

# W elcome to Wilton

*Population: approximately 16,000*

## History

Wilton's earliest residents were migratory Indians who trekked along the old Paugusset or Berkshire Trail, which today is U.S. Route 7.

In 1965, a group of settlers from Windsor led by Richard Olmstead and Nathaniel Ely purchased land from Roger

Ludlow, who had earlier bought the land from an Indian Sachem. Called Norwalk, it included Wilton and parts of New Canaan and Westport and extended "as far as a man could walk from sunrise to sunset," according to the original deed.

Although this region was settled in 1651 as part of Norwalk, the first dwelling

house was built in 1706. Originally, Wilton grew from a small settlement of farmers who had established "The Wilton Society" as a northern band of their Norwalk church parish. The village of Wilton with parish privileges was granted by the General Assembly on May 12, 1726. The Town of Wilton was incorporated by the Assembly as a separate body politic on May 2, 1802.

In the American Revolution, 223 offi-

cers and soldiers who lived in Wilton fought against the British. The enemy troops marched through Wilton in April 1777 along the Ridgefield Road following the Battle of Ridgefield, ransacking a number of homes and demanding to be given supplies and provisions.

In 1852, the steam engine brought wealthy summer visitors, who sought the beautiful natural surroundings of bucolic hills, streams and ponds. After World War II, Wilton began the steady transformation from modest town to the premier residential community it is today.

## Geography

An active, friendly town, Wilton combines a New England, country atmosphere with in-town sophistication. Situated along the Norwalk River Valley, the residents of Wilton find the destinations of Fairfield and Westchester Counties as well as New York City easily accessible by road or rail. To the south, the Route 7 connector links Wilton to both the Merritt Parkway and Interstate 95. Wilton Main and Cannondale railroad stations provide Metro North trains to Grand Central Station just 78 minutes away. Located in from the coast, the beaches and marinas of Long Island Sound are only a 20 minute drive away.

## Government

First Selectman, Open Town Meeting

## Culture, the Arts, & Heritage

Wilton's accessibility is a part of its cultural horizon. A half hour's drive can take residents to events in towns all around them and easily beyond to New York. The other part of the cultural scene lies right at



*Wilton Center Gazebo*

home. This aspect is just as satisfying because it goes right to the heart of the reasons people choose Wilton in the first place: community involvement, hometown effort and neighborliness.

Music is heard at an intimate level. The Wilton Congregational Church sponsors a chamber music series featuring renowned soloists and groups. The Wilton Library offers noon concerts in its entrance courtyard.

Artists have always thrived amidst the quiet beauty of Wilton. Today, the Wilton Arts Council sponsors art exhibits of new and established artists and has special programs for its membership. Wilton has an Arts and Crafts Society, also.

The impulse to create in the rural privacy of home is exemplified by the Weir Farm Historic Site. Weir Farm is the only national park in Connecticut and the only park in the country dedicated to an American painter. American Impressionist Julian Alden Weir, 1852-1919, lived and painted on this upland farm. Retreating from his New York studios, he spent summers here hosting his circle of fellow art luminaries: Childe Hassam, J.H. Twachtman, John Singer Sargent and Albert Pinkham Ryder. The farm is restored and open to the public. Take a walk through the little lanes and fields or through the woods to Weir Pond. Even today, it is very clear why an artist would settle in Wilton. The Weir Farm Heritage Trust sponsors art classes, lectures, exhibitions and a visiting artist program. Every year an Artist-in-Residence at Weir Farm has an opportunity to work and absorb the inspiration of the place. A show of the resulting artwork is held at the close of the residency period.

Community theater thrives at the Wilton Playshop and the Wilton's Children's Theater. This is hometown Wilton at its best, drawing on and devel-

oping real local talent for the pleasure of a local audience.

### *Faith*

Wilton's history of faith shows in both the architecture and the denominations of its places of worship. From the colonial Wilton Congregational Church to the Quaker Meeting House, the 150 year



*The Wilton Playhouse on Lover's Lane*

old Zion's Hill United Methodist Church to the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, religion in Wilton comes very much in a variety of distinctions and expressions.

### *Recreation*

Wilton is blessed with ideal outdoor and indoor recreational facilities. A variety of seasonal programs and activities for all ages are offered through the Wilton Family Y and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Throughout the year ongoing programs are offered in activities such as: floor hockey, basketball, ballet, golf, horse-

back riding, baseball, racquetball and swimming lessons, as well as school vacation camps and summer day camps. Seniors and adults participate in aerobics, volleyball, country dancing, painting, softball leagues and guided day tours to places of interest. The Wilton Family Y has a wide range of health, wellness and recreational programs for its members and area residents. Aquatic activities from swimming to scuba diving are offered in the 25-yard indoor pool or the 50 meter indoor/outdoor pool. A spring fed lake is also available for aquatics and boating activities. Other offerings include a full gymnasium, adult fitness center, racquetball, squash, and paddle tennis courts.

Wilton is also home to the Nature Conservancy and Woodcock Nature Center, which hold summer camps for ages 4-10, special programs and walking trails. The Norwalk River meanders through Wilton and attracts many local fishermen (especially in April for the opening of trout season).

Merwin Meadows, situated in the heart of Wilton, features a swimming pool, picnicking and playground area. There are 10 playgrounds and 8 passive parks in the town, which offer scenic hiking and jogging trails. Weir Farm is Connecticut's only National Park and the only one dedicated to an American artist. Visitors can tour Weir's studio and walk through 57 acres of rolling meadows and woods, historic farmhouses and barns.

Wilton has 23 private clubs offering tennis and swimming and a country club. Town recreational facilities include 8 lighted tennis courts and numerous playing fields.

### *Parks*

- Bradley Park - 83 acres
- Cherry Lane - 50 acres
- Horseshoe - 6 acres

Quarry Head - 32 acres state owned parcel, which includes one of Wilton's notable old quarries.

Schenck's Island Park - 13 acres

Town Forest - 188 acres is Wilton's largest park

Wild Duck Preserve -16 acres

Weir Farm - 57 acres

## Education

Wilton enjoys a school system that is supported by about two thirds of its total budget. Community involvement plays a strong role in all aspects of town life, no less in the school system. The Wilton Educational Foundation founded in the early 1990s attempts to rally community support and resources for the sole benefit of the district schools. Quality education is a number one priority in Wilton. Class size is kept low at all of the schools, holding steadily in the 19-21 range. A full spring, fall and winter program of adult education classes are held after hours at the Wilton High School.

## Public Schools

Wilton has three Elementary Schools

**Ina E. Driscoll School** – Grades K-2

**Tilford W. Miller School** – Grades K-2

**Cider Mill School** – Grades 3-5

The Ina E. Driscoll School and Tilford W. Miller School have been connected to serve kindergarten through third grade. These schools each have about 600 students. The Cider Mill School has roughly 664 children in the fourth and fifth grades.

Wilton has one Middle School – Grades 6-8. The **Middlebrook School** is sixth through eighth grade middle school with 743 students.

Wilton has one high school – Grades 9-12. The modern **Wilton High School** on Route 7, built at a cost of \$15,000,000 has superb facilities including a moun-

taineering climbing wall. There are 26 interscholastic athletic teams, advanced placement courses in English, American History, science and mathematics, award-winning orchestra, band and chorus training and extracurricular activities that run the gamut from Russian club to debate team. Foreign languages, computers, art and gifted student programs begin in the

are located close by in neighboring towns. St. Luke's in New Canaan, Fairfield Prep in Fairfield, Greens Farms Academy in Westport and the Wooster School and two parochial high schools are available in Danbury.

## Nursery Schools

Friends Nursery School

Georgetown Early Learning Center

Homespun Learning Environment Ltd.

Landmark Academy

Mitten Hill Nursery School

Montessori School

Montessori-Town & Country School

Wilton Children's Center

Wilton Community Nursery School Inc.

Wilton Congregational Day School

## Day Care Services

Day Care Services

Georgetown Early Learning Center

Homespun Learning

Environment Ltd.

Hometown Nannies Inc.

Nannie Source Inc.

Tuesday's Child

Wilton Children's Center

Wilton Montessori

Zion's Hill Methodist Church

For more information about Wilton's Schools including:

- Faculty experience
- Faculty salaries
- School registration
- Class sizes
- SAT scores

Please contact the Wilton Board of Education at [www.wilton.k12.ct.us](http://www.wilton.k12.ct.us)



Historic Cannondale

middle school and even at the elementary school level. Over 89 percent of graduating seniors go on to four-year colleges and another 5 percent go to two year schools for a nearly complete college destination rate. The average number of merit scholar finalists over the last ten years is 6.3.

## Private Schools

Landmark Academy serves children from preschool through the middle school years.

Our Lady of Fatima is a Catholic school for students from kindergarten to eighth.

Other private educational institutions