

## Life Along the Connecticut River: 1600-1800

The early days of our country were shaped by the early European settlers who landed in coastal towns and cities and then found their way inland. The Connecticut River Valley was among the first inland places settled because the River provided a natural highway for settlers to explore. In addition, the soil in the Valley was much better for farming than much of New England. This meant that the Valley was settled very early in New England's history. These factors set the stage for a fascinating opportunity to gain insight into how early settlers lived and died over three centuries ago in our communities.

This seminar will explore life along the Connecticut River Valley during the colonial period - from 1600 to 1800. The CT River Valley originates just north of VT and NH and travels south through Massachusetts and CT to where it empties into Long Island Sound.



*William Pynchon*

Founder of Springfield

The format of the class will be the familiar "presentation and discussion" widely used in LIR. Members of the seminar will be asked to read some collateral material and prepare a presentation on some aspect of life in the time and place we are studying. Technical assistance will be provided if needed for presentations.

We suggest two books as resources: "Everyday Life in Early America" by David Freeman Hawke and "A History of the Connecticut River" by Wick Griswold (2012). We welcome suggestions of other books, videos, and articles.

In the ten weeks we have we will explore as many aspects of life in the CT River Valley as we can, including history, religion, politics, beliefs, entertainment and everyday life.

Some possible presentation topics include:

- Native Americans
- The Settlement of towns
- Education
- Commerce and Trade
- Occupations
- Governance
- Entertainment
- Slaves, classism, and prejudice
- Transportation
- Superstition and Folklore
- The Church
- Medicine and Health
- Food
- Writing and Literature
- Birth and Death
- The lives of children

Moderators:

Kay Klausewitz  
Jim Harvey

[kayklausewitz@gmail.com](mailto:kayklausewitz@gmail.com)  
[jimharvey293@gmail.com](mailto:jimharvey293@gmail.com)

781-248-5446  
413-259-5102