



CT State Library

Office of the State Librarian

Report to the State Library Board

May 24, 2021

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State Librarian

This report is prepared bi-monthly in conjunction with the regular meetings of the Connecticut State Library Board. The report, which will be included in the minutes of the May 24, 2021 meeting of the Board, covers the period of March 23, 2021 through May 21, 2021.

Office of the State Librarian

1. The State Library Building **reopened for researchers** on May 17, 2021. Members of the public may book appointments Monday through Friday to visit the Government Information, Law and Legislation, History and Genealogy, and Archives research areas. We continue to observe social distancing and cleaning protocols for visitors and staff. Assuming infection rates remain low and vaccinations continue, we anticipate being able to expand our availability to outside researchers in the near future. Due to the self-guided nature of the Museum of Connecticut History, it remains closed for now. Staff continue to receive their own vaccinations; teleworking continues to be a regular part of work rotations as much as possible as well.

The Appropriations Committee submitted its **proposed budget** on April 21, 2021. Although it retains the Governor's proposals to annualize a \$53,749 FY21 recession and a \$49,800 savings from a proposed move of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH), the potential \$100,000 cut to borrowIT CT was restored. Retaining those state funds would also preserve our matching federal dollars. I have been in communication with fiscal officers at the Department of Administrative Services and the Office of Policy and Management; we continue to monitor the budget process and its implications for State Library operations.

Connecticut received **\$2,775,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** to benefit the library community. Key spending priorities for these funds are: addressing digital inequities, pandemic emergency relief, and supporting library services to their communities. Through the Division of Library Development (DLD), the State Library is 1) implementing a subgrant program for CT public libraries for use toward the key spending priority areas; 2) establishing a Digital Navigator Pilot in partnership with CT Education Network and the CT Office of Broadband Policy; and 3) expanding workforce development

database offerings available through researchIT CT to every CT resident with a library card. We are thrilled to continue the good work first made possible through the CARES Act and Governor Lamont's Everybody Learns Initiative.

Since our last meeting, I have concluded a series of **virtual roundtables** with members of the Connecticut Library Association. During National Library Week, I participated in the American Library Association's **Virtual Advocacy Day**, joining other CT librarians in conversation with Rep. DeLauro's, Rep. Hayes', and Sen. Murphy's offices. I also presented the **Opening Keynote** for the Connecticut Library Association's Virtual Annual Meeting.

Unit Activities

Programs & Trainings

The State Library's "Digging Into History: WWI Trench Restoration" project, spearheaded by Christine Pittsley, received a 2021 **Award of Merit** from the Connecticut League of History Organizations. Preparations are underway to continue this groundbreaking project again in the summer of 2022.

Public Records staff presented **records management training** as part of the **Connecticut Town Clerks' Association** Spring Conference on April 22nd. The webinar was attended by over 200 clerks and assistant clerks. In addition, staff presented records management training to over 350 municipal employees on April 28th. These periodic training webinars are sponsored by the **Connecticut Conference of Municipalities**.

Kym Powe presented **From Diversity to Inclusion: How to Audit Your Collection and Why**. The presentation had 92 attendees and very positive evaluations. Attendees said, "I appreciate the wonderful work being done on diversity and inclusivity. I get so bogged down in my work that I forget to take advantage of all the CT State Library has to offer" and "Please consider using this webinar in graduate programs in Library [Science], whether public or school".

Dawn La Valle, in partnership with Peggy Cadigan of the New Jersey State Library, spoke at **two international virtual programs**: the "Future of Libraries Beyond Four Walls" for the American Embassy, New Delhi, India and "Remote Services in the Era of Covid" at the Nigerian Library Association's Evidence Based Library Services Conference.

Ashley Sklar and Marina Marmolejo, Program Manager of UniteCT for the Department of Housing, partnered on an information session for libraries to learn more about the [UniteCT program](#), which provides \$235 million **in rental and utility payment assistance** to qualified Connecticut households financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The session included an overview of the program, eligibility across communities, and the online application portal with resources available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Staff from the Division of Library Development also presented:

- A workshop explaining new reporting requirements for the Summer Reading Program, which is migrating **from a quantitative output to an outcome-based report initiative**.
- A six-week **Transforming Teen Services- Computational Thinking** module.

- Verena Getahun from the Minnesota State Library, presented **Community Asset Mapping for the Curious**, the first of several planned community engagement sessions.
- **Preparing for the Next Wave of Angry and Argumentative Library Customers** with Andrew Sanderbeck. This workshop had close to 100 registrations, and the recording of the workshop has had approximately 300 views to date.
- A new virtual **Hands-On Legal Reference for Public Librarians workshop** was held April 28, 2021, with plans for this to be repeated.
- Gail Hurley supported libraries by providing resources and programming opportunities for their communities during Money Smart Week April 10-17, and throughout **Financial Literacy Month**.

State Archivist Lizette Pelletier and State Librarian Deborah Schander participated in a conversation for the **March Third Thursday program** which occurred on the fourth Thursday of the month. The event was broadcast live on Facebook.

Assistant State Archivist Allen Ramsey moderated the Council of State Archivists webinar **Marketing Yourself as an Archival Worker** on April 22.

Patrick Smith virtually presented the new **Connecticut's Apollo Space Program Moon Rocks** program to 50 sixth grade students in Newtown. The program also highlighted the state's contribution to the US space program in general. He also offered two **Hiking through History** in-person presentations: Cedar Hill Cemetery (20 students & 10 adults) and the Bolton-to-Lebanon Town Green "Rochambeau Revolutionary Trail" (25 students & 10 adults.)

Resource Updates

Sarah Morin and Lisa Lew have processed 14 cubic feet of the New Haven County Court files from 1700-1749 as work continues on the **New Haven County Court Records – National Historic Publications and Records Commission [NHPRC] Grant Project**. Todd Gabriel has scanned 22 court cases (approximately 160 pages) involving African Americans and Indigenous persons for the Connecticut Digital Archive. A [subject guide and blog](#) for the court records were published on the State Library website, To date, three blog posts have been published, and these have been promoted on Facebook and Twitter.

2. **findIT CT, the Statewide Library Catalog**, is coming up on its 5-year anniversary in May. findIT contains the holdings of 370 libraries and contains more than 25 million records. Gail Hurley is the findIT coordinator and works with consortia and standalone libraries in CT to help them update their holdings in the catalog. All the consortia networks as well as some individual libraries have updated their holdings in the first few months of 2021, with more being added on an ongoing basis.

The Preservation Office continues to **scan new content from the library collection** and preserve digitized materials in the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA). Recent additions of note include the [Good Will Star](#) (1903-1924), a publication of Hartford's Good Will Club, and the [Connecticut Wildlife Conservation Bulletin](#) (1955-1972).

The [Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project](#) (CDNP) has added **two new historic newspaper titles** to the Library of Congress' Chronicling America database: the [Litchfield County Post](#) (1826-1829) and the [Litchfield Enquirer](#) (1829-1866). With the addition of these titles, Connecticut coverage in Chronicling America has been expanded back an additional 50 years. According to Connecticut State Historian Walter W. Woodward, the *Litchfield Enquirer* was, in many ways, the paper of record in western Connecticut during one of the most significant state transitions, the period in which Connecticut moved from being an agrarian-based society suffering severe outmigration to the time when it was one of the nation's most formidable industrial giants.

CDNP has also digitized additional issues of the **Italian language newspaper** [La Sentinella](#), completing the full run of this title. Now all known issues, covering 1920-1948, are available on Chronicling America. Project Coordinator Nicole Besseghir presented an exploration of the three Italian language newspapers digitized by CDNP at the May 20 Third Thursday.

Stephen Slovasky, as a member of the Connecticut State Colleges and University's (CSCU) **PRIMO VE Assessment Task Force**, participated in a discussion with other schools about choosing and implementing PRIMO VE, ExLibris's alternative discovery interface. CSCU is considering replacing the current Primo "classic" with PRIMO VE. There are advantages to the new interface, including better and simpler local customization of Primo views, and real-time synchronization of PRIMO VE information with Alma updates.

Outreach and Engagement

Archives staff and WWI Project Manager Christine Pittsley met with Diane Weaver-Dunn, executive director of **Connecticut Radio Information System [CRIS]** on April 29 to discuss CRIS' **Revolutionary War Battlefield** grant proposal to the **National Park Service [NPS]** and participation in Christine's **Washington-Rochambeau Trail project** with the NPS.

Kym Powe and Ashley Sklar have put together **CT Reads**, a year-long partnership initiative to promote reading and connection built on the one state, one read concept. CT Reads will be an annual reading initiative that uses a rotating community committee structure to select 4 book titles (1 main and 3 short list) each calendar year for three age groups: children (ages 8-12), teens (ages 13-18), and adults. CT Reads is modeled on [All Iowa Reads \(AIR\)](#) by the Iowa Center for the Book and the State Library of Iowa. The Connecticut State Library's (CSL) Division of Library Development (DLD) aims to partner with the Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC), CT Humanities Center for the Book, and the CT Association of School Librarians (CASL) and others to develop and launch this new program.

In April, DLD launched a new email initiative called **DLD Directors' Notes**. This bi-annual email is specifically for library directors and is modeled on the new director welcome letter launched earlier this year. In this email, there will always be an overview of the core resources and support available to library directors through CSL DLD. In addition, we aim to share timely, relevant news, updates, articles, and ideas that might feed and fuel the library work in Connecticut.

In response to interest expressed by Justice Ecker and Judge Cohn at the last State Library Board meeting, the State Librarian has begun a series of conversations with the Law reference staff, Judicial library administration, and members of the judiciary and their staffs on **the relationship between the State Library and the Judicial Law Libraries**. Shared areas of interest include: ongoing training, decreasing budgets, the availability of legal materials in print and electronic format, outreach to other state agencies, and more.

Kathy Makover continued to serve on the **Notary Law Committee** convened by the Secretary of the State to draft legislation to update the statutes and provide for electronic and remote notarizations, fast becoming essential in today's world.