



Report to the State Library Board

July 26, 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 July 26, 2021 meeting of the Board, covers the period of May 25, 2021 through July 23, 2021.

Office of the State Librarian

Like many other state agencies, the State Library and Museum of Connecticut History **fully reopened to the public** on July 1. Under Department of Administrative Services (DAS) policy, patrons continue to wear masks during their visits, and staff continue to wear them in all common areas. Our new public hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Saturday hours were suspended in 2020 due to lack of funding, and while we hope to resume some weekend hours in the future, cost remains a barrier.

State Library projects continue to receive **recognition from the professional community**. In addition to the Digging Into History project winning a second recent award (2021 Award of Excellence from the American Association for State and Local History's Leadership in History Awards), Connecticut's State Historical Records Advisory Board (CT SHRAB), chaired by State Archivist Lizette Pelletier, is the 2021 recipient of the Council of State Archivists - National Historical Publications and Records Commission's State Historical Advisory Board Award of Merit. The CT SHRAB was chosen to receive this award for overall excellence, as well as for the Travelling Archivist Program and the 5-part digitization workshop series produced with Conservation Connection (CC) which was offered via Zoom due to COVID-19.

Numerous recent events have created an opportunity to re-envision operations at the **Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH)**: 1) The state's final budget for FY22-23 cut nearly \$50,000 from the LBPH budget, leaving us unable to continue current LBPH operations at the Rocky Hill location; 2) The retirement of the unit's long-time director left us with a significant vacancy; and 3) recent changes to the federal program mean those with reading disabilities are now eligible for the services LBPH provides. Taking these and related factors into account, it was clear that, physically and operationally, the best fit for LBPH's new home is within the Division of Library Development (DLD) and at the Middletown Library Service Center (MLSC). This transition

will allow us to not only realize the savings necessary, but also build upon existing synergies and service missions between LBPH and DLD including readers' advisory, early childhood and K-12 literacy, and support for CT's veterans' community. We are in the process of hiring a new MLSC/LBPH Unit Head, which fills not only the leadership vacancy at LBPH but also a long-vacant opening at MLSC. Dawn La Valle has been overseeing the transition process for both departments, and we are coordinating with the Office of Policy Management (OPM) and Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to finalize details about the location move, which we anticipate happening later this calendar year. We also continue conversations with OPM and DAS about future uses for the Rocky Hill location which could benefit other State Library departments.

Special Project Brief

Conservation of the Royal Charter and Other Key Documents

Connecticut's Royal Charter has been on public display since about 1843. It hung on the wall of the Secretary of the State's Office, first in the Old State House then in the Capitol building, from 1878 until it and its storage vault were relocated to Memorial Hall in the Museum of Connecticut History in 1910. The document was originally in three separate sheets joined by a silk cord that was encased in wax with the King's seal. The three sheets were initially framed together, one above the other in a mahogany frame. In about 1850, they were transferred to an oak veneered frame made from a piece of the still-standing Charter Oak. When the document was moved to the new capitol building, it was placed in the current frame constructed all or partially with wood from the fallen Charter Oak. It appears that sometime prior to this was when the three parchment sheets were glued together as they currently are.

The Charter has been exposed to ultraviolet (UV) light for most of that time which has caused it to fade. In addition, in 1878, while being prepared for the new frame, the framer placed the parchment on a stretcher and wet it with water to "erase the wrinkles." This caused additional fading of the ink. An engrossing clerk in the Secretary of the State's office retouched the damaged areas with India ink. The Hartford Courant, in an opinion piece at the time, decried the action, asking "was there ever in a public record office, or in a civilized country, a more offensive act of vandalism than the unauthorized 'retouching' an original document in the state archives?" Since its arrival at the State Library, the Charter has received conservation treatment only once. In 1974, staff from the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) came to the State Library and spent a number of days treating the Charter as well as the Fundamental Orders of 1639, the 1818 Constitution, and the 1965 Constitution most likely in advance of an exhibit on the state's constitutional history in the Museum of Connecticut History. In 1988, NEDCC field staff reassessed the document and submitted a proposal for additional treatment. Unfortunately, money budgeted for this type of project was diverted for agency staff computers. In light of the document's 350th anniversary in 2012, former State Librarian Ken Wiggin worked with Preservation staff to try to have the document sent up to NEDCC to be conserved and digitized. Unfortunately, once again timing and funds prevented the project from going forward.

In early 2018, Ken approached the State Archives staff about getting the Charter and possibly other key documents conserved and digitized. A NEDCC staff member visited the State Library in March 2018. Unlike 1974, the state's procurement processes have become much more complicated, at first requiring the State Library have the conservation work go out to bid. Eventually, Ken was able to get a sole source contract waiver to deal exclusively with NEDCC. Next, staff ran into issues with insurance coverage under the state's risk management policy, contracting with an appraiser for an updated valuation of the Charter, the state's copy of the Proposed Twelve Amendments to the US Constitution from 1789, and an 1878 map of the United States and the writing of a sole source contract with state procurement. Just as things looked like they might fall into place, Covid-19 occurred. Now that the pandemic has eased and non-staff can enter the building, John A. Woods, a respected documents appraiser, came to the State Library on June 21. He spent the morning under the watchful eye of Edmond Andros' portrait in Memorial Hall while examining the Charter and the other two documents. We hope to have the new evaluations for the documents by mid-July. In the meantime, the State Archivist is working on the contracting language, arrangements for transport up to NEDCC's facility in Massachusetts, and a State Police security escort during transport. The current target date to send the documents is in mid-September.

Unit Activities

Programs & Trainings

The **Historic Documents Preservation Program** provides funding for records preservation and management projects for the 169 municipalities and the State Library. The program is funded through towns' land recording fees, with 70% returned to the towns in grants and 30% expended by the agency. On June 30th, the agency awarded a total of \$727,000 in **FY22 Cycle 1 Grants** to 114 towns in the amounts of \$5,500, \$7,500 and \$10,500. Kathy Makover has been processing FY21 amendments and reports and FY22 applications and contracts.

Municipal and probate vaults must meet the State Library's administrative regulations and receive agency approval for renovations or new construction. During this period, Kathy Makover worked with the Town of Chaplin regarding the installation of a new heating/air conditioning system to improve the long-term preservation of the town's essential records. Final approval was issued on May 18. She continued work with several other towns currently in various stages of vault planning or construction.

Maria Bernier and Dawn LaValle helped public library directors develop eligible applications for the Federally-funded **American Rescue Plan Act grant program**. They offered four drop-in sessions to answer questions and help directors develop their grant ideas, and then reviewed and approved applications from 153 libraries for a total of \$1,898,464 in grants. All information about the program is maintained on the [ARPA Grants LibGuide](#).

The Division of Library Development completed a **virtual site visit** from the **Institute for Museum and Library Services** (IMLS) that occurs every five years and received a

positive response to our work. Madison Bolls, a Senior Program Officer with the IMLS said of the CT State Library program: “Overall, the LSTA program is exceptionally well-organized and well-run. The administrative and financial processes are in order, and certain elements, like your commitment to building the capacity of your sub-awardees through pre-award counseling and keeping thorough [Library Services and Technology Act] procedures and handbooks, could serve as a model for other states. I commend you and your staff for the attention to federal funding requirements and best practices. I have no recommendations at this time.”

Maureen Sullivan led a 3-part **Lead Your Library series**. 62 librarians from academic, public, school, and special libraries attended to: have a greater understanding of the CT Vision for Resource Sharing Tool Kit; understand the importance of strategic foresight and vision to the future of libraries and to their own effective leadership; have more confidence in their ability to lead transformative change, and more. One participant shared, “The topic of futures in libraries is incredibly timely and I am very happy this series was offered. Maureen and Dawn are excellent leaders and facilitators, particularly on the topic of futures.”

DLD is now focusing on the **CT Vision for Resource Sharing Pilot**. Seven libraries representing academic, public, and special libraries are currently engaged in a 3-session immersive pilot which provides an overview of the CT Vision for Resource Sharing and the Resource Sharing Scenarios and CT Vision goals. Participants are engaging in the tools of Strategic Foresight to understand the scenarios and their possibilities. Feedback and summary conversations will be compiled to present a comprehensive report to the Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development (ACLPD).

Kym Powe created and presented a now nationally recognized workshop “**From Diversity to Inclusion: How to Audit Your Collection and Why?**” which taught librarians the difference between diversity and inclusion, and how to perform a diversity audit, with a spreadsheet template. The workshop was so well received that Kym was asked to do it again for the Wallingford School system, Tennessee public librarians, Ohio public librarians, and it has been accepted for the New England Library Association annual conference.

All CT Reads is a new year-long initiative being developed to promote lifelong reading, learning, and connection that uses a rotating community committee structure to select three main book titles and 3 shortlist book titles, each calendar year for three age groups: children (ages 8-12), teens (ages 13-18), and adults. In addition to the books, All CT Reads provides a supported programmatic structure built around the titles with room for individuality and creativity. The program is a partnership with the Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC), CT Humanities Center for the Book, and the CT Association of School Librarians (CASL) and others.

DLD hosted two further programs in May:

- **Family Homelessness and Connecticut Libraries** was presented by Vikki C. Terrile, MSLS, MA, and introduced participants to family homelessness in the United States, specifically family homelessness in Connecticut, and how libraries can support children and families in homeless situations.

- Melissa Marshall, a Connecticut attorney nationally known for her expertise in disability civil rights law and her bias awareness workshops, presented “**Accessibility is More Than a Ramp: Reducing and Interrupting Disability Bias in the Library.**”

The application for the **next board grant** from the **National Historical Publications and Records Commission** (NHPRC) was submitted to Grants.gov on June 9. CT SHRAB plans to expand its regrant program from incorporated cultural heritage organizations to community-based archives such as historic African American churches and religious organizations to assist them in caring for and providing access to their collections. The board also requested regrant funds to assist incorporated cultural heritage institutions to create subject guides to black, indigenous, and people of color collections/items in their archives and provide them training that addresses the language of archival description, identifying inherent biases in archival appraisal, and making archives more inclusive and representative of each town’s communities.

The new **Hiking Through History program**, with 30 participants, focused on Norwich’s Native American story at Yantic Falls State Historic Site, the Uncas gravesite, Royal Mohican Burial Ground and several Thames River waterfront sites. Planning is underway for an African American fresh-air venue and a Judicial Branch/Old State House collaboration linking sites between downtown Hartford and the Museum of Connecticut History.

Resource Updates

The State Archives submitted a **Congressionally Directed Spending Funding Request of \$948,800** on June 6 to Senators Blumenthal and Murphy. The proposed project, *Planning to Preserve Connecticut’s Digital Government History* would support CSL and Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA), working with Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology (BEST) to expand and improve the automatic digital connection required to transfer essential long-term and historically significant digital records from state agencies to a secure digital repository certified as meeting digital preservation standards. Allen Ramsey and Barbara Austen spearheaded the effort to develop and submit the request with approximately ten days’ notice.

Allen Ramsey and Deborah Schander met with DAS BEST staff on June 17 to discuss the **State Archives’ IT Capitol Investment Fund submission** to obtain funding for managing closed state employee email accounts and to create a secured digital preservation repository for confidential and restricted records. A follow up meeting with Lizette Pelletier and Barbara Austen was held on June 22. Based on the advice given at the initial meeting, Allen is working to narrow the scope of the project.

Allen Ramsey, Elise Marzik, and Barbara Austen are working on an **electronic records policy** and held review discussions with key stakeholders from DAS/BEST on May 10, June 4, and June 9. The new policy will govern all digital imaging and electronic records management and preservation projects carried out by executive branch state agencies and municipalities. They are continuing to work on the companion **electronic records standards document**.

We successfully closed FY21 having expended \$574,533.97, or 99.99%, of the **legal/legislative library materials** allocation.

Recent Archives accessions include:

- **Connecticut National Guard 59th Presidential Inauguration (PI59) mission photographs, 2021:** The photographs consist of digital images documenting the Connecticut National Guard PI59 missions during the 59th Presidential Inauguration both in Hartford and Washington, D.C. The images can be [viewed in CTDA](#).
- **Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH) patient records on microfilm, circa 1870-1948:** The State Archives acquired these records because CVH no longer had a working microfilm reader printer for its staff to be able to fulfill records requests.
- **James F. Blesso papers, circa 1951-2010:** James F. Blesso was born in Hartford on April 17, 1927. James joined the Hartford Police Department in 1951 and rose to the rank of captain. At the end of his career with the Hartford Police Department he managed the Communications Division. James retired from the police department in 1976 and began working for the Connecticut Justice Commission as a grants administrator. James in 1979 became the Director of the newly established Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications. A priority of the office was the development and implementation of "Enhanced 911" (E-911) service throughout the State of Connecticut.
- **Dept. of Transportation training videos, circa 1980-1999:** Training videos from the Department of Transportation (DOT) training center that are both hard skills and soft skills. Also includes some homemade videos pertaining to the construction and upkeep of Bradley International Airport.

The **Office of the Public Records Administrator** continued work with municipalities and state agencies on government records retention, preservation, and management.

- The office issued the following **retention schedule updates:** Department of Public Health, Regulatory Branch – Drinking Water Section Schedule (DPH-07), two Series updated, effective 6/29/21.
- Elise Marzik continued to work directly with state agencies to update **agency-specific schedules**. She is currently managing the update process for seven agencies.
- LeAnn Burbank and Cherie Miles processed 277 municipal and 70 state **records disposition forms**.
- Elise Marzik created new state and municipal records disposition forms for an **electronic authorization process**. The new forms are replacing the hard copy mail-in system for records disposals and have been posted to the State Library website effective July 12th. As we transition to the electronic system, paper disposition forms are still being accepted.

Sarah Morin and Lisa Lew have processed 21 cubic feet of the **New Haven County, County Court files** from 1700-1749, 1750-1769 (partial), and 1770-1772. Todd Gabriel has scanned 68 court cases (approximately 436 pages) involving African American, Black, and Indigenous persons for the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA). Criteria for digitization of other selected cases was finalized in June. Barbara Austen has started creating metadata spreadsheets to upload the scanned documents that refer to African American, Black, or Indigenous people into the CTDA. Articles about the project were submitted to the New England Archivists (NEA) Newsletter and the Connecticut History Review. An article to the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Archivists and Archives of Color Quarterly Newsletter is in progress.

Discovery Services assembled a new electronic collection comprising all the titles from the **Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project (CDNP)**. A version of this electronic collection will reside in the CSCU (Connecticut State Colleges and Universities) instance of the Primo discovery interface.

The Cataloging Unit has continued reviewing and has begun processing the first batch of **former Special Collections books** recently assigned to the stacks and to the withdrawn collection by History and Genealogy librarians. Cataloging will in most cases provide original cataloging and reclassification from Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) to Library of Congress (LC) Classification. The Cataloging Unit will also advise on or defer to the Preservation Unit decisions on long-term conservation.

On March 25, 2020, the daily newspaper ***The Bristol Press-New Britain Herald*** began publication. William Anderson contributed cataloging records to the OCLC database describing the complete runs of the two Connecticut daily newspapers, *The New Britain Herald* and *The Bristol Press* that merged to form the new daily. He also cataloged the new publication into OCLC (Online Computer Library Center).

The vendor Newsbank provided CSL with hard drives containing digital images and metadata for 2019 for **six Connecticut newspapers**: *Connecticut Post*, *News-Times (Danbury, CT)*, *Greenwich Time*, *The Hour (Norwalk, CT)*, *The Bulletin (Norwich, CT)*, and *Stamford Advocate*. Kandace Yuen has been collaborating with Reference and CSL IT Support staff to determine usability of the files, where to store them, and how to make this data available to staff as well as in-house patrons.

With input from Collection Services and Reference staff, Jackie Bagwell developed a new, easier to use **online library card application form**. After the form went live into production in June 2021 we began to see an increase in the number of applications. Collection Services and Reference Service staff worked together to process 136 new CT State Library (CSL) card applications during May-June 2021. These cards provide our patrons with 24/7 remote access to many CSL and researchIT CT online databases.

Preservation Office & Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project (CDNP)

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:

- [Cuts and Fills](#) (1941-1959), a monthly newsletter published “by and for the Connecticut State Highway Department”
- [State of the Arts](#) (1981-1988), a quarterly newsletter published by the Connecticut Commission on the Arts
- [A Choice Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs](#) (1785), a hymnal compiled, edited, and published by Samson Occom (1723-1792), a Mohegan tribal leader and ordained Presbyterian minister

The [Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project](#) held **two Third Thursday talks** to promote recently digitized titles: “Ciao, Connecticut! Exploring Connecticut’s Italian Newspapers” presented by Project Coordinator Nicole Besseghir on May 20, 2021; and “Inquiring about the Enquirer: Historical Litchfield Newspapers and the CT Digital Newspaper Project” on June 24, 2021, with contributions from Project Coordinator Nicole Besseghir, Litchfield

Historical Society Archivist Linda Hocking, and Peter Vermilyea, Housatonic Valley Regional High School teacher and author of numerous books about Litchfield County.

The History and Genealogy unit completed a [new name index/database of Connecticut military service personnel](#) who served during World War II and the Korean conflict, which contains over 700 images.

The Division of Library Development (DLD) is working with Lyrasis and the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) on a new initiative called **the Palace Project**. In the coming months, the Palace app will replace the SimplyE app. This app will utilize the same open source software as SimplyE but will allow Lyrasis and DPLA to make changes and improvements to the platform in a much more efficient and responsive manner. The staff side of the program, Library Simplified, will remain the same for libraries so the 155 libraries that are already configured in the app will still have access to the circulation manager that they are familiar with. In conjunction with roll out of the new app, DPLA will begin to provide access to Amazon titles that were previously unavailable to libraries for purchase. The migration of RBdigital titles for hosting with DPLA will also be completed for the launch providing libraries and patrons access to an additional 3,000 titles in the Palace app from the Connecticut State Library.

In May, DLD rolled out **Learning Express Workforce Solutions** from EBSCO which was purchased with the recently authorized funds provided to the Connecticut State Library as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. It builds upon the Job & Career Accelerator database and additional features include: Occupational Test Preparation; Workplace Success Skills; Computer Skills; High School Equivalency; and Spanish-Language Resources.

Outreach and Engagement

LeAnn Burbank, a member of the **Town Clerk's Certification Committee**, proctored the Town Clerk Examination on June 3 at the Newington Town Hall.

Kevin Johnson gave several presentations:

- **William Webb** for the Hempsted House in New London. His presentation was recorded for their Juneteenth celebration.
- **Jordan Freeman** at McAlister Intermediate School in Suffield, CT. Attended by 100 5th grade students.
- **William Webb** at ACT (Arts at the Capitol Theater) Performing Arts Magnet High School in Willimantic, CT. 90 students attended. This was coordinated by Sarah Smith, NAACP Education Committee and Donna Dufresne, Chair, Windham NAACP Curriculum Committee.

Debra Pond, Nancy Lieffort, Allen Ramsey, and Damon Munz offered a **building/collection tour** to 15 Judicial law clerks. The Archives staff displayed a volume of State Library and Supreme Court building architectural drawings and photographs of external features of the building from the pictorial collections in the law reference reading room.

“Bridging Digital Divides during COVID-19: Findings from the 2020-2021 Connecticut State Library Digital Inclusion Survey” by Brian Real, PhD was published

online in Public Library Quarterly on June 23. This article presents findings from the 2020–2021 Connecticut State Library Digital Inclusion Survey. The primary purpose of this study was to determine what actions public libraries in Connecticut are already taking to meet the digital inclusion needs of their communities and what information and assistance they need to better meet these goals. However, since this study was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, the author customized numerous questions to focus on how public libraries have adjusted their operations when patrons have had limited access to library buildings.

DLD began implementing its partnership with the **National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA)** by jointly hosting a June 17, 2021 in-depth virtual training session on how to carry out a successful **Digital Navigator program**. The training included tools to map the digital divide on a granular level, tools to manage navigator outreach, ideas about new partnerships, the goals of data collection, and visualizations that can contribute to disseminating data analysis.

Dawn La Valle and Ashley Sklar established a new partnership with **Hartford Healthcare (HHC)**. DLD and HHC value partnering to ensure that health services and health information are accessible to all - addressing the healthcare and health literacy needs of the communities we are all serving. Currently, HHC is setting up COVID-19 mobile vaccination sites at CT libraries and conducting virtual or in-person COVID-19 vaccine information sessions with HHC providers. We are looking forward to developing an ongoing relationship with HHC beyond COVID-19, to continue engaging on removing barriers to healthcare that provides individuals with the care they want and need.

Jenny Groome was appointed to the **GODORT Government Information for Children Committee**. The Government Information for Children (GIC) Committee is a unit of the Government Documents Round Table (GODORT) of the American Library Association (ALA).

State Archivist Lizette Pelletier [presented](#) a **history of the Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut and the Public Records of the State of Connecticut series** along with editor Douglas Arnold on May 26 as part of the Connecticut Democracy Center series on Legislative Landmarks.

Lizette and Allen met on June 8 with the State Librarian, WWI Project Director Christine Pittsley, and Jennifer Tucker, Associate Professor of History of Science, Wesleyan University on the **State Library's possible contributions to a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)/Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded grant, involving Wesleyan University, the Science Museum London, and Sussex University, that would include historical research on the industrialization of the CT River Valley and links with slavery.**