

# HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION PROGRAM

## PRESERVING THE PAST, PROTECTING THE FUTURE

### Annual Report on the Preservation Activities of the Connecticut State Library

FY 2024



Connecticut State Library  
Hartford, Connecticut  
September 1, 2024

# CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY

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## Front Cover

Enos Benham vs. James Thompson, 1748/9, Connecticut State Library, State Archives, RG 003, New Haven County, County Court, Files.

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

**Annual Report to the Government Administration and Elections Committee  
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 2024, revenues decreased by 9% from the previous year; comparing the past two years, revenues declined 20%. Some factors that may have contributed to the decrease include a low housing inventory, steep home prices, high mortgage rates, and inflation. Real estate predictions indicate that the remainder of 2024 and into 2025 will be challenging for both buyers and sellers, but it is possible that the number of houses for sale will increase, and mortgage rates will stabilize in 2024/2025.

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 15% 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 \$21 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 New Haven Court Records project 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 2024, 150 municipalities were awarded targeted grants totaling \$1,016,000. Grants were awarded in the amounts of \$6,000, \$8,000, or \$11,000, 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 over 53,000 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 2024, the Archives acquired 46 accessions totaling 3,049 cubic feet. Accessions included:

- **State Government Records:** Connecticut General Assembly Portraits collection, State Senate photograph album, circa 1874-1875 (PG 540). Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection, Division of Scientific Services (RG 161:002): Research files, Miscellaneous Imprint Unit case files, Administration files, DNA miscellaneous files, Toxicology Unit and Controlled Substances Unit case files (sexual assault or homicide related), 101 cubic feet; Toxicology Unit and Controlled Substances Unit case files (sexual assault or homicide related) and Latent Print case files, 1937-2022, 290 cubic feet; Reconstruction files, 66 cubic feet; Toxicology Unit and Controlled Substances Unit case files (sexual assault or homicide related) and Firearms case files, 1945-2018, 117 cubic feet. Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection, State Police (RG 161:001). Investigation files, 2002, 47 cubic feet. The records are not open to the public per CGS §1-210 and federal Criminal Justice Information (CJI) policy. General Assembly, Joint Committee on Executive and Legislative Nominations records, 2019, 2 cubic feet (RG 002:025). Governor Ned Lamont Records, photographs by James Naleski, 2022-2023 (RG 005:042). Insurance Department docket files, 1983-2019, 9 cubic feet: regulation making records, 1991-2019, 18 cubic feet (RG 011). Office of the Chief Medical Examiner medical records, 1970-2018, 202 cubic feet (RG 194). The records are not open to the public per CGS

§1-210 and CGS §19a-411. State Marshal Commission records, 2001-2022, 5 cubic feet (RG 177).

- **Local Government Records:** Town of Bolton land records, 1909-1980, 6 cubic feet (RG 062:012). Town of Bridgeport welfare case files, circa 1904-1961, 297 cubic feet (RG 062:015). Town of Harwinton land records, 1905-1957, 9 volumes (RG 062:066). Town of Lebanon land records, 1941-1981, 17 volumes (RG 062:071). Town of Manchester burial permits, 1914-1928, 0.5 cubic feet (RG 062:077). Town of Pomfret records, 1934-1963, 3 cubic feet (RG 062:112); records, circa 1798-1976, 0.25 cubic feet (RG 062:112) list of taxes abated, 1827-1829; property transfer data, 1905-1906; correspondence, 1799, 1808, 1930, 1938; and notices of meetings permanently recorded school society districts, 1845-1850. Town of Redding land records, 1767-1983, 8 cubic feet (RG 062:117) 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. Town of Sherman voter registration cards, 1950-2016, 0.25 cubic feet (RG 062:127). The registration cards are not open to the public per CGS §1-210 due to personally identifiable information (PII). Wallingford Probate Court record books, 1776-1897, 32 volumes (RG 004:148).
- **Manuscript Collections:** Abby H. Smith family correspondence, 1854-1879. 17 letters (RG 069:043). Pierre Starr Papers, 1834-2022, 4 cubic feet (RG 069:193) Pierre Sythoff Starr, 1839-1920, Pierre served as an assistant surgeon in the 39th Ohio Infantry during the Civil War. After the war he practiced medicine in Chicago and Hartford. The papers consist of correspondence, materials he received while attending Yale University and University of New York, military records, financial records, items from his post Civil War medical career, photographs, and materials from presentations by Robert Starr III, great grandson of Pierre, and the book launch party of *"For my Grandchildren" The Civil War Journey of Pierre Starr*. George F. Cram, Chicago, Illinois, Connecticut state map; Connecticut Light & Power Company and Southern New England Telephone Company standard maps, 1975-1976; bills for services and paid, 1798, 1817-1849; and Citizens National Bank book, 1926-1944.
- **Digital Collections:** All ingests to the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) were on hold during FY2024 as a result of a system migration to a new platform. However, Digital Records Archivist Barbara Austen continued to keep up with newly scanned

material from the New Haven County Court Records Project, staff folders from former Governor Dannel P. Malloy's office, and other small collections until she retired in March 2024.

### C. *New Haven Court Records*

The State Archives completed additional work on a 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, 1666-1855. The "Uncovering New Haven" project continues earlier grant-funded work to identify records related to historically marginalized communities, especially enslaved persons, free persons of color, and Indigenous persons.

As of June 30, 2024, project staff have processed 195.25 cubic feet (390.5 boxes) of the New Haven County and Superior Court records. Records completed include County Court files 1666-1818, County Court papers by subject (all categories), Superior Court files 1711-1779, Superior Court papers by subject (all categories except executions). They have reboxed cases according to best archival practices, identified and entered approximately 400 cases involving African-descended, African American, Black, Indigenous, Spanish, and multiracial persons or groups into a database spreadsheet to be published online. Staff also scanned 1,440 cases (5,439 pages) for ingest into the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA). Scanning has been halted since the retirement of the previous Digital Records Archivist in March 2024 and will resume when the position is filled.

In order to enhance public awareness of these research resources, this project has been publicized on the Connecticut State Library website, as well as several other venues. To date, staff have published approximately 50 blog posts and 43 Instagram posts; participated in 5 presentations, podcasts, or forums; submitted 4 articles to third-party publications; and the project was featured or mentioned in at least 9 articles, newsletters, subject guides, podcasts, etc. by others.

The State Library has committed an additional year of funding for processing the remaining County and Superior Court records as part of our preservation activities. Staff are currently processing the County Court files 1819-1855, Superior Court files 1780-1798, Superior Court criminal files 1797-1855, Superior Court judgments (civil case files) 1798-1855, Superior Court no appearance files 1808-1856, and Superior Court papers by subject (executions).

#### D. *Planning to Preserve Connecticut's Digital Government History Project*

The State Archives received a Congressionally Directed Spending Funding Request of \$948,000 through the offices of Senators Richard Blumenthal and Christopher Murphy. The project is a collaboration of the Connecticut State Library (CSL) and the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) through the University of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Bureau of Information Technology Solutions (BITS).

The project supports expanding and improving the automatic digital connection required to transfer essential long-term and historically significant archival 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 cost estimates for a secure digital preservation repository meeting digital preservation standards for confidential and restricted records. The State Library's cost share on this project falls under our preservation activities.

During FY2024, the Archives Connection System Workgroup worked with vendor Slalom Consulting to automate the redaction process for Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and other confidential information contained in state agency digital records transferred to the State Archives. Slalom, State Archives, and DAS BITS staff met regularly during this period including daily "standup" meetings to report on progress and weekly status review meetings for product development and backlog status to discuss current redaction workflows and pain points; visualize future workflows; and review available and potential resources. The redaction web application project completed user authentication into the web-application and held its final project readout on April 4. Assistant State Archivist Allen Ramsey and Slalom software engineer Rui Calado demonstrated the redaction web application at Slalom's Impossible Factory live event on June 5.

Information Management Consultant Mark Conrad issued a Request for Information (RFI) for a secured digital preservation repository through the federal General Services Administration (GSA) Market Research as a Service (MRAS) to state and local governments and federal agencies. Twenty-nine vendors responded with information about their offerings and suggestions for improving our RFI. The working group reviewed the draft RFI and provided feedback. The group issued the [request for information \(RFI\)](#) on June 24. Mark continued to meet with other state archives to gather information that will be useful for our final report with recommendations.

#### E. *Records Management Training and Outreach*

Public Records staff continues working closely with state and local government officials to address records preservation and management issues, including records retention and disposition, disaster recovery, electronic records management, and vault storage.

In FY 2024, the department presented municipal records management training either in person or via webinar for the New Town Clerk Orientation, the Litchfield County Tax Collectors Association, the Registrar of Voters Association Conference, the Library Association Office Administrators Roundtable, the City of New Britain, the Town Clerk Certification School, the Probate Court Assembly, and the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. Staff also attended the fall and spring conferences of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association, presenting Public Records program updates and staffing an information table to discuss the grant program and other records management topics with clerks and vendors.

In addition, the department introduced a new state agency records management training program consisting of a series of seven webinars with presentations by Public Records staff, State Archives staff, and State Library Reference Services staff targeted towards Records Management Liaison Officers and other state agency staff.

Assistant State Archivist Allen Ramsey and Government Records Archivist Damon Munz participated in the Archives on the Hill advocacy activity sponsored by the Council of State Archivists (CoSA) on July 25th in Washington DC prior to the start of the CoSA / Society of American Archivists (SAA) joint annual conference. They visited the offices of Senators Blumenthal and Murphy and Representatives Courtney and Larson to thank them in person for their support of the Congressional Directed Spending grant that the State Archives received to fund the *Planning to Preserve Connecticut's Digital Government History Project*.

#### F. *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.

CoSA offers a variety of educational opportunities and forums for both professional and technical staff. This includes advocacy for archival programs, technical shop talks, spotlights

on individual state and territorial archives, case studies and best practices, and unconferences on electronic and digital records.

Public Records and Archives staff attended a variety of conferences and webinars on records management and preservation topics, including artificial intelligence; accessioning digital records; continuity of operations planning; earthquake preparedness; disaster response and recovery; digitization standards and best practices; cloud computing; and the National Association of Government Archives & Records Administrators' (NAGARA) Spring Forum on data management issues.

**II. Historic Documents Preservation Account Expenditures – FY 2024**

Personnel Costs	\$ 571,656
Consultant Services	\$ 54,635
Data Services	\$ 19,263
Membership Dues	\$ 5,000
Archival Supplies	\$ 4,461
Professional Development	\$ 176
Archives Month Marketing	\$ 69
Premises – Archives	\$ 68,965
Van Lease – Archives	\$ 3,200
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	\$ 727,425
Grant Awards	\$ 1,016,000
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<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 1,743,425</b>