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Civil War Commemoration by State Librarian Kendall Wiggin

On April 12, 2011 the firing of Civil War era cannons in front of the State Capitol marked the beginning of Connecticut's commemoration of the Civil War. Over the next four years, museums, libraries, and archives around the state will present programs, curate exhibits, and offer other special events. The theme of the 150th anniversary is "That the Generations to Come Might Know Them." Historian Jill Lepore has said that "How wars are remembered can be just as important as how they were fought and first described . . . Waging, writing, and remembering a war all shape its legacy, all draw boundaries." The State Library is a tremendous resource for anyone studying the war or tracing ancestors who fought in the war. The collections of the Library, Museum and Archives document the enormous role Connecticut played in providing troops, arms, and supplies. Over the next four years we will be digitizing and making available through our website a wide array of these resources. The State Library is also an active partner in many commemoration efforts. I am honored to be a member of the Connecticut Civil War Commemoration Commission. The Commission's website <http://finalsite.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=2296> is a great source providing an events calendar, a speaker's bureau, news and links to important resources. The State Library is working with Connecticut History Online (CHO), Encyclopedia of Connecticut History (ECHO), and Connecticut Treasures to increase the resources available online and to discover new resources. Through the Conservation Connection we are also working to improve the conservation of the documents, newspapers, photographs and artifacts that document the Civil War that are in the custody of libraries, museums and archives around the state. How well we remember the war and understand its impact on our society today will be greatly enhanced by the activities the State Library and other institutions around Connecticut undertake over the next four years.



Spring Comes . . . to Historical Connecticut, **by Mark Jones, State Archivist**

After a long, trying winter, the editorial staff of the *CONNector* is providing our readers with images of spring in Connecticut drawn from our historical photographs. We looked through the *Hartford Courant* to catch any article about spring and found an 1852 editorial entitled, "May." The author, a *Cranky Yankee* compares the idealized vision of spring with the reality:

The poetry of May! The roads are muddy-the "banks of violets" are too wet to sit upon and in some parts of New England, half snow-the "sporting lambkins" are lean, slim, dirty animals-the "village green" is as brown as the winter has left it, and there is no one so "jolly green" as to dance upon it-the "May pole" is a whipping post or a tavern sign post. Is there any romance in all this, or any poetry of May? No one who has seen the earth in New England on the first of May 1852, would ever fancy that it could possibly inspire poetry. Of the "prose" of May we have sufficient. We have not heralded even the first Dandelion yet, and the "balmy air" breathes as if it came over a snow bank.

May 3, 1852, Hartford Courant.

Spring Wildflowers



Eva C. Potter was an artist who lived in Glastonbury. Little is known about her. In 1943 she sold one hundred and forty-five watercolors of spring wildflowers in Connecticut to the State Library. She painted them from 1941-43.

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Spring Comes . . .to Historical Connecticut (continued)



Bulbous Buttercup, May 12, 1941



Wild Azalea, June 4, 1941



Showy Lady's Slipper, June 19, 1941



Skunk Cabbage, April, 1942

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Spring Comes . . . to Historical Connecticut (continued)



Fishing Season

For fishermen, spring begins with the opening of trout season in early April and the running of the shad in late April and early May. The photos to the left show shad boats and fishermen. The photos at the bottom show the crowds that can assemble at good fishing holes on opening day of trout season and a fisherman about to net a catch on the Housatonic River. The photographs come from PG 170, *Connecticut Development Commission's Survey of Connecticut*. They were shot to provide tranquil images of the state to attract businesses and new residents.



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Spring Comes . . .to Historical Connecticut (continued)

Elizabeth Park Spring Flower Show



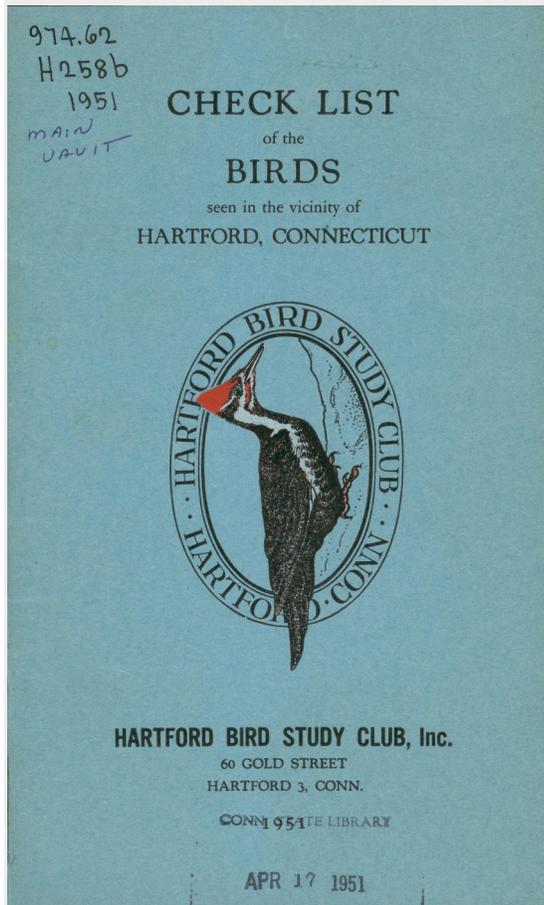
For several years, Elizabeth Park has exhibited spring flowers at its greenhouse in the spring. These photographs were taken by State Archivist Mark H. Jones and are used with his permission. This show was from the 1990s. We include these to add brilliant colors to this mostly black and white photo essay.



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Spring Comes . . .to Historical Connecticut (continued)

Migrating Birds



Bird watchers know that during the spring, they will be busy. For years, the Hartford Bird Study Club gave out checklists to its members so that they could record the days on which they saw various species. Rex Brasher was a renowned artist of birds who produced a collection of paintings of birds of North America. These were published as prints. In the State Library's Picture Group 900, there is

a painting of the state bird, the robin, entitled, *Robin on a Honeysuckle Bush*. We do not know when Brasher painted it or the intent of use that he had for the painting. On the reverse, there is a note in pencil, "Make back a little browner," suggesting that his work of art was unfinished.



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Spring Comes . . .to Historical Connecticut (continued)

Parades and Commemorations



Sometimes historical events are commemorated in the Spring. At left is a photograph of a parade on April 26, 1927 in Danbury, part of the Sesquicentennial of General William Tryon's Raid and Burning of Danbury. The Baisley Studio in Danbury took the photograph. This is found in *Picture Group 300, Connecticut Cities and Towns Collection, ca. 1885-1965.*



March would not be March without the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade. At left is a color photograph made before the start of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New Haven on March 14, 1982. From left to right are former Mayor of New Haven Richard C. Lee, Governor William A. O'Neill, Mayor of New Haven Biagio DiLieto, and Michael V. Lynch.

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Spring Comes . . .to Historical Connecticut (continued)

Arbor Day



Arbor Day was begun by J. Sterling Morton of Nebraska in 1872 and ten years later the event began in schools across the nation. Since then, thousands of trees have been planted by secondary school students. In 1926, Governor John H. Trumbull designated by a Proclamation that Arbor and Bird Day would fall on April 23. Its purpose was to

“awaken and stimulate in the minds of our youth the need of preserving these blessings, and that our love of nature may express itself, on one day at least, in terms of practical and intelligent husbandry . . .” Connecticut still observes



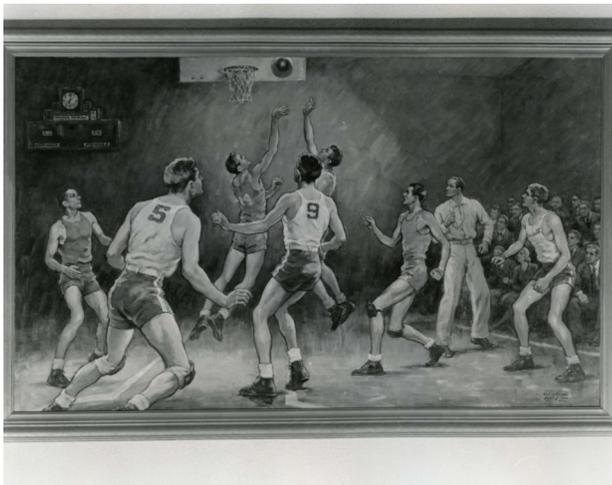
Arbor Day annually on the last Friday of April. The national Arbor Day Foundation and the Connecticut Tree Protective Association sponsor many activities. The photographs above were taken by the Connecticut Forestry Department and are in Record Group 079, Department of Environmental Protection.

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Spring Comes . . .to Historical Connecticut (continued)

Baseball and Basketball

Sports have always furnished ideas and subjects for art work. The Connecticut State Archives has over 1,200 black and white photographs of art completed under its Federal Art Project. At left is an image of a successful "at bat" in a George Avison painting. The photo directly below is of a sculpture entitled "Tagged or Safe at Second" by John E. Burdick.



The last two take basketball as their subjects. Who doesn't look forward to "March Madness"? The image above is another sports painting by George Avison. To the right is an image from a panel of a mural in an octagonal music room of Stamford High School by James Daugherty. "Football and Basketball," features a scene (to the left of the door) of a women's basketball team, a daring subject for the 1930s.



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Spring Comes . . .to Historical Connecticut (continued)

Maypoles and Memorial Day

Lewis Mills was an educator and master photographer who lived in Canton. Between 1895 and 1955, he took shots of Connecticut one- room schoolhouses, historic sites, farm scenes, bridges, mills, public buildings and other points of interest. At right is a photograph of the Campville School in Harwinton on the first day of May. The students are performing a traditional Maypole dance. Notice the expressions of the boys and the girls kneeling in the dirt. The *Mills Collection* is Picture Group 180.



Spring lasts until Memorial Day, which traditionally is considered the first day of summer. At left is a picture of school children placing flowers on the graves of World War I servicemen around 1920 in Zion Hill Cemetery in Hartford. William G. Dudley, Photographer, Record Group 012, Records of the State Library, War Records Department.

***Gustatory Adventure and the Will to Live:
Rachel Carson's Writings in the Connecticut State Library***

by Stephen Slovasky, Cataloging Unit Head



“The presence of each individual mussel in this crowded assemblage is evidence of the achievement of its unconscious, juvenile purpose, an expression of the will-to-live embodied in a minute transparent larva once set adrift in the sea to find its own solid bit of earth for attachment, or to die.”
Rachel L. Carson, *The Edge of the Sea*.

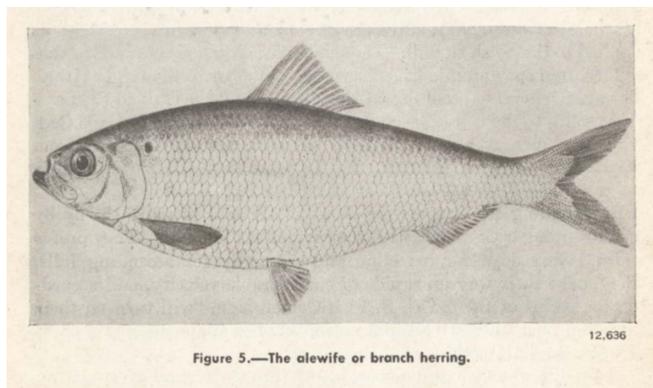
Rachel Carson is famous for *Silent Spring*, her disquieting classic of the literature of environmentalism. That book’s alarms about ecological damage from the overuse of herbicides and insecticides persist today in public policy toward environmental hazards, wildlife protection, and insect control. We credit *Silent Spring* with the incentive to create the federal Environmental Protection Agency and for the legal prohibition of DDT in the United States. Due mainly to our impassioned reaction to *Silent Spring*, Carson has become a secular saint of the 21st-century Green movement.

The New Yorker serialized *Silent Spring* in 1962 and Houghton Mifflin published it in book form that same year. By then Carson was already a distinguished and best-selling author of superb, highly literate books and magazine pieces chronicling the life-cycle of the world’s oceans and seas and the creatures inhabiting them. Fortunately for the Connecticut State Library, copies of the original printings of her commercial books, plus the writings she produced during her career as an Aquatic Biologist with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service from 1936 to 1950, endure in the bookstack. All Carson’s writings—even the

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***Gustatory Adventure and the Will to Live:
Rachel Carson's Writings in the Connecticut State Library***
(continued)

government documents—delight us through the author's gift for presenting scientific facts and phenomena in elegant, lyrical prose. Fresh and vital, Carson's writings on oceanography and marine biology are, paradoxically, to the 21st-century reader more immediate and inspiring than *Silent Spring*, for Carson's most-read book is diminished by its extratextual notoriety, its discomfiting tendentiousness, and its subtext suggesting interagency antagonism between Fish and Wildlife and the Agriculture Department.

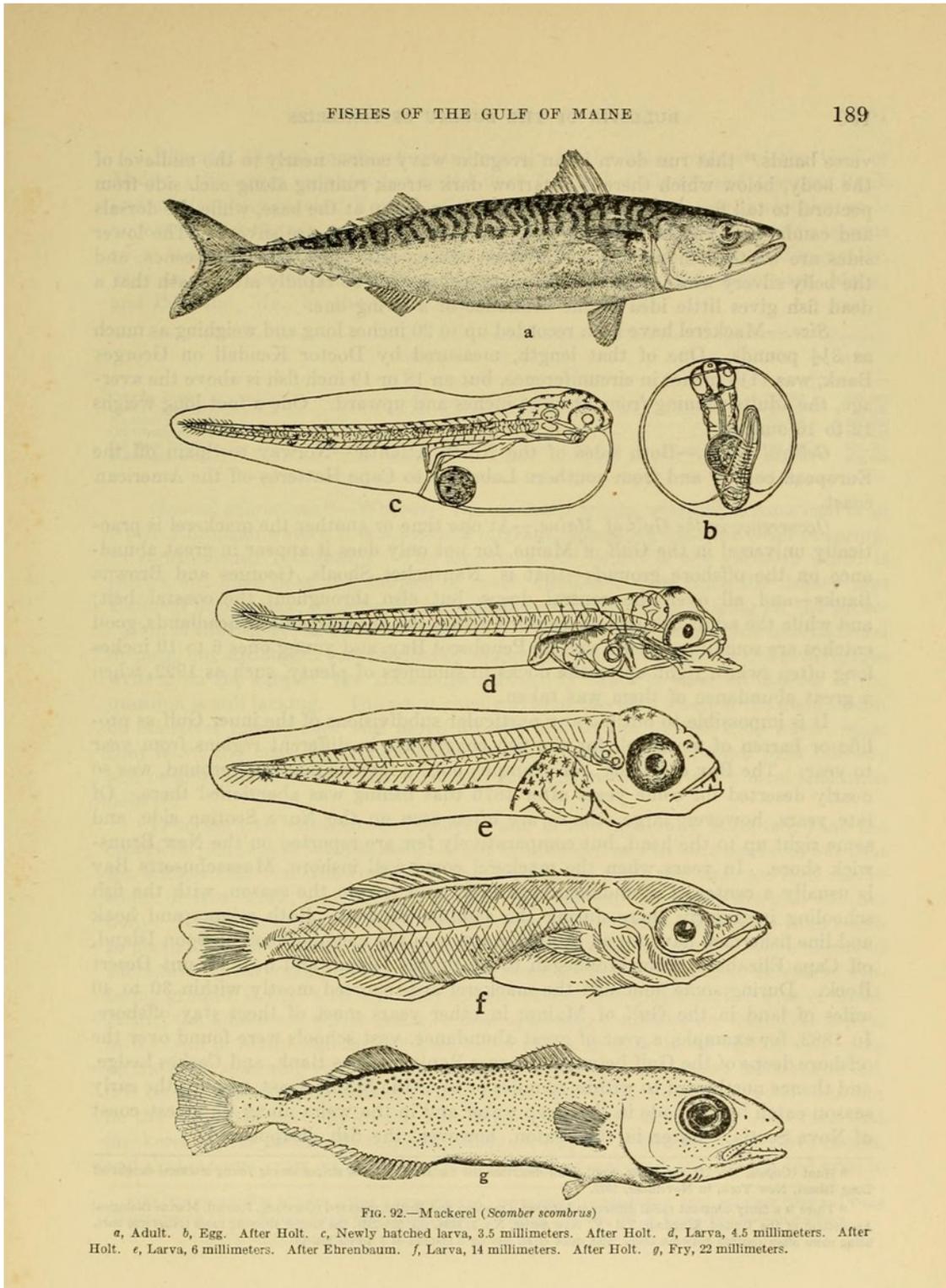


"In the spring the sea is filled with migrating fishes, some of them bound for the mouths of great rivers, which they will ascend to deposit their spawn. Such are the ... alewives seeking a hundred coastal streams of New England." *The Sea Around Us*.

Carson's first book, *Under the Sea-Wind: a Naturalist's Picture of Ocean Life* was published by Simon and Schuster in a limited printing in the fall of 1941. Both literary and scientific reviewers praised it, but it did not sell well, having appeared a month before the attack on Pearl Harbor. However, the Connecticut State Library was prescient enough to purchase a copy of this now valuable issue and which we now treat as a rare book. *Under the Sea Wind* was of course reprinted several times after Carson's literary reputation was established. Here is the opening of the "Birth of a Mackerel" chapter. Listen for echoes of Thoreau and the English Bible:

So it came about that Scomber, the mackerel, was born in the surface waters of the open sea, seventy miles south by east from the western tip of Long Island. He came into being as a tiny globule no larger than a poppy seed, drifting in the surface layers of pale-green water. The globule carried an amber droplet of oil that served to keep it afloat and it carried also a gray particle of living matter so small that it could have been picked up on the point of a needle. In time this particle was to become Scomber, the mackerel, a powerful fish, streamlined after the manner of his kind, and a rover of the seas.

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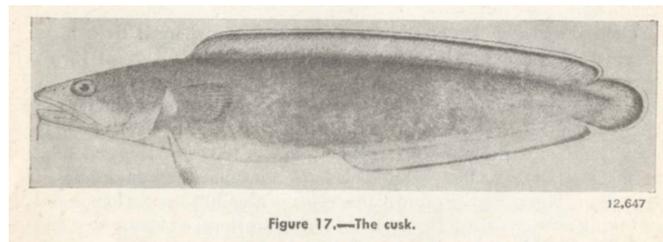


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Gustatory Adventure and the Will to Live: Rachel Carson's Writings in the Connecticut State Library (continued)

Two years later Carson wrote *Food from the Sea: Fish and Shellfish of New England*, for the Fish and Wildlife Service. Here the Service was encouraging the domestic cooking of cusk and wolffish as substitutes for the overfished haddock and cod. Here again Carson brandishes her characteristic lyricism, now incorporating a measure of Eleanor Roosevelt's wartime attitude of encouragement:

New England's marine bill of fare includes so many items that it would be possible to make a different selection from it every day for two and a half months. Seafoods brought into New England ports range from staples like cod and haddock to delicacies like swordfish, lobsters, and scallops. They include fat fish and lean fish, fish of delicate flavor and fish of rich flavor, fish for baking, broiling, or pan-frying, for delicious and satisfying main dishes or for salads, appetizers, or chowders.



Scarcely any other class of food offers so great a variety—so rich an opportunity for gustatory adventure. The housewife who experiments with new fish species and new methods of preparation banishes mealtime monotony and provides delightful taste surprises for her family. For example, instead of haddock fillets for dinner tonight, why not put new interest in your menu by serving the little known fish cusk, considered one of the choicest New England table fish? For a salad surprise try New England shrimp or flaked mackerel in gelatine. Instead of expensive fresh salmon, substitute fillets of wolffish, an excellent table fish that has only begun to achieve deserved importance. Any new species that is available is worth trying.

A revealing passage from Carson's later government work, from the 1948 Fish and Wildlife Service pamphlet *Guarding our Wildlife Resources*, prophesizes the ethical and esthetic principles of contemporary environmental awareness:

All of the people of a country have a direct interest in conservation. For some, as for the commercial fishermen and trappers, the interest is financial. For others, successful conservation means preserving a favorite recreation—hunting, fishing, the study and observation of wildlife, or nature photography. For others, contemplation of the color, motion, and beauty of form in living nature yields esthetic enjoyment of as high an order as music or painting. But for all the people, the preservation of wildlife and of wildlife habitat means also the preservation of the basic resources of the earth, which men, as well as animals, must have in order to live. Wildlife, water, forests, grasslands—all are part of man's essential environment; the conservation and effective use of one is impossible except as the others also are conserved. (p.1)

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***Gustatory Adventure and the Will to Live:
Rachel Carson's Writings in the Connecticut State Library***

(continued)

Carson continued in federal service until 1950 when income from her best-sellers gave her the freedom to write full-time. *The Sea Around Us* (1950), treating the worldwide marine ecosystem, won the 1952 National Book Award for nonfiction. *The Edge of the Sea* (1955) depicts the diverse ecosystems of the eastern shoreline of North America. All of Carson's commercial books remain in print in 2011, with digitized versions of her Fish and Wildlife freely available from the Alaska Resources Library and Information Services.

Books by Rachel L. Carson in the Connecticut State Library: (Hyperlinks resolve to the CONSULS WebPacPro listing for the cited title, where, for the Fish and Wildlife Service publications, a further link resolves to a digitalized copy of the cited work.)

Under the Sea-Wind: a Naturalist's Picture of Ocean Life (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941) **Special Collections QH92.C3** <http://consuls.org:80/record=b1778822~S16>

Food from the Sea : Fish and Shellfish of New England. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service Conservation Bulletin 33. (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1943) **I 1.72:33** <http://consuls.org:80/record=b1461981~S16>

Chincoteague: a National Wildlife Refuge. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. Conservation in Action, no. 1. (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1947) **I 49.36:no.1** <http://consuls.org:80/record=b1734625~S16>

Parker River: a National Wildlife Refuge. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. Conservation in Action, no. 2. (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1947) **I 49.36:no.2** <http://consuls.org:80/record=b1766050~S16>

Guarding our Wildlife Resources. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. Conservation in Action, no. 5. (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1948) **I 49.36:5** <http://consuls.org:80/record=b1778284~S16>

The Sea Around Us. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951) **GC21.C3** <http://consuls.org:80/record=b1217818~S16>

The Edge of the Sea. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955). **QH91.C3** <http://consuls.org:80/record=b1212929~S16>

Silent Spring. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962) **QH545.P4 C38 1962** <http://consuls.org:80/record=b1217001~S16>

Lost Woods: the Discovered Writing of Rachel Carson. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998) **QH81.C3546 1998** <http://consuls.org:80/record=b2289252~S16>

(*Silent Spring*, *The Sea Around Us*, and *The Edge of the Sea* are available from the Middletown and Willimantic Library Service Centers, where *Silent Spring* is also available in audio. Eligible patrons will find Carson's oeuvre well represented in the audio and Braille collections of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.)

Picture credits: The alewife and the cusk are from *Food from the Sea*. The mackerel life-cycle chart is from Bigelow, Henry B. and William B. Welsh. *Fishes of the Gulf of Maine*. Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Fisheries. Vol.XL, part 1. (Washington, USGPO, 1924). The mussel bed is from *Mussel Watch: Recent Trends in Coastal Environmental Quality*. (Rockville, Maryland: NOAA, 1992)

Connecticut Book Lovers Won't Want to Miss This

**by Mary Engels, Middletown Library
Service Center Director**



On May 21 and 22 the Greater Hartford Campus of the University of Connecticut will welcome thousands of people to the first ever Connecticut Book Festival. Over thirty Connecticut authors will join Honorary Chairperson Wally Lamb for this free Festival celebrating books, reading and our state's bountiful and diverse literary community. Authors of fiction and nonfiction for adults and teens will offer presentations, panel discussions, readings and book signings.

The Festival will have something for every literary taste. Whether you enjoy poetry or mysteries, essays or memoirs, history or science fiction, short stories or humor, there is sure to be an author to your liking at the Festival.

Among the dozens of speakers to appear at the Festival are:

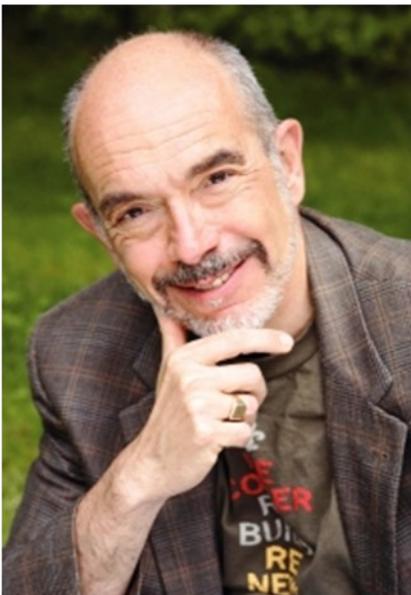
- Chandra Prasad, a writer and editor of both fiction and nonfiction. Her most recent novel is *Breathe the Sky* based on the life of Amelia Earhart. She is also the author of *On Borrowed Wings*, a novel set in Depression-era Connecticut, and *Death of a Circus*, about a small circus in the early twentieth century.
- Essayist Sam Pickering, an English professor at the University of Connecticut and the model for the film *Dead Poets Society*.
- Mystery writer Rosemary Harris, nominated for the Agatha and Anthony awards for her first book, *Pushing Up Daisies*.
- Food writer Nancy Freeborn, co-author of the book *New Haven Chef's Table: Restaurants, Recipes, and Local Food Connections*, and manager of the Chester Farmer's Market.
- Bessy Reyna, author of two bilingual books of poetry and a former winner of the Outstanding Latina Cultural Arts, Literary Arts and Publications Award; she will moderate a panel of Latino authors.

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Connecticut Book Lovers Won't Want to Miss This (continued)

- Wendell Minor, an illustrator who uses his affinity for environmental issues in his illustrations of the works of poets and authors. In addition to illustrating children's books, he has created cover art for such books as *Truman* by David McCullough, *Beach Music* by Pat Conroy and *Small Town Girl* by LaVyrle Spencer.



Wally Lamb

In addition to authors speaking about their works there will be performances by the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, the dance troupe dancEnlight, and State Troubadour Chuck E. Costa, as well as roving characters from the Mystic Paper Beasts Theatre Company. The Children's Activities Tent, sponsored by Connecticut Humanities Council and the Northeast Children's Literature Collection, will offer a chalk drawing competition—led by Hartford Art School Professor Bill Thomson author of *Chalk*—among its attractions.

Area restaurants and food purveyors will be on hand to satisfy your culinary as well as your literary tastes.

The Festival is a partnership of Connecticut Center for the Book at Hartford Public Library, Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, Connecticut Humanities Council, Connecticut Library Association, Connecticut State Library, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, UConn Co-op Bookstore, and the University of Connecticut, Greater Hartford Campus.

If you love reading and books you won't want to miss this opportunity to meet a favorite author or listen as writers discuss their works and the creative process. For more information about the Festival and all it has to offer visit www.ctbookfestival.org or find us on [Facebook](#).

Earth Day and Environmental Legislation

by Todd Gabriel, Archives Storekeeper

April 22, 2011 marked the 41st anniversary of Earth Day. In our everyday hustle and bustle we tend to forget how we impact the environment. Once a year we have a reminder to reevaluate and assess how we would like to leave the earth for next generations.

By the late 1960s the moral and ethical ground of the United States was shaken, with the Civil Rights, Feminist and New Left movements.

There seemed to be an elevated sense of awareness including the environment. In 1962, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, a best-selling book which stimulated widespread concern over the misuse of pesticides and their devastating impacts to the environment was credited as helping to launch the environmental movement. Several events added to the cause and were catalysts that later culminated into a response we now call Earth Day: the proclamation that the Great Lakes were dead--choked by what seemed an endless infusion of pollutants; the grounding of the **Torrey Canyon** off the coast of England, the first catastrophic oil spill from a supertanker. Environmental groups formed that wanted to take action, but it was not long before politicians were involved trying to awaken Washington.¹



Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisconsin) became quite frustrated with a lack of environmental interest among his colleagues in the U.S. Senate. Hoping to stimulate popular interest for the environment, Nelson looked to America's non-violent campus activism for inspiration and

proposed a series of environmental learning experiences, "teach-ins" for campuses across the nation. By 1970 it was official, Earth Day was April 22. More than 20 million people

participated in the first Earth Day. In addition the United States formed the Environmental Protection Agency on December 2, 1970 and Congress passed the Clean Air Act; one important provision was the phasing out of leaded gasoline. Gaylord Nelson was responsible for creating a ripple effect of environmental change throughout the country seen in laws at the federal and local levels, and in the raising of public awareness of the dangers of pollution.²

Connecticut Governor John Dempsey followed suit and declared April 22, 1970 Earth Day in Connecticut. In response to Governor Dempsey's Official Statement several of the Connecticut State Library's

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Earth Day and Environmental Legislation

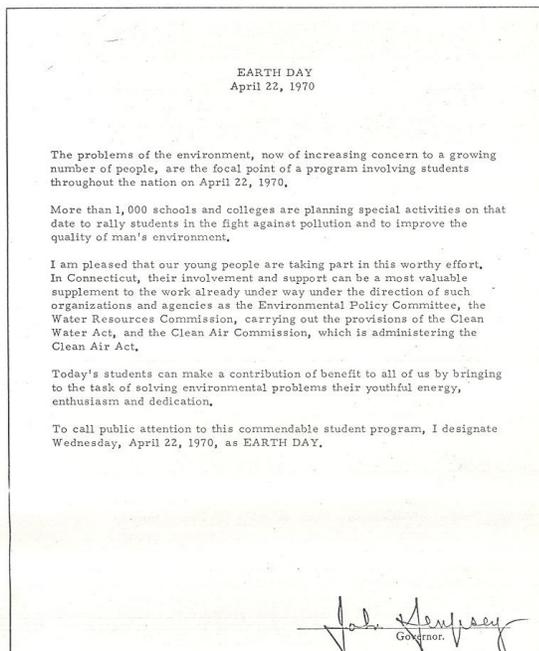
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"young" staff members developed a program at the Library for the day between the hours of 12 noon and 2 pm. Severio Fodero, Assistant to the Director of Yale University's Department of Health, delivered the keynote speech on the increased amount of pollution in the environment.³



By His Excellency JOHN DEMPSEY, Governor: an

Official Statement



Now environmental groups achieved results at the national and state levels. In 1971 the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection was founded. In 1972 the Federal Clean Water Act was passed

and the Environmental Protection Agency banned DDT, a harmful insecticide. In 1975 Congress passed legislation setting standards for automobile tailpipe emissions and in 1978 the Connecticut General Assembly passed the Bottle Bill to reduce litter and promote recycling. A Hazardous Waste Section was created within the Connecticut DEP in 1978, with a mission to stop illegal dumping and find safe dumps for dangerous materials.⁴

On Earth Day 1980, former commissioner of the Connecticut DEP, Douglas Costle, who at the time was head of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, attended a festival in Bushnell Park in Hartford. The event featured displays by environmental groups and examples of self-propelled vehicles. Before a tour of Connecticut's first refuse recycling plant in Bridgeport, Costle stated, "Economic growth and preservation of the country's natural resources are not mutually exclusive." However, "In the long term, good environmental projects are good economics." The plant was able to process 1,000 tons of garbage a day.⁵

In 1982 the Regan administration reviewed the twelve years of environmental laws and decided to cut the Federal agency's budget in half. Two-thirds were cut from research and as reported at the time, enforcement was put "into a velvet glove beneath a velvet glove." As a result many trained professionals left the agency.⁶

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Earth Day and Environmental Legislation

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In 1983 Connecticut adopted regulations to handle cleanup of contaminated sites and set guidelines for safe waste removal and disposal. On a positive side, for the first time in more than 40 years, a pair of bald eagles in Litchfield County successfully raise two chicks. The spread of the pesticide DDT, which indirectly caused eagles to lay eggs with weak shells, had been named as a cause of their decline. The bird was removed from state's endangered species list in 2007. In 1990 the 20th anniversary of Earth Day was celebrated by 200 million people worldwide. In 1997 the state set goals to protect 21 percent (or 673,210 acres) of state land by 2023. It has accomplished 72 percent of its goal thus far.⁷



In 2009 the Connecticut State Library implemented its own Green Team to be watchful of environmental practices within the agency. The Green Team has made all agency cleaning products environmentally friendly, implemented single-stream recycling and designated a supply exchange center in the cataloging unit. The Green Team looks to the future with plans to assess landscape policies as well as ways to tighten the green commitments of the Connecticut State Library. The Green Team invites staff to join in on the effort.

¹ Fred Stoss, "Earth Day 1970-1995: An Information Perspective," [Electronic Green Journal](#); Apr95, pN.PAG, 0p, Academic Search Premier

² FIELD OF GREEN :THE WORLD IS A CLEANER PLACE AS 40TH ANNIVERSARY NEARS; EARTH DAY. (2010, April 19). *Hartford Courant*,B.1. Retrieved April 26, 2011, from Hartford Courant. (Document ID: 2013904921).

³ Walter Brahm to John Dempsey, April 13, 1970, box A-449, Earth Day folder, John Dempsey. RG5, Connecticut State Library

⁴ "Earth Day: A decade passes," *Hartford Courant*, April 20, 1980, p. 35A

⁵ "Costle, Welcomed Home, Lauds Earth Day Ideals," *The Hartford Courant*, April 23, 1980

⁶ "Environmental Policy: Wandering in the Dark," *The Hartford Courant*, April 22, 1982

⁷ FIELD OF GREEN :THE WORLD IS A CLEANER PLACE AS 40TH ANNIVERSARY NEARS; EARTH DAY. (2010, April 19). *Hartford Courant*,B.1. Retrieved April 26, 2011, from Hartford Courant. (Document ID: 2013904921).

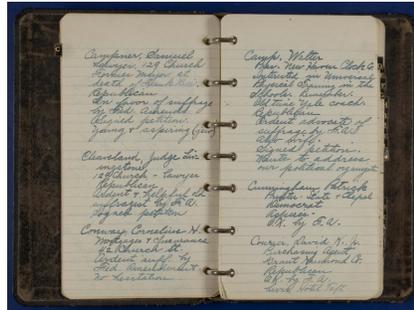
Gladys Bragdon Suffrage Interviews Notebook Donated by League of Women Voters to State Library

by Allen Ramsey, Government Records Archivist

The (Mrs. R.) Gladys Bragdon Suffrage Interviews Notebook, 1918, was donated by the League of Women Voters of Connecticut (LWVCT) to the Connecticut State Library at a ceremony held in Memorial Hall at the Library on March 23, 2011.

The notebook was discovered by Cheryl Dunson, the president of the LWVCT, while she was searching for items to help celebrate the league's 90th anniversary. The donation ceremony included remarks by LWVCT President Cheryl Dunson, State Librarian Kendall Wiggin, Secretary of State Denise Merrill, and long time LWVCT member Percy Lee Langstaff. The (Mrs. R.) Gladys Bragdon Record of Suffrage Interviews notebook submitted on July 1, 1918 provides a unique insight into the views of prominent men of the time on whether women should have the right to vote.

The notebook contains handwritten entries of interviews conducted with approximately 129 prominent men both in and outside local and state government about their position and views on giving women the right to vote. Bragdon recorded in the notebook the men's names, job title or position in government, party affiliation, if they signed a petition, interests, changed views, and if they supported the federal amendment. Some of the more prominent men's names in the notebook include: Governor Simeon E. Baldwin, Yale football coach and New Haven Clock Company President Walter Camp, lawyer Robert O. Eaton, New Haven Mayor Frederick Farnsworth, New Haven Mayor David E. Fitzgerald, John Fitzgerald, Congressman James P. Pigott, Republican State Chairman J.



Henry Roraback, Isaac M. Ullman, and Governor Rollin S. Woodruff. The interviews helped the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association (CWSA) gather information about who did and who did not support voting rights for women.

In 1918 the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association (CWSA) was organizing;

studying; writing letters and editorials; and interviewing prominent men in an effort to pressure politicians on the federal and state level to pass a federal suffrage amendment. Gladys Bragdon was one of several organizers helping the New Haven Equal Franchise League (NHEFL), a member organization of the CWSA, pressure Congressmen and state politicians to support the federal amendment. On June 19, 1919 the 66th Congress of the United States passed the suffrage amendment, also known as the Susan B. Anthony amendment, and sent it to state legislatures' for ratification. Tennessee became the necessary 36th state to ratify the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution on August 18, 1920. The Connecticut General Assembly, in a special session, ratified the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution on September 14, 1920. The passage of the amendment by three-fourths of the states guaranteed women the right to vote.

The Library recently completed digitizing the Gladys Bragdon Notebook of Suffrage Interviews which is available online at our [Flickr](#) site. For additional information about our archival holdings on suffrage and the LWVCT see the finding aids for the [Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association](#) (RG 101) and the [League of Women Voters of Connecticut](#) (RG 106).

Susan Haigh, "1918 Memoir Opens Window to Suffrage Movement Views," Associated Press, *Boston Globe*, March 21, 2011, http://www.boston.com/news/local/connecticut/articles/2011/03/21/1918_memoir_opens_window_to_suffrage_movement_views/ (accessed March 25, 2011).

Connecticut was the 37th state to ratify the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

In Memoriam ***Rockwell ("Rock") Harmon Potter, Jr. 1915-2011***

by Mark Jones. State Archivist

On Monday, April 26, 2011, Rockwell Harmon Potter died in Maine. He was 95 years old. He worked for the Connecticut State Library from 1946-1982, first as the head of the War Records Department, then as Chief of the State Records Center at Rocky Hill, and finally, for twenty years as the Public Records Administrator for state agencies and local governments.

He was born on May 26, 1915, the son of one of Hartford's most distinguished ministers, Dr. Rockwell H. Potter, Sr. who was minister at Central Church and for a time, Dean of the Hartford Seminary. He attended Harvard, Yale and Cornell University. After college, he worked as a reporter for the *Hartford Times*. It was there that he met his future wife, Althea Rathbone of Woodstock who was editor of the newspaper's Women's Page. The two married around the time of his induction into the Army in September 1942.

As Reverend Potter's son, the newspapers followed his military service in the Second World War. Potter's induction in September 1942 and commission as second Lieutenant, his promotion to first lieutenant in North

Africa, recovery from his wounds, and his discharge received notice in several issues of the *Hartford Courant*.

Potter served with the 66th Armored Regiment in General George H. Patton's Second Armored Division which Patton deemed as his "Hell on Wheels." His job was to provide ammunition for his regiment. As noted above, he was promoted in North Africa. Other theaters of action included Sicily, France, Germany, Holland, and Belgium. He received the Legion of Merit for "keeping his regiment supplied with ammunition during its rapid advance in Sicily." Patton's tank forces also played a crucial role during the Battle of the Bulge. Potter received seven battle stars, a bronze arrowhead and two Purple Hearts. He was

discharged at Fort Devens, Massachusetts in November 1945.

He returned to Connecticut with his wife, Althea. In 1946, he began working in the Connecticut State Library as head of the War Records Department which accepted letters, diaries, photographs, and articles from veterans and their families pertaining to



Rockwell H. Potter, "Potter to Head War Records Bureau," *Hartford Times*, February 2, 1946, Newspaper Clipping Files, Connecticut State Library.

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(continued)



Governor John Dempsey, State Librarian Walter Brahm and staff at ground breaking for the addition to the Connecticut State Library and Supreme Court Building, September 23, 1965, PG 220, State Archives, State Library. Potter is in the back left. Walter Brahm is the first person to the left in the first row.

Connecticut's service in the nation's wars.

After the war, the Federal government expanded, and President Truman asked former President Herbert Hoover to chair a commission charged with finding ways of making government more efficient. The Hoover Commission urged government to adopt principles of records management in all of its offices. This new profession concentrated on the life cycle of a record in order to legally dispose of records once a minimum legal retention period had passed. Since the Hoover Report, records management has helped agencies "get rid of" tons of paper with no administrative, legal, fiscal or historical value and to identify those which were necessary for the continuity of government in case of a disaster and those which

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warranted indefinite retention in an archives.

In 1958, the State of Connecticut opened a state records center in Rocky Hill and Potter became its chief. In 1961, he was appointed as Examiner of Public Records and in 1967,

became the first Public Records Administrator. His jurisdiction was over state agencies and local governments. Since the late nineteenth century, Connecticut had been concerned about the condition and storage of town records. The Assembly created the post of Examiner of Public Records in the early twentieth century. The Administrator, however, had greater authority than the Examiner to carry out records management functions such as inspecting storage conditions in towns, issuing public records retention schedules for towns and state agencies, and approving or denying requests for the destruction of public records.



Closeup of Rockwell H. Potter, Jr. at ground-breaking, September 23, 1965

Part of Potter's jurisdiction was over Connecticut's 169 towns. Like his two predecessors, he ran up hundreds of miles of driving time. I once heard that he tried to visit one third of the towns every three years. From his office in Hartford, he was in constant contact with the clerks through letters and over the phone. His letters summarized the condition of records and storage

rooms and called on towns to improve them. Many town clerks got to know him and a visit from "Rock" included small talk and crucial advice.

In 1964, Walter Brahm was appointed the Connecticut State Librarian. Potter often said that Brahm had a great vision of urgent assistance that libraries, manuscripts repositories and local governments in New England required to preserve deteriorating books and public records. The two began talking about the need for a regional conservation center and met with the other New England State Librarians. Regional

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cooperation was based on Articles VI and VII of the Interstate Library Compact. Brahm credited Potter with writing the Proposal for a New England Document Conservation Center. The Center's objective was "to make available to New England public libraries, state and local archival agencies, and participating non-profit historical, educational and cultural institutions, on a cooperating basis, the means of preserving, repairing and restoring important or unique documentary materials."

In 1973 the conservation center opened in Andover, Massachusetts and is now known as the



Rock Potter and NEDCC Director Ann Russell at 30th Anniversary Party held at the JFK Library, Boston, 2003.

Northeast Document Conservation Center. "Rock" was especially proud of his role in its founding. After his retirement in 1982, he maintained connections with the Center attending the annual spring party at the Center whenever he could.

I had the privilege of knowing "Rock" over my many years at the State Library. After Althea and he moved to Maine in 1987, I saw less and less of him, though we did occasionally talk with each other over the phone. I shall remember him as a tall, well-dressed man who had what some might call "old school" bearing. He was always courteous and very generous in his encouragement. I was honored when he said that he was glad that I was the State Archivist at the Connecticut State Library. He had a dry, New England wit. It was these qualities that endeared him to public officials and colleagues throughout the region, and it was his passion for books and proper management of public records that made him one of New England's important advocates for preserving its cultural heritage.

Mark H. Jones, State Archivist, Connecticut State Library
May 4, 2011

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