

## **Report to the State Library Board**

November 28, 2022

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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 November 28, 2022 meeting of the Board, covers the period of September 20, 2022 through November 18, 2022.

### **Office of the State Librarian**

The biennial state budget process continues, and the State Library has finalized its submission to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). With limited exceptions, agencies were asked to not propose any increases to their budget lines; the State Library submitted a request to increase the CT Digital Library appropriation to reflect rising inflation costs there as well as proposed several options to better capture fees which support the Historic Documents Preservation Fund. OPM's work to prepare the budget on behalf of the Governor will continue through 2022.

In the past few months, I have continued to place an emphasis on building community partnerships. These efforts include attending the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) Fall Conference in October; this was my first opportunity to meet other State Librarians in person and resulted in many fruitful conversations. The first meeting of Connecticut's "America 250" Commission was November 18. The Commission is tasked with planning and supporting the state's celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026 and includes representatives from Connecticut Humanities, the State Library, Town Clerks Association, and many other state organizations. Earlier this year, I joined the Hartford Hospitality Task Force and continue to attend meetings on a monthly basis. This committee is comprised of representatives from many downtown Hartford businesses, hospitality entities, civic and promotional organizations, and city departments; the State Library's involvement in this group has already led to several opportunities to support culture and business in Hartford. The State Library has been invited to participate in this year's Red, White, and Blue Schools program, a K-12 civics education initiative of the Office of the Secretary of State, Department of Education, Democracy Center at the Old State House, and other state-wide organizations. This year's theme is Exploring Founding Documents of Government. A kick-off event was held on November 15, and State Library staff will be presenting a webinar on useful resources to support teachers in January.

Because even seemingly small changes can have a big impact, the Access Services unit is being renamed the Reference Services unit. This unit comprises three reference departments: Law & Legislative, Government Information, and History & Genealogy; these departments are the primary way many researchers interact with the State Library. While "access services" is a term historically used in many libraries, it often creates confusion for library patrons, and our intention is to describe the work of this unit more clearly to our visitors.

## Unit Activities

### Partnerships and Community Engagement

On October 6, the State Library was among **20 “Game Changer” honorees**, an initiative of *CT Explored* magazine celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The CT in WWI project, led by Christine Pittsley, continues in 2023 with a new “Digging Into History” archeological dig in Bolton. The project was also recently featured on *CT Insider*: <https://www.ctinsider.com/news/article/French-students-dig-Bolton-Revolutionary-War-17536436.php>.

As a member of the **Connecticut Statewide Digital Equity Planning Team**, Dawn LaValle attended the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) State Digital Equity Plan Workshop hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Teams from Maine, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, and Vermont, as well as representatives from the Federal Reserve Banks of Kansas City, New York, and Richmond, and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration received an overview of the Digital Equity Act (DEA), DEA Notice of Funding Opportunity statewide plan requirements, communities of practice, and aligning DEA and the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. States shared the work they are already doing, with Connecticut being noted for its Digital Navigators Pilot. The CT Statewide planning team will be interviewing project managers as well as beginning work on digital assets mapping.

CT Libraries & Partners for Digital Equity (CTLPDE), a project of the State Library, sponsored a **Digital Inclusion Week event** in the community room of the Hartford Public Library. The event featured Tracie D. Hall, the Executive Director of the American Library Association, who spoke on the crisis of information poverty and the goal of digital equity. Community voices were represented by Juan Fonseca Tapia, a neighborhood organizer with the Center for Leadership and Justice; Dr. Nasreen Al Omari, an East Hartford Adult Ed Instructor; Yadira Jeter, an East Hartford Works Career Navigator; Rafael Rodriguez-Cruz, a Greater Hartford Legal Aid attorney; Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services in the City of Norwalk; Homa Naficy, Executive Director of The American Place at the Hartford Public Library; Robert Gagne, a digital navigator with the Hamden Public Library; and Elisabeth Michel, MPH, a Health Equity Operations Specialist with Hartford HealthCare. Almost 100 advocates and stakeholders attended. The event was publicized in advance by the appearance of a navigator pilot program manager on the National Public Radio show “Where We Live.” It was recorded and archived by CT-N.

Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) staff Matt Geeza and Paula McLean **conducted 10 outreach sessions** during the period of September 21-November 5, 2022. Outreach sessions included visits to public libraries, the LIONS Low Vision Support Group in New Britain, a presentation at the CT Association of School Librarians (CASL), and a presentation at the National Federation of the Blind of CT’s convention in Rocky Hill.

The **LBPH Advisory Committee** met on October 28, 2022. New Advisory Committee members were provided with training and orientation.

Gail Hurley began working in partnership with the Space Science Institute around planning for **upcoming solar eclipse events** in 2023 and 2024. Part of this planning will include receiving Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) kits relating to the eclipses, and an in-person event in late spring/early summer 2023 for Connecticut libraries.

The State Library is partnering with CT State Parks on the **CT Storywalk Passport Program**. Four permanent Storywalks will be built at four state parks with year-round maintainers. In partnership with LBPH, two of the Storywalks will be braille accessible.

The New England Youth Consultants have joined together to plan a **Teen Summit event** on November 18. There are over 350 registrants.

The **eGO CT Community Share program** for schools continues to grow. There are now 80 sites participating in the program. There are approximately 170 school sites that are eligible to join. Division of Library Development (DLD) staff have been reaching out to schools and continue to add relevant content for the new school year. To date, 538 new items have been added specifically for this program, in addition to the Children & YA content already available from Baker & Taylor.

Reference Services **staff continued to assist researchers** through a variety of contact points.

- The History & Genealogy Unit fielded approximately 233 in-house, 139 telephone/chat inquiries, along with 277 e-mails for a total of 649 total patron questions answered during the months of September and October.
- The Law & Legislative Reference Unit has answered approximately 242 in-person, telephone, and chat inquiries, and 150 e-mail reference inquiries during September and October.
- Government Information answered 506 inquiries via telephone/chat and 51 email reference inquiries between September 1 and November 16.

On October 14<sup>th</sup> Mel Smith was presented with a **generous donation** from the Connecticut Society of Genealogists and other genealogical/historical societies for use in purchasing of new books for the History & Genealogy department.

Kris Abery and Lindsay Young gave a **tour** of the Law & Legislative department and the Government Information Services department to seven new Supreme Court law clerks in September. Kris Abery, Lindsay Young, and Mel Smith gave a **tour** of the three Reference Services departments to ten members of the Law & Legislative Library, Office of Fiscal Analysis, Auditors of Public Accounts, Legislative Commissioners Office, and the Office of Legislative Management on November 8.

By statute, **Town Clerk and Probate Vaults** must be constructed and maintained in accordance with state regulations and approved by the Office of the Public Records Administrator. LeAnn Power has been working with towns on vault construction and renovation projects, including projects for the City of Bristol, the Vernon/Ellington Probate Vault, and the Town of North Canaan. These vaults provide a high level of fire protection and security for towns' permanent and essential records.

LeAnn Power, and Elise Marzik attended the **Fall Conference of the Town Clerks' Association** in Westbrook on September 15. They staffed an information table, addressing questions from town clerks and record vendors related to agency policies and the Historic Documents Preservation grant program.

Allen Ramsey and Lizette Pelletier continue to identify items of interest for the Connecticut Radio Information System (CRIS) National Park Service planning grant to provide **accessibility** at the **Redding Revolutionary War encampment site** located within the Putnam Memorial

State Park. Lizette participated in a **Veteran's Day event** at the park on November 11 and gave a brief profile of Judith Lines, a mixed-heritage woman from Windham, one of the traditionally excluded individuals identified during the project. She served as a "camp follower" with the Connecticut Continental Line during her husband John Lines' enlistment with Colonel Meigs' Regiment. As a camp follower, she provided laundry services for the various line officers under whom John served.

Deborah Schander, LeAnn Power, Lizette Pelletier, Elise Marzik, Damon Munz, and Allen Ramsey met with **Scan-Optics** for a quarterly meeting on October 7 for a status update and continued discussion as public agencies take on new digital transformation initiatives.

Elise Marzik and Allen Ramsey met on October 24, October 31, November 8, and November 14 with Omarys Vasquez (State Building Inspector) and Mike Glidden (representative from the Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officials) in a focus group as part of the **Digitization of Building Codes** project to work on **Records Retention and Best Practices** for the working group's final report. The focus group discussed electronic records requirements and determined next steps to revise the M10 Land Use and Development municipal records retention schedule for use in the project.

The **Archives Connection System** project kickoff meeting was held on October 20 and was attended by State Archives and Public Records staff, Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Bureau of Information Technology Solutions (BITS) staff, and Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) staff. The project team met on October 27 and November 3 to review and work towards finalizing a statement of work (SOW).

A temporary exhibit, "**A History of US**" has been installed in Memorial Hall. The exhibit was created by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and traces the history of the United States from the Revolutionary War to the Civil Rights era focusing on critical figures and events while tracing the evolving concept of freedom from founding to today. After the exhibit ends in our Museum, it will be offered to other museums and libraries in Connecticut.

The Museum loaned the Connecticut Historical Society (CHS) a **Weed sewing machine** for a new exhibit "The Bicycle Game". The Museum also assisted CHS with images for the new exhibit. The sewing machine was just recently donated to the Museum and will now be on display at CHS for the next year.

The "**Hiking Through History**" program wrapped up this Fall with visits to the Old Connecticut Path in Willington and two historic cemeteries in East Windsor. 13 people attended in Willington while 15 attended the East Windsor program. The programs were featured on a Channel 30/NBC news segment in late October.

## **Programs & Trainings**

As a component of the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) Transformation for Libraries: The Futures School, Dawn LaValle, Ashley Sklar, and the Futures School hosted a **webinar "After the Futures School: Perspectives, Learning, and Implementing Foresight as a Core Competency,"** featuring 5 Futures School graduates including the State Librarian of Pennsylvania, and Kendra Davey and Renee Bibby from the Pima County Public Library (PCPL), who shared their Pima County Implementation "Future Focused Anti-Racism: PCPL's Planning Framework for an Equitable Future." The Connecticut State Library's (CSL) project is

gaining a following across the nation, resulting in IMLS inviting CSL to submit a proposal to extend the grant with additional funding.

LBPH re-launched its **patron book club** in October. The book club is virtual and is facilitated by LBPH Reader's Advisor, Paula McLean. Seven patrons attended the first book club meeting. The next book club meeting is scheduled for January 2023. LBPH patrons can also take advantage of **patron programs** offered by LBPH's federal partner, the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS). LBPH emails patrons with the meeting information approximately one week before each program date.

A **borrowIT CT audit** revealed that dozens of libraries are no longer complying with borrowIT CT regulations that require lending of all physical materials to non-residents. Maria Bernier hosted new training on the regulations and report for 112 librarians. Many of them were unfamiliar with the almost 50-year history of this statewide resource sharing program.

Maria hosted a tour of the **Meriden Public Library's construction site** on October 13 and a tour of the **renovated Westport Library** on November 15. These tours help library staff, board members, and building committee members understand what they'll be facing with their own upcoming renovation or construction projects.

The Division of Library Development (DLD) provided a subscription for all public libraries to the **NorthStar Digital Literacy training platform** and rolled out the service in October with library setups and staff training.

Kym Powe designed a presentation on **Creating Inclusive Collections** for a School Library Journal/Library Journal course.

DLD held a workshop with Megan Emery from **The Healing Library** on October 24 and are in conversation about additional workshops on social emotional learning in 2023.

Steve Mirsky participated as a guest speaker on the podcast "[Amazing Tales from Off and On CT's Beaten Path](#)". This particular episode covered the history behind the myth of CT's "**bouncing pickle law**" and why the topic, which came to a head in 1946, is still well known in current times.

In partnership with CT Humanities and the Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO), Nicole Besseghir, Gail Hurley, and Anna Newman, from the Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project, presented a series of **five newspaper digitization webinars**, on topics relating to newspaper digitization, such as title selection, copyright, working with vendors, and digital preservation. The webinars were recorded and are available on the CLHO's YouTube channel. The webinar series is part of CSL's collaborative effort with CT Humanities and CLHO to support CT institutions interested in digitizing their local newspapers.

LeAnn Power and Elise Marzik presented a **records management training webinar** to approximately 120 municipal employees on November 17. The webinar was hosted by the **Connecticut Education Network** as part of a Data Security Series for public schools.

## Resource Updates

The **Palace Project** continues to grow. There are now 97 sites that are live in the app and actively sharing content with their patrons. There have been 3,268 checkouts in the app this fiscal year and 1,874 of those checkouts were from the Connecticut State Library eGO CT Collection.

**Usage in requestIT/fulfillment** is averaging 1,150 requests per month this fiscal year and is expected to exceed last year's usage by 13%.

Jeannie Sherman and Mel Smith continue working with Allen Ramsey and Damon Munz to create a listing of Connecticut State Library materials to be approved for **scanning by FamilySearch** at the Van Block facility. Such materials as Connecticut church, probate court files, the James N. Arnold copy of Connecticut town vital records, along with various Connecticut Archives Series materials are to be included in this next phase of scanning. This second listing will be finalized within the next few weeks.

Bill Room staff Steve Mirsky, Asaf Aliev, and Andrew Bourque **continued processing and indexing transcripts** resulting from the 2022 legislative session, completing 11,907 pages. Some committee hearings still remain untranscribed and efforts are underway with several committee clerks to determine their status and when they'll be complete and ready for public access. Asaf compiled and uploaded 64 legislative histories to the law and legislation Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) collection. Efforts are underway to implement a process for digitally archiving legislative bulletins and calendars since some of them are no longer being produced on paper.

Lindsay Young finished **digitizing the 1911-1929 subject headings** for the Historical Bills & Acts database. Adding these headings as a searchable field, along with links to bill files and legislative histories, should be completed by the end of the year. These changes will make the database more powerful and the legislation more accessible for patrons.

Susan Bigelow uploaded 753 new **Connecticut State documents** into the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) in September and October. To date, 269 collections and 2,044 collections have been created.

With the assistance of Eric Paiva and Elizabeth Esquilin, the **Federal Documents program** processed 3,796 discards submitted by selective depository libraries in Connecticut and Rhode Island. In addition, 226 claimed federal documents were added to the federal documents collection.

The **Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project** (CDNP) welcomed Erin Shapland as the new Project Assistant. Erin will be collating microfilm for CDNP's current grant cycle and helping to identify historical newspaper content for our outreach efforts.

CSL's **digitization program** received a significant upgrade with the purchase and installation of an Atiz BookDrive Mark 2 book scanner. The BookDrive system includes two professional Canon 6D Mark II cameras, and its V-shaped book cradle allows for digitization of bound volumes with low risk of damage. The BookDrive is used in cultural heritage institutions worldwide and greatly increases CSL's capacity to digitize materials from its collections efficiently and easily.

The Preservation Office continues its ongoing project to **digitize unique Connecticut state documents** from our collections, for many of which CSL holds the only known copy. Of the 654 documents selected for the first phase of the project, 342 (52%) have been digitized, and 277 (42%) are publicly available in the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA).

The Preservation Office, with the support of the Law reference staff, is digitizing **historical legislative transcripts**, which will be made available in the CTDA. Since starting the project in October, 11 volumes from the 1969 Senate and Joint Standing Committee proceedings have been digitized.

Kandace Yuen activated 10,100 electronic portfolios linking to **full-text content in HeinOnline** databases and made them accessible in our Alma/Primo catalog. These resources are available remotely to users with a CT State Library card.

Kandace Yuen has been processing **Connecticut historical newspaper donations** in collaboration with History & Genealogy, Cataloging, and Preservation staff in an effort to preserve these fragile and unique collections.

Gertrude Owusu has been adding both new and retrospective holdings to our Alma/Primo catalog for **Federal Documents on Microfiche**. In September and October, Gertrude added 550 detailed item records to our catalog.

The Cataloging Unit completed its project to replace **hyperlinks for electronic state documents**, exporting revised bibliographic records from OCLC into Alma and Primo. As of October 31, 26,130 revised records have been exported.

After submitting a sole source purchase request to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Procurement unit to establish a five-year contract with the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), State Archivist Lizette Pelletier learned from our agency liaison at DAS that conservation of historical documents has been considered a non-competitive purchase since 2019. Therefore, staff is in the process of updating the cost estimates for the fine arts mover and security escort to be able to transport the **Royal Charter and other key documents** to NEDCC in the spring.

**New Haven County Court Records** Project Archivist Sarah Morin and Lisa Lew have processed 84.5 cubic feet (169 boxes) of the New Haven County, County Court files from approximately 1700-1805. They are currently processing records from 1806-1809. To date, staff has discovered 215 cases involving African-descended, African American, Black, and Indigenous persons in the court records. Todd Gabriel has scanned 539 court cases (approximately 2,224 pages) for the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA). These cases involve African-descended, African American, Black, and Indigenous persons, as well as other selected topics of research interest. Barbara Austen continues to upload cases from 1760-1789 to CTDA as they are discovered and scanned. Alexa Bosse and Carlos Chuquizuta, student interns from Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) Department of Information and Library Science, are working remotely and have transcribed 19 court cases (approximately 96 pages) from the New Haven County, County Court Minorities Collection. Damon Munz and Sarah Morin were interviewed by Tricia Ennis, reporter for Connecticut Inside Investigator (CII) in August 2022. The article was published on September 18: <https://insideinvestigator.org/uncovering-new-haven-confronting-history-in-centuries-old-court-records/>. An August 2022 blog post, "100 Years of Court Records: A Retrospective," was mentioned in the National Historical Publications

and Records Commission's (NHPRC) October 2022 newsletter:  
<https://www.archives.gov/nhprc/newsletter/october22>.

Allen Ramsey, Elise Marzik, and Barbara Austen continued work on an **electronic records policy** and **electronic records standards document**. The new policy and standards will govern all digital imaging and electronic records management and preservation projects carried out by executive branch state agencies and municipalities. The policy and standards have been reviewed by the Office of the Attorney General and their feedback is being incorporated into the documents.

The Office of the Public Records Administrator issued one updated **records retention schedule** for the Higher Education State General Schedule (1 series revised, effective 11/8/2022). Elise Marzik is currently working with four agencies on updates to agency-specific retention schedules.

William Fothergill, chair of the Ebenezer D. Bassett Memorialization Committee at Central Connecticut State University, presented the **Archives Month Third Thursday program** on October 20, tracing the cultural heritage background of Ebenezer D. Bassett who was the first African American graduate of the State Normal School (Central Connecticut State University), abolitionist, and the first African American appointed as Minister in Residence (Ambassador) by the United States government.