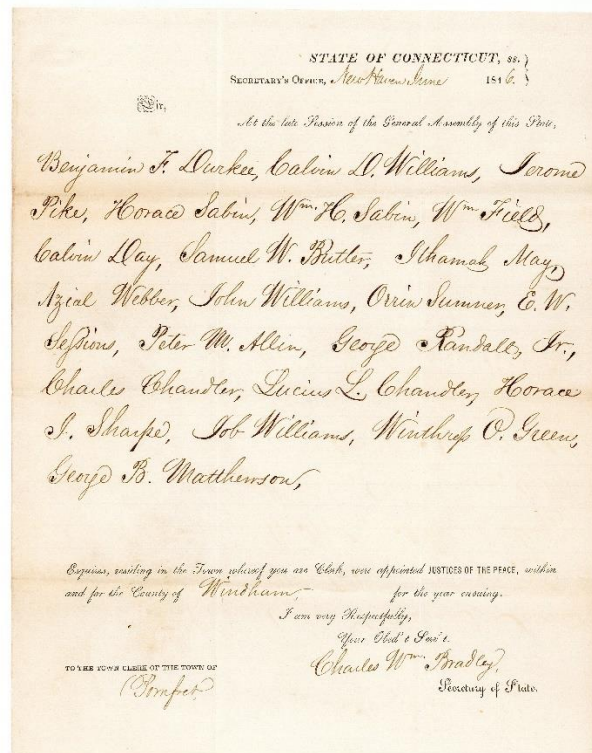


HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION PROGRAM

PRESERVING THE PAST, PROTECTING THE FUTURE

Annual Report on the Preservation Activities of the Connecticut State Library

FY 2023



Connecticut State Library
Hartford, Connecticut
September 1, 2023

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Front Cover

Justice of the Peace Appointments, 1846, Connecticut State Library, State Archives, RG 062:112, Town of Pomfret records, box 4, folder 20

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**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 the town clerk fund and remitting \$2 for deposit to the program account.

During the 2017 session, however, the legislature approved a significant increase in funding for the program, doubling the land recordings 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 2023, revenues decreased by 11% as compared to the prior year. Current market forecasts indicate a slowdown in home sales, but housing demand is still present.

The Historic Document Preservation account continues to be impacted by the legislative change to recording fees for Documents with Nominees also known as Mortgage Electronic Registration System (MERS) documents. 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.

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) now codified in CGS 49-10(h). 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. Our program continues to be impacted by this legislative change, losing 16% over the last fiscal year and an average of 18% each year since 2013.

Since the establishment of the grant program in 2000, the Connecticut State Library has distributed over \$20 million in grants to municipalities. The preservation and management of public records is an essential function of municipal government. Public records, including land records, maps, minutes and vital records, serve to protect and document the ongoing rights and interests of individuals and entities throughout the State of Connecticut.

The grant program supports towns in preserving these records while also increasing efficiencies, reducing costs, and improving their public services, including online access to public records. The program continues to provide significant benefits to the citizens of Connecticut by providing support and funding for municipalities' records management and preservation programs.

The State Library has maintained 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 through the Office of the Public Records Administrator. In FY 2023, 151 municipalities were awarded targeted

grants totaling \$955,500. 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.

B. *Government Records Preservation*

The State Archives contains 50,000 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 2023, the Archives acquired 25 accessions totaling 744 cubic feet. Accessions included:

- **State Government Records:** Office of the State Comptroller records; Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Office of Adjudications records, circa 1979-2000; Department of Public Health meeting minutes and records, 1894-1932, 1967-1987; Department of Public Works Bergin Correctional construction records, circa 1989-2011; Office of the Lieutenant Governor gifts, 1975-2022; Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection Division of Scientific Services records, 1944-2021; Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection Connecticut State Police records, 1990-2018; Connecticut Lottery Corporation records, 1971-2009; Department of Transportation photographs, 1990-1993; Norwich State Hospital admission cards; Capital Region Library Council records.
- **Local Government Records:** Town of Canterbury records, 1923-1989; Town of Chaplin maps, circa 1956-1972; Town of East Lyme school records; Town of Berlin tax records, 1878-1967; Town of Fairfield aerial photographs, 1931-1933; Town of North Canaan aerial photographs; Town of Eastford voter registration cards, 1942-2016; Town of East Hartford voter registration cards, 1897-2000; Town of Stratford records, 1865-1999; Town of Montville school records, 1963-1972.
- **Manuscript Collections:** The King's School of Bolton records, circa 1995-2007.
- **Digital Collections:** The following digital collections have been processed and are now available through the Connecticut Digital Archive: 1934 aerials; documents from *Rex (King George) vs Dr. John Hollowell et al.*, a significant court case about abortion and murder from 1747 found in the Windham Superior Court Records; transcripts from a 1964 investigation into the practices of the Norwich Police Department were scanned and made available to the public after being restricted

for 50 years; and nearly 60,000 emails handled by Director of Operations and Constituent Services Kathryn Damato in Governor Malloy's Office, 2011-2013.

C. *New Haven Court Records*

The State Archives completed work on a two-year grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to enhance access to judicial records held in the State Archives from the New Haven County, County and Superior Courts, 1700-1855. The "Uncovering New Haven" project continued earlier grant-funded work to identify records related to historically marginalized communities, especially enslaved persons, free persons of color, and Indigenous persons.

By the end of the grant on March 31, 2023, project staff had processed 102.5 cubic feet (205 boxes) of the New Haven County, County Court files and papers by subject from 1700-1810, rehoused all cases according to best archival practices, and identified and entered approximately 234 cases involving African-descended, African American, Black, and Indigenous persons into a database spreadsheet to be published online. Staff also scanned 724 court cases (approximately 3,054 pages) involving African American, Black, and Indigenous persons—as well as other selected court cases—from 1700-1810 that are in the process of being uploaded to the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA).

The State Library has committed an additional year of funding for processing the remaining County Court records as part of our preservation activities. Staff are currently processing records from 1812-1819 and continue to upload cases to the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) as they are discovered and scanned.

D. *Digitization of Building Codes*

Public Records and Archives staff participated in a working group with the State Librarian, a Connecticut State Representative, officials from the Department of Administrative Services [DAS], and officials from municipalities and regional council of governments regarding Special Act 22-14 "An Act Concerning Building Officials, Resources Relating to the Administration of the State Building Code and the Promotion of Careers in Related Fields". The Digitization of Building Codes Working Group drafted and submitted a report on the proposed digitization of state building code records to the Connecticut General Assembly Planning and Development Committee.

As part of the recommendations, Public Records and Archives staff formed a working group to revise the M10 Land Use and Development municipal records retention schedule. The M10 revision working group has continued work on this project through the year and members include municipal town planners, building officials, architects, and legal counsel.

E. Archives Connection System

The State Archives received a Congressionally Directed Spending Funding Request of \$948,000 through the offices of Senators Richard Blumenthal and Christopher Murphy. Planning to Preserve Connecticut's Digital Government History is a collaborative project of the Connecticut State Library (CSL) and the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) through the University of Connecticut, working with Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology (BEST).

The project supports expanding and improving the automatic digital connection required to transfer essential long-term and historically significant digital records from state agencies to the custody of the State Archives. Outcomes will include workflows for automating redaction of sensitive and confidential information within publicly accessible documents housed in the CTDA and recommendations and costs estimate for a secure digital repository certified as meeting digital preservation standards for confidential and restricted records. The State Library's cost share on this project falls under our preservation activities.

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 2023, the department presented municipal records management training at the Connecticut Town Clerks Conference and at an event hosted by the Greenwich Police Department, as well as a municipal training webinar for the Connecticut Education Network. Staff also attended the fall and spring conferences of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association, staffing an information table for the State Library and speaking with clerks and vendors regarding the grant program and other records management topics. Public Records and Archives staff also presented at a public event series at Connecticut's Old State House.

G. Professional Development in Records Management and Archives

The State Library maintains an annual membership in the Council of State Archivists (CoSA), which provides leadership that strengthens and supports state, territorial, and District of Columbia archives in their work to preserve and provide access to government records.

Public Records and Archives staff attended a variety of conferences and webinars on records management and preservation topics, including a digital preservation workshop hosted by the Northeast Document Conservation Center.

II. Historic Documents Preservation Account Expenditures – FY 2023

Personnel Costs	\$ 500,251
Consultant Services	\$ 14,805
Archival Supplies	\$ 8,122
Professional Development	\$ 95
Van Lease - Archives	\$ 4,493
Premises – Archives	\$ 65,871
	\$ 593,637
Grant Awards	\$ 955,500
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Total Expenditures	\$ 1,549,137