

# Welcome to Shelburne



You are standing at the crossroads of Shelburne's past and future. The area was settled by American colonists in 1768, five years after Britain's victory in the French and Indian War. They were not, however, the first settlers here. Native American arrow heads and spear points recovered near Shelburne Pond date back as far as 7,000 B.C.!

The area's rich soil, plentiful game, and sheltered bay made Shelburne an ideal place for settlement. The first industries were built at Shelburne Falls, which powered several mills. On Lake Champlain, Shelburne Shipyard began constructing steamships in 1825. A dozen were constructed there, including the *Ticonderoga*, which was moved to the Shelburne Museum in 1955.

The town's landscape has changed considerably since 1768. The first settlers cut down the forests to produce potash, which was used to manufacture soap and glass. Later, Merino wool became a valued agricultural product. By 1840, sheep outnumbered people 16-1! Their grazing turned the countryside into rolling fields with very few trees.

Shelburne evolved with the advent of the railroad in 1849. Wool production moved to the western states and dairy farming began to dominate the landscape here and elsewhere in Vermont. Grazing cows require less land than sheep, so some fallow fields reverted to forests. The woodlots and dairy barns you see throughout the area are vestiges of those times.

Following World War II, much of the land along U.S. Route 7 was developed into neighborhoods, industrial parks, and retail centers as Chittenden County's population boomed and its economy shifted from agriculture to manufacturing and services.

As you travel through town look for hints of historic Shelburne. You can find stone walls in forests that were once fields, steamboat wrecks on the bottom of Shelburne Bay, 19th century farmhouses, and many other things that reveal the past. With these changes in mind, what do you think Shelburne will look like in 100 years?



Shelburne has many parks and trails as well as access points for Lake Champlain, the LaPlatte River, and Shelburne Pond.



"Shelburne Village, 1955" by Sheel Gardner Anand. Oil painting completed in 2004. Image used with artist's permission. For further information, see [www.sheel.net](http://www.sheel.net) or call 800-734-3350.

