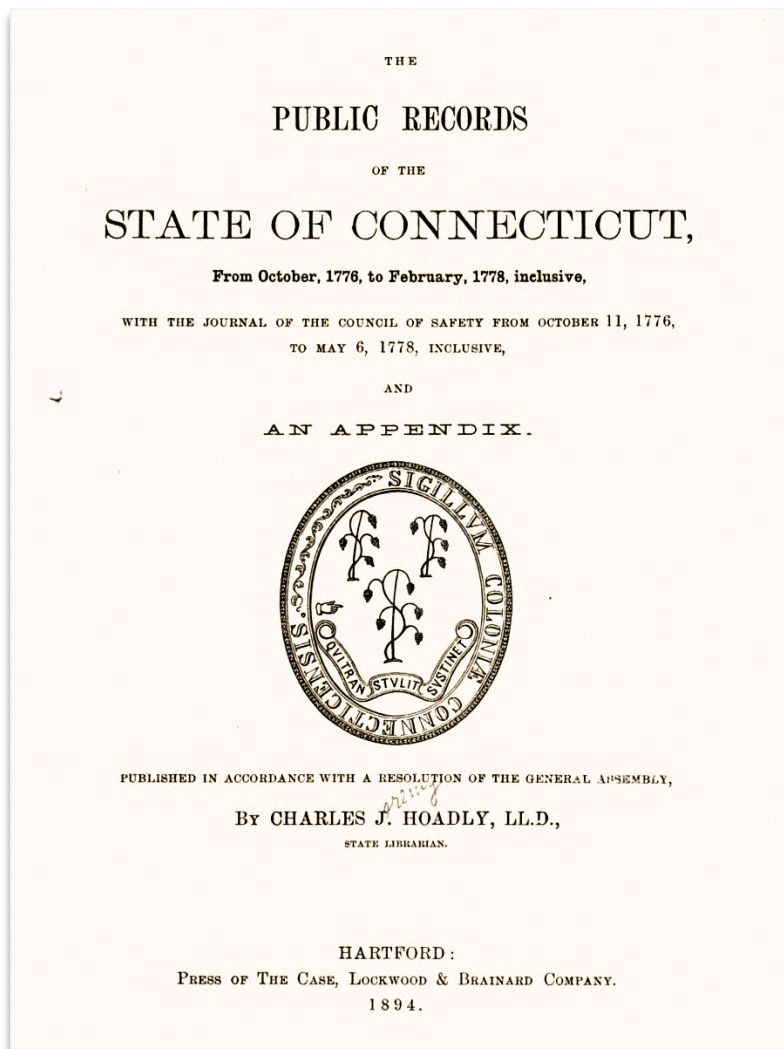


HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION PROGRAM

PRESERVING THE PAST, PROTECTING THE FUTURE

Annual Report on the
Preservation Activities of the Connecticut State Library

FY 2021



Connecticut State Library
Hartford, Connecticut
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Front Cover

The Public Records of the State of Connecticut. Vol. 1, 1776-1778. Hartford: Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1894.

Inside title page. *Note:* Digital versions of the volumes can be accessed on the Connecticut State Library website at

<https://ctstatelibrary.org/state-archives/the-public-records-of-the-state-of-connecticut/>

Issued in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 11-8k(c)2

**Annual Report to the Joint Standing Committee on Government Administration
On the Preservation Activities of the Connecticut State Library with
Allocated Funds in the Historic Documents Preservation Account**

I. Historic Documents Preservation Program

The Historic Documents Preservation Program supports the preservation and management of government records throughout Connecticut. This program was established under Public Act No. 00-146, *An Act Concerning Real Estate Filings and the Preservation of Historic Documents* and codified in *Connecticut General Statutes (CGS)* §11-8i through §11-8n, effective July 1, 2000.

The program is funded through a fee on land recordings pursuant to CGS §7-34a. As originally established, municipalities collected a \$3 land recording fee for records preservation and management, retaining \$1 for an associated town clerk fund and remitting \$2 for deposit to the program account.

Effective July 15, 2013, a new distribution model was set for the land recording fee on Documents with Nominees, excluding this fee from distribution to the program account and significantly reducing revenues (Public Act No. 13-184). In the 2014 and 2015 legislative sessions, the State Library requested that the program's portion of the recording fee on Documents with Nominees be credited to the account to keep the fund whole. The proposals did not move forward.

During the 2017 session, however, the legislature approved a significant increase in funding for the program, doubling the land recording fee that generates revenues for the account (Public Act No. 17-2). Effective December 1, 2017, municipalities began collecting a \$6 fee for records preservation and management and an additional \$4 fee for deposit to the state's General Fund. From the \$6 fee, municipalities retain \$2 for the town clerk fund and remit \$4 for deposit to the program account.

As the program is funded through a land recording fee, revenues are directly impacted by changes in the real estate market. In FY 2021, revenues increased by 13% as compared to the prior year. This rise was due in part to economic conditions related to the pandemic. A sudden decrease in recordings in the spring of FY 2020 was followed by exceptionally strong recording trends in FY 2021, likely reflecting higher volumes in both home sales and refinancing.

However, recording volumes for Documents with Nominees also increased during this time period due to greater utilization of the Mortgage Electronic Registration System (MERS). As described by MERSCORP Holdings, MERS is a “national electronic database that tracks changes in mortgage servicing rights and beneficial ownership interests in loans secured by residential real estate” and it serves as a nominee. Account revenues nevertheless increased by about \$190,000 in FY 2021 due to the overall rise in recording volumes.

The State Library maintains a fiscally conservative approach in its management of the account. During this period, the State Library awarded municipal grants; accessioned and preserved archival records; supported the publication of the *Public Records of the State of Connecticut* and other significant records projects; provided records training and outreach; and supported professional development in archives and records management.

Pursuant to statute, seventy percent of the funding is allocated for municipal grant awards “to enhance or improve the preservation and management of historic documents” [CGS §11-8l(d)]. A separate annual report is submitted each year to describe the municipal grant awards and provide a summary of the State Library’s activities and its recommendations concerning the grant program [CGS §11-8m(b)].

Thirty percent is allocated for “(1) the preservation and management of historic documents maintained by the State Library, and (2) the expenses of administering the historic documents preservation grant program” [CGS §11-8k(c)]. This annual report describes the activities carried out by the State Library with these allocated funds [CGS §11-8k(c)].

A. *Grant Program Administration*

The Historic Documents Preservation Grant Program is administered by the Office of the Public Records Administrator. In FY 2021, 140 municipalities were awarded targeted grants totaling \$882,000. Grants were awarded in the amounts of \$5,500, \$7,500, or \$10,500, for small, medium, and large towns, respectively. These grants supported significant improvements in the preservation and management of local government records across the state.

In response to the evolving situation with the pandemic and the impacts on both town and vendor operations, deadlines were shifted where possible for both FY 2020 and FY 2021 grants. For the FY 2021 grants, the grant program administrator worked with the Office of the Attorney General and utilized the Governor's Executive Order 7M to extend the Cycle 1 application and award deadlines by 90 days, ensuring that towns would have sufficient time to prepare their FY 2021 grant applications during the spring and summer of 2020.

B. *Government Records Preservation*

The State Archives contains more than 49,000 cubic feet of records documenting the evolution and implementation of state public policy, the rights and claims of citizens, and the history of Connecticut and its people.

In FY 2021, the Archives acquired 20 accessions totaling 73 cubic feet. Accessions included:

- **State Government Records:** Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Connecticut Valley Hospital patient records on microfilm, circa 1870-1948; Military Department, 59th Presidential Inauguration (PI59) missions photographs, 2021; General Assembly, Commissions, Committees and Councils, Consent of the People: 350 Years of Representative Government, circa 1987-1994; Department of Transportation correspondence, circa 1967-1968; Department of Transportation training videos, circa 1980-1999; Connecticut State Library state legislation regarding marathon dancing, 1933.
- **Local Government Records:** Town of Columbia aerial photographs, 1966-1986; Town of East Windsor tax records, 1887-1953; Town of Middlefield voter registration cards, 1934-1988.
- **Manuscript Collections:** James F. Blesso papers, circa 1951-2010; Central Baptist Church (Norwich) records, 1840-2020.

C. *ArchivesSpace*

ArchivesSpace is an open source web application designed to support core archives administrative functions. These functions include accessioning, describing, and

arranging analog/digital content. The State Library maintains an annual subscription agreement with LYRASIS for ArchivesSpace hosting services, including cloud storage, technical support, and ongoing software updates. The ArchivesSpace application allows staff to provide more timely access to newly acquired records and enhanced reference services.

D. *Public Records of the State of Connecticut*

The *Public Records* series is an essential resource for scholars of Connecticut's history, town historians, legislators, lawyers, family historians, and genealogists. The core of the publication is a transcription of the manuscript register of the acts, resolutions, and appointments made by the Connecticut's General Assembly, housed in the State Archives. Individual volumes contain supplementary documents relevant to the period under consideration. Editorial work includes an introduction, informational annotation, and a comprehensive index.

Recent volumes of the *Public Records of the State of Connecticut* have covered the postwar defeat of the Federalists by a Reform coalition, the adoption of a state Constitution and the end of public financing of religion in 1818, and tax and fiscal reform in subsequent years. Several volumes have won awards from the Association for the Study of Connecticut History.

Work continued on Volume XXIII (1825-1826) during FY 2021. Publication was delayed due to the impact of pandemic travel restrictions on research activities but is expected in mid-2022.

E. *Enterprise Content Management System*

The Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system is designed to improve electronic records management efficiencies for state agencies and allow the State Library to more effectively manage records retention, disposal, and accession procedures. The system utilizes the Atlas retention schedule database, FileNet repository, and IBM Enterprise Records (IER) module to automate the review and disposition of records. The IER module includes workflows for the destruction of records and for the transfer of archival records to the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA).

Public Records and Archives staff continued work on this project through the year in

collaboration with the Department of Administrative Services, Bureau of Enterprise Systems & Technology (DAS/BEST).

F. Records Management Training and Outreach

Public Records staff worked closely with state and local government officials to address records preservation and management issues, including records retention and disposition; disaster recovery; and vault storage. In FY 2021, the department presented two municipal records management training webinars in coordination with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and the Connecticut Town Clerks Association.

G. Professional Development in Records Management and Archives

Public Records and Archives staff attended a variety of conferences and webinars on records management and preservation topics, including two full-day online forums presented by the National Association of Government Archives & Records Administrators (NAGARA). The Fall Forum focused on local, state, and federal archives projects. The Winter Forum addressed the management of government records in the Microsoft 365 environment.

II. Historic Documents Preservation Account Expenditures – FY 2021

Personnel Costs	\$	561,280
Editorial Services	\$	10,571
Subscriptions - Archives	\$	6,820
Professional Development	\$	765
Van Lease – Archives	\$	7,701
Premises – Archives	\$	7,290
Account Correction	\$	(11,101)
	\$	<u>583,326</u>
Grant Awards	\$	881,925
Total Expenditures	\$	<u><u>1,465,251</u></u>