

Report to the State Library Board

July 22, 2024

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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 22, 2024 meeting of the Board, covers the period of May 21, 2024 through July 12, 2024.

Office of the State Librarian

Several major milestones have recently been achieved at the State Library.

As a result of its **strategic framework process**, the State Library has refined its Vision, Mission, and Values Statement as well set three goals: raise awareness, expand accessibility, and deepen collaborations. The Framework will now serve as the agency's community-centered and future-facing roadmap, guiding all aspects of the units and divisions. Each unit and division within the State Library will operationalize the Framework in cooperation and partnership, as we collectively step towards the future.

The **Museum of CT History** will be closed from July 11 through August 2 for renovations to take place in the exhibits. In the current "Connecticut Collections" and "Colt Firearms" exhibits, all walls and exhibit cases will be painted, platforms with a rail system will be constructed, and wall graphics will be installed. The improvements will afford the opportunity for museum staff to reorganize and refresh the objects on display, including the removal of textile items in need of conservation (as recommended in the Collections Assessment for Preservation report the Museum received in February 2024). In Memorial Hall, the 1910-era oak exhibit cases will be restored, including repairs to the wood, handles, and locking mechanisms; the removal of fluorescent light fixtures in favor of LED; and the addition of lift-lock casters. The Freedom Trail Quilts will be installed on four custom, free-standing walls that will be located in each corner of the room.

Final arrangements have been completed for the transport of the **1662 Charter** up to the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC). Firelock, the maker of the fire resistive case, and its staff will be packing the document into the case and transporting it to the NEDCC facility in Massachusetts. State Police cruisers and officers will escort the vehicle during the trip. The parchment conservator at NEDCC currently estimates that the conservation and imaging work will take approximately 6 months to complete. Once she can examine the document outside of the inner framing, she will provide staff with a more accurate timeline. Given the Charter's importance as a legal and political document, and the agency's fiduciary duty to preserve it for many generations of Connecticut citizens to come, State Library staff have determined that the original document must be securely stored away from day-to-day public view moving forward, except for limited periods. This decision aligns with conservation best practices as well as peer institutions' preservation and access policies regarding their own documents of similar historical significance. Both during the conservation period and in future, visitors to the State Library and its Museum of Connecticut History will be able to view a high-resolution reproduction of the Charter in the historic oak frame carved by Hartford sculptor

Albert Entress in the Museum. They will learn not only about the document and its history but also the importance of conservation through new educational content. Future limited public viewings of the original Charter will be publicized through the State Library's website, social media, and other communication channels.

Kevin Johnson has had a very busy Spring with eleven historic presentations during the months of May and June. Of special note, it should be acknowledged that after 684 appearances as Civil War soldier **Private William Riley Salisbury Webb** of the 29th Connecticut Volunteer (Colored) Infantry spanning 25+ years, Kevin has finished his regular public offerings of this character. Kevin's energetic historic portrayal has brought this Connecticut soldier's life to a wide range of audiences throughout the State of Connecticut and beyond. In doing so, he has provided the public just a small glimpse of the history and life stories that are housed at the Connecticut State Library. Congratulations to Kevin for his ongoing quest to tell the stories of those that have gone before us with his continued presentations of Jordan Freeman of the Revolutionary War and his new character of James "Professor Jim" Williams of Trinity College.

Unit Activities

Partnerships and Community Engagement

As part of the State Library's Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) grant **Transformation for Libraries: The Futures School**, Dawn La Valle presented at the 2024 Treasure State Academic and Information Services (TRAILS) Academic Library Symposium. She presented a "Fueling Montana Academic Libraries with Foresight" session as part of the TRAILS Futures School Cohort which will take place in 2025.

A collaboration between Kym Powe and Ashley Sklar, **All CT Reads 2024** continues with over 28 reservations for book discussion sets and over 500 checkouts of All CT Reads 2024 titles in the Palace app by CT readers. Together with partner Connecticut Library Consortium, the behind-the-scenes cycle of All CT Reads 2025 is underway as the kids, teens, and adult committees have selected this year's reading lists and entered the summer months of reading and book reviewing.

Following the year-long pilot initiative with **Libraries Without Borders US (LWB)**, Kym Powe and Ashley Sklar created a [Libraries Without Borders LibGuide](#) documenting the work and learnings of the collaborative projects in partnership with the six participating public libraries. Each of the six libraries had the opportunity to use local community and library assessment data to design and implement creative, relevant outreach solutions. With year two, LWB is collaborating with the CT State Library to create a series of trainings and toolkits for libraries across the whole state to learn to achievably expand outreach capacity, drawing on the experiences and learnings from the year one libraries which represent a mix of geographic region, demographics, and size.

Ashley Sklar was invited to continue for the second year of the University of Maryland's Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Leadership grant **Ready NOW: Supporting Youth and Families During Crisis**. This project builds on the previous work and publication [Library Staff as Public Servants: A Field Guide for Preparing to Serve Communities in Times of Crisis](#). Ashley is participating in the Community of Practice sessions during the planning phase this summer and as a mentor for a public library in the second cohort. She will be sharing about participating in year one from the State Library perspective for the Ready

NOW Year 2 Information Session on July 9 as the lead project team works to recruit public libraries from across the county.

In partnership with the [Department of Energy and Environmental Protection State Parks](#) Division's **No Child Left Inside** initiative, the CT State Library attended Boating Day to share information about State Library resources and books with children to support summer reading and help build home libraries. Among the many State Library resources that were shared, information was also shared about the CT StoryWalk project which resulted in four permanent StoryWalks being built in four CT State Parks.

Many states are beginning to evaluate literacy and how reading is taught in schools and enacting policies designed to help children learn to read at grade level. During these conversations the contributions of public libraries and their connection with parents and caregivers often aren't considered, leaving public librarians unsure how they can provide support. The Youth Consultants across New England built a half day workshop series called [Becoming Readers: Supporting all kids on their reading journey](#). During the session attendees learned to support readers from birth and ways to support prenatal and newborn families, how kids learn to read with a focus on dyslexia and other reading differences, and Mind in the Making which combines research focusing on executive function skills and science-fueled training and resources.

Dawn La Valle, Matt Geeza and Kym Powe exhibited at the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, **Community Access and Equity Fair** at the State Armory. They provided information on children's literacy, the Palace App, the CT Library for Accessible Books (CT LAB), and much more to fair attendees and partner state agencies. Dawn and Brad Bullis also exhibited at the **Connecticut Education Network Annual Conference** providing information on researchIT, Palace and Community Shares.

Brad Bullis visited the Henry Carter Hull Public Library (HCH) in the **Outreach Van** on Saturday, June 22nd. This visit supported the HCH Book Sale and the Clinton Arts Festival. The van was positioned right outside the HCH Library and patrons were provided with information about the Connecticut State Library & Museum, CT LAB, eGO CT, researchIT CT, Middletown Library Service Center (MLSC), and provided information about how to apply for a Connecticut State Library card. Division of Library Development (DLD) staff provided specific information to 31 individual patrons and had 49 patrons visit the van.

The next phase of the **eGO CT Community Sharing Program** has been launched and includes adding non-Destiny K12 sites to the Boundless platform for access to the Connecticut State Library ebook collection.

Suzanne Kiss attended a **Daring Dialogues** preview session presented by the CT Age Well Collaborative at their offices in Bristol. The 2.5-hour workshop, attended by about a dozen leaders in healthcare, aging, and community engagement, enabled participants to explore and examine their biases around aging in a safe, supportive space. DLD is currently working with CT Age Well Collaborative to bring the Daring Dialogues program to CT libraries.

Dawn La Valle and Suzanne Kiss, in partnership with Hartford Healthcare exhibited the CSL Outreach Van at the **Barnum Festival Community Health Fair** in Bridgeport. This family friendly event offered free health screenings and resources to support community health for children through seniors. DLD staff shared State Library resources including researchIT CT including MedlinePlus.

CT LAB staff conducted five outreach sessions during the period of mid-May through June 2024. These outreach visits reached 128 individuals. Two outreach events during this period were especially noteworthy. On May 22, 2024, Matt Geeza, and Paula McLean attended the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind's (BESB) Silver Summit. While at the Silver Summit, Matt participated in a breakfast panel, Matt and Paula presented a conference session on using CT LAB equipment, and, during the conference's exhibit fair, Paula registered nine new patrons for CT LAB services. On June 3, 2024, Matt Geeza and Ashley Sklar presented at the Connecticut League of Museum's (CLM) annual conference. Matt and Ashley's presentation highlighted the CT State Library's partnership with Perkins Access and the development of the pilot program, *Transforming Libraries and Museums*.

Gail Hurley continued to work with **GIANT Room** staff and pilot libraries through monthly meetups, on planning of community programs, and planning a late summer panel presentation by the pilot libraries on their experiences this year with the GIANT Room. June 1st kicked off a second year of partnering with the GIANT Room which will include presentations, learning workshops, and more pilots.

On May 28th, 22 employees from the Office of the State Comptroller's Central Accounts Payable Department **toured the Museum of Connecticut History and the State Library**. Once again, museum and library staff coordinated by splitting the group in two; Patrick Smith and Beth Burgess led the museum tour, while Lindsay Cawley, Kris Abery, and Susan Bigelow presented the three reference areas of the library and collection highlights to our guests. Archives staff gave a tour of the archival storage areas in the main building and the Van Block facility to Library Board member Alison Clemens on June 3. On June 4, Mel Smith gave a tour of the History & Genealogy Unit and State Archives to a group from the Springfield Armory in conjunction with a tour by the Museum of Connecticut History staff. And on June 18, Mel Smith gave a tour of the History & Genealogy Unit to Trinity College history students to learn about historical resources and, in particular, newspaper resources. Beth Burgess led a tour of the Museum of CT History for Trinity College's Watkinson Library staff and Board president on June 27. On June 13, ten employees from a variety of different legislative offices toured. Jennifer Matos guided the group on a brief tour through the museum, followed by Steve Mirsky, Kris Abery, and Mel Smith introducing each of the library's reference areas.

Jenny Groome served as a judge for the **2023 Government Documents Round Table** of ALA's Notable Documents panel. As part of her role, Jenny's reviews were published in the article ["Population, Prosperity, and Parks"](#) in *Library Journal*.

The **Historic Documents Preservation Program** supports records preservation and management in the municipalities and at the State Library. On July 8, 2024, the agency awarded a total of \$649,000 in FY2025 Cycle 1 grants to 102 municipalities in the amounts of \$5,500, \$7,500, and \$10,500, based on town size. Nicole Besseghir reviewed and processed the applications, and prepared contracts for the FY2025 grant awards, which were emailed to the municipalities; the contracts will be executed throughout July and August. The FY2024 grant period ended on June 30, 2024 and 112 municipalities completed Cycle 1 grants and 32 completed Cycle 2 grants, for a total of \$1,016,000 in funds expended.

Nicole Besseghir has been working with towns on **vault construction and renovation projects**, including projects for the Town of Avon, Town of East Hartford, the Town of Farmington, Town of Ledyard, the Town of Lebanon, the Town of Pomfret, the Town of South Windsor, the Town of Windsor Locks, the Town of Plainfield, Town of East Windsor, Town of Darien, Town of Scotland, and the Town of Stonington.

LeAnn Power issued approval of the certification renewal of William B. Meyer, a records storage facility in Windsor, CT to provide **off-site records storage** for State of Connecticut records. Nicole Besseghir managed the review process, communication with the vendor, and set up the necessary site inspections. All off-site storage facilities must meet the requirements of Public Records Policy 03 and receive a certificate of approval to store state agency records.

LeAnn Power administered the **Town Clerk Certification Examination** along with the Certification Committee on June 25 at the Newington Town Hall.

Work is progressing on the federally funded **Planning to Preserve Connecticut's Digital Government History Project**. The redaction web application was demonstrated at Slalom's *Impossible Factory* live event by Allen Ramsey and Slalom software engineer Rui Calado on June 5. Mark Conrad and the working group finalized and issued the [request for information \(RFI\)](#) on June 24. The working group held a virtual information session with prospective respondents to ask questions on July 1. The session was [recorded](#) and made available on the State Library's website. Mark also continues to meet with other state archives staff to gather information that will be useful for our final report with recommendations.

Lizette Pelletier attended a Hartford History Center (HHC) Advisory Committee meeting on May 20. HHC Director Brenda Miller gave the committee a **progress update on the post flood renovations** to the HHC and the rest of the Downtown Library caused by a waterpipe break on Christmas morning of 2022. Brenda shared lessons learned so far from the disaster recovery process.

Lizette Pelletier and Deborah Schander met with Wes Horton from the **Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society (CSCHS)** on May 22. CSCHS would like to establish procedures for the routine transfer of its archival records and potential funding for a part-time project archivist to process the collection.

Public Records and Archives staff met with the Chief Data Officer and other state data stakeholders for initial **discussions on data management and retention** and to start planning further records management education for and partnership with agency data officers throughout the state.

Over the last two months, the **Museum of CT History** has hosted 1,440 students via field trips and 70 adults through group tours.

Patrick Smith delivered "**Revolutionary Connecticut**" outreach programs to 60 third grade students at Oswegatchie Elementary School in Waterford and 75 fifth grade students at Parkman Elementary School in Enfield.

Hiking Through History programs were offered by Patrick Smith in May and June. On May 24, Patrick led 28 patrons on a hike of the Dismal Brook Preserve in Granby to learn about the site's natural history and over 300 years of settlement. On June 28, Patrick led a tour of Downtown Hartford for 22 attendees with a particular focus on Hartford's African American legacy. Additional Hiking Through History programs are planned for July (Enfield Historic District), August (Downtown Hartford), September (Barn Island Preserve in Stonington), and October (Lovers Leap State Park in New Milford).

On June 3, the Museum of CT History took the CSL Outreach Van to the **Connecticut League**

of Museums' Annual Conference held at Central CT State University. Inside the van, the museum displayed the fragment of a sculpture of King George III (1770), a facsimile of the State's copy of the Declaration of Independence, and related items to help tell the story of Connecticut's role during the American Revolution. Outside the van, Jennifer Matos, Beth Burgess, and Patrick Smith set up an information table, along with iPads that utilized Augmented Reality to allow visitors a 360-degree view of the fragment. About 50 conference attendees visited the Outreach Van.

Jennifer Matos and Beth Burgess delivered a conference session with Central CT State University graduate student Alex Dueben called "**A More Perfect Union**" at the Connecticut League of Museums' Annual Conference on June 3. The session discussed how the principles set forth during the nation's founding have been challenged and adapted over the past 250 years, and in what ways the nation's founding documents and ideals are still relevant and resonant to citizens today. Connecticut's founding documents (all of which are held by the CT State Library) were presented as a basis and context for understanding America's continual quest for a more perfect union.

Programs and Training

Dawn La Valle, Gail Hurley, and Barbara Ghilardi presented as part of the **Leading from the Future Series**, Strategic Planning – There is a Better Way, providing an overview of community needs assessment tools including Target Audience, Observation, and Empathy Mapping. Two follow-up, in-depth workshops are scheduled in July on target audience and empathy training as well as training on creating surveys. Dawn and Brad Bullis presented a workshop in the Leading from the Future series on Effective Library Policy Development which included a panel of directors and board members from the Avon Free Library, Darien Library, and the Public Library of New London.

The Middletown Library Service Center (MLSC) has traditionally been a space that lends children's materials to institutions (schools, public libraries, and universities). Last year, DLD began actively participating in outreach to the homeschool community to share CT State Library resources and allow lending of MLSC resources. At this year's **CT Homeschoolers Conference** we more than quadrupled the number of homeschooling families in the Alma database.

On July 17, 2024, the **CT LAB Book Club** held its quarterly book club meeting. The Book Club discussed *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese. CT LAB's federal partner, the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) offers virtual programs that are open to CT LAB patrons. **NLS is offering a Summer Reading Program** that runs June-August and includes author talks and activities open to patrons of all ages. CT LAB shared information about how to register for NLS-led programming with its patrons via the CT LAB newsletter.

Mel Smith was invited to speak at the **Probate Assembly: Continuing Education** in-person seminar along with staff from the Office of the Public Records Administrator and the State Archives. Mel spoke specifically about the long history of probate records gathered at the Connecticut State Library and housed in the State Archives. Patron access and use of such probate records, including the online digital availability of such records, was highlighted.

Elise Marzik and Nicole Marino presented a **records management training** on May 15 at the Connecticut Library Association Office Administrators Roundtable in Wallingford to 20 municipal

library employees. Elise Marzik, Nicole Besseghir, and Nicole Marino also presented a records management training hosted by the City of New Britain to 35 municipal employees from New Britain and surrounding towns on May 29.

The Office of the Public Records Administrator concluded the **State Records Management Webinar Training Series** with a session presented by State Archives staff on April 17. Lizette Pelletier and Damon Munz presented Session 7: Records Preservation & Disaster Preparedness, overview of best practices for preservation of records and how to prepare for potential records disasters to approximately 90 state employees representing a majority of Executive Branch state agencies. Elise Marzik developed the new training series, which will repeat annually.

Public Records, Archives, and Reference Services staff presented a Records Management Workshop at the municipal **Town Clerk School** hosted by Central Connecticut State University on May 8. Over 100 town clerks working towards certification attended, and topics included records management; records preservation; archival records; disaster recovery; municipal documents; and history and genealogy reference services.

Elise Marzik, Allen Ramsey, Damon Munz, and Mel Smith presented “Supporting Probate Courts: Records Management, Preservation, and Access,” at the **June 2024 Probate Court Assembly** in New Britain on June 26. Approximately 140 Connecticut probate court judges and staff attended the event.

Resource Updates

MLSC added approximately 20 **new puppets** to its puppet collection in June 2024. The entire puppet collection was recently added to the MLSC's equipment catalog. This change will improve the online browsing experience and reservation process for library staff who wish to borrow puppets from MLSC.

The FY2024 **annual report for CT Public Libraries** will open in mid-July. Webinars will be offered to train folks on the new platform as well as one-on-one appointment availability. The report's deadline will be moved up to Tuesday October 1st.

eGO CT continues to grow. There are now 325 K12, public, and academic libraries accessing the Connecticut State Library ebook collection. Circulation of the Connecticut State Library collection this fiscal year exceeds 19,530, and we are tracking for a total of 20,000 checkouts in FY24. There are currently 4,836 patrons actively using the Palace Project app.

In May and June DLD purchased 1,250 new items for the eGO CT program and the Palace app. So far this year 8,183 items have been purchased for the collection for a total of 38,552 items that are now provided for free to public libraries, academics, and schools. This includes over 23,000 simultaneous use titles provided from the Palace Bookshelf.

A **requestIT CT enhancement** was activated in fulfillment in June: an Owning Library can force check-in for those libraries who receive items back at the owning library that were never properly checked out / checked in by their borrowing libraries. This feature improves workflow and saves time for ILL staff that use fulfillment.

Wafaa Razeq finished a thorough update to each of the [State Agency Profiles](#), our popular online resource which offer brief histories of each state agency, including legislated name changes, tables of leadership, and links to annual reports.

Kris Abery and Elizabeth Esquilin have completed an ongoing project to accurately identify, catalog, and barcode about 1,200 **oversized federal documents** which require separate shelving to accommodate their unusual size.

Susan Bigelow and Mel Smith have completed an **inventory of oversized materials** that will be reclassified under the Library of Congress Classification system and placed in their designated new locations in our open and restricted special collections.

In May and June 2024, the **Preservation Office** digitized over 5,100 pages of State Library collection materials. Griselle Colon and Maritza Pagan digitized seven volumes of historical Connecticut General Assembly proceedings transcripts from 1965 and 1967. Twenty-four percent of transcripts from 1965 and 66% of transcripts from 1967 have now been digitized. Griselle Colon and Maritza Pagan also digitized 69 unique Connecticut state documents.

Kandace Yuen processed **original newspapers** into 14 acid-free boxes, created inventory lists, checked the state library's existing holdings, and provided the information to affected State Library units.

Collection Services continues to deaccession materials that agency staff have identified for weeding. During May-June 2024, we deaccessioned 686 volumes of **looseleaf legal treatises and West digests**. The materials weighed approximately 1,860 pounds and freed 102 linear feet of shelf space in the library Stacks location.

Laura Diller cataloged 91 **three-dimensional maps** issued by the U.S. Army Map Service. These contour maps are housed in a section of the Probate Vault.

The Discovery Services Unit is reviewing all unassigned digital inventory of copies of state library physical resources and, when available in **Internet Archive** or as a permanent link created by the **USGPO** (United States Government Publications Office) assigning the resource to the Internet Archive electronic collection or the USGPO electronic collection. During this reporting period we completed 4,100 updates. Examples: *United States. Government Accountability Office. Whistleblower protection. 2010. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Assisting newcomers through employment and support services. 2010.*

Discovery Services contributed 52 records to the **Name Authority Cooperative (NACO)** database. Noteworthy contributions were Connecticut. Task Force on Performance, Evaluation and State Certification of School Personnel for finding the report *Guidelines for local performance-based evaluation and state certification of professional school personnel, 1972*; and Taylor, Samuel, 1833-1908 for finding the *Taylor collection of early Hartford photographs, 1957*.

Significant **USGPO titles** cataloged: United States. Government Accountability Office. *College athletics: Education should improve its Title IX enforcement efforts. 2024.* U.S. Geological Survey. *Help build the Protected Areas Database of the United States (PAD-US). 2023.*

Significant **cartographic titles** cataloged: *The library atlas of the world ... containing over two hundred maps and a complete index*. Chicago, 1912. *Rand, McNally & Co.'s indexed atlas of the world : with 275 illustrations : historical-descriptive-statistical*. 1905.

The Office of the Public Records Administrator issued two **new records series** for the Department of Social Services agency specific schedule (DSS-05, effective 6/10/2024). Elise Marzik is currently working with five agencies on updates to agency-specific retention schedules.

LeAnn Power and Cherie Miles processed 554 municipal and 240 state agency authorization forms for records disposals.

The **State Records Center** provides off-site inactive records storage for state agencies free of charge. Doug Yaeger and Mike Soltesz accessioned 753 cubic feet of agency records; deaccessioned 1,393 cubic feet; processed 284 reference requests; and processed 110 re-files and inter-files.

Sarah Morin, student interns, and volunteers processed 8.5 cubic feet (17 boxes) of the **New Haven County Court records**. They completed Superior Court files 1770-1779; Superior Court papers by subject category Travel; County Court files March-June 1818; and County Court papers by subject category Executions 1825-1827. They identified approximately 17 cases involving Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Scanning for ingest to the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) is on hold until a new Digital Records Archivist is hired. Sarah Morin published two blog entries, [Divorce in Eighteenth-Century Connecticut](#) and [Black Governors and Kings of Connecticut](#), as well as two Instagram posts, Obadiah Munson's [petition to divorce](#) "the Infamous Rachel Page of Branford" and a [sheriff's bill](#) for the hanging of Joseph Mountain.

Recent Archives Accessions include:

- Office of the Chief Medical Examiner medical records, 1975-2016 (RG 194). The records are not open to the public per CGS 1-210 and CGS 19a-411.
 - *The medical records consist of photographs, slides, x-rays, and fingerprints.*
- Town of Redding land records, 1767-1983, 8 cubic feet (RG 062:117)
 - *The records consist of 10 general land record index volumes, grantor and grantee, 1767-1921; grantor and grantee, 1922-1953; grantor and grantee, 1954-1970; grantor and grantee A-K, 1971-1983; and grantor and grantee L-Z, 1971-1983.*

Public Records and State Archives staff continue to collaborate to move forward with initiatives for the management and preservation of **statewide electronic government records**. On June 4th, Public Records and Archives released revised procedures and new authorization forms for public agencies seeking approval to dispose of original paper records stored as digital images. *Public Records Memorandum 101: Disposition of Original Paper Records after Scanning (2024)* details the new procedures, the use cases for the new forms, and reminders for state agencies and municipalities developing internal digitization policies. Research into procedures developed by other states as well as the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) digital turn at the federal level informed the departments' new procedures. The result demonstrates a dedicated effort to help public agencies and our own departments pursue digitization goals responsibly and defensibly in accordance with Public Records Policy 04: Electronic Records Management.

The Museum of CT History has been awarded a **\$25,000 Planning Grant** from Connecticut Humanities for a project called *Connecticut's Role in the Founding of the United States*. The funding will allow for the hiring of an Exhibit Planning Consultant and an Exhibit Designer to help the museum plan and design a new exhibit that will commemorate and coincide with the United States' 250th Anniversary. In addition, an Advisory Team representing different backgrounds and disciplines will advise on the content of the exhibit, with the goal of including Black, Indigenous, and female voices, all of whom have had little to no representation in past anniversary commemorations. At the end of the project's timeline (June 2024 to January 2025), the museum will have a robust Exhibit Plan that will serve as a blueprint for the construction of the actual exhibit, which, if funding allows, would ideally open on or around July 4, 2026.

As part of the "Re-writing the Narrative: Connecticut Governors' Connections to Slavery & Freedom" project with the **Trinity Public Humanities Collaborative Program**, the Museum of CT History had two Trinity College students, Abdoul Diallo and Aida Haile, begin an internship in May. The students are working with museum staff to research and create new and improved biographies for Connecticut Governors that better showcase the governors' connections to slavery, freedom, and equal rights. Digital guides will be created for the new governor biographies, so that, in addition to being accessible on the museum's website, QR codes can be used by museum visitors to scan and access the content.

On June 10, Yale University Art Gallery Numismatic Curators Benjamin Hellings and Emily Seigerman visited the Museum of CT History to review the **Joseph C. Mitchelson Coin Collection**. The Yale curators took a thorough look at the collection's content, storage, and organization and provided feedback and recommendations to the Museum of CT History staff. They recommended an inventory and digital imaging of the collection as a good place to begin to better understand and document it and shared that there may be grant opportunities to support this work. The Yale curators have offered their assistance as the Museum of CT History continues to develop a plan for the Coin Collection.

The Museum of CT History was closed on June 13 to allow Johnson Control International (JCI) to continue its review of the security alarms on museum exhibit cases. JCI will be providing the State Library and Judicial Branch Facilities with a report analyzing **museum security** and making recommendations for improvements.

Over the past two months, Museum of CT History acquired four **new collection items**. A commemorative basketball and candy dish owned by Gov. John Rowland and a Wiffle Bat and Ball were donated to the collection; a Civil War medical kit owned by P. S. Starr was transferred from the State Archives to the Museum.

Beth Burgess coordinated the return of a portrait of Revolutionary War hero **General Joseph Spencer**, painted by Charles Noel Flagg in 1903, that had been on long-term loan to the East Haddam Historical Society. The museum currently has eight long-term and one short-term loans in place.

Beth Burgess arranged a research appointment with a representative from the **Museum of Fife & Drum** (Ivoryton, CT) to view seven military drums in the museum's collection. History & Genealogy graciously provided space for the researcher to examine the drums. Through the process, staff garnered new information (maker's labels, etc.) to add to object cataloging.