



Wethersfield Historical Society

Where history happens every day.

Connecticut State Prison in Wethersfield Scavenger Hunt

Directions: A dangerous criminal has escaped from the Connecticut State Prison! Search for clues in the following places in Wethersfield to decode the name of the escaped prisoner.

1. Solomon Welles House

220 Hartford Avenue

Over time, many different people worked at the Connecticut State Prison. In addition to guards, the prison also employed teachers, music directors, and librarians. The person in charge of the prison was called the warden.

Find the “Wethersfield Heritage Walk” sign and read it to discover which of the prison’s employees would have lived at the Solomon Welles House.

- If the prison wardens lived here, then the first letter is L
- If the prison librarians lived here, then the first letter is F
- If the prison music director lived here, then the first letter is M

2. State Prison Cemetery

Cove Park-State Street

Many individuals died inside the Connecticut State Prison and some of them are buried here in Wethersfield.

Find the “Wethersfield Heritage Walk” sign and learn more about the State Prison Cemeteries and the people buried there.

- If Prince Mortimer was a prisoner, then the second letter is Y
- If Prince Mortimer was a prison warden, then the second letter is R
- If Prince Mortimer established the second burial ground, then the third letter is A
- If Samuel Chamberlain established the second burial ground, then the third letter is D
- If prisoners’ graves were marked in the prison cemeteries, then the fourth letter is N
- If prisoners’ graves were unmarked in the prison cemeteries, then the fourth letter is I

3. Charles Hart Seed Company

304 Main Street

Local businesses sometimes employed prisoners. Prisoners would work in the Charles Hart Seed Company’s Cannery where they would use machetes to process melon seeds.

Find the “Wethersfield Heritage Walk” sign and learn more about Wethersfield’s seed companies.

- If Charles Hart Seed Company only sold melon seeds, then the fifth letter is C
- If Charles Hart Seed Company sold onion seeds too, then the fifth letter is A



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4. Griffith Academy

275 Main Street

In 1936, the Great Flood hit Wethersfield. The flood was so bad that 244 homes in Wethersfield were damaged, schools closed, and mail service stopped. The American Legion employed state prisoners to help with the restoration work that had to be completed after the Great Flood.

Visit Griffith Academy, which was owned by the American Legion in 1936.

- If this building is painted black, then the sixth letter is I
- If this building is painted white, then the sixth letter is S
- If this building is painted blue, then the sixth letter is B

5. Ancient Burying Ground & Village Cemetery

Numerous people who worked at the Connecticut State Prison were buried in Village Cemetery.

Find Ezra Hoskins's gravestone. Need help finding Ezra Hoskins's gravestone? Check out Wethersfield Historical Society's website: <https://www.wethersfieldhistory.org/burying-ground-digitization/>

- If Ezra Hoskins was killed by the prisoners, then the seventh letter is H
- If Ezra Hoskins died from Spanish Influenza, then the seventh letter is S

6. Joseph Webb House

211 Main Street

Newgate, Connecticut's first state prison, was located in East Granby. Originally, prisoners at Newgate were kept in cells located in underground tunnels. When the state decided to replace Newgate with a modern prison, Judge Martin Welles convinced the state to move its prison to Wethersfield. The state prison opened in Wethersfield in 1827.

Visit the Joseph Webb House, which was owned by Martin Welles in 1827.

- If this house has no windows directly above the front door, then the eighth letter is A
- If this house has one window directly above the front door, then the eighth letter is E

7. Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department

171 Main Street

Overcrowding in the Connecticut State Prison led to disaster in 1960 when 400 prisoners rioted. This riot, the biggest rebellion in the prison's history, was so bad that the Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department and the Connecticut National Guard were called in to help restore order.

Find the white sign on the Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department Building.

- If the Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department was founded before the state prison opened in Wethersfield, then the ninth letter is R
- If the Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department was founded after the state prison opened in Wethersfield, then the ninth letter is L



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8. Former Sacred Heart Church

32 Garden Street

Protestant and Catholic chaplains were hired to provide religious services to the prisoners. Father John T. Lynch served as both the Catholic chaplain at the Connecticut State Prison and as the first resident pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Wethersfield's first Catholic Church.

Visit the building in which Sacred Heart Church was located when Father Lynch preached there.

- If the doors of this building are black, then the tenth letter is D
- If the doors of this building are red, then the tenth letter is M

9. Franklin Clark House

91 Main Street

Thanks to the state prison, Wethersfield was one of the first Connecticut towns to acquire electricity and running water. These modern amenities made Wethersfield a popular place to live. As a result, beginning around 1910, Albert Hubbard would build over 200 modern homes in Wethersfield.

Visit the Franklin Clark House, one of the homes built by Albert Hubbard.

- If this house has a front porch, then the eleventh letter is A
- If this house does not have a porch, then the eleventh letter is O

10. Martin Wells House

646 Wolcott Hill Road

One of the state prison's most famous visitors was Alexis de Tocqueville. Tocqueville was writing a book on prisons in the United States and considered the Wethersfield prison to be among one of the best prisons that he viewed.

Visit the house where Tocqueville stayed when he visited Wethersfield.

- If this house has one chimney, then the twelfth letter is N
- If this house has two chimneys, then the twelfth letter is D

Write the Prisoner's Name Here:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12