

## Report to the State Library Board

May 22, 2023

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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 22, 2023 meeting of the Board, covers the period of March 28, 2023 through May 12, 2023.

### Office of the State Librarian

The legislative session is nearing its end, with bills related to eBook pricing and book censorship still under consideration. We remain in active conversation with legislative leaders, bill sponsors, leadership in the library community, and others on these bills. The budget process also continues. The State Library's request for an inflation increase to support the CT Digital Library was included in the Appropriations budget. In addition, Appropriations added two other proposals: \$500,000 per year to support three literacy initiatives in the state and \$225,000 per year for the restoration of grants-in-aid to public libraries. In addition, the Committee on Finance, Revenue, and Bonding's proposals included a requested renovation at the Middletown Library Service Center and increasing the cap on public library construction grants from \$1 million to \$2 million per grant. We are in conversation with the Office of Policy and Management regarding these new proposals, and OPM will continue to negotiate with the Legislature over the next weeks as a budget is finalized for July 1.

Several members of staff have recently been recognized for their work:

- Christine Gauvreau received the CEN Leadership Award at the Connecticut Education Network's 2023 annual Member Conference.
- Kymberlee Powe was named one of *Library Journal's* national 2023 Movers & Shakers in the Educators cohort.
- Allen Ramsey is a 2023 recipient of the Victoria Irons Walsh Leadership Award from the Council of State Archivists.

Each award is much-deserved recognition of the ways Chris, Kym, and Allen enrich their units, the State Library, and the state and national landscape on an ongoing basis. Congratulations to all!

### Unit Activities

#### Partnerships and Community Engagement

**School and adult group attendance** at the Museum of Connecticut History has been up since last year, though still not near pre-pandemic levels. From September to the present, visitation numbers are as follows:

- 247 Adults as part of Adult Groups
- 1,888 School Kids as Part of School Groups.

These numbers do not include unannounced or unscheduled school groups or drop-in visits from individuals who also visit the Museum.

The FY2024 Cycle 1 application period for the **Historic Documents Preservation Program** closed on April 30. The State Library received 111 Cycle 1 grant applications for a total of \$755,000. The grants provide significant support for municipal records management and preservation programs, including the expansion of public access to electronic records. The FY2023 grant period ends on June 30, 2023; the State Library awarded 120 grants for Cycle 1 for a total of \$773,000 and 31 grants for Cycle 2 for a total of \$182,500 for FY2023.

LeAnn Power has been working with towns on **Town Clerk and Probate Vaults** construction and renovation projects, including projects for the Town of Avon, Town of East Hartford, the City of Bristol, the Town of Pomfret, the Town of Ledyard, and the Town of Stonington. Vaults provide a high level of fire protection and security for towns' permanent and essential records.

**The Archives Connection System Workgroup** finalized the project Business Requirements Document, discussed its automation requirements concerning the identification and redaction of personally identifiable information (PII) with vendor Dataiku, and submitted a required semi-annual report to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

The Division of Library Development (DLD) and its partner, The Futures School, held their 10<sup>th</sup> Cohort as part of the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Programming Grant, **Transformation for Libraries: The Futures School**. IMLS requested that this Cohort be offered as a special organizational pilot for the Applied Foresight Accelerator Program. DLD selected the California State Library for this Cohort, which will serve as a model program for a possible grant extension. DLD and The Futures School have trained over 530 librarians across the country and the U.S. Territories in Natural Foresight influencing statewide activities such as a futures conference in Maryland, the states of Idaho, Arizona, Pennsylvania, and Colorado integrating Foresight into state services and, most notably, IMLS itself integrating Foresight scenario planning in its Annual Grants to States Conference. DLD and the Futures School look forward to the next iteration of this groundbreaking project.

The **CT State Digital Equity Act Planning Team** is currently working with the newly hired Digital Equity Program Manager, Lauren Thompson, a librarian who has previously worked at the Norwalk and Hartford public libraries, to plan community engagement listening sessions with public libraries as the anchors for these conversations. Dawn LaValle and DLD are working closely with Lauren on communications, library mapping, and engagement.

Ashley Sklar, Suzanne Vick, and Kym Powe recently completed writing DLD's first **Diversity Plan** as required by its Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) 5-Year Plan. Working with consultant and Niche Academy trainer Julie Edwards, the team began writing the plan in November 2022, which initially involved much research and education on other similar plans at state and academic libraries and other institutions. The plan was presented to the full DLD

Team on April 26, receiving kudos and some ideas for improvement, and is now being prepared for review by chosen community partners. The goal is to post the plan online by July 1, 2023.

As part of DLD's **partnership with Hartford Healthcare (HHC)**, Dawn LaValle and Elisabeth Michele from Hartford Healthcare presented sessions at the CT Education Network Annual Conference and the Accelerating Healthcare Equity Conference in Minneapolis, MN. The sessions highlighted DLD/HHC's outreach efforts during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, including emphasizing the value of community-based partnerships and libraries as partners in addressing social determinants of health and increasing access to health services; how they formed such partnerships, successes achieved so far, and potential challenges to be mindful of when partnering with different organizations.

In partnership with Lifetime Arts and the CT Office of the Arts (COA), the **Creative Aging for CT Libraries grant** has been accepted by the Pasculano Foundation. A 90-minute introductory webinar was held on April 27th to familiarize CT libraries with Creative Aging and Lifetime Arts resources. A verified recording of the webinar will be available so libraries can participate after the event to ensure eligibility for funding to implement a program with a teaching artist from COA and support from Lifetime Arts.

In collaboration with Kymberlee Powe and **Libraries Without Borders (LWB)**, DLD is creating a pilot project with a group of six CT libraries that will result in temporary library spaces in their communities, modeled on LWB's other initiatives and customized for CT. The project began with a series of site visits to the six libraries as well as a community data collecting phase.

DLD's **CT Libraries & Partners for Digital Equity (CTLPDE)** has continued to lay the groundwork for partnerships between libraries and service organizations to meet community digital inclusion activity needs. In April of 2023, DLD consultant Christine Gauvreau and CTLPDE leader Melissa Canham-Clyne held a first meeting with the Hotchkiss Library Director and community organization Sharon Connects to plan a Northwest Connecticut stakeholders' conversation on digital navigation. In addition, CTLPDE has engaged with "The Undivided Project" to plan a first presentation to CT librarians on how to create climate resilience in underserved communities via digital solutions. In addition, CTLPDE mobilized members to contribute their digital inclusion experiences during the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Virtual Broadband Roundtable held on April 25, 2023.

**CT Library for Accessible Books (CTLAB)** staff conducted nine outreach sessions during the period of March to April 2023. Outreach sessions included visits to the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind low vision support group; a presentation to the UCONN Health Ophthalmology Group; the town of Farmington's low vision support group; two senior living residential facilities; and public libraries.

CTLAB has partnered with nine public libraries across CT to serve as **hub libraries**: Bristol Public Library, Danbury Public Library, Darien Library, Killingly Public Library, Otis Library (Norwich), Simsbury Public Library, Slater Library (Jewett City), Stratford Library, and the Weston Public Library. All hub libraries have an informational display that has applications and information about CTLAB, as well as digital talking book players and cartridges that are

available for in-library demonstration. Hub library staff have received training that covers an overview of CTLAB resources and services and can answer basic questions about the service but will refer any questions that they cannot answer to CTLAB. CTLAB plans to partner with the hub libraries to offer information sessions about CTLAB services. Upon request, CTLAB patrons will be able to pick up and drop off talking book players and cartridges at all hub libraries. Most patrons will continue to receive books and talking book players by US Mail but, over the years, we have had requests from patrons to drop off materials at a public library.

As part of DLD's ongoing **Financial Literacy Project** MoneySmartWeek@YourLibrary, in partnership with the Department of Banking and UCONN Extension, DLD hosted a table at the Legislative Office Building on April 18<sup>th</sup>, highlighting DLD resources pertaining to financial literacy resources for ages 0 to older adults.

## **Programs & Trainings**

The Museum of Connecticut History is one of 79 museums across the country accepted into the American Alliance of Museum (AAM)'s **Museum Assessment Program**. The museum will be conducting an Organizational Assessment with the goal of creating a solid foundation for long-term health and impact, emphasizing thinking, acting, and planning strategically; organizational alignment and capacity; leadership and organizational structure; and risk management and organizational culture. Museum staff has begun a self-review using learning modules and a workbook provided by the AAM.

Museum staff Jennifer Matos, Christine Pittsley, Patrick Smith, and History & Genealogy's Kevin Johnson are participating in a program called "**Uncovering the Hidden History in Your Town.**" This four-part program creates a learning cohort to help museums / historical societies make slavery and freedom an integral part of the local colonial story. The team attended a workshop at the Noah Webster House on February 23 and March 22. On April 11, project consultants visited the CT State Library to assist the team with their research on Connecticut Governors and their roles related to slavery and abolition, as well as the history of Black Governors in the state. The last session was held on May 10.

Christine Pittsley participated in a **battlefield tour of Seicheprey, France** from April 17-23, 2023, highlighting the contributions of Connecticut men from the 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry and the 26<sup>th</sup> Division during World War I. A highlight of the event was the rededication of the Connecticut Fountain in Seicheprey and the renaming of a road for the 26<sup>th</sup> "Yankee" Division. This event was made possible through a partnership between the Connecticut Heritage Foundation and Knee Deep Into History Battlefield Tours.

Patrick Smith is teaching a 9-session course on **Colonial Connecticut** to a large Home School Co-Op in Enfield on a weekly basis. The class takes place every Monday morning for an hour each week. 19 students are taking part.

On April 26, the Museum organized a visit for 16 **National Park Service staff from Springfield Armory**, which is the group working on turning Coltsville into a National Park. Mel Smith and

Lizette Pelletier presented Colt-related archival materials to the group in the History & Genealogy department. Steve Mirsky and Kris Aberly showed the group around the Law Library and Government Services. Jennifer Matos toured the group through the museum with special guest Dean Nelson.

LeAnn Power, Elise Marzik, and Nicole Besseghir attended the Spring Conference of the **Town Clerks' Association** in Westbrook on April 20. They presented a training on Records Retention and Management for approximately 200 town clerks and vendors. They also staffed an information table, addressing questions from town clerks and records vendors related to agency policies and the Historic Documents Preservation grant program.

DLD offered a new Continuing Education program developed and led by a digital navigator trained through the Digital Navigation Pilot Project Grant Program. The event, called "**Digital Navigators Explain How It's Done**" was held on March 8, 2023, and was well attended. CT Libraries & Partners for Digital Equity created workshops and tabling materials on digital navigation for the CT Library Association conference, the CT Education Network (CEN) annual conference, and the New England Library Association Conference.

Ashley Sklar led two sessions with Rebecca Degnan of Prism Counseling on educating about and supporting the **LGBTQIA+ community in libraries**.

The **CTLAB Book Club** last met on April 19, 2023. The Book Club is led by CTLAB Reader's Advisor, Paula McLean, and will meet next in July 2023.

**RequestIT Open Office Hours** will be held on May 24. Staff from the Connecticut State Library, Bibliomation, and Equinox will share information with ILL library staff and answer questions about the requestIT CT program.

Matt Geeza, Kym Powe, and Ashley Sklar presented a series of workshops for library professionals called **ADA and Beyond**. The purpose of the series is to encourage library staff to think about ways that they can go beyond ADA and make their libraries more welcoming and inclusive for all people. The workshops covered topics such as making library programs accessible; making Microsoft Word and PowerPoint documents accessible for people who use screen readers; website accessibility; workplace accommodations for people who have disabilities; and an assistive technology petting zoo.

DLD hosted a new workshop series in April and May called "**Leading from the Future: Best Practices in the Administration and Governance of Libraries in CT**". The series included "Administration Basics – Being a Library Director 101", "The Critical Partnership: Public Library Trustees and Directors", "There is a Better Way! Re-thinking Strategy Planning for Your Library", and "So You Want to Build a Library? Capital Planning in CT."

In response to recent concerns in libraries and schools regarding ChatGPT artificial intelligence, DLD offered a special three-session workshop in April from Library 2.0 called "**ChatGPT Bootcamp**."

## Resource Updates

Museum staff are currently exploring the best and safest way to put the **Colt Whitneyville-Walker revolver** stolen from the Museum in 1971 back on display. A press release about the revolver's return was issued on March 23, 2023. Several news outlets picked up the story, including NBC 30, who did a video interview with Jennifer Matos and Dave Corrigan: [Stolen 19th Century Colt Revolver Returned to Connecticut](#), March 30, 2023.

Public Records welcomed two **new staff members**: Nicole Besseghir, Public Records Analyst, will manage the Historic Documents Preservation grant program and review of municipal vaults. Nicole Marino, Electronic Records Analyst, will assist in electronic records initiatives for state and local government.

The Office of the Public Records Administrator issued one **new records series** for the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP-01, effective 3/17/2023) and one **revised records series** for the Office of the Attorney General (OAG-01, effective 5/1/2023). Elise Marzik is currently working with three agencies on updates to agency-specific retention schedules, and with a municipal working group to update one municipal retention schedule.

LeAnn Power and Cherie Miles processed 480 municipal and 154 state agency authorization forms for **records disposals**.

Sarah Morin and Lisa Lew are currently processing **New Haven County Court Records** from 1812-1819. Several volunteers from the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council (CPGC) are currently processing the County Court papers by subject. Todd Gabriel has scanned 724 court cases (approximately 3,054 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 1730-1770 to CTDA as they are discovered and scanned. Sarah Morin submitted an article for the fall 2023 issue of *Connecticut Explored* discussing what has been discovered about women, free and enslaved African American and Black persons, and Indigenous persons in the court records from 1700-1810. As of May 1, 36 blog posts have been published on the State Library website (<https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/archives/uncoveringnewhaven/blog>), and promoted on Facebook and Twitter.

**Recent Archives Accessions** include:

- Thomas Rose Papers, circa 1720-1730, 3 manuscript documents (RG 069:190)
  - Correspondence from Thomas Rose regarding encroachment by white settlers on land set aside for use by Pequot Tribal members in the Groton area. Documents attributed to Thomas Rose addressing Governor Joseph Talcott, the citizens of Groton, and the General Court. He advocated on behalf of the local Pequots to regain access to land set aside for them.

- Dept. of Public Health records, 1894-1932 and 1967-1987, 0.5 cubic feet (RG 016)
- Town of East Lyme school records, 6 cubic feet (RG 062:045)
- Town of Montville school records, 1963 June-1972 June, 1 cubic foot (RG 062:086)
- Town of Stratford records, circa 1878-1990, 34 volumes (RG 062:138)
- Dept. of Environmental Protection. Office of Adjudications index file of closed cases, circa 1979-2000, 0.5 cubic feet (RG 079:028)

#### **Digital Records Processing Completed:**

- All of Governor Malloy's 60,000+ constituent emails have been converted to PDFs and redacted and are available on CTDA.
- Transcripts from a 1964 investigation into the practices of the Norwich Police Department were made available to the public after being restricted for 50 years per an agreement between the town and the Public Records Administrator at the time. They have been scanned and are available at [https://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/30002%3ARG062-104\\_CCCommittee](https://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/30002%3ARG062-104_CCCommittee).
- New Haven County (Waterbury District) Coroner Records, July 1931-December 1966, 35,459 images
- New London County Coroner Records, 1932-1935, February 1942-June 1969, 29,431 images

Public Records and Archives issued the joint ***Public Records Memorandum 101: Disposition of Original Paper Records after Scanning*** (April 3) to address questions regarding *Public Records Policy 04: Electronic Records Management* and the new procedures for the disposition of paper records that have been digitized.

Maria Paxi has completed a History & Genealogy hand-out of "**Connecticut Towns and their Establishment**" which was last updated in 1985. This new color handout includes a map of Connecticut, along with information on year of establishment and parent town. Maria has also created new signage for the History and Genealogy Unit index corridor that highlight the many state-wide genealogical slip indexes housed there.

In late March a new staff-created database, ***Connecticut Paupers 1844-1907***, ([ctatatelibrarydata.org/connecticut-paupers-1844-1907/](http://ctatatelibrarydata.org/connecticut-paupers-1844-1907/)), was added to our online database platform. This unique online *Index to Town Claims to the Connecticut State Comptroller for payment for care of State Paupers* contains over 11,000 entries, and indexes thousands of original documents found in the Connecticut State Archives as part of archival record group (RG) # 008, Records of the Connecticut State Comptroller. This index will allow easy access to documents that detail the lives of individuals and families facing an uncertain future in Connecticut during a time of great economic and social upheaval in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Jeannie Sherman has added much-needed call number information to the History & Genealogy use copy of **"Maps of Connecticut before the year 1800, a descriptive List"** by Edmund Thompson. Staff and patrons now have an easy resource to help identify pre-1800 Connecticut maps in our collections.

Steve Mirsky completed uploading **CT appellate records and briefs** into CTDA now totaling over 12,000 files. This material encompasses 2017-2022, during which the Judicial Branch curtailed providing microfilm/paper versions. This newly created CTDA collection is text searchable across multiple years including by docket number.

Asaf Aliev, Andrew Bourque, and Steve Mirsky continued indexing 2023 legislative transcripts, totaling 8,091 pages. In addition Asaf scanned, created metadata, and uploaded 3,000 bill files from 1961 to CTDA that were badly in need of preservation. He also edited, created metadata, and performed quality control on 1957, 1958, and 1967 CTDA transcript files for the preservation office, and created CTDA collections for 2023 hearings and proceedings.

With the assistance of Erica Paiva and Elizabeth Esquilin, the **Federal Documents** program processed 1,846 discards submitted by selective depository libraries in Connecticut and Rhode Island during the March - May 2023 time period. The Federal Depository program also received 4 boxes of claimed federal documents from the University of Connecticut. Kris Aberly cataloged, barcoded, and added 102 claimed federal documents to the federal documents collection.

Kris Aberly and Elizabeth Esquilin are currently working on a project to barcode and update the location codes for items in the **federal document oversize collection**.

The **eGO CT Community Share program** for schools continues to grow. There are now **109** school sites participating in the program. There are approximately 170 school sites that are eligible to join. To date **1,107** new items have been added specifically for this program in addition to the Children & YA content already available from Baker & Taylor.

**Find IT CT**, the statewide library catalog, had 25,343,987 bibliographic records and 19,558,735 items as of April 1, 2023. In FY23 to date, findIT CT has 399,096 visits, and 3,333,873 page views.

**eGO CT** continues to grow in 2023. There are now **125** participating public libraries using the Palace Project app and sharing Connecticut State Library eBook content with their patrons. eGO CT is also supporting the Experiencing America program, All CT Reads, and the Statewide Summer Reading program. Each of the titles included in these programs have been added to the Palace app and multiple copies have been purchased for many titles.

The Preservation Office has completed the first phase of its ongoing project to **digitize unique Connecticut state documents** from our collections, for many of which CSL holds the only known copy. In total, 556 documents were digitized and are being preserved and made accessible in the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA).



The Preservation Office is also digitizing **historical legislative transcripts**. Since starting the project in October, all 41 volumes from the 1969 Senate and Joint Standing Committee proceedings have been digitized and are now available in the CTDA, completing the digitization of legislative transcripts from 1969.

Eight new Connecticut newspaper titles have been digitized by **the Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project** and are now available in the Library of Congress' Chronicling America database for public access:

- [Bradley Beam](#) (Bradley Field, Windsor Locks), 1943-1945
- [The Messenger](#) (Bloomfield), 1943-1945
- [The Sub](#) (Groton), 1943-1946
- [Eastern Connecticut News](#) (Groton), 1946-1947
- [The Union Times](#) (New Haven), 1941-1948
- [La Verita](#) (Waterbury), 1926-1939 and [La Verita, Corriere del Connecticut](#) (New Haven), 1939-1946
- [Putnam Patriot](#) (Putnam), 1908-1930 – with 1931-1949 to follow this year

Collection Services negotiated with the vendor Gale (a Cengage Company) to permit the CT State Library (CSL) remote access to five online subscriptions in the **Making of Modern Law series**. Kandace Yuen updated links in our LibGuides and Primo catalog to reflect that these resources are now available remotely for CT State Library cardholders. Titles include: [Making of Modern Law: Foreign, Comparative and International Law, 1600-1926](#); [Making of Modern Law: Legal Treatises 1800-1926](#); [Making of Modern Law: Primary Sources](#); [Making of Modern Law: Trials 1600-1926](#); and [U.S. Supreme Court Records and Briefs, 1823-1978](#).

During March-April 2023, CSL deaccessioned 64 **commercial legal looseleaf volumes** no longer being updated in print. This freed 17 linear feet of shelf space in our stacks.

CSL processed 477 new **CT State Library card applications** during March-April 2023. Jerry Seagrave issued 423 (89%) of these applications and mailed cards and welcome letters to patrons.

Laura Diller cataloged several noteworthy titles from the **Library of Congress Congressional Research Service Insight series**, including:

- [The role of the Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) in budget development : in brief](#). Taylor N. Riccard.
- [The executive budget process timeline : in brief](#). Dominick A. Fiorentino.
- [The role of executive agencies in budget development : in brief](#). Dominick A. Fiorentino.
- [The role of the President in budget development : in brief](#). Taylor N. Riccard
- [The metaverse : concepts and issues for Congress](#). Ling Zhu.

Bill Anderson cataloged several **noteworthy titles for the State Library collections**, including::

- [\*Civil liberties update. American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut.\*](#) 2022. JC599.U5 P46
- [\*The descendants of Benjamin Fenn Sr. \(1612-1672\) and his wives Sarah Baldwin \(1621-1663\) & Susanna Wood \(1640-1674\).\*](#) Ellwood Count Curtis. 2022. CS71.F3345 2022.
- [\*The descendants of John Frary Sr \(1610-1695\) and his wife Prudence \(1610-1690\).\*](#)
- Ellwood Count Curtis. 2021. CS71.F846.  
[\*The descendants of Pasco Foote \(c. 1595-1670\).\*](#) Ellwood Count Curtis. 2022. CS71.F6879 2022.