

What's new at the Connecticut State Library!

Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council

December 6, 2022, CSL, Van Block Facility

Overview:

1. **Personnel update – the great retirements of 2022!**
 2. **Building, Budget, Equipment, & Hours**
 3. **History & Genealogy Staff Indexing projects and more**
 4. **Digitization at CSL / LOC newspaper grant project & new databases**
 5. **What's new in the Archives?**
 6. **FamilySearch**
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1. Personnel Update:

Changes in Connecticut State Library staff, and what a year it has been!

Glynis Georgie, long-time Federal Documents cataloger retired in January of 2022. Her position has yet to be filled.

As reported last year, Steve Rice of the Government Information Reference Librarian, sadly passed away on November 28 of 2021, and his position has still not been filled. The position has been posted and applications are currently under review to determine those candidates to be interviewed.

On April 1, 2022, Nancy Lieffort of the Government Information Unit, Debra Pond of the Law & Legislative Reference Unit, and Carolyn Picciano of the History & Genealogy Unit retired, this is not an April fool's joke....

Also in April of 2022, Kathy Makover of the Public Records Administrators Office retired as well. Kathy was instrumental in overseeing the State Library preservation grant program to local municipalities, along with working with city/town clerks to ensure town vault security/specifications.

In early May 2022, Victor Maldonado, our lone mail room attendant, left State Library service; the mail room position has been posted, closed and interviews should be happening soon. In the meantime, members of the Photoduplication Department are filling in to deliver/pick-up mail for the agency.

On July 1, of 2022, History & Genealogy Unit Office Assistant Kristi Finnan retired as well. All H&G staff have temporarily taken on the many aspects of Kristi's position until a replacement is hired.

The State Museum of Connecticut History directors' position (formerly Dean Nelson's position who retired in the Fall of 2021) has been posted and interviews have been conducted. It is anticipated that an announcement for the new director will come soon.

Former museum curator David Corrigan, who retired in the Fall of 2021, has returned in a limited, temporary fashion to assist in completing various tasks to help pave the way for the new director of the State Museum of Connecticut History.

An extra little tidbit: As a matter of H&G Unit comparison: in 2009 when Richard Roberts retired, there were 6 professional and 3 paraprofessional staff in the History & Genealogy Unit. Today, before any future hires, there are 3.6 professional staff members (we split the use of one staff member with GIRS) and 1 paraprofessional!

2. Building, Budget, Equipment, & Hours (Oh, my...):

Building: As reported over the last few years, the State Library has experienced some “water issues” in various areas of the building. Major roof repairs have taken place this year with contractors taking over the administrator’s parking area as a work zone, displacing staff to park elsewhere for over a month in the early Fall. The repairs are now completed, and leaks are now gone!

Due to intermittent staffing shortages with the State Marshals who now guard and protect the Connecticut State Library and Supreme Court building; the South entrance to the library is often closed for external access. The North entrance is always open for public use.

Budget: We are almost mid-way through the fiscal year, and there is nothing specific to report at this time. Highlights for the H&G department this year were two generous monetary donations, one from a private individual and another from a group of dedicated Connecticut Genealogical and Historical Societies who banded together. Nearly \$8,500 was donated for book purchases for the unit!

Equipment: After many years of planning, the Preservation Department under the guidance of Anna Newman, has purchased two new overhead scanners for digitization of library and archival materials!



**Brand new scanners ready for action in the
CSL preservation office!**

Left: BookDrive Mark II scanner (note special
V - shaped cradle for support of bound items!)

Right: CopiBook i2S scanner (oversized cradle)

Hours: Starting on July 1, 2021, the library was opened Monday to Friday, 10-4 to the public without registering for use, with limited seating; about 50% capacity. As a result of the many retirements previously mentioned, public hours were reduced on April 1st to four hours per day, Monday-Friday, 10:00-2:00. Library hours will likely not to be increased until such time as to when each reference unit (3) rehires a new staff member.

Another extra little tidbit: The Access Services Division of the Connecticut State Library which includes all three reference units, has been rebranded as **Reference Services!**

3. History & Genealogy staff projects and more: Ongoing projects for 2022 and beyond:

Connecticut General Assembly granted divorce cases

Mel Smith & Jeanie Sherman

A database of hundreds of divorces granted by the Connecticut General Assembly 1655-1897 has been completed, however, due to time constraints, a webpage has yet to be created. Various manuscript and published resources are utilized in highlighting, sometimes-fascinating, colonial to 19th-century divorces granted by the Connecticut General Assembly. Many of these divorces pre-date those granted by the Connecticut superior court system which was formed in 1711. It is hoped to be completed and posted sometime in 2023!

Early Connecticut Superior Court divorces, 1713-1798

Susan Bigelow

Indexing of divorce cases found in Early Connecticut Superior Court Records. Susan is currently in volume 19 (of 31 total) of these records covering the years 1713-68. This index should offer a wealth of colonial and early State of Connecticut families once completed.

Pauper database

Kevin Johnson, Barbara Austen & Maria Paxi

Pauper database, circa 1844-1907, Boxes of town correspondence to the Connecticut State Comptroller for payment of non-resident paupers. Kevin has inputted 23 boxes of correspondence into a database which includes over 11,600 entries! Maria is done editing Kevin's work and the database is likely to go on-line sometime in 2023 as time allows for the creation of a supporting webpage. Stay tuned!

H&G staff with assistance from our colleagues in the State Archives are continually striving to make available to our patrons' unique information online from the wide and varied resources found in the State Archives and Special Collections of the Connecticut State Library.

4. Digitization at CSL /LOC newspaper grant project:

Digitization of objects at CSL

CSL continues to digitize and place items on-line to be discovered and accessed via the State Library online [Primo Catalog](#). You may also access the [Connecticut Digital Archive](#) (CTDA) directly as well to search and find items. Barbara Austen continues to add digitized objects to CTDA and I would encourage you to investigate this resource from time to time to determine what new materials have been added that might be helpful to you in your genealogical and historical research.

Newspapers in the Connecticut Digital Archive

Please visit the Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project (CDNP) website ctdigitalnewspaperproject.org/ for information on titles that have been digitized to date, as well as blogs, guides and other resources.

Library of Congress (LOC) Grant Newspaper Grant Digitization

The Connecticut State Library has received a fifth federal grant to digitize additional Connecticut newspapers from our newspaper microfilm collection. The grant will allow Connecticut to add another 100,000 pages, digitized from microfilm of state newspapers. Titles have been announced, and will include the following:

- **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) 1926-39 & **La Verita, Corriere del Connecticut** (New Haven) 1939-46
- **The Willimantic Journal** (Willimantic) 1857-1911
- **Windham County Observer** (Putnam) 1905-1949
- **Putnam Patriot** (Putnam) 1908-1949
- **The New Haven Union** (New Haven) 1905-1920

For access to the free online newspapers at the LOC please see: [Chronicling America](#).

Our correspondence (mail & e-mail) remains high from historical levels as we answered 1,702 such queries in fiscal 2022. This is down several hundred such requests from the previous COVID haunted fiscal year, but we have also been missing Carolyn & Kristi who helped answer patrons' questions.

New Databases: *Early American Newspapers*, by Readex, Series #18, Connecticut Titles include:

Bridgeport Standard	Bridgeport	1863-07-27	1867-12-31
Unionist	Brooklyn	1833	1833
Charter Oak	Hartford	1839-04-01	1848-11-09
Hartford Evening Post	Hartford	1868-02-01	1872-12-25
Hartford Evening Press	Hartford	1856	1868
New Britain Times	New Britain	1858-05-08	1859-09-10
New London Daily Star	New London	1848-01-24	1873-05-08
Ultimatum	New London	1838-07-01	1842-10-29
Waterbury American	Waterbury	1844-12-14	1876-08-11

Plus, thousands of other issues from other New England newspaper titles!

5. What's new in the Archives?

New Haven Court Records Project

Thanks to a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the Connecticut State Library continues to process the New Haven County, County Court records collection for enhanced public access and use. You will find an online [subject guide](#) along with a published [blog](#) that chronicles a selection of the interesting, amusing, tragic, and sometimes infuriating cases found in these court records. This project has taken longer than originally anticipated, and another grant or funding may be needed to extend and conclude it as intended.

Connecticut Charter & Bill of Rights Conservation

State Archivist Lizette Pelletier continues to work to make the needed arrangements to have the Connecticut Charter of 1662 and the Connecticut copy of the United States Bill of Rights sent to the Northeast Document Conservation Center for treatment. This would allow for the preservation and digitization of these very important documents to ensure access for future generations. Various other

historic Connecticut documents such as the Prudence Crandall court case files may also be included in this conservation effort!

Some new acquisitions of interest for genealogists in the State Archives include:

Probate Records (RG #004, probate courts)

Canton Probate Court Records, record books, 1922-87, 15 cu. feet, 31 volumes, accession 2022-006

Darien Probate Court Records, probate files, 1963-64, 1 cu. foot, accession 2022-007

Derby Probate Court Records, Wills, ca. 1858-1976, 5 cu. feet, accession 2022-014

Naugatuck Probate Court Records, probate records, 1863-1976, 65 cu. feet, 123 volumes, accession 2021-031

Naugatuck Probate Court Records, probate files, 1903-40, 5 cu. feet, accession 2021-032

Municipal Records (RG # 62, Town & Borough Records)

Lebanon Grand Lists, (real estate & personal property), 1900-90, 105 volumes, accession 2022-015

North Canaan Land Records, volumes 1-11, ca. 1859-1917+, accession 2022-002

Pomfret Town Records, 1799-1999, 6 cu. feet; 6 boxes, accession 2022-013

Putnam Grand Lists, (real estate & personal property), 1855-2000, 181 volumes, accession 2021-023

Personal Collections (RG 69, Personal Papers/Records)

Calvin Butler Papers, ca. 1800-1899, Calvin Butler was a lawyer who practiced in Plymouth, Connecticut, and served as a state representative and state senator. The collection consists of diaries, correspondence, and deeds. 1 box, 1 cu. foot, accession 2021-028

Church Records (RG 70, Connecticut Church Records)

Congregational Church of Easton, Connecticut, 1762-2021, 5 items, (3 Microsoft Word documents, 1 pdf document, and 1 digital video disc (DVD).), accession 2022-008

For information about items in our State Archives, please consult the [ArchivesSpace](#) finding aid!

6. FamilySearch

The Connecticut State Library, in partnership with FamilySearch, has begun in 2022 a massive collaboration which will result in the digitization of millions of images of items from our State Archives and other book collections.

The following are the items that **have been digitized** to date this year!

- Census (Population) for CT: 1850-70
- Census (Special) for CT: 1850-80
- Family & Bible Record Abstracts (27 vols.)
- Connecticut Archives Series (9 new subjects, see: [Connecticut Series Online](#))
- Connecticut Vital Records, manuscript records of town vital records
- Coroner records, CT counties not done before: Fairfield, New London, etc...
- Divorce Record volumes for Fairfield, Hartford & New London Counties
- Veteran Records/Fitch Home Records (RG #73)

Items currently being surveyed for inclusion for the next round of scanning!

- Church Records (various churches/denominations not done before)
- CT vital records from RG #72 (Barbour II, 1845-1905) various towns
- CT vital records, Arnold copy of Connecticut Town Vital Records used in the creation of the Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital records
- CT Probate Court files (to 1940) various courts

Items being considered for future scanning by CSL of future scanning by FamilySearch include:

CT Probate Record volumes (to 1940) various courts
County Temporary Home Records (various CT counties)
Municipal Tax lists (grand lists) various CT towns

Other collections or items may be included/added to this listing as approval and condition of the material allow. Connecticut land records in the custody of the various town clerks will not be included in this potential project.



**Wishing you all a safe and prosperous holiday season and wonderful
New Year!**

Hope to see you at the Connecticut State Library in 2023!