



The CONNector

...Preserving the Past, Informing the Future



Kendall F. Wiggin
State Librarian

Two Important Library Initiatives

The [Declaration for the Right to Libraries](#) is the cornerstone document of American Library Association President Barbara Stripling's presidential initiative, *Libraries Change Lives*, which is designed to build public will and sustain support for America's right to libraries of all types – academic, special, school, and public. Ms. Stripling is encouraging libraries around the country to get citizens to sign the declaration. Here in Connecticut, the Connecticut Library Association, the Connecticut Library Consortium, and the State Library are working on leading a statewide signing effort.

Statistically, Connecticut has some of the busiest, most professionally run, and most well supported libraries in the country. Yet, in an age of scant public dollars and competing public services, Connecticut's public libraries must continuously demonstrate their value to their communities. The Declaration for the Right to Libraries will be a good opportunity to increase public and media awareness about the critical role of libraries in communities. But to enhance its role in the community, a library needs to continuously take the pulse of the community. Library leaders have to know what is going on outside the walls of their libraries. Today's library service is not built from the inside out, but rather from the outside in. And while libraries change lives, changing lives need responsive libraries.

Early next year the Division of Library Development will be strongly encouraging all public libraries in Connecticut to be a part of the national launch of the Edge Initiative. Edge is a groundbreaking, first of its kind, management and leadership tool that helps libraries create a path for the continuous growth and development of their public technology services. Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and led by the Urban Libraries Council, it was created with the vision that all people should have opportunities to enrich and improve their lives through open access to information, communication, and technology services provided by public libraries. The initiative will go nationwide in January 2014, and public libraries in Connecticut will be among the first to have access and apply this leadership tool to assess and ultimately strengthen the technology services Connecticut libraries provide. Libraries across the state help meet the technology needs and interests of community members, and the Edge Initiative will help Connecticut libraries ensure that their residents have access to enhanced digital and technology services. The driving force behind the Edge Initiative is a set of benchmarks that libraries use to assess their current public access technology and empowers library leaders to elevate their strategic planning, shape the story of the library, and communicate its value in supporting community goals and initiatives around education, health, economic development, and more. ✧

Kendall F. Wiggin
November 2013

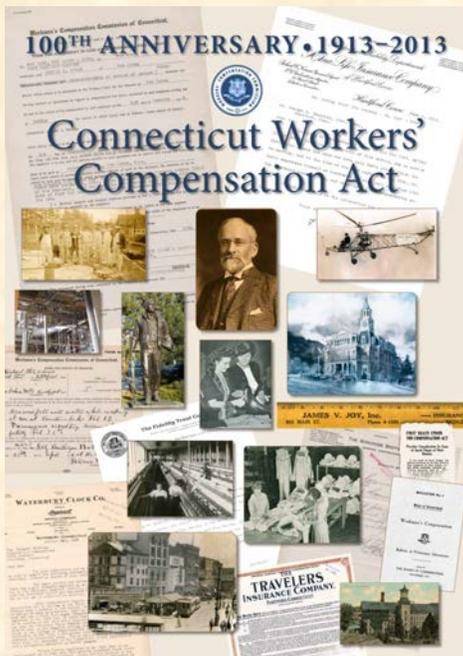
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Workers' Compensation Symposium

by Jean Bonzani, Connecticut Workers' Compensation Commission

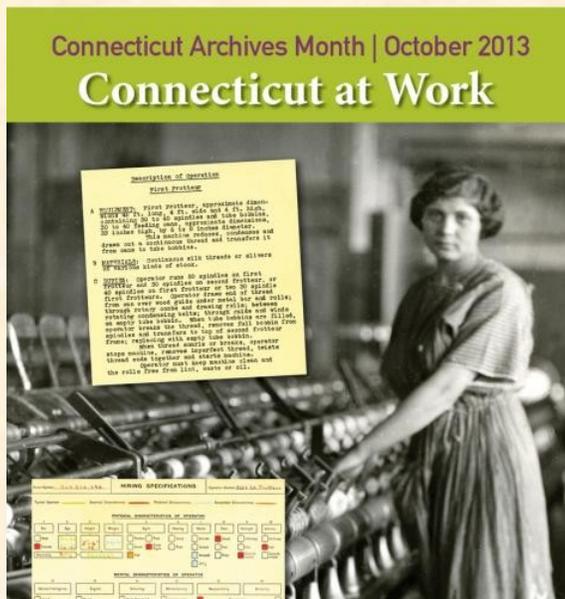


The Connecticut Workers' Compensation Commission held a symposium on October 4, 2013 celebrating the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the Workers' Compensation Act. The symposium consisted of educational programs relevant to today's practice and presentations focused on the

Our first stop in planning for our celebration was the Connecticut State Library, where we viewed our agency files from 1914 forward. With the help of Paul Baran we were able to locate the file for the first injury, 1/1/1914, and made that part of the background of our commemorative poster, along with many other archived documents from the State Library. Our presentation at the symposium on the history of the agency was vastly enriched with copies of the actual documents and handwritten file notes perfectly preserved over the last hundred years. The back stories contained in these files were of keen interest to all who participated in the history portion of the presentation. The files from the 1930s and 1940s made it possible for us to tell the story of the Radium Girls in Connecticut, a significant and important piece of Connecticut's industrial history.

history and timeline of events shaping the first one hundred years of the Workers' Compensation Act and the Commission. The theme of the symposium was "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." All net proceeds from the symposium (upwards of \$100,000!) will be donated to the Disabled Workers' Scholarship Fund.

As an agency we knew there were old files archived at the Connecticut State Library, but we were truly surprised and grateful that they had been preserved and cataloged in such a way that we could reach back 100 years and personally document our history as an agency and the lives of the injured workers that we served. ✧



October has once again been proclaimed as Connecticut Archives Month by Governor Malloy. If you haven't received a copy of the Connecticut at Work poster and would like one, please contact Paul Baran at paul.baran@ct.gov. For more information on the theme of this year's poster, please visit the Connecticut Humanities website: <http://cthumanities.org/ctatwork>



The Hurricane of 1938: Aboard “The Spray” by Jenny Groome, Reference Librarian

Introduction

Growing up along the shore of Long Island Sound, weather played an important role in our community. In Stony Creek, we would gather on the town dock as storms rolled in, watching first the gulls fly onto the main land and then people working to secure boats as the grey line of storm approached. The Hurricane of 1938 was as much a part of Branford's legendary history as Captain Kidd's treasure, Stony Creek pink granite in the base of the Statue of Liberty, the Leatherman, or the holding off of British troops trying to navigate the Thimble Islands during the Revolutionary War. Numerous times I joined other school children as we were gathered together to hear our local history in the tales of Hurricane Survivors.

So strong were this part of Stony Creek history and my sense of local history that I quickly volunteered to do my first display for the reading room's small exhibit case. I imagined comparing the WPA and CCC rebuilding of the walls along Mrs. Wolf's Linden Point home to the rebuilding after Hurricane Sandy. I read reports by the Relief Committee, the WPA, Relief for Farmers, Relief for Municipalities, local newspapers, and the Department of the Interior's flood project and learned how extensive this hurricane truly was and gave thanks I wasn't raised on the Hurricane stories of Rhode Island (possibly the worst hit, definitely the most significant loss of life). I read of the fire in New London that harkened back to Benedict Arnold's burning of the city. But I found little on the shore between Bridgeport and New London. I dug and turned outward from the collections at the Connecticut State Library, hoping to find references that would lead me back to sources in our collection. And I did. (See insert with suggested places to look). I also reached a number of people through Facebook who shared their families' recollections - which I urged them to consider preserving through libraries and/or historical societies. A few people tried to arrange for me to speak with family members who had lived through the Hurricane of 1938, but it did not work out. And then I was privileged to learn that Mr. Walter Lange wanted to share his firsthand account, which was shared via Facebook when Chip Stakes Viel transcribed it online.

Posted on Facebook Group “Growing Up in Branford” by Chip Stakes Viel on behalf of Walter Lange, Jr.

Walter Lange Jr. was hospitalized on the day he was to tell his story about the '38 Hurricane [to] the local newspaper; he has been infirm since. With the blessing of Walter and his Family his story is told here.

Aboard "The Spray" written by Walter Lange in his own words and memories:

SEPTEMBER 20, 1938

It had been raining every day this week. Donald and I are waiting for the weather to clear to leave on our one week cruise, before starting back to school. We had been calling the airport often for weather reports. Finally, they said the weather would clear. We sailed out of New Haven Harbor that night in the Sea Scout boat *Spray* heading east down the sound. About off Duck Island the weather got worse, the wind was all over the place but mostly from the southwest and a lot of lightning. By the time we passed the Connecticut River, we decided we should pull into a port, get the *Spray* ship shaped by morning as the bilge had a lot of water and we were not making headway pumping. I don't think it rained much; we were shipping water, or the boat was leaking. We headed for West Harbor on Fishers Island, as our destination

was Cuttyhunk. There was so much lightening that black night we could pick up all the buoys sailing into the harbor. We dropped anchor just before the yacht club and pumped out the bilge. It must have been well after midnight when we hit the sack.

SEPTEMBER 21, 1938

When we got up in the morning there was a good east wind blowing, which meant no Cuttyhunk this trip. I was for going through The Race to Greenport and Shelter Island; Don thought that there was too much wind to leave. I suggested that we go ashore and mail some postcards, get some lunch, and when we come back to the boat if the wind is blowing more we stay, otherwise we go!!

When we rowed back to the boat it sure was blowing harder!! Greenport was forgotten. Some people were tending their mooring lines. I remember a big black ketch with a clipper bow abeam of us and two or three men putting chafing gear on the mooring lines. Later we watched it break loose and drift ashore. About mid afternoon, we sat in the cockpit watching all the boats breaking loose drifting in towards the yacht club and me taking pictures. Then we thought it was about time we better be securing things ourselves. There was a vacant mooring just off our starboard bow, a 500 pounder, so I put



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my bathing suit on and with a 3/8" manila line, I swam to the mooring, tied the line on and put it on our bit. **We** were going to heave the mooring aboard as soon as I changed into my clothing. I had changed into my clothing and was sitting in the cabin warming up looking out the companionway when we hear someone yell, "Spray Ahoy!!"

I jumped up and when I looked to port, there was a big schooner heading right down on us broadside, heeled over with the starboard rail down as if sailing!! The captain was on the helm with the wheel hard over, the engine running and two men in the bow paying out anchor line. The first thing that happened when she hit us was that a small davit on her starboard side hit our mizzen mast shrouds, and down came our mizzenmast. The schooner's anchor line crossed over our mooring lines and we actually held the schooner for awhile as she came up into the wind. We then put on life jackets and I remember Don wanted to jump in and swim ashore. I said you would get hurt or killed with the waves hitting the rocks and boulders to our lee. Why don't we jump aboard the schooner and when it breaks up, then we'll swim ashore?

Once aboard the schooner, I decided to try to get my camera through the forward hatch of the *Spray*. I made two or three attempts to reach my camera off the shelf in the bow; as the two boats came together and when they went apart, I would jump back. Then our bit on the bow holding our mooring lines broke off and the *Spray* was adrift with all our belongings. We could see it heading for the white water on that pile of rocks. I noticed the crew on the schooner had put on their life jackets since we came aboard. Now the schooner was hitting bottom and pounding. Because of her deep draft, we did not hit the rocks. The tide was high now and we could see a car under the water at the low road near the boulders and public beach, as the wind started hauling around the schooner slid down in front of the public beach, pounding on the sand. For awhile, we thought we might go out into Fishers Island

Sound as the wind was now blowing out of the harbor!!

The tide started dropping, so we stayed there off the beach - gradually we started heeling over on our starboard side. All this time the crew and we were lying on the port deck against the cabin. It was blowing so hard you couldn't stand up and it was raining. The rain and spray of seawater from the hull was going horizontal with the wind, if it hit you in the face, it hurt and felt like hail stones. The water built up between the deck and cabin side and lying in the water protected us from the wind also kept us warm. I remember us looking over to New London and seeing the red glow in the sky from the fire as it was starting to get dark. We thought the whole city was burning down.

It is low tide now and the boat is on a 45 degree angle. The wind has gone around to the southwest and let down some. The cook had been down below cooking dinner on a shipmate stove and he called us all below to eat and be warmed up. It was unbelievable sitting down at the table with such a nice dinner, being dry and warm with electric lights on!!! The table was on gimbals as the schooner was rigged for ocean racing, which it has done. If you were sitting on the low side of the boat the table was up to your chin, and on the high side, the table was in your lap. We had a few good laughs, after dinner we were each given a bunk for the night. I remember the boat hull creaking all through the night from laying on her side with no support under the hull.

SEPTEMBER 22, 1938

Up in the morning to a beautiful sunny day. I don't think we had breakfast aboard, as we were anxious to see what happened to the *Spray*. We rolled up our pant legs and walked ashore, it was high tide. The schooner's name was *Barlovanto* owned by Pete DuPont. the *Spray* was a sad sight, on the rocks between a big boulder, the bottom staved in, and a lot of sand in the bilge. We could not find any of our clothing or money. I found my camera, which I had repaired. There wasn't much we could salvage, the spars and sails we stowed under the yacht club. We heard that the ferryboat had sunk in New London; the phones were out, there was no communication to the mainland. Now we were getting hungry, with no money, only our shirts and pants on. The knees





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were ripped through so we tore the bottom half off and had on shorts. I don't remember if we had shoes on. Someone at the yacht club told us that a hotel not far up the street would give us something to eat. When we walked into the hotel, they sat us down at a table with a tablecloth in the dining room full of people dressed up. Did we get stared at!! The word finally got around that we were two stranded, shipwrecked boys. They also gave us a room for the night. I thought it was nice of the hotel taking care of us and that it was "on the house." A number of weeks after we got a bill from the hotel!!

We stayed at the hotel for three or four days until one day when we were at the dock, a tugboat came in. I remember the captain in the wheelhouse with the window down holding up a newspaper with the headlines: "HURRICANE HITS NEW ENGLAND." We were happy when we saw that word "hurricane" as we thought we were just in a bad storm and were saddened about losing the Sea Scout's boat "Spray."

I think the reason the tug came out to the island was to pick up the body of someone who drowned here during the hurricane. The coffin was on the forward deck of the tug. A few other people and we got a ride into New London on the tug. We passed a Coast Guard Cutter on our way in from the island, not knowing it at the time; our parents were on the Coastguard Cutter looking for us!!

Hurricane 1938 Research Tips

Here are some research tips which may help find some of the less consulted sources.

- **Images** – available in books; [newspaper coverage](#); [Aerial Photographs Collection](#) that includes a section on the hurricane damage; Connecticut State Library [Channel on HistoryPin](#); Archives' [Pictorial Collections](#) including [Floods and Hurricanes in Connecticut, 1936-1955 \(PG 160\)](#) as well as [Colt \(PG 460\)](#); throughout other archival collections.
- **Recovery Efforts** – [Report of the Rehabilitation Committee](#); reports by the [Connecticut Coordination Office](#); WPA and CCC reports and publications; Town Reports and Town histories in the Connecticut State Library; [newspapers](#);
- **Cost** – Reports by federal, state and municipal agencies, as well as annual budgets. The WPA and CCC programs were already established and required matching funds, and many town budgets include line items for these programs.
- **Flora and Fauna** – reports, bulletins and other publications by CT Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Interior, CCC; newspapers; articles in [AGRICOLA](#) or subscription database JSTOR (must be used within Connecticut State Library or another library with a subscription).
- **Weather** - U.S. Weather Bureau reports and publications; NOAA.gov; U.S. Department of Interior's report on the floods.
- Items in the Connecticut State Library catalog may be searched in various ways, including [New England Hurricane, 1938](#)

I think the hotel gave us enough money to get home. New London was a mess and no trains were running. We got a bus to New Haven and a trolley home. Then we met each other on our bikes and rode down to the boatyard. Al, Charlie, and a few others were standing in the yard talking when we jumped over the fence and surprised them. Boy!!! Were Al and Charlie ever glad to see us!! My father later told me that Don's mother and my mother were at my house in the car ready to start looking for us, when he said, "Let's wait awhile till the mail man comes as there might be some late news about us."

Sure enough, there was my post card from Fishers Island, which made the last ferry in from the island before it sunk. When Mom and Dad saw the *Spray*, they didn't think it was our boat because there was only one mast showing. The people told them it was our boat and we had just left for home. They were relieved to know that we were ok!!

Walter Lange Jr.

Pete DuPont wrote a check to the Sea Scouts for \$100.00 for the loss of the *Spray*.

Epilogue

Walter Lange, Jr. returned to the wreck to gather belongings, take pictures of the boat and the name plaque for the Spray.

On September 23, 2013, Mr. Lange, 96, shared this story for the 75th anniversary of the Hurricane of 1938. He passed away three days later, happy in the knowledge that people would know of his adventure.

Images of Mr. Lange, below, and of the *Spray* before and after the storm (previous page) are courtesy of Kerry Lange. ✧





The North Haven Train Wreck of September 2, 1913

by Bill Anderson, Cataloging Librarian

The document is, at first glance, an unremarkable one. The tragedy it represents does not stand out to the casual eye.

The document was inherited from my predecessor, shelved among documents of the Interstate Commerce Commission, all waiting their turn for inclusion in the library's web catalog. It shares the shelf with reports, petitions, and hearings of the Commission from the early 20th century, largely dealing with the mundane if important matter of setting freight rates.

The physical volume is a maroon binder with a yellowed paper pasted to it; a standard stenographer's minutes form for investigations "before the Interstate Commerce Commission," filled in with now faded typescript "In the matter of the investigation of the accident on the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, near Wallingford, Connecticut on September 2, 1913." The investigation was held soon after at New Haven on September 5 and 6. The signature "Mr. (?) Higgins" is penned in black ink in the upper right corner of the form. A quick check inside indicates that Richard Higgins was chairman of the investigation.

The 419 pages within contain the testimony of a wide variety of individuals associated with the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, including a conductor, engineers, a brakeman, a train dispatcher, a signal engineer, the draughtsman who prepared the layout of the track on up the ranks to the superintendent of the shoreline. The language is matter of fact, bloodlessly technical in parts; question and response with little hint of tragedy.

The hints are there though if read carefully.

The weather ("Very foggy", "How far could you see signals?", "Why, not over two car lengths"-- railroad fireman)

Detailed interrogation of signal procedures. ("You



overran the signal?", "A little, yes"--conductor, a penciled "x" marks the margin. A latter signal was overrun by seven car lengths, the page margin similarly marked)

Delays in schedule reported by the dispatcher who ordered the trains to run 30 minutes late, amended later to one hour and fifteen minutes late.

I decided to bring the report to our newsletter editorial meeting, wondering if I might make anything of it for the next issue. It was suggested that I take a look in the local newspaper, the Meriden Daily Journal, to see what happened. We have the paper on microfilm and I pulled the September 1913 reel, 100 years ago to the month, and loaded it up. A single glance at the September 2, 1913 issue dramatically revealed the scope of events behind the document on my desk. Reading further through that and succeeding issues convinced me that there was indeed a story worth telling. Mel Smith of our History and Genealogy unit helped me with the microfilm to PDF scanner to grab scans of the paper for research.

On the foggy morning of September 2, 1913, some time just before 7 a.m. (6:40 a.m. if a shattered watch found in the wreckage was keeping good time), the first section of Train 95, White Mountain Express, collided with the second section of Train 91, Bar Harbor Express. The accident occurred at Talford Crossing about a mile north of the North Haven train station.

Seeing the signal too late, August B. Miller, conductor of Train 95, pulled the brake in vain as the train plowed into Train 91, the impact smashing its way through three passenger cars and halfway through a fourth with a force "like a drop hammer onto a child's toy" in the words of the Meriden Daily Journal correspondent. The two rear cars were



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“telescoped”, while a third was thrown to one side of the track, after which the fourth car absorbed the remaining energies of Train 95. There was a little confusion as to the exact damage. The “early story” lists Train 95 “plowing” through five cars, which may have been a confusion with the total number of passenger cars attached to Train 91. A sober reminder that incoming accounts in the wake of the disaster can often be confusing.



White Mountain Express crashed through two cars of the Bar Harbor Express, north of New Haven, Connecticut on Sept. 2, 1913. (Source: Flickr Commons project, 2010)

News of the accident travelled quickly, as several nearby businesses were abandoned and a crowd of onlookers gathered. The tentative 18 dead reported September 2 rose the day after to 21 as the wreckage was cleared.

The *Journal* lists the dead, updating the list a day later, and it seems appropriate to linger with a few of them briefly. Both trains were returning home from resort areas.

Samuel C. Fox, banker from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Frank B. Rutter of Scranton, Pennsylvania, vice president of the Scranton Bolt and Nut Company and his wife Grace Law Rutter.

"Japanese, [died] on train while being brought to the hospital." He was later identified as Harry K. Imai of New York City.

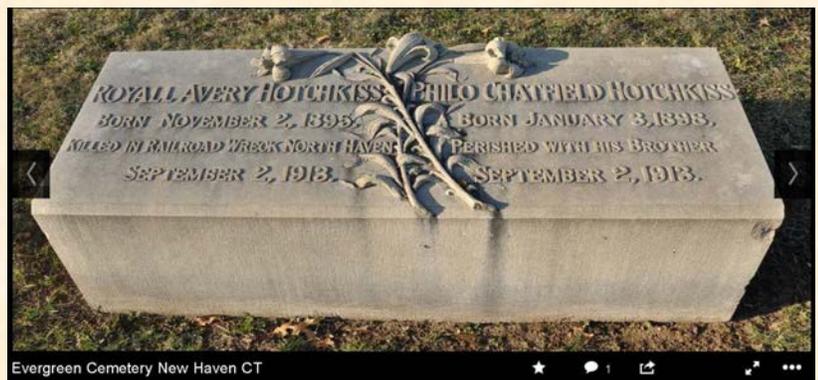
George T. Koga, Japanese waiter, New York City.

The coroner's report records 45 cents of change on his person and a notebook with his name and address.

"Mary Jane _____" of Hartford, Connecticut who died of injuries before her name could be ascertained. The only unidentified death on the second list of September 3.

"Girl loaded down with jewels, died in New Haven Hospital of her injuries". She was identified as Martha H. Marvin, the daughter of Dr. John Benson Marvin of Lexington, Kentucky, who along with his wife, was also among the dead. Martha was just shy of her 28th birthday, 27 years 11 months by the Coroner's report. The *Meriden Daily Journal* claims the jewels were worth \$5,000. The Coroner's report gives a complete accounting of an impressive list of jewelry, though no value is attached. They were returned to relatives.

A few names vanish from the list given on September 2 compared with the September 3 list, and "Mary Jane" could not be found in the New Haven coroner's reports. Perhaps a few of the "dead" emerged miraculously alive after the chaos of the first day. R. A. Hotchkiss and his brother Philo were not so lucky. R. A. perished in the collision, while his brother Philo was brought to New Haven Hospital, where his leg was amputated. The two brothers were united in death on the next day's list and buried together underneath the same stone.



Balancing the scales of life and death, there was at least one story of chance whim altering and perhaps lengthening a man's life. No ominous portent of doom revealed itself to James Hale Steinman, a banker from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He was simply "suddenly seized with desire to visit my sister



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in Portland, Maine." Steinman stepped from the train and left the ill fated Philadelphia camping party with which he was traveling.

The crash dominated the September 2 and 3 issues of the *Meriden Daily Journal* and then slowly faded to briefer columns further back. Even through the shockwave of death and wreckage of those two days, the smaller tragedies and mundane events frame the greater tragedy, highlighting the changes and commonalities for us in a Connecticut a hundred autumns hence.

"Lecture course for local school teachers"

"Warner killed and eaten by cannibals" (Warner was a "German-American mineologist who was searching an unexplored section of the island [of Papua New Guinea] for radium")

"Miss Annie McGovern, of Bridgeport, is visiting her cousin, Mrs. Hattie Davidson, in this city." (This notice appears in a personal column citing other such visits, returns from vacations, admittances to the hospital, etc. of various locals"

"Woman mobbed for wearing slit bathing skirt" (In New Jersey)

"Catch autoist who ran over man and fled" (In New York, victim survived and "autoist" was caught)

Thus, one outwardly unremarkable document led me to a dramatic and, in many ways moving tragedy of Connecticut's past. I have barely touched

the surface in the span of a short article, woven from a few sources, and brevity has dictated the omission of detail in even these sources. As with any first drafts of history, the immediate newspaper accounts I drew from need to be tested against other sources.

Two further Interstate Commerce Commission investigation volumes of other accidents around the same time lie on my shelf below the North Haven wreck of September 2, 1913. I have not yet dared to dig deeper into these. ✧

References

[In the Matter of the Investigation of the Accident on the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad near Wallingford Connecticut on September 2, 1913: Stenographer's Minutes before the Interstate Commerce Commission, New Haven Conn., September 5 and 6, 1913](#)

[Meriden Daily Journal, 1913: Sept. 2-3](#)
[Connecticut Coroner's Records: New Haven County, vol. 19-21 \(1911-1913\)](#)

[Connecticut Coroner's Records: New Haven County, vol. 19-21 \(1911-1913\)](#)

Royall and Philo Hotchkiss grave site photo credit Dana Laird through <http://www.flickr.com/photos/57648602@N00/6657201535/in/photolist-b9gU5P-b9gTA4>

Photo research provided by Irma Carper-Miller



72nd Governor Portrait in Memorial Hall, by Ursula Hunt, Administrative Assistant



Governor M. Jodi Rell's official portrait has taken its place in the Museum of Connecticut History's Memorial Hall. The portrait, painted by renowned artist Laurel Stern Boeck, of Stamford, CT, can be seen alongside the portraits of 71 former Governors of the state. A ceremony to honor former Governor Rell and to unveil the portrait was held in Memorial Hall on September 11. It was a wonderful event that was very well attended. Present at the event, in addition to Jodi Rell, were Governor Dannel Malloy, Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman, Senate Minority Leader John McKinney, Attorney General George Jepsen, State Comptroller Kevin Lembo, State Treasurer Denise Nappier, Secretary of the State Denise Merrill, former Lieutenant Governor Michael Fedele, former Chief of Staff Lisa Moody, portrait artist Laurel Stern Boeck, Chief Justice Chase Rogers, State Library Board Chair John Barry, State Library Board members Joy Hostage and Bob Harris, **public media, and Governor Rell's family, which** included many grandchildren!

The speaking program was reminiscent of Governor Rell's time in office and included brief stories about her successes, challenges, compassion and even humor.

Governor Rell was the second female Governor in Connecticut. In Governor Rell's concluding remarks, she stated, "I have to tell you, I'm a little bit pleased to help Ella take on a few of these men!"

I encourage you to visit the Museum of Connecticut History to see its collections and exhibits and also to view the **Museum's newest addition** - former Governor Rell's portrait. ✧





Researching Accidents and Premature Death:

Resources for Historians and Genealogists Mel Smith, History & Genealogy Reference Librarian

As Bill Anderson's article "The North Haven Train Wreck of September 2, 1913" illustrates, a single tragic event may not only affect a single individual, but whole families and communities as well. While the sudden death of a loved one as a result of an accident or criminal activity may be forgotten over time, the details and circumstances of the event live on in a wide array of secondary and primary sources.

Beyond the official record of death of an individual, which will be found in the Connecticut city or town where the death took place (the Connecticut State Library has microfilm copies of these records from the colonial times to circa 1900), there are many avenues to pursue information about a person's death.



Tariffville, Railroad Bridge Collapse, January 15, 1878.

Connecticut *State Library State Archives PG 300, Connecticut City and Towns Collection, Simsbury Folder*

State Library website. Newspapers will often provide colorful accounts of a tragedy just as they do today, the major difference being that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were more newspapers competing against each other to get information to their readers and the public. The more sensational a newspaper byline, the better to help promote circulation. Needless to say, newspapers were not always the most reliable of sources for information, as the articles sometimes did not match the reality of the event.

Within the Connecticut State Archives are found various primary resource records which may shed a more official light on the events of an accidental or violent death. The following listing of resources is not meant to be exhaustive, but is provided as a beginning for such unique research:

Coroner and Medical Examiner records:

Archival Record Group #003, Records of the Judicial Department

Inquests into deaths that happened either accidentally or by violence have been conducted as early as 1639 when the Connecticut General Court enacted legislation calling for inquiries into untimely deaths. Later in Connecticut history a justice of the peace or a grand juror acting as a coroner would convene a jury to make an inquiry, take evidence, and report to the Superior or County Court on deaths in that jurisdiction. It was not until May 1, 1883 that the General Assembly created the Office of the Coroner. The Connecticut State Library has within the State Archives a vast array of records, hearings, medical examiner reports, case files, and laboratory reports dating from 1883 to 1979 for each Connecticut County, though content for each county may vary. Also, restrictions apply to access of those records received after July 1, 1970, along with certain photographic images due to federal or state privacy statutes. You will find an online guide to the [Records of the Judicial Department](#) which outlines the State Archives holdings to Superior and County Court inquests along with the records of the Office of the Coroner on the Connecticut State Library website.



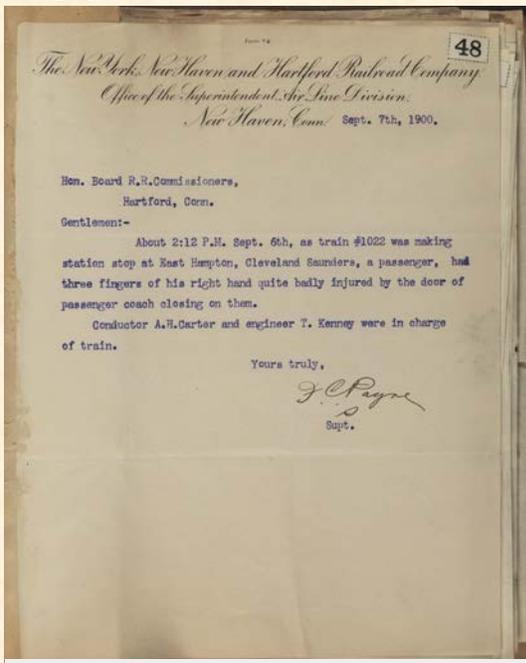
Tariffville, Railroad Bridge Collapse, January 15, 1878.

Connecticut *State Library State Archives PG 810, Stereographs, Box 1, Tariffville Disaster Folder*

Newspapers are one of the best unofficial secondary resources to find details surrounding a premature death. Online subscription based newspaper resources found at the Connecticut State Library include the *Historical Hartford Courant*, *Early American Newspapers* and *Access Newspapers* along with other growing free newspapers resources such as the Library of Congress's "Chronicling America, Historic American Newspapers" project. Some of these subscription resources, such as the *Historical Hartford Courant*, are even available to Connecticut residents to use remotely using the available research databases available through the Connecticut

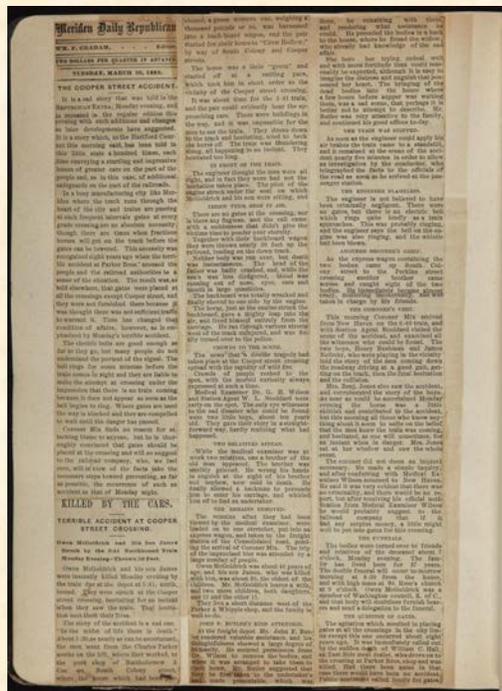


Continued from page 10



1900 accident report for the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Company

Connecticut State Library State Archives RG 041:001, Board of Railroad Commissioners, Series #9 Accidents, Boston & New York Airline



Cooper Street Accident

Connecticut State Library State Archives RG 041:001, Board of Railroad Commissioners, Series #8 Scrapbooks, Box 74, Volume for December 14, 1888 to April 25, 1889, March 20, 1889 page

Railroad accident reports and other related materials:

Archival Record Group #041:001, Board of Railroad Commissioners

The Board of Railroad Commissioner records are a subsection of the Public Utilities Control Authority, and are a treasure trove of wide ranging materials including railroad accident reports, investigation reports and hearings related to injuries and deaths of patrons and employees of the railway systems in Connecticut. Of particular interest to the historian and family researcher are:

Series #1, Record Books, forty-five volumes covering the years 1854 to 1911 which detail by individual railroad name the administration functionality of the railway to the State of Connecticut. These volumes include accident reports.

Series #9, Accident Reports, nineteen volumes covering the years 1893 to 1911 containing detailed reports of railroad accidents that took place in Connecticut which resulted in injury or death to patrons or employees.

Series #8, Scrapbooks, twenty-three volumes covering the years 1879 to 1909 of state-wide newspaper clippings arranged chronologically detailing all manner of railroad news including accidents and deaths.

Series #11, Indexes, Subseries 11.2, Index to accidents, a paper index to over 6,300 railroad fatalities from 1853 to 1893. A patron use copy is available at the History & Genealogy reference desk at the Connecticut State Library. This indexes accident reports found within Series #1, Record Books.

These materials will help historians and family genealogists shed light on deaths of those who died in Connecticut under premature or mysterious circumstances, and may help answer long standing questions about long lost family members. ♦



Connecticut Goes to the Mall: Our State at the 2013 National Book Festival

by Stephen Cauffman, reQuest Interlibrary Loan Coordinator

The 13th annual Library of Congress National Book Festival took place on Saturday and Sunday, September 21 and 22, 2013 at the National Mall in Washington, DC. The outdoor event, free for attendees, featured talks and book signings by more than 100 authors. The Library of Congress recorded and archived the author events, while C-SPAN televised live the talks that took place in the History & Biography tent. Estimates are that 200,000 people attended the National Book Festival over the two days.

One of the many highlights of the Book Festival was the Pavilion of States, which took place on the Saturday of the two-day event. Sponsored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services with additional funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the pavilion consists of booths for each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U. S. territories, and the Library of Congress's Center for the Book. Exhibit space allowed each state to share information on its unique cultural and literary heritage with festival-goers.

Connecticut's participation in the Pavilion of States for 2013 was spearheaded by Stuart Parnes, Executive Director of the Connecticut Humanities Council which is the new home of the Connecticut Center for the Book, and Dawn La Valle, Director of the Division of Library Development for the Connecticut State Library. The Connecticut booth contained an attractive tri-fold panel that featured the spines of a stack of books, each of which was written by a Connecticut author, both classic and contemporary, from Mark Twain to Suzanne Collins.

Staff at the Connecticut booth distributed various maps, brochures, and bookmarks that highlighted Connecticut

landmarks. Other popular giveaways included pencils inscribed with "I visited the Connecticut booth at the National Book Festival!" and handouts compiled by the State Library's Linda Williams, which featured lists of children's and young-adult fiction books by Connecticut authors and children's and young-adult fiction books set in Connecticut.

Members of the Junior League distributed a "Discover Great Places Through Reading" brochure in the pavilion. The U. S. map on the brochure encouraged kids of all ages to visit every booth in the pavilion in order to collect each state's sticker or stamp for their map. Staff at the Connecticut booth affixed a small "Connecticut - Still Revolutionary" sticker to the map for everyone who stopped by. The brochure also contained a list of great reads from each state and Connecticut's contribution to the list was the book *In Pursuit of the Common Good: Twenty-Five Years of Improving the World, One Bottle of Salad Dressing at a Time* by Paul Newman and A. E. Hotchner.



Susan Hildreth (center), Director of IMLS, in front of the Connecticut booth at the National Book Festival with (l to r) Jessica Carso and Stuart Parnes from the Conn. Humanities Council; Susan Hildreth; Dawn La Valle and Steve Cauffman from the Conn. State Library.

Attendees began strolling through the pavilion as early as 9:00 a.m. By the official opening time of 10:00 a.m., a large wave of people was streaming through the pavilion, a wave that continued unabated throughout the day. "Yay, Connecticut!" and "Go Huskies!" exclaimed visitors as they passed the Connecticut exhibit space, while staff at the booth affixed stamps to maps and chatted with attendees. Fortunately rain held off until late afternoon and only a downpour near the end of the day stemmed the tide of visitors. Given the continued success of this event, planning is underway for a Connecticut booth at 2014 Pavilion of States at the National Book Festival. ✧



Exciting News for the Division of Library Development

by Dawn La Valle, Division of Library Development Director

The Connecticut State Library was one of seven state libraries invited to participate in the soft launch of the Edge Initiative which took place in June and July of this year. The Edge Initiative was developed by a national coalition of 13 library and government organizations including the California State Library, Lyraris, OCLC, and International City/County Management Association among others, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and spearheaded by the Urban Libraries Council. The ultimate goal of the coalition is to ensure that technology is available to all people regardless of their education and geographical location. The Edge Benchmarking Tool encourages libraries to align their digital and technology services with community priorities with a clear view of what is working and where there may be room for improvement.

Where People Connect,
Communities Achieve



The actual Edge Benchmarks provide libraries with systematic methods to assess, understand and apply best practices for public access technology services. The Benchmarks are as follows:

- Community Value: specific programs, services and support that enable people to get value from their use of technology
- Engaging the Community and Decision Makers: external practices that connect the library to the community
- Organizational Management: internal management and infrastructure

Each of the seven state libraries selected were tasked with identifying 10-25 public libraries of various sizes, wealth and geographical locations. Nineteen Connecticut Libraries was selected based on their interests, service populations, operating budgets, and locations in order to represent the diversity of the state. The selected libraries were Avon Free Public, Coventry Public, Canterbury Public, Cheshire Public, Rocky Hill Public, Colchester Public, Danbury Public, Fairfield Public, Groton Public, Hartford Public, New Milford Public, Norwalk Public, Putnam Public, Russell Public, Simsbury Public, Wallingford Public, West Hartford Public, Weston Public, and Westport Public. The role of the soft launch libraries across the nation was to refine the tool with input from the seven state libraries in preparation for the national roll out in early 2014.

The Edge Initiative team provided the State Library and all participating libraries with crafted communications tools for press releases, social media, newsletters and targeted messages to stakeholder groups, library staff and other key organizational participants. All soft launch libraries received in-depth training and support in preparation for the launch of the actual tool. The tool itself normally would take 2-4 hours to complete; however, the soft launch libraries were given almost a month to complete it. Along the way the Edge Team and Division of Library Development Staff provided support and resources to the Conn. libraries.

The Edge Toolkit includes:

- The **benchmarks assessment tool** for libraries to assess and evaluate current services
- A **resource guide** with practical templates, tools and tips for improving the library's public technology services.
- **Case studies** that feature examples of public libraries of all sizes using computers to meet community needs.
- **Reporting and presentation tools** that help library leaders tell the story of how computers support the local economy, workforce, lifelong learning and a strong community
- **Training** that will guide libraries in using their Edge results for planning, advocacy, and outreach activities to enhance as well as build technology services.

At the conclusion of the soft launch period the Connecticut State Library was very pleased to report that all 19

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Connecticut libraries had completed their assessments using the tool. We held an Edge Wrap Up session for the participating libraries to discuss what worked and what did not work in order to provide the Edge team with a working list of suggested changes to improve the tool. Participating libraries overwhelmingly praised the tool and indicated that it would be extremely helpful for strategic and technology planning.

Bill Derry, Assistant Director for Innovation and User Experience at the Westport Public Library offered:

"The Edge Technology Assessment program provided our library for the first time with a set of **BENCHMARKS** that consisted of uses of technology that libraries serving their communities well should do. Of course we need to select from the recommendations based upon our community makeup, but before this we had no benchmarks!"

Connecticut libraries who, based on their positive experience with the tool, have agreed to serve as mentors with other key partner organizations, will join the Connecticut State Library to launch a statewide initiative to encourage all Connecticut public libraries to take advantage of this powerful benchmarking tool. National rollout for the Edge Tool will be January of 2014, but Connecticut libraries will be among the first to have access to it to assess how their communities are using technology and how best practices can be established to align future growth and services with community priorities.

Stay tuned!

For more information about Edge, go to <http://www.libraryedge.org/> or contact Dawn La Valle, Director of Library Development, dawn.lavalle@ct.gov ✦

DiversityWorks Program Invited Job Seekers and Employers to Outreach/Job Fair on October 24, 2013

Continuing the celebration of Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM), the Add Us In/DiversityWorks program invited job seekers to an event specially designed to help people with disabilities looking for work. The DEAM Job Fair took place on October 24th in Bridgeport and was open to all jobseekers.

The WorkPlace's Add Us In/DiversityWorks program supports small businesses in Southwestern CT and surrounding communities to hire and leverage the talent of people with disabilities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals with disabilities.

Job seekers were encouraged to dress "to impress," and to bring copies of their resume. There were also two helpful workshops: "Navigating a Job Fair" to learn tips for maximizing your experience at a job fair and "Disability Disclosure-If To, When To, and How To" to learn the pros and cons of disclosing a non-visible disability as well as how to discuss a visible disability with potential employers.

Both DAS and the CT State Library for the Blind and Handicapped were invited and had a free booth to recruit candidates to diversify our workforces.

Total of attendees/job seekers: 328
Total number of employers: 30

Debra Mainville, Human Resources Specialist and Alicia Nuñez, Equal Employment Opportunity Manager, were on hand to assist job seekers with information about getting a job with the state, taking an exam, signing up for e-alerts and navigating the DAS website.



War of 1812 Connecticut Contract Muskets

by Dean E. Nelson, Administrator, Museum of Connecticut History



United States military policy in the post-Revolutionary decades sought to establish more certain national preparedness on land and sea against the Atlantic world's constant economic turmoil, social strife, and shifting political alliances, should those troubles come to America's lands, as they had before in colonial wars of the 1750s and 1770s. Major initiatives towards these ends emphasized manpower, organization, and armament. The Militia Act of 1792 provided that "...each and every free able bodied white male citizen..." between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years be enrolled in the militia and that "...every citizen, so enrolled...shall...provide himself with a good musket or firelock..." and requisite bayonet, powder, and ball ammunition. Congress in 1794 mandated the establishment of National Armories at Springfield, Massachusetts, and Harpers Ferry, Virginia, for government military musket manufacture. Private manufacturers, many quite new to gun making, won federal contracts in 1798, 1808, and 1812, totaling tens of thousands of shoulder arms, to augment Springfield and Harpers Ferry output; many of these contract arms were in turn delivered to the states "...apportioned to the number of soldiers enrolled..." for their respective militias.

War Department contracts stipulated that "the muskets shall be made exactly after the Charleville pattern..." the tried-and-true standard French infantry shoulder weapon imported en masse to arm America in the recent Revolution. Single-shot muzzle-loaders of flint and steel ignition bore prominent features such as an iron barrel 42 or so inches in length, with a smooth (unrifled) bore of 69/100 inch diameter firing a lead ball weighing a bit under an ounce. The barrel was secured by three thin, flat iron bands to a full-length seasoned black walnut stock which accommodated a steel ramrod for seating the charge into the breech. Iron components were first forged and then ground or file-finished to acceptable dimension. Though the technological concept of parts interchangeability for production efficiencies and repair was acknowledged in the period, it was pretty much dismissed as an unrealistic approach to gun making.

The Museum of Connecticut History has had the good fortune in recent years to add several respectable War of 1812 Connecticut contract muskets to the collections. They have survived in good order, remarkably unscathed by two full centuries of obsolescence, common breakages, alteration, deterioration, and the well-intentioned vandalism of recent "cleaning."

Oliver Bidwell of Middletown fabricated the musket at left, with lock plate stamped with an eagle, "O. Bidwell" and "U. S./1811". It was manufactured for the War Department through his 1808 contract for 4,000 arms; only 682 were actually delivered. It retains its original socket bayonet.

Center is an 1812-dated example by Ethan Stillman of Burlington, who delivered 736 guns of his 1808 contract for 2,500. The lock plate lacks a "US" marking above the eagle, an indication of a commercial sale or manufacture under a state contract. It originally belonged to Connecticut militia Colonel Anson Colt with ownership passing to the oldest family son through the generations until its 2011 donation to the museum.

Right is a product of New Haven's famed gun maker Eli Whitney, who secured a federal contract for 15,000 in 1812, ultimately delivering some 18,000 from June of 1815 through 1824, too late to see actual service in America's second war with England. Whitney's design streamlined the ironwork a bit and substituted a brass priming pan; its lock features "N. Haven" in a scroll and its breech is struck with the letters "SNY" denoting either a State of New York contract or subsequent federal issuance to that state.

U. S. Military Flintlock Muskets and their Bayonets: the Early Years, 1790-1815 by Peter A. Schmidt (2006) is a fine, detailed study of these and other American military long arms of the Federal era, with full text transcriptions of key period correspondence. ✧



Poet, Soldier, and Editor: the Restless Life of Luther G. Riggs

by Glenn Sherman Library Technician

Sonnet
 Unwashed the kismet at the close of day,
 As hand in hand we sat together dead—
 While down against my cheek, her fallen hair
 Terribly meekly sunned, and my head bowed
 The lightning claps, herons kiss her feet,
 While to my heart I press her willing hand
 More fast I thought her than in all the land
 Could any flower be, however rare.
 The setting sunshine lay across her breast,
 As if it clasped her in its arms of gold,
 And to itself her fairy form would fly,
 But flying so, could be more sweet, bliss,
 Not feathery of the flowers or sun am I,
 But oh, my darling, love me or I die!

Luther G. Riggs

“Sonnet,” in Riggs handwriting, appeared on p.153 of *Poets and poetry of printerdom*.

Almost fifteen years ago, while working for the Connecticut Newspaper Project,¹ I became fascinated with the life story of Luther G. Riggs, a newspaper publisher in Meriden, Connecticut. At first glance, there was nothing remarkable about this young editor, who filled column-inches with original verses and sharply worded editorials, and gave his newspapers highfalutin names like the “Meriden Literary Recorder,” but when I began sensing an almost comic story arc emerging, I just had to probe deeper. What I found might not have been the “Most Interesting Man in the World,” but certainly a remarkable one: someone who literally fought for his beliefs and loudly espoused causes, great and petty, someone who managed to achieve a couple of firsts and yet seemed to have a positive talent for attracting trouble, someone who participated in history, recorded it for posterity, and then somehow, became lost to it.

A Quiet Start

Luther Granger Riggs was born on September 28, 1837, in what is now Easton, Connecticut,² to a family of modest means, but deep New England roots. Sometime before 1850, they relocated to Bridgeport where Jonathan, Luther’s father, supported the family of five as a housepainter.³ Luther, the eldest child, seems to have received a decent

— although largely self-guided — liberal arts education and engaged in the study and writing of poetry. His relationship with words turned “professional” when he became an apprentice at the Bridgeport publishers of the Standard newspapers at age fifteen.⁴

In 1857, at age 20, Luther married Isabella Gertrude Munson, of New Haven.⁵ In the following year, the couple finally settled in New Haven, and their son, Wallace, was born. Luther found work at a book and job printing office and also found time to compose poetry,⁶ but this quiet life was about to change in a big way.

His First “First”

July of 1861 saw the release of the first book edition of “The Anarchiad” (1786-1787), reconstructed by Luther G. Riggs from the original newspaper serial installments. His introductory essay was the first widely disseminated scholarly examination of the “Hartford Wits,” an extraordinary group of Yale alumni who together wrote the mock-epic poem inspired by the woes of the early republic.⁷ The work was but one volley in the war of words in the newspapers of the time that helped sway our young nation toward the 1787 Constitutional Convention. The group he rescued from obscurity was hardly a bunch of unknowns — it included George Washington’s aide-de-camp (and Derby native), David Humphreys, diplomat and poet Joel Barlow (of Redding), poet John Trumbull (of Lebanon), and Dr. Lemuel Hopkins (of Waterbury) — but together, as the “Hartford Wits,” this group demonstrated the power of the press to actuate change, something that, no doubt, was compelling to Riggs, especially as the nation was, once again, in the throes of crisis.

As “The Anarchiad” was being printed, that crisis came to a head. On April 12-13 Fort Sumter, South Carolina came under bombardment, and the Civil War was on. Riggs enlisted in October, 1861 as a private in the 1st Light Battery, Connecticut Volunteers.⁸ There, we begin to find hints of his personality, illustrated in a recollection by one of his fellow soldiers:

Comrade Riggs was better fitted for the officers' quarters than the privates' mess, for he was fastidious, and did not take kindly to the hardships of a private's life. As one of the comrades said: "Riggs would have been all very well if the army regulations had provided him with a servant." On one occasion Comrade Riggs was on guard duty and was late in returning for dinner. "Corporal, where is my dinner?" he asked in a lordly manner. "In the messpot, " was the answer. It so happened that the comrades in that particular tent had been either very hungry or had forgotten their comrade, for nothing was found in the pot but one potato. Comrade Riggs was angry, he made a formal complaint, and told the comrades that "they ought to have more consideration for men on guard."⁹





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A formal complaint over a potato? That confrontational manner and sensitivity to perceived injustice would follow him into civilian life, and greatly influence its course. Fortunately for private Riggs, the officers' quarters beckoned, and in an historic way.

A Second "First"

While Riggs was stationed at Port Royal, South Carolina, the Union took its first tentative steps toward organizing colored regiments. They would not be made up of northerners, but of escaped slaves from South Carolina and Florida. The undertaking was daunting, and almost certainly doomed to failure, as these recruits were completely untrained and faced certain death if captured. Newspapers in the North (including the Hartford Courant) editorialized against the expense of equipping and training these men, and the possibility of soldiers deserting, taking their Enfield rifles with them.¹⁰

When word got out that a company was being formed at Smith's plantation in Beaufort, Luther Riggs managed to secure a commission as a lieutenant in what would become the 1st South Carolina (Union) Volunteers, the first black regiment of the Civil War.¹¹ Among their ranks was Harriet Tubman, who served as a scout, spy and cook.¹² The regiment saw little action, as it was considered too dangerous for the white officers who led them (Jefferson Davis threatened to hang the officers if captured, with worse awaiting the troops), but the unit was involved in support operations, and ultimately provided an inroad for Northern colored regiments to enter the war. This was not enough for Riggs however, and on August 21, 1862, he joined the 22nd Regiment Connecticut Volunteers as a 1st lieutenant,¹³ although he continued to defend the reputation of his former regiment throughout the war.¹⁴ During his time with the 22nd, Riggs was promoted to Captain, and finally saw his action at Suffolk, VA.¹⁵ After mustering out on July 7, 1863, he turned to newspaper publishing to further the Union cause.

Unbalanced Coverage

Newspapers have long played a central role in political and regional conflict in the United States. Before the age of "balanced coverage," editors unambiguously represented specific parties and movements, using their publications to promote candidates and vilify opponents, but few were as vociferous as Luther G. Riggs when forwarding their causes. His militant editorship of a series of Meriden Connecticut newspaper titles, and later, titles in Illinois and Wisconsin, would win him more enemies than friends.

It may be helpful to know a little about newspaper partisanship during the Civil War. In the North, Republican papers promoted the most radical social and political agenda. Independent papers generally supported the Union war effort, but not necessarily emancipation and other Republican positions. Democrat papers were split between two factions: War Democrats that shared some resentment at the Republican leadership and the poor progress of the war but stood behind a strong Union, and therefore cooperation with Republicans, and Copperhead Democrats who were openly sympathetic to the South and virulently anti-Republican. Riggs had long been in the anti-slavery camp and had participated in the black regiment experiment in South Carolina, but when he launched his first newspaper it was as an Independent sheet.

Meriden Connecticut, where Riggs established his press, was not entirely sympathetic to his message. Way back in 1837, Meriden had been the site of an anti-abolition riot that riveted New England.¹⁶ Many of its leading citizens were Democrats, and the most recent paper published in that city, the Meriden Banner, reflected those leanings. The Emancipation Proclamation had been issued just months earlier, and the war was not going well for the Union. The slogan of Riggs' first newspaper, the Meriden Literary Recorder, "Independent in Everything – Neutral in Nothing" could not have been more apt. He immediately began

polarizing the community, and over the next two decades would publish a succession of more than a dozen weekly and daily newspaper titles and continue a turbulent relationship with the town's leading citizens. The public ate it up, but the subjects of his writing were less pleased.

The "History of New Haven County" describes his tenure this way:

"On the 29th of August, 1863, they began the Meriden recorder, a weekly paper, with independent tendencies. Having served in the army, Mr. Riggs started off with a good soldiers' patronage, and for several years, the business prospered. He had considerable ability to do newspaper work... but he lacked the tact to please the public and had a stormy career before he left Meriden on account of the hostility of many citizens."¹⁷

THE HILLYER GUARD!
\$155 BOUNTY!
Don't Wait to be Drafted!
Lieut. H. GLAFFCKE,
 (Late First Lieutenant First Connecticut Artillery,) and
Lieut. LUTHER G. RIGGS,
 (Late from Port Royal, South Carolina, in connection
 with Mr. I. C. BAGG'S, are recruiting a Company for
 the State Militia, at
282 MAIN STREET,
 UNDER ESSMAN & HASS'S CIGAR STORE.
 Lieuts. GLAFFCKE and RIGGS have been in the
 service since the breaking out of the Rebellion, and those
 who enlist in their Company will have the advantage of
 being under old and experienced officers.
 Enlist at once, and secure
THE LIBERAL BOUNTY
 Offered to Volunteers.
\$155! BOUNTY! \$155!
 Call at the Public Rooms, where all needful informa-
 tion may be obtained
 Lieut. LUTHER G. RIGGS,
 Lieut. H. GLAFFCKE,
 Sergt. I. C. BAGG'S,
 Recruiting Officers.
 aug 22 tld



Continued from page 17 Some of this can be attributed to Riggs' sensitivity to racism and injustice, as an incident in 1868 illustrates. Frederick Douglass came to Meriden to give a lecture, and was to stay at the Meriden House hotel. Its proprietor was a man named Ives, "for many years a resident of the South." It should come as no surprise Douglass was not graciously received. As reported in the Hartford Post: "Mr. Riggs, editor of the Recorder, denounced the conduct of Mr. Ives in severe terms..." leading to a loss of business. Not long after, Riggs was assaulted by Ives, "a powerfully built man," and only through the intervention of some bystanders was he not more severely beaten.¹⁸

More often *insensitivity* was the cause of Riggs' problems. He was twice assaulted with horsewhips. Once by the ex-postmaster of Meriden, with whom Riggs had been publicly arguing for years. During the ensuing fight, pistols were drawn. Fortunately, the altercation only resulted in bloodied noses. Almost two years later, in 1869, Riggs was horsewhipped again, this time by the son of ex-mayor Charles Parker, who had been the subject of a provocative news item.¹⁹ Riggs fled to Hartford, the son turned himself in and paid a fine, but more was to come. A libel suit followed that went all the way to the state Supreme Court of Errors on appeal.²⁰ And, in 1881, Riggs would be sued for slander by another mayor, George R. Curtis.²¹

His printing press was smashed with axes once, and thrown into the Quinnipiac River another time. The sheriff impounded his press on still another occasion. He was assaulted by irate readers numerous times. Early on, he ran afoul of the postmaster (a Democrat), who then refused to deliver his papers, and was even chastised in the New York Times. Luther G. Riggs was becoming news in his own newspapers.²²

He would not cease churning out controversial news items – or poetry. In 1875 he was featured in two poetry anthologies: "Poets and poetry of printerdom," published in Cincinnati by Oscar H. Harpel, and "Poems," unsurprisingly published by L.G. Riggs and Company. The New Englander and Yale Review gave "Poems" a pretty good review: "No one who looks over these pages with care can fail to find marks of poetic genius."²³

An Unquiet End

By 1882, Riggs had alienated so many people in Meriden, that he had to leave town. His wife, Isabella, did not go with him. Heading west, Riggs can be found living in Chicago in 1883 with the occupation "printer."

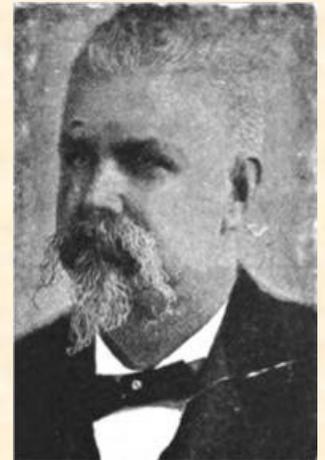
The following year, he entered into a short-lived marriage with Lizzie M. Pierce of Elgin, Illinois.²⁴ 1886 finds him assistant editor of the Sun, and in the two years following, editor²⁵ of the Chicago Telegram, where he seems to have met with some success. From the Yonkers Statesman: "Luther G. Riggs, the enterprising editor of the Chicago Telegram, has been the means of making the paper an enormous success. Although he is a poet he is also most practical."²⁶

In 1887, while still in Chicago, Riggs met, and married, Rachel Warner (known as "Ray"), a dressmaker almost twenty years his junior,²⁷ but his restlessness continued: in the next year he started publishing the Recorder in Richmond, Illinois.²⁸ The couple finally settled – if that can be the term for it – in Bloomfield, Wisconsin, where, in 1889 Riggs began publishing the Genoa Junction Journal and continued to arouse controversy. Remarkably, in an eerie echo of his Meriden days, vandals tossed his type cases into the Nippersink Creek. He published for two more years before his death on October 31, 1891 at just 54 years of age.²⁹ He finally rests in peace, at the Roberts Cemetery in Apple River Township, Jo Daviess County, Illinois.³⁰

About Riggs, it was said: "He was one of the order of cry-aloud, spare-not country editors and seemed to think that peace is dear at any price, and too inglorious for an ex-centurian."³¹ He was also eulogized as "a veteran soldier, a fine scholar, and a man prominent in social life."³² Clergyman and writer William H. H. Murray recalled him this way in 1904:

"Luther," as we called him, was a *rara avis*, as the phrase is, a small and, I might say, unbound edition of Horace Greeley. I always liked Luther, for he was a true man at the core and praised his friends beyond discretion and cursed his enemies with most refreshing earnestness.³³

The Luther G. Riggs I found led a life full of improbable turns, and perhaps as much tragedy as comedy. He lacked patience and was full of ambition, had no sense of moderation and little toleration for fools. He was an advocate and a scold, a scholar but hardly a gentleman. The man who composed poetry from a young age could at the same time be a maddening gadfly from the bully pulpit of his newspapers. He was a witness to, and sometimes part of history in the making, yet remains a curiosity, thinly traced through city directories, catalogs and indexes, and a few published anecdotes. Everyone has a story, and unraveling this tale proved to be immensely satisfying. ✧



**Continued from page 18**

1. The Connecticut Newspaper Project, which ran from 1991-2002 at the Connecticut State Library, was a component of the National Endowment for the Humanities-funded United States Newspaper Project, a state-by-state effort to identify and catalog every known newspaper in the country, and microfilm as much as funds would allow. This program, supervised by the Library of Congress, resulted in 1,094,446 pages of 437 titles of Connecticut newspapers being filmed. There are plenty more pages to go. This effort enters a new era as microfilm becomes accessible through digitization.
2. Oscar H. Harpel, *Poets and poetry of printerdom*. Cincinnati: Oscar H. Harpel, Publisher and Printer, 1875, p.154.
3. 1850 U.S. Federal census, Bridgeport, ward 4, Fairfield, Conn. p.277A.
4. Oscar H. Harpel, *Poets and poetry of printerdom*. Cincinnati: Oscar H. Harpel, Publisher and Printer, p.154.
5. Connecticut State Library. Hale Collection of Newspaper Marriage and Death Notices: [New Haven palladium](#), Nov. 10, 1857, [Hartford evening press](#), Nov. 11, 1857, [Columbia evening register](#), Nov. 14, 1857, [Middletown constitution](#), Nov. 18, 1857.
6. Oscar H. Harpel, *Poets and poetry of printerdom*. Cincinnati: Oscar H. Harpel, Publisher and Printer, p.154.
7. *The Anarchiad : a New England poem / written in concert by David Humphreys, Joel Barlow, John Trumbull, and Dr. Lemuel Hopkins ; now first published in book form ; edited, with notes and appendices, by Luther G. Riggs*. New Haven: T.H. Pease, 1861, preface.
8. Connecticut. Adjutant-General's Office. *Record of Connecticut men in the War of Rebellion, 1861-1865*. Hartford, Conn.: Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1889, p.103.
9. Herbert W. Beecher. *History of the First Light Battery Connecticut Volunteers, 1861-1865. Personal records and reminiscences. The story of the battery from its organization to the present time. Comp. from official records, personal interviews, private diaries, war histories and individual experiences ... Historian, Herbert W. Beecher*. New York, A. T. De La Mare Ptg. and Pub. Co., Ltd, v.2, p.195.
10. [Hartford courant](#), 1862:Aug.20, p.2.
11. Herbert W. Beecher. *History of the First Light Battery Connecticut Volunteers, 1861-1865. Personal records and reminiscences. The story of the battery from its organization to the present time. Comp. from official records, personal interviews, private diaries, war histories and individual experiences ... Historian, Herbert W. Beecher*. New York, A. T. De La Mare Ptg. and Pub. Co., Ltd, v.2, p.195.
12. Kate Clifford Larson. *Bound For the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2004, p.105.
13. Connecticut. Adjutant-General's Office. *Record of Connecticut men in the War of Rebellion, 1861-1865*. Hartford, Conn.: Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1889, p.744.
14. [Hartford courant](#), 1862:Aug.20, p.2.
15. W. A. Croffut and John M. Morris. *The military and civil history of Connecticut during the war of 1861-65: comprising a detailed account of the various regiments and batteries, through march, encampment, bivouac, and battle: also instances of distinguished personal gallantry, and biographical sketches of many heroic soldiers: together with a record of the patriotic action of citizens at home, and of the liberal support furnished by the state in its executive and legislative departments*, New York: L. Bill, 1868, pp.332-334.
16. For a more full account of this, see Charles Henry Stanley Davis. *History of Wallingford, Conn., from its settlement in 1670 to the present time*. Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1979, starting p.509.
17. History of New Haven County, Connecticut / edited by J.L. Rockey; assisted by a corps of writers. New York : W.W. Preston, 1892, p.517.
18. [Hartford post](#), 1868:Feb.21, p.2.
19. [New York times](#), 1869:Sept.2, p.2.
20. Supreme Court of Errors of Connecticut. "The State v. Luther G. Riggs." November Term, 1872. At the original trial, Riggs was found guilty. On appeal, the case was overturned, with retrial recommended.
21. [New York times](#), 1881:Apr.1, p.1.
22. These incidents were reported in the various Riggs titles over his years in Meriden.
23. [New Englander and Yale review](#), v.34, issue 133, 1875:Oct., pp.792-793.
24. Illinois State Archives: *Illinois Statewide Marriage Index*. Also announced in the [Chariton patriot](#), Chariton, IL, 1884:July 30, p.3.
25. Fold3.com. *Chicago directories for 1883-1888*.
26. [Yonkers statesman](#), Yonkers, NY, 1884:Jan.22, p.1.
27. Ancestry.com. *Cook County, Illinois, Marriages Index, 1871-1920 [database on-line]*. Provo, UT. Ray's birth date is listed as 1861, however, her grave marker gives a birth date of March 1. 1856 (source: Findagrave.com).
28. Thomas W. Herringshaw. *Local and national poets of America with interesting biographical sketches and choice selections from over one thousand living American poets*, Chicago American Publishers' Association c1892, p.825.
29. Albert Clayton Beckwith, *History of Walworth County Wisconsin*, Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, 1912 p.238.
30. Findagrave.com.
31. Albert Clayton Beckwith, *History of Walworth County Wisconsin*, Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, 1912. p.238.
32. [Valley chronicle](#), St. Charles, IL, 1891:Nov.13, p.3.
33. [The independent](#), "Reminiscences of my literary and outdoor life, by W.H.H. Murray" 1904: July 28, pp. 198-199. W.H.H. Murray, considered the "father of the Outdoor Movement," was minister of the Congregational Church of Meriden, and had Riggs to thank for his second career as a successful adventure writer, as it was Riggs who first published his stories in the [Meriden recorder](#) in 1867. This might be Riggs' third "first."

Illustrations:

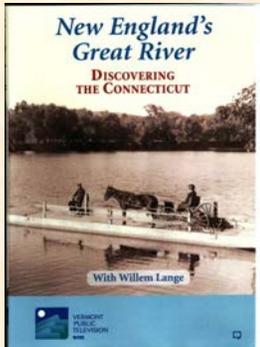
The engraving of Luther G. Riggs was from a plate facing p.152 of *Poets and poetry of printerdom*.

The recruiting advertisement for the Hillyer Guard was from the [Hartford daily courant](#), 1862:Aug.26, p.3.

Photo of Luther G. Riggs in the last year of his life appeared on p.825 of *Local and national poets of America with interesting biographical sketches and choice selections from over one thousand living American poets*.



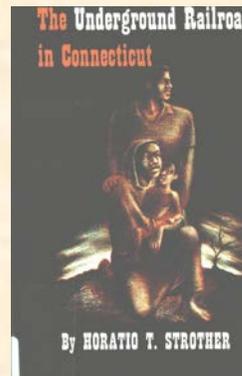
NEW AND NOTEWORTHY AT CSL

History & Genealogy


*New England's Great River :
Discovering the Connecticut /
with Willem Lange*

Caro Thompson

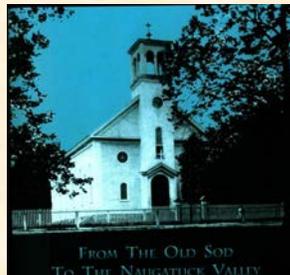
F12.C7 N48 2003



*The Underground Railroad in
Connecticut*

Horatio T. Strother

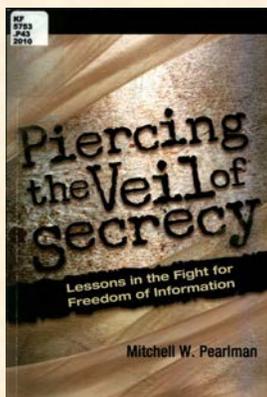
E450 .S93 1962



*From the old sod to the Naugatuck Valley: Early Irish
Catholics in New Haven County Connecticut*

Janet Maher

F105.I6 M35 2012

Law & Legislative Reference


*Piercing the Veil of Secrecy:
Lessons in the Fight for Freedom
of Information*

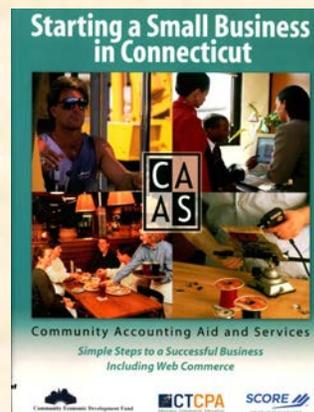
Mitchell W. Pearlman

KF5753 .P43 2010

The 2013 Connecticut session saw the sealing of growing classes of public documents, while at the same time citizens advocated for greater transparency and accountability in government

decision-making. Likewise, there's an ongoing tension between national security and disclosure at the federal level.

These debates make *Piercing the Veil of Secrecy* an especially timely book. No one can provide better insight into the issues than Mitchell Pearlman. The long-time executive director of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission, Pearlman has written and lectured world-wide on the value of open government in a democracy weighed against the privacy rights of citizens.

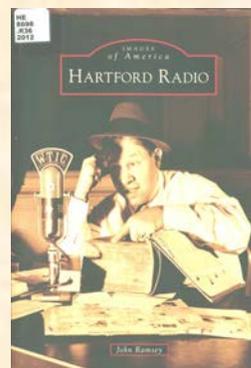
General Reference


*Starting a Small business in
Connecticut*

**John S. Purtil, Jr.
managing editor**

HD62.5 .S73 2013

Written for people going into business for the first time, includes topics on marketing, developing a business plan, legal aspects of starting a business, and how to raise start-up money.



Hartford radio

John Ramsey

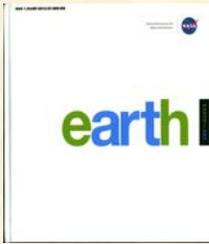
HE8698 .R36 2012

A picture history of Hartford Radio back to the 1930s. Includes images of on-air personalities, stations, equipment and publicity events.



Continued from page 20

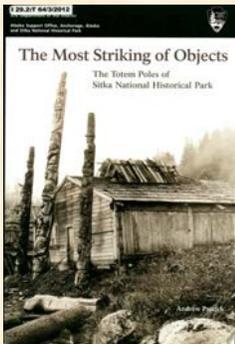
Federal Documents

***Earth as Art***

Lawrence Friedl

NAS 1.83:NP-2012-07-889-HQ

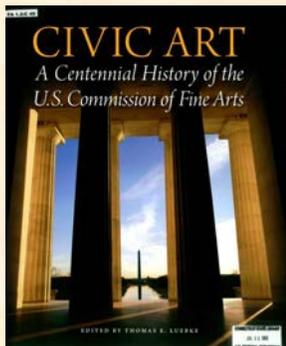
Stunning images from satellites demonstrating patterns, shapes, colors, and textures of landforms, seas, and polar regions.

***The Most Striking of Objects: The Totem Poles of Sitka National Historical Park***

Andrew Patrick

I 29.2:T 64/3/2012

This book is a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Sitka National Historical Park totem pole collection, including historic photographs, interviews with present day carvers, and detailed descriptions of preservation efforts.

***Civic Art: A Centennial History of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts***

edited by Thomas E. Luebke

FA 1.2:C 49

The Commission was created by Congress in 1910 as an independent design review agency to guide the ongoing work of representing national ideals in the design of the capital city. This comprehensive history is packed with photographs of buildings, cemeteries, monuments, commemorative coins and medals, designs, models, and descriptions of projects all demonstrating the influence the Commission has had on design in Washington.

Archives

RG 003, Tolland County Superior Court Records, 1786-1928, 42 volumes, 11 indexes (Accession 2014-011)

RG 069:165, Billie (Helen) Hill Political Memorabilia Collection, 1943-2013, bulk 1943-1988, 6 cubic feet (Accession 2014-001)

RG 079, Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection, Stream Channel Encroachment Lines Program Hearings and Studies, circa 1955-2013, 28 cubic feet; and Maps, circa 1955-2013, 32 map drawers (Accessions 2014-015 and 2014-016).

For the full list of FY 2014 accessions see: <http://www.ctstatelibrary.org/acc2014.htm>



Continued from page 21

New Staff



The Division of Library Development welcomed **Julie Styles** to the position of Continuing Education Coordinator at the Middletown Library Service Center on September 20, 2013.

Access Services welcomed **Anne Rajotte** to the position of Law Reference Librarian I on September 6, 2013.



Staff Changes

Access Services

Lindsay Young was hired as a Librarian II in the Law & Legislative Reference Unit on May 31, 2013. Lindsay previously served as a Librarian I in the Law Unit.

Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH)



Gordon Reddick was appointed as Director of LBPH in November 2012, following **Carol Taylor**'s retirement on October 1, 2012. Gordon had previously served as Deputy Director .

Archives

Paul Baran (left) was appointed to the position of State Archivist on June 14, 2013, following the retirement of former State Archivist Mark Jones. Paul had previously served as the Assistant State Archivist.

Kris Abery was hired as Library Specialist and Deputy Director in December 2012. Kris had previously served as the Continuing Education Coordinator at the Middletown Library Service Center.

Rafal Warchol was hired as Storekeeper in February of 2013. Rafal had previously worked as a Library Aide at LBPH.

Allen Ramsey (right) was hired as Assistant State Archivist on August 9, 2013. Allen previously served as the Government Records Archivist.

Damon Munz (center) was hired as a Government Records Archivist on October 4, 2013. Damon was previously working as a Library Aide in Archives. Damon received his MLS from SCSU in May 2013.

Paula McLean was hired as a Library Technician on November 2, 2012. Paula was previously a Library Technical Assistant.





2013-2014

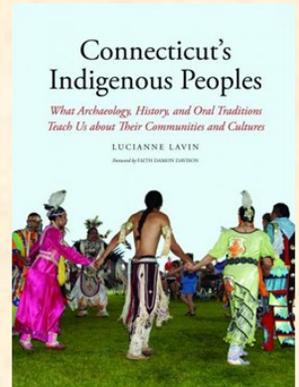
Third Thursdays at the Connecticut State Library

231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford

12:00-12:45 PM

Memorial Hall

November 21 – Dr. Lucianne Lavin, Director of Research and Collections at the Institute for American Indian Studies on her new book ***Connecticut's Indigenous Peoples: What Archaeology, History, and Oral Traditions Teach Us About Their Communities and Cultures***



January 16 – Arthur S. Myers, Director of the Middletown Public Library on his recent book ***Democracy in the Making: The Open Forum Lecture Movement***

February 20 – Bill Costen, Creator of **The Costen Cultural Exhibit**, talks about his collection of rare photographs, ephemera, memorabilia and collectibles that show the accomplishments of Americans with an emphasis on African Americans throughout history

March 20 – Susan Campbell, award winning author, discusses her forthcoming ***Tempest-Tossed: The Spirit of Isabella Beecher Hooker***

April 17 – Elizabeth Normen, Publisher of *Connecticut Explored* discusses ***African American Connecticut Explored*** scheduled to be published December 2013

May 15 - Gene Leach, Professor of history and American Studies emeritus at Trinity College discusses the history of **West Hartford's "scandalous" Luna Park**

June 19 – Kevin Johnson from the State Library will portray **Jordan Freeman** an African-American servant of John Ledyard and the body servant of Col. William Ledyard in the Revolutionary War.

State Library and Museum of Connecticut History's Third Thursday Brown Bag Lunchtime speaker series features a variety of speakers on various aspects of Connecticut history.

All programs are free and open to the public and attendees should feel free to bring their lunch.

More information is available at <http://www.ctstatelibrary.org/> or by calling 860-757-6510.

Funding for this series is provided by the Connecticut Heritage Foundation.

CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY





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