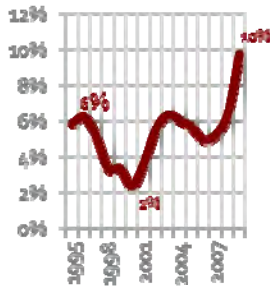
2000 Census

from Torrington, into...

<b>Torrington</b>	<b>8,853</b>
Litchfield	835
Winchester	608
Watertown	422
Waterbury	410
Hartford	392
New Hartford	310
Simsbury	309
Avon	302
Thomaston	280

2000 Census

**Unemployment Rate**



CT DOL

**Zoning**

	ZONE	ACRES
<b>Business</b>	CIR	121.69
	I	1,126.36
	IP	538.79
	LB	553.59
	GB	173.20
<b>Residential</b>	R6	1,598.21
	R10	950.73
	R10s	1,089.40
	R15	591.10
	R15s	1,863.31
	R25	696.10
	R40	674.80
	R60	11,352.29
	RRC	1056.63
	RWP	2,999.62
	<b>TOTAL</b>	

**EMPLOYMENT**

The 2000 US Census indicates that there were about 16,310 jobs in Torrington. According to the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) and the Department of Labor (CT DOL), from 2000 to 2008 Torrington lost about 400 jobs. Trade and Services account for about 66 percent of all business establishments, and about 66 percent of all Torrington jobs.

*Types of Jobs in Torrington*

BUSINESS SECTOR	ESTABLISHMENTS	EMPLOYMENT
Agriculture	2%	1%
Construction and Mining	14%	7%
Manufacturing	6%	17%
Transportation and Utilities	2%	2%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	25%	27%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	7%	4%
Services	41%	39%
Government	3%	3%

CERC

**Labor Force**

According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, Torrington has a labor force of 19,644 in 2009. This is an increase of 1,372 from 2000 (about 8 percent). About 10 percent of the Labor Force is currently unemployed. This is the highest it has been in the last 15 years, but it reflects National and State trends and economic conditions.

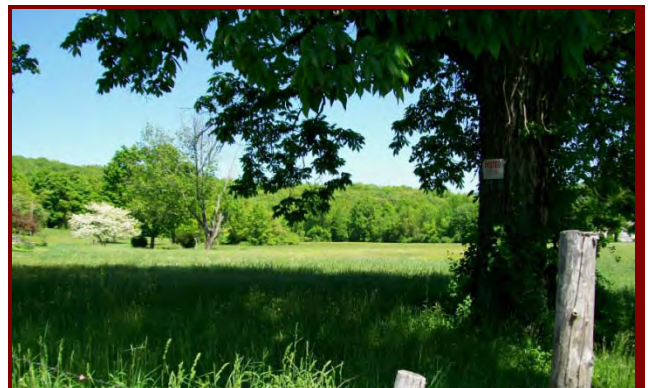
While considered an employment center in the Region, with a total of 15,893 jobs and 19,644 workers the net effect is that Torrington exports workers to other communities. About 55 percent of the jobs in Torrington are filled by Torrington residents, the remainder (45 percent or so) are filled by people from outside of the City.

**ZONING**

The City of Torrington is about 40 square miles in size. The City has been divided into 15 zoning districts to regulate land-uses. About 10 percent (about 2,500 acres) of the City is zoned for business land-uses, while 90 percent (about 22,880 acres) is zoned for residential land-uses.



Big Y Plaza (above); Conservation subdivision (below)



Preserving Open Space and Farms