

The CONNector

Connecticut State Library Newsletter

April 2004

Volume 6

Number 2

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The State Librarian's Column

Kendall F. Wiggin
Connecticut State Librarian



SBC has an advertisement running right now that asks the question “Are we there yet?” Having spent a good deal of time this past month researching the history of the State Library and Library Development in particular, I find myself asking – will we ever get there? Of course this begs the question, where is *there*.

To me the *there* goes back to the very beginning of the public library movement and was best articulated by Target '76. “Total Library Service for All the People of Connecticut.” The path to that goal has at times been inspired, rocky, and unsure. Progress has been measured. The record shows that some of the same problems and constraints show up decade after decade. Yet, many people in Connecticut have spent countless hours working towards better library service for all. Over the course of the last century many innovative projects have been implemented. Some have matured into ongoing services. Today many of these services need increased financial support if they are to reach their full potential. It seems that funding has never been sufficient, yet, however limited, state and federal funds have made a significant impact on library development in Connecticut. The need and competition for library dollars at all levels has grown keen. In the past health care, social service and retirement costs were hardly mentioned. Today their costs are soaring consuming ever more public dollars resulting in new competition for library dollars. Library use continues to grow putting more pressure on staffing and resources. Demand for information resources continues to grow putting pressure on library material budgets. Exciting new technologies make reaching more people possible, but at a cost. The diversity and demographics of library users is changing like never before in Connecticut. Are we there yet? No. But as I tell my kids – half the fun is getting there, especially when you know where you are going. It has been 10 years since the last Governor’s Commission on Libraries was convened. The time is fast approaching for us to again look at how, in this time of great social and economic change, we as a state can attain total library service for all the people of Connecticut.



*What A Free Library Does
For
A Country Town*

Connecticut Public Library Document No. 1. 1894.

1. It keeps boys at home in the evening by giving them well-written stories of adventure.
2. It gives teachers and pupils interesting books to aid their school work in history and geography, and makes better citizens of them by enlarging their knowledge of their country and its growth.
3. It provides books on the care of children and animals, cookery and housekeeping, building and gardening, and teaches young readers how to make simple dynamos, telephones and other machines.
4. It helps clubs that are studying history, literature or life in other countries and throws light upon Sunday-school lessons.
5. It furnishes books of selections for reading aloud, suggestions for entertainments and home amusements, and hints on correct speech and good manners.
6. It teaches the names and habits of the plants, birds and insects of the neighborhood, and the differences in soil and rocks.
7. It tells the story of the town from its settlement and keeps a record of all important events in its history.
8. It offers pleasant and wholesome stories to readers of all ages.

The CONNector Editorial Board
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Message In The Wall

Bonnie Linck, Reference Librarian, History & Genealogy Unit



Front Row: Dave Corrigan, Thomas DiCorleto, Damian Gallo. Back Row: Mark Jones, Kendall Wiggin

Damian Gallo of the State Library's Facilities Unit reached through the small hole in the brick wall. His fingers, searching for an electrical conduit in the space between walls, touched something, but it wasn't the conduit. Instead Gallo, against all odds, wrapped his hand around a piece of History.

May 14, 1910 was a Saturday, fair, and at 62 degrees, just right for laying masonry in the growing state-of-the-art structure that was to be the Connecticut State Library and the State Supreme Court. Working on Saturday was the rule then—the forty-hour work-week was still decades in the future. Many of the workers were recently-arrived Italian immigrants, hired by subcontractors.

On that day one worker in particular was perhaps thinking of the events of the week as he laid bricks. Haley's comet would pass over Hartford in two days and the King of England had just died. Haley's Comet appears once every seventy-five years. He would not be alive when it came again. His wife and young children would be grown old and gone, too. And here he was, a poor Italian boy working on this magnificent building, earning a living, making his own contribution to this great land. The future was bright

with opportunities. Even he had a place in history, and maybe he wanted to record it in his own way.

The chance came perhaps on a lunch break or when the crews were getting ready to go home for the day. It was certainly spur-of-the-moment, for the paper used was from the wrapping for a new tool or part, the manufacturer's label mostly torn off. It was good plain brown paper, slightly waxy on one side, making it even better for the purpose. On the regular side, an educated, sophisticated hand not yet familiar with the intricacies of English spelling wrote:

Hartford 14 May 1910 tis Date
Wuos Ruto from De Corleto
Francesco Di Nicolo Lebor
nato + Domicillato in
Corleto Peticara Provincia Di
Basilicato married in Hartford
27 May 1905 Wuricked in tis
Building for 18 Mons. Et
The presente Rote tis line
your truly F D Corleto

And for the final flourish, that practiced hand put its rubric, that artistic blending of first and last initials, at the bottom, an impressive touch.

What the mind behind this note, the mind with a sense of history, wanted to say was, in traditional English:

Hartford 14 May 1910 this date
[this wall]was mortared by DeCorleto
Francesco [of] Di Nicolo Labor
born [and] resided in
Corleto Peticara Province of
Basilicato married in Hartford
27 May 1905 Worked in this
Building for 18 Months At
The present wrote this line
Yours truly, F D Corleto

continued

When Gallo's hand reached through the wall some 80 years later in the mid-1990's, the first thing it grasped was this paper, folded into a long, slim piece about 1 inch wide and 10 inches long. Gallo's immediate reaction was : "Paper? There's not supposed to be any paper in there!" But there it was, a message from the past.

Damian passed the paper on to Dave Corrigan, of the Museum of Connecticut History, who did some research on it before passing it on to Mark Jones, State Archivist, for inclusion in the State Archives. With 2004 being the 150th anniversary of the State Library, Jones remembered this odd piece of paper, and shared its story with CSL staff. Would anyone like to try to decipher the old handwriting? Someone did, and the story of one man's American dream unfolded.

Old records show that the Italian workers were essential to the building of the State Library/State Supreme Court, from digging the foundation to laying the brickwork. However, independent contractors hired the men, and no names of individuals were known until this find of the message of the wall. This piece of brown paper about the size of a sheet of typing paper, with its few pieces of information, names one of those men and gives us a glimpse into the life of an Italian immigrant laborer.

Using the clues in the message, we were able to find out a lot about Francesco DeCorleto (later DiCorleto). With CSL resources, and with help from Vital Statistics, the story of an immigrant dream come true emerged.

The marriage date was the starting point. A call to Angela Kasek at the Department of Vital Statistics confirmed that on May 27, 1905, a Francesco De Corleto married Rosina Scavullo in Hartford. This crucial piece of information confirmed the identity of the note-writer.

Next, a gazetteer explained that Basilicato, one of the poorest provinces of southern Italy, located in the arch between the "heel" of Italy and the toe of the "boot", was known for its earthquakes, mudslides, and heavy emigration. So DeCorleto was one of many that left southern Italy, following the hope of a better life in America.

In the note, DeCorleto himself refers to his 18 months of working on the building, so it is probable that he started out as one of a group of laborers in December, 1908. Then, in the 1911 *Hartford City Directory*, Francesco DeCorleto is shown as living on Front Street and working as a "helper" at the State Library. As city directory information was gathered the year before the directory was published, this places him in Hartford in 1910. It also indicates that he had moved beyond the status of a group laborer and was most likely a maintenance worker at the State Library.

What happened to Francesco next? His progress may be traced somewhat through the yearly editions of the *Hartford City Directory*, but is best summarized by the 1920 federal census for Connecticut where Frank DiCorleto, as he was then known, is listed as a "builder" living on Woodland Street in Hartford. By then he and Rosina had a family of three daughters and two sons. The 1930 census shows another daughter born, and Frank's occupation again as "builder", but with the added note of "Home Construction". His family was underway, and he had established himself in Hartford.

With the names of the children from the 1920 and 1930 censuses, the next step was the Connecticut Death Index 1949-2002 online at Ancestry.com. All of the children had died by 2002 in the Hartford area. Online obituaries of the Hartford Courant (1992-present) revealed that the children had gained professional skills such as realtor and seamstress. A daughter, Helen, graduated from college and became a Director of Education in the Hartford Public Schools. A son, Dominic, especially stood out as he graduated from college, served in World War II, became an attorney and then served as Clerk of Courts for the Hartford Superior Court. Dominic died in 2002, and his obituary mentioned his sons, one of whom is Thomas DiCorleto of New Hartford, Connecticut.

continued

Thomas DiCorleto responded graciously to our call. We learned that he was only 9 when his grandfather Frank died in 1959, and that Frank was sick with Alzheimer's by then. To his regret, Thomas did not get to know his grandfather very well. Frank's wife Rosina passed away in 1971. While there are no family stories about Grandpa helping to build the State Library, Thomas, a history enthusiast and Director of Special Services for Granby Public Schools, was delighted to learn about the message.

He told us that Frank made three trips to America, the first in 1891 when he was twelve years old. (Frank's work on the State Library/State Supreme Court building was after his third and final trip to the United States.)

Thomas related that one of Frank's early projects was to buy an old farmhouse at 419 Woodland Street in Hartford, "People don't realize how rural parts of Hartford still were then", Thomas adds. Frank demolished the farmhouse,

built apartments on the land, and earned income from the rentals. This confirms the picture that the Hartford city directories and the federal censuses give of Frank as a rising businessman.

After starting from the bottom, Frank DiCorleto's career as a successful builder went on to span almost three decades. In addition to constructing apartments on Woodland Street, he also built homes. He left a legacy of hard work, solid structures, and a better life for his family. Some of his buildings still stand, and the contributions of his descendants have made Connecticut and the United States better places to live. His was the American dream come true.

A piece of brown paper, a pencil, and a space between two walls... Not the message in the proverbial bottle, but unexpectedly in the heart of the building, sailing through time.

Frank deCorleto, we hear you.



Workers digging the building foundation. Perhaps one of these workers is Francesco deCorleto.

Special thanks to Damian Gallo, Maintenance Services, to Dave Corrigan, Museum of Connecticut History, to Mark Jones, State Archivist, and to Angela Kasek, Department of Vital Statistics

AT THE CAPITOL

Mrs. J. W. Booth Gives a Beautiful Rubber Plant to State Library Adjusting Electric Lights in Building

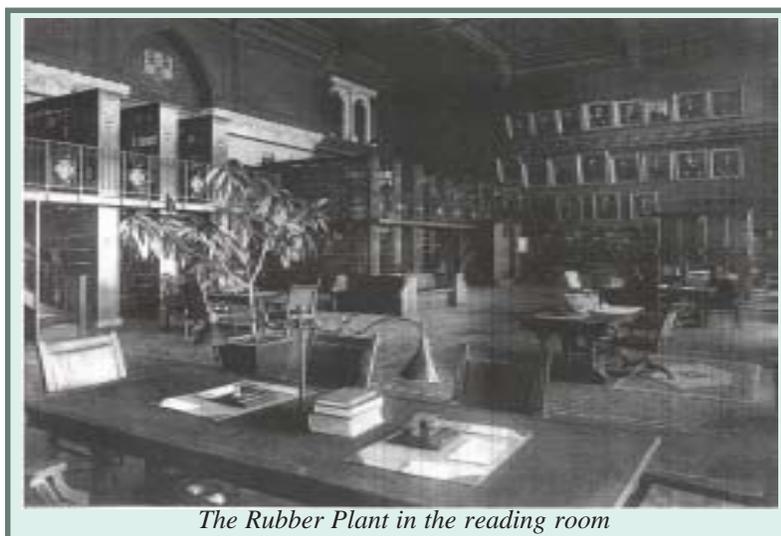
“Mrs. Booth, widow of the late Dr. J. Webb Booth, of this city, has given to the state library a very handsome rubber plant. George S. Godard, the librarian has written a letter of grateful acknowledgment to the donor. Superintendent Sprague of the capitol has had a large box filled with fresh loam prepared for the plant, and it may now be seen in the east end of the library, its healthy foliage and spreading branches indicating that the atmospheric conditions of the library agree with it. Some time ago the library received two rare plants from the estate of the late Francis B. Cooley. One was an Australian fern, and its towering trunk and far-reaching branches attracted the attention of every one who visited the library. Notwithstanding its apparent vigor and rugged strength it was comparatively speaking, an extremely delicate plant. Its branches were unusually brittle and would crack if a person in passing rubbed against them. The plant would show signs of

its sensitiveness and objection to contact with any object that exceeded its own power of resistance by withering and shrivelling up. But, strange to say, it had extraordinary recuperative powers and a few days after the withered branches were removed others would grow. Finally, however, the plant was denuded of its beautiful foliage and nothing remained but the bare trunk. The rubber plant which Mrs. Booth has given the library has taken the place vacated by the death of the exotic from the Australian bush.

Superintendent Sprague is putting into effect a plan whereby he expects to increase the light in the interior of the building from the electric lamps while at the same time reducing their number. The stairway leading from the third floor to the first have been unsatisfactorily lighted. The electric lamps, five or six at a landing, gave ample light, but owing to their position

and to the number of turns and corners on the stairways there were shadows thrown which made the descent of the stairs by feeble persons or by those whose eyesight was in anyway defective, positively dangerous. On cloudy days the difficulty was increased. Within the past week or so four or five visitors to the capitol have stumbled in picking their way down the steps. Superintendent Sprague is experimenting by having a cluster of three or four electric lights placed in the center of the ceiling over the landing. Over each cluster there will be a reflector and it is his hope that these clusters of lamps will afford sufficient light and that by their position there will be no further shadows from projecting objects. Superintendent Sprague is also having the electric clusters in the different departments lowered from the ceilings to a position closer to the desks and tables thereby giving more light to the clerks.”

Hartford Times, November. 14, 1905



The Rubber Plant in the reading room

Field of Dreams *The Story of Information Services at CSL*

Hilary Frye, Reference Specialist, Law & Legislative Reference Unit

If you build it they will come . . . that is the story of a famous movie about baseball, one of our favorite national pastimes. It's also the story of Information Services Division (ISD) at Connecticut State Library. Instead of a baseball diamond, we built a matchless collection which has lured not ghosts, but live people from every sector of our society. And now, as the 21st century opens, we are starting to "broadcast" the game by providing Internet access to our peerless collection!

For the first century or so, the business of ISD was acquiring, organizing, indexing and cataloging. We had the same modest beginning as practically all of the original colonies' state libraries. The foundation was a miscellaneous collection of books which gradually accumulated in the offices of state officials. These volumes consisted principally of collections of their own laws and legislative proceedings, books purchased to meet temporary official necessities, or which had been presented by the sister states, foreign governments or individuals. In 1856 the number of volumes in the Connecticut State Library nearly doubled when substantial manuscript collections were transferred from the Office of the Secretary of the State. Noted jurists also donated collections of rare and valuable law books, many dating back to colonial times.

By 1903 the State Librarian somewhat plaintively noted that it was

beginning to require more time to serve the public. As the collection grew, it began to appeal to a wider audience than just the government officials in Hartford. The 4,957 readers came not only from Hartford and the departments in the State Capitol, but also from more distant towns of the State and neighboring states. By cataloging the collection, CSL became known as the only place in Connecticut to provide various lines of information.

In 1907 the Legislative Reference Department was established by special appropriation and added to the Information Services Division. ISD was now providing content, not just *access* to content. A staff of three was hired to provide research services to the Legislature, including topical reports prepared from documents, treatises and proposed legislation bill files from 25 states. The new department acquired, organized, indexed, and catalogued these files. It also maintained and indexed the typewritten copies of stenographers' notes from hearings held before the several committees. Thus, the new department could also provide services to the Judicial Branch, members of other future Assemblies and other interested parties as to what was the intention and purpose of each bill as advocated at these hearings.

An unforeseen and explosive growth of CSL collections followed. In 1911 the State Library moved to its current space at 231 Capitol Avenue,

Hartford, which had adequate room for current collections and room for expansion. Normally a state library doubles in size in twenty years, but in Connecticut something different happened. In 1909 legislation was passed which directed state, town or county officials to deposit their non-current records at the State Library. 1921 began a new era in accessibility of Connecticut public records and archives when a law was passed authorizing the permanent deposit of badly worn volumes of land records and probate records. Information Services now employed 7 catalogers who toiled to make the mushrooming collection accessible.

In the first half of the 20th century CSL hired additional ISD staff to interact with the public. It acquired several valuable collections such as the Wells Collection, the Hale Collection, The Connecticut War Department Records, and Connecticut Church Records. Questions were received from all around the world and there was a large increase in the number library service users.

In 1953 the Library was receiving so many letters requesting extensive research, especially for family lines and military service, that the departments were unable to meet the demand. A policy of referring these letters to professional genealogists was adopted. Just three years earlier, the Library had received the Mormon microfilms of the "Land Records of the

State and the Probate Records of the Probate Districts to 1850”, including 2,018 reels of film. The popularity of these records, combined with the other excellent collections, increased the number of research requests.

By the 1960’s ISD staff had grown to 65; attendance was up by 25% and we extended the hours of library service. Two things happened in that decade which caused even more growth: for the first time in the history of the State Library a publication was issued which informed the public of new acquisitions, and we became the first library in the nation to be designated a Regional Federal Depository. This designation required us to permanently retain all U.S. publications available to depository libraries and we were now advertising our new acquisitions. We told the public about our 66,000 new items and use of the collection jumped up 34% in the next year.

In the years between 1965 and 1976, Information Services Division became a “go-to” source for the entire State. During that time period CSL was given two other state functions to run. In 1965, CSL became the focal point for state-wide library activities when the Legislature combined the library extension services of the Department of Education with the State Library. This created the Division of Library Development (DLD). The assumption of a different leadership role by the State Library through DLD also spread to the ISD, as it came to be viewed as a leading source of answers to difficult reference questions. Because of the strength of the

collections, it was possible for ISD to use those resources to answer questions which had stymied librarians from other libraries. In 1976, the 16 County Bar Libraries were given to CSL and the new Law Library Department was created within ISD. In recognition of this new role, we began a statewide toll-free telephone reference known as Library Line. We also reached out to another segment of the population in 1968 by adding a new department: Service to Blind and Physically Handicapped Readers. The new department served 2,624 readers in the next year.

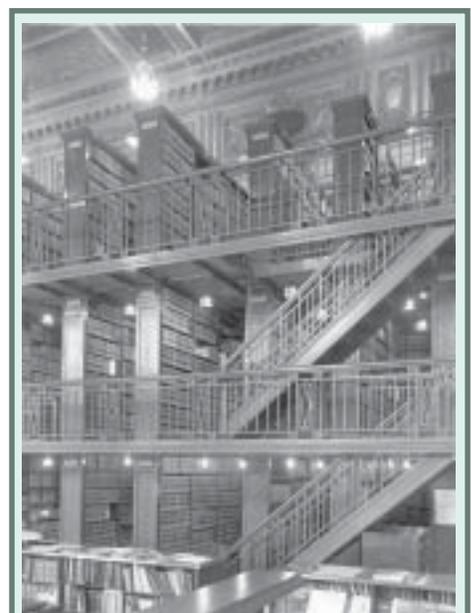
In 1974, ISD participated in a nationwide, computerized cataloging project and resource database, OCLC. With this tool, CSL changed to an on-line catalog, offering our holdings to even more visitors.

ISD reference librarians were among the first in the nation to be trained in the use of new electronic subscription databases such as the New York Times Info Bank, Westlaw, Lexis and Dialog. Thus CSL was poised to become a leader in the information explosion known as the Internet.

ISD has been at the forefront of the wave of proliferating electronic subscription databases and sophisticated search engines, and is now supporting the provision of digital content through initiatives in metadata and digital collections. We early assumed a leadership role in the OCLC Cooperative Online Resource Catalog to share the identification and description of high

research value websites, and then began the Connecticut Digital Archive to catalog state documents which only appear on the Internet. The Law Department participated in a Virtual Reference pilot sponsored by the New England Law Library Consortium. CSL was the first to mount the Connecticut statutes on the Internet. In cooperation with the Connecticut State University and the University of Connecticut, we created and managed the first State of Connecticut website, and remain active in the design of the new state web portal. CSL’s website contains over 3,000 substantive content pages, attracts 750,000 visitors annually, and is linked to by over 29,000 other websites.

In the 21st century Information Services Division continues to evolve as we seek new applications for enhancing, preserving and delivering our ‘Field of Dreams’ collection.



Connecticut State Library circa 1910

1934 Connecticut Aerial Survey: A First, Twice

Patrick McGlamery, Map Librarian at University of Connecticut and Jane F. Cullinane, Preservation Librarian



In 1935, a man is using binoculars to view the completed mosaic.
(RG056 Connecticut's tercentenary celebration)

Connecticut was the first state to have a statewide aerial survey done. In 2004, Connecticut's is possibly the first, statewide historical aerial photograph survey available on the Worldwide Web. In 1934 "Two men in a cabin plane circled around in a cloudless sky. They flew, at 100 miles an hour, up the state. Every 25 seconds the photographer took a picture of three and one quarter miles."¹

The survey produced 10,484 photographs that showed the shape of the shoreline and the location of houses, roads, industrial buildings and farms as they existed seventy years ago. Since 1935 the photos have been available to researchers at the State Library.

Governor Wilbur Cross recommended the 1934 aerial survey to the State Planning Board. Dr. Charles G. Chakerian, director of the Board, said "The Water, Tax, Health, Highway and other departments had wanted one for years." In 1935, to make it easier to use the photograph collection, employees of the Connecticut National Guard and the State Highway Department pieced the 7 x 9 inch photos together like a jigsaw puzzle.

The result, called a mosaic, is one very large picture of the entire state, just five years after a statewide paving project called "Get Connecticut Out of the Mud" enabled the new-fangled, but popular automobiles to climb the state's hills and cruise its valleys. The mosaic was photographed and divided into 24 x 29 inch panels for ease of use.

Using funds provided by the Historic Document Preservation Program, the panels were scanned by DataVault of Stafford, CT. Ben Smith, a Master Degree student at the University of Connecticut, did the geo-referencing. This is a painstaking process to determine the map coordinates of three or four points on the scanned image and assign them to the online map of the state.

Explore a time when most homes had a small orchard and there were still more horses than automobiles and substantially fewer trees! The 1934 Historical Aerial Survey of Connecticut is available at mapserver.lib.uconn.edu/magic/index.htm.

Use Internet Explorer. This brings you to the site of the University of Connecticut Map and Geographic Information Center. Click on the aerial photograph, then click on the 1934 aerial photograph. Go to the bottom of the screen and use <Go To> to zoom to a specific town or use the <hand> or <magnifier> button to navigate. The <hand> moves the image from left to right. Drag the <magnifier> to the left to enlarge the view and to the right to shrink it.

¹ All quotations are from: "Connecticut first state to have its picture taken from air, best map ever made is clever blend of 10,500 photographs" *Hartford Daily Courant* March 31, 1935, p. D3

The Connecticut Genealogical Indexes

Richard C. Roberts, Unit Head, History and Genealogy



State Librarian George Godard and Mr. Hale

In his 1917-1918 Annual Report, State Librarian George Godard outlined a new policy concerning genealogical research: “we have made it the policy of the Connecticut State Library not to undertake special genealogical research....” but, he added, it would be “a pleasure” to answer questions “from the minute indexes upon which we have been working on for several years...”

Soon after moving to its present building in 1910, the Connecticut State Library had embarked on a number of indexing projects that have served as the heart of its Connecticut genealogical resources for the past seventy plus years. Perhaps the best known is the Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Records, named for Lucius Barnes Barbour, State Examiner of Public Records from 1911-1934, who initiated the project. An avid amateur genealogist who, with his father Lucius A. Barbour had collected information from town and church records on Connecticut’s early families. By 1907 Barbour had become involved in the “Connecticut Vital Records” project to transcribe

and publish “the ancient vital records of the Towns of Connecticut.”

In recognition of his work, on July 5, 1911, Barbour was appointed Connecticut’s Examiner of Public Records. Realizing what the State Librarian’s Annual Report for 1920-1922 termed “the necessity for preserving ... [vital] records and making their contents easily and quickly accessible,” Barbour and his father personally “devoted many years and no small amount of money, in copying or having copied in their original form and spellings practically all of the Vital Records of Connecticut, prior to 1850.” James N. Arnold, who had published the Rhode Island vital records, did most of the copying. It took nine years to gather the information. The Barbours presented the resulting volumes to the State Library, “to be known as the Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Records.”

After their deposit at the State Library, the transcripts were “carefully indexed under the personal supervision of Mr. Barbour.”

Indexing took 20 years to complete. Information was typed onto printed forms which were then cut, producing 12 small slips from each sheet. The slips for most towns were then alphabetized and the information was typed a second time on large sheets of rag paper, which were bound into a separate volume for each town. The slips for all towns were then interfiled, forming a statewide, alphabetized slip index/abstract of most surviving town vital records to about 1850. Thus, there are two parts of the Barbour Collection: the slip index, and bound volumes for individual towns. At the dedication in 1932, Mr. Godard noted that it was the first time in the country that such a statewide index had been compiled.

Meanwhile, CSL initiated indexing projects. Beginning in 1911, probate files had begun to be deposited in the State Library, and by 1914 the Connecticut Probate Assembly had approved a plan for processing, arranging, and indexing the files. “Every estate,” wrote George Godard in his 1914 annual report, “is to have an index card bearing the essential data, which card shall be alphabetically with similar cards from other districts, thus easily, quickly and definitely locating the papers of any estate at any time deposited in our library by any Probate District”.

In the State Librarian’s 1928-1930 Annual Report Mr. Godard wrote, “It is hoped also that what has been accomplished in connection with vital and probate records may some time be extended to the church records....” Due to reduced funding and staffing in the 1970s, the Church Records Index project was never completed,

continued

but it does provide access to approximately one-quarter of the records or copies of original records from over 600 Connecticut churches.

Meanwhile, about 1915, spearheaded by its secretary, Charles R. Hale, Hartford Camp No. 50, Sons of Veterans began a project to locate and mark the graves of soldiers of all wars in Hartford County cemeteries. Blueprints were made of each cemetery showing the location of graves, with name, service, etc. The original drawings were placed (and remain) in CSL, with copies going to the individual towns to facilitate placing of flags on Memorial Day.

In 1917 the General Assembly authorized the State Librarian to locate and permanently identify “the graves of all soldiers, sailors and marines ... who are buried within the limits of this state” and appropriated ten thousand dollars to do this. By 1930, 1,734 cemeteries had been located and soldiers’ graves located and listed for 82 towns. A Veterans’ Graves card index was in progress, then consisting of “more than 100,000 cards” that indexed information from Charles Hale’s cemetery records, newspaper clippings of soldiers’ deaths, G.A.R. records, records of the Adjutant General, and information from patriotic groups. Later, the General Statutes of Connecticut required heads of cemeteries and registrars of vital statistics to send copies of the veterans’ death certificates and the location of their graves to the State Librarian. Maintenance of the Veterans’ Death Index was discontinued in 1982.

What is today known as the “Hale Collection” began as an outgrowth of the Veterans’ Graves project. In a W.P.A. project directed by Charles R. Hale information was recorded from headstone inscriptions in 2,269 Connecticut cemeteries. In a related

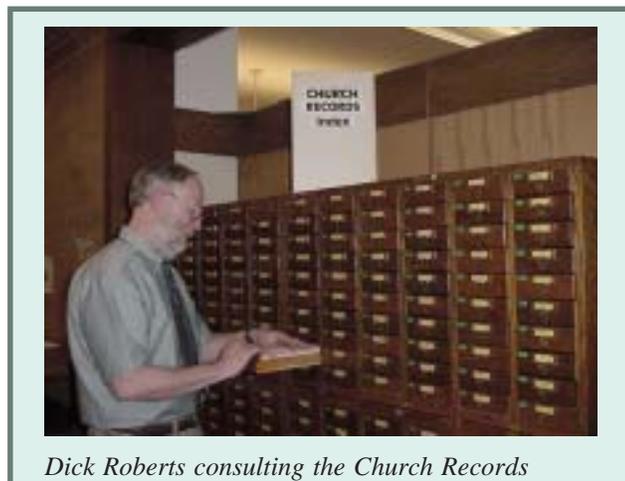
project marriage and death notices were abstracted from 90 of the earliest Connecticut newspapers. The Marriages Notices Index gives both the brides’ and grooms’ names and wives’ maiden names in one alphabetical slip index. The slip may also show the date of marriage, the name of the newspaper from which the information was abstracted, issue date, and a page number are located at the bottom of each slip. The Deaths Notices slips show the individual’s name and date of death, the name of the newspaper from which the information was abstracted, the issue date, and a page number are located at the bottom of each slip.

There is also a Bible and Family Records Index, initiated under the direction of Lucius B. Barbour and continued under the supervision of his successor, Harold S. Burt. In addition, indexes were prepared for the Connecticut Archives (the papers of the General Assembly to 1820), the papers of Governor Jonathan Trumbull, the federal censuses for Connecticut, 1790-1850, and the *Connecticut Courant*, 1764-1800. Mr. Godard noted in his 1920-1922 Annual Report, “By means of these minute indexes the records are saved from unnecessary handling, much time of state and town officials and others who have occasion to consult, same, is saved.”

“one feels reasonably assured that whatever is to be found in these records pertaining to the question in hand, is made accessible through these special indexes.”

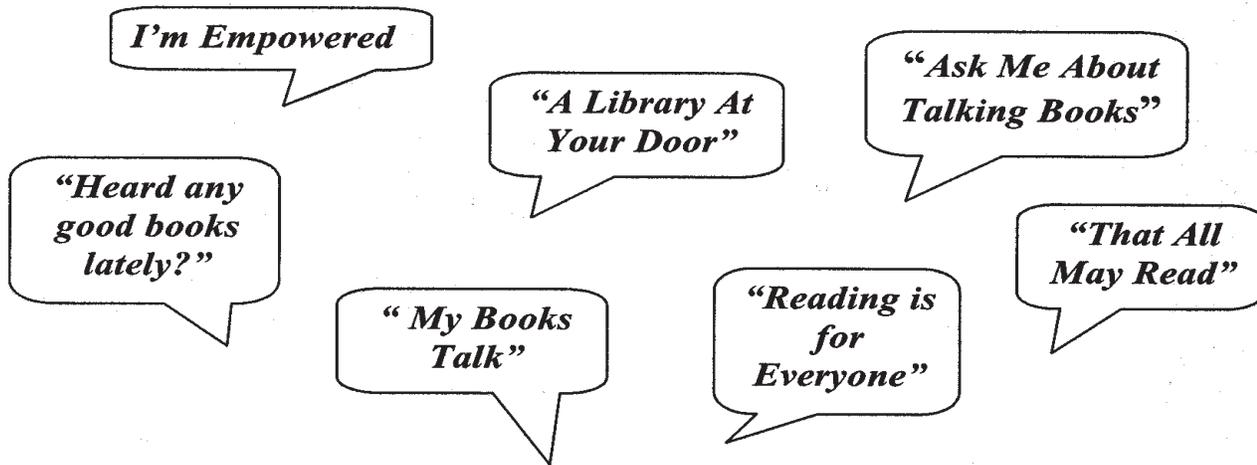
Today, thousands visit the State Library’s History and Genealogy Unit every year in search of information on their ancestors, and the Unit receives hundreds of information requests by mail, fax, and e-mail every month. As in 1918, the History and Genealogy staff cannot undertake extensive genealogical research, but it continues to provide a limited Genealogical Index Search Service.

Now, CSL is exploring new ways to provide the wealth of information collected and indexed in the 20th century to 21st century researchers. Volunteers from the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council have been keying information from the Connecticut Courant Index into an Access database that will be added to the searchable databases on the State Library Webpage. CSL is planning to make the information in the genealogical indexes more accessible to users through online delivery. Perhaps within a few years we will be able to report that it is “a pleasure” to be able to answer questions “from the electronic indexes upon which we have been working on for several years...”



Dick Roberts consulting the Church Records

That All May Read



Carol Taylor, Director, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

These are just some of the slogans that the **talking book** program has used nationally over the years.

The **Connecticut State Library's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH)** believes that library services should be a right and a privilege for all citizens. By providing alternative format books and magazines to meet the recreational, educational and informational needs of person who have difficulty with print media, our special library aspires to the philosophy "That All May Read."

The LBPH is part of a network of regional and subregional libraries throughout the country providing **talking book** service to persons who are unable to read regular printed material due to a visual or physical disability. The Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) administers this free national library program. The special format books and magazines and necessary playback equipment provided are supplemental to the services and programs of the local public libraries.

This library provides unique reader services. Eligible patrons complete an application that asks them to indicate if they want to select their own books exclusively or would like for us to assist, as needed. Each patron is assigned a library reader advisor who assists in creating a reading profile and in book selection for him or her. Their interest profile allows the circulation system to select books for them by subject, but it will always select any specific requests and reserves first if those materials are available. Catalogs in large print, Braille format, audiotape and online help patrons make their own selections. Bi-monthly updates inform them of the newest materials available through the program.

The reader advisors are responsible for keeping themselves up-to-date with the newest titles available from NLS. They

continued

share their opinions and experiences related to books with patrons, as well as each other. They share patron's comments about particular books with other patrons. They use genre reference materials, lists and websites. They perform catalog searches for patrons.

We feel it is important to empower patrons to take ownership in their library service. Our most effective method of empower patrons is to provide outreach to support groups for the disabled, and to residents of retirement and healthcare facilities. This gives us the opportunity to tell patrons how the service works and to teach them ways to get more of what they want in reading materials.

Often times a patron calls asking us to "just send me some novels". In that situation their reading profile is very helpful. Other times they are a little more specific by requesting "6 mysteries." My favorite is when they say, "Oh, honey, you know what I like." The best situation is when the patron calls with a list of titles, authors or book numbers. Many authors like John Grisham and Danielle Steele are just not prolific enough for many of the library users. Students and participants in book studies in their local area are very specific about the titles they need. The most frustrating thing is to hear a patron say, "You never have anything I like." With over 60,000 titles available in English and many foreign languages and with over 200,000 items inventoried in the collection we know there must be something on the shelves to interest them. The interview process is critical under these circumstances. Since its beginning in 1968 the Connecticut LBPH has brought the pleasure and information provided by reading to a special group of Connecticut residents, so that indeed "All may read."

For more information about the library visit the website www.cslib.org/lbahhtiT4 or call (860) 566-2151 or toll free in-state (800)-842-4516.



**Free Library Service
for Blind and Physically Handicapped People**

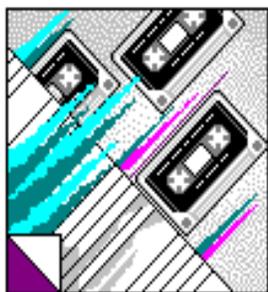
Connecticut State Library
Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
198 West Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067
Telephone: (203) 566-2151 or 1-800-842-4516

National Library Service
for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped

Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Historical Facts Sheet

Brad Tenan, Circulation Assistant

- 1868 Boston Public Library established a department for the blind after receiving eight embossed volumes.
- 1882 Pennsylvania Home Teaching Society and Free Circulation Library for the Blind was founded in Philadelphia.
- 1896 New York became the first state to create a department for the blind in a state library.
- 1897 John Russell Young, Librarian of Congress, developed the concept of a national library for the blind with a reading room for the blind containing 500 books and music items in raised type.
- 1903 Library for the Blind of the New York Public Library became officially established.
- 1913 One copy of each book in raised type first deposited in Library of Congress.
- 1931 National Library Service established by the Pratt-Smoot bill, authorizing the Librarian of Congress to “serve as local or regional centers for the circulation of such books, under such conditions and regulations as he may pre- scribe,” beginning service for blind adults.
- 1933 Establishment of a uniform system of Braille, and the development of the talking book.
- 1952 Beginning service for blind children.
- 1958 Recordings begun utilizing slower speed (16 2/3 rpm), thus requiring fewer discs per book.
- 1962 Program authorized by Congress to collect and maintain a library of musical scores and instrumental texts.
- 1966 Beginning service for the visually or physically disabled.
- 1968 First production of flexible discs as an alternative format. The first such book was *Wheels* by Arthur Hailey, in 1972.
- 1968 Establishment of the Connecticut State Library’s Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.
- 1969 Cassette tapes and players first distributed throughout the regional library network as a supplement to the Talking Book Program.
- 1969 All disc talking books recorded at an even slower, more economic speed: at 8 1/3 rpm.
- 1971 U.S. News and World Report was the first national circulation magazine to be produced in quantity on flexible discs.
- 1977 First cassette title recorded in 4-track, at 15/16 ips : *Roots*, by Alex Haley.
- 1985 Computerization of all book and patron records at the Connecticut LBPH.



Heard Any Good Books Lately?

The Story of Library Development in Connecticut

Kendall F. Wiggin, State Librarian

The executive secretary was the connection between the public libraries and the state. Many times she would be introduced at meetings as the state librarian, which purportedly distressed the State Library staff.

Chapter 1: The Public Library Committee

The story of the Division of Library Development did not become part of the Connecticut State Library's history until 1965. However, the story of library development in Connecticut goes back to 1893. In that year the General Assembly passed a law allowing for the establishment of Public Libraries in any Connecticut Town, Borough, or City. The same law empowered the State Board of Education to appoint 5 persons to the Connecticut Public Library Committee. The members of the Committee were to serve without pay but were expected to provide "advice and assistance in regard to the selection and purchase of books, the cataloging of books and any matters pertaining to the maintenance or administration of the library." This marks the beginning of consulting services to libraries.

As an incentive to establish a library, the Public Library Committee was authorized to select and purchase books for a town in an amount not to exceed the amount expended by the town for the establishment of the Library, but in no case more than \$200. Towns also had to state that each year they would give "not less than a certain sum." This marks the beginning of state aid to public libraries and the concept of maintenance of effort that is still a part of today's public library grant programs

Both consulting and state aid have changed over the years, but in the beginning it was clearly intended to encourage the establishment of libraries. The Public Library Committee provided a wide range of materials to towns and libraries. Much of their advice was issued through the *Connecticut Public Library Document*. Issue number 1 for 1894 was entitled "What A Free Library Does For a Country Town". (See page 2.) This short document was intended to be used by anyone in a community interested in getting a town to establish a library. The Committee offered to "go to any town in the State where there is a desire to establish" a library. Today only four towns do not have a public library. The executive secretary of the Public Library Commission served as a consultant although she was originally referred to as a "visitor and inspector".



*Belle Holcomb Johnson,
First paid "visitor and inspector" of the Connecticut
Library Committee*

The Public Library Committee also assisted public libraries in serving small schools by depositing collections of books with teachers. The executive secretary prepared, repaired and repacked boxes of books each summer to be distributed to schools in the Fall. The books would then be returned to Hartford each spring. During the early 1940's the library community became more active and encouraged the Board of Education to boost the status of the Public Library Committee. There was a call for more funds and more staff to improve statewide library services.

In 1944 the Public Library Committee staff was augmented with the addition of a School Library Advisor and a Regional Library Advisor. The regional library advisor was located at Griswold High School as was the newly established Regional Service Center established by the State Board of Education. Her role was to "work with public libraries, schools, adult groups and any organizations which [were] interested in better book service, especially along cooperative lines. By 1946 the staff of the Public Library Committee was involved in a statewide survey of library service; standards for school libraries; a study "with definite recommendations" for general library training in the state; and a statewide program for the improvement of reading. In 1947, the Department of Education assumed the duties of the Public Library Committee and it became the Bureau of Libraries (later the Bureau of Library Services) within the Department of Education.

Chapter 2: The Bureau of Library Services and The Department of Education

The passage of the Library Services Act (LSA) in 1956 ushered in a new era in library development. Connecticut was one of the earliest states to have its federal plan accepted. With an influx of federal dollars, the Bureau of Library Services' staff was increased to include, among others, a public library consultant and the Interlibrary Loan Center was started. The Middletown Library Service Center (October 1, 1955) and the Willimantic Library Service Center (July 1, 1959) were established as pilot projects. Miss Helen Ridgeway, head of the state Department of Education's Bureau of Library Services planned to expand the centers into Litchfield and Windham Counties.



Middletown Library Service Center occupied a former school house built in 1878.



New Computer Lab, Willimantic Service Center, Circa 2004

During this time the Connecticut State Library had very little to do with the Public Library Committee and public libraries in general although the State Librarians had been active in the Connecticut Library Association and the Hartford Library Association. In 1956 State Librarian James Brewster retired and Robert Sale, a special librarian at Pratt and Whitney, became State Librarian. Mr. Sale had very different ideas than his predecessors about the role of the State Library in improving statewide library service. His views, however, were at odds with those of Miss Ridgeway. One of Mr. Sale's proposals was to close many small public libraries and have towns rely more on the State Library. Needless to say this upset a great many libraries as well as Miss Ridgeway. A rift developed between the State Library and the Bureau of Library

Services. It did not end until legislation was passed to merge the two in 1965. But before that came to pass, the Connecticut Library Association had grown increasing concerned about the structure and the role of libraries in relation to the State's rapidly growing economy and expanding and changing population.

In 1961, members of CLA approached Governor Dempsey who responded by appointing the Governor's Committee on Libraries. Interestingly both the State Librarian and the Chief of Library Services served as members of the Committee. Governor Grasso, then Secretary of the State, served as the Governor's liaison. The Committee's report was to be a manifesto and sensible blueprint for total library service for Connecticut in the years ahead. Although few specific programs were a direct result of the report, it established a foundation for subsequent initiatives and played a key role in the modern era of library development.

In addressing the governmental structure issue, the report called for the development of an integrated library system and the establishment of a State Board of Libraries to be headed by a Commissioner of Libraries. A few years after the report was issued legislation was introduced to place the Bureau of Public Libraries under the State Library, something the State Librarian favored. However, Miss Ridgeway and the Department of Education resisted this proposal and competing bills was introduced in the General Assembly. In the end the responsibility for public libraries ended up not in the Department of Libraries as envisioned only a few years earlier, but as a division within the State Library. School libraries remained the responsibility of the Department of Education. Both Miss Ridgeway and Mr. Sale left office before the transition was completed.

Chapter 3: The Division of Library Development

In 1964 Mr. Walter Brahm arrived from Ohio as the new State Librarian and hired the first Associate State Librarian for Library Development. With his extensive background in library development, Mr. Brahm began building and expanding the role of the new Division of Library Development and increasing the visibility of the library consultants. One of his first proposals was for a statewide library card, but this idea was not well received and nothing came of it.



In 1971 the activities of the State Library included the Library Service Centers; the Interlibrary Loan Center; two teletype networks; consulting services for public libraries in the area of operational issues and building programs; statistical information; state grants; administration of federal library funds; centralized cataloging program; bookmobile loan program; the development of a union list of serials and a union list of books; consultant service to state institutions; numerous institutes and workshops; and the adoption of recommended standards for principal public libraries.

Even with this array of services, the Connecticut Library Association was concerned that there was no active and generally accepted plan for the future development and improvement of library services within the state. In September of 1971, a group of nearly 40 concerned librarians, trustees and lay people met for a weeklong institute funded by a grant by the State Library Committee. What developed became known as the "Target '76" Plan. Many positive outcomes resulted including the development of Connecticutcard, Library-line, Connecticut and the Cooperating Library Service Units.

Chapter 4: The Connecticut Library Association and other Library groups

Over the next 25 years the Connecticut Library Association and other library groups in the state continued to actively pursue improvements in library services and library funding amidst a rapidly changing library landscape. Computer technologies were beginning to both opportunities and threats for libraries of all types.

Target '76 was followed by the Governor's Conference on Libraries and Information Services in 1978 and in 1990 as well as the 1983 conference, "Toward the Year 2000". These all impacted the course of library development and the services administered and delivered by the State Library's Division of Library Development. During this period of seemingly unending developments in information technology the relationship between the State Library and the library community was at times cooperative and sometimes a ground for a frank exchange of opinions. This was new territory.

The Division of Library Development has entered the 21st century with a mission to provide leadership, funding, education, and statewide services that enhance a local library's ability to deliver high quality library service to its community; a mission that has evolved with the times, but remains rooted in the state's interest in extending library

services to every citizen of Connecticut. Today's State Library continues to administer the recently reauthorized

federal library program (now the Library Services and Technology Act); Connecticar; Connecticard; grants to public libraries, public library construction and iCONN; the Connecticut Digital Library. Through iCONN, the State Library now works closely with school, academic, special and public libraries. iCONN is also an example of the collaborative nature of today's library development. Whether it is working with various state agencies; library organizations both local and national; or the Gates Foundation, the State Library is today very much a partner in efforts to improve library service throughout Connecticut.

Sources: Reports of the Governor's Committee on Libraries. 1962 - 1963.

Connecticut Public Library Document, various Frances Davenport, "History of the Connecticut State Library," Oral History Interview conducted by Mary Anna Tien at the Middletown Library Service Center, June 9, 1976, Connecticut State Archives.

Excerpts from the Connecticut Public Library Committee Meeting Notes October 13, 1908

Belle H. Johnson [Visitor and Inspector]

"Establishment of libraries

The chairman reports that a library association has been formed in the town of Redding. The library, known as the Mark Twain library, has been opened with about 500 books in a disused chapel...

That a library building, known as the Wheeler library, has been erected in the town of North Stonington. It is to be open [in] the fall with about 5,000 books.

That by the establishment of libraries in the two towns mentioned above the number of traveling libraries loaned by the Connecticut public library committee is reduced to 13.

Traveling libraries, Audubon Society

The chairman reports that the worn & soiled books in the traveling libraries loaned by the Audubon society have been replaced so far as possible and rebound at the expense of the Audubon society. 13 books have been replaced at a cost of \$14.36. 61 books have been rebound at a cost of \$21.00.

Summary of books & pictures loaned

The chairman reports that since the last meeting there have been sent out

10 bird charts	46 portfolios of pictures
16 adult traveling libraries	155 unframed pictures
13 framed pictures	

This includes material owned by the Public library committee, the Colonial Dames, Audubon Society & State Grange."

2004 State Public Library Construction Grant Award

Mary Louise Jensen, Building Consultant



Sketch of Windsor Public Library

On January 26, 2004, the Connecticut State Library Board approved a \$500,000 State Public Library Construction Grant for the Windsor Public Library for a \$5,998,091 addition and renovation project. The addition will be 11,410 square feet with a total square footage of 34,410. The present building is a 1777 colonial house connected to a 1976 brick addition. The architect firm is Best Joslin Architects, who furnished the drawings. This grant was made from funds returned by another library. Construction grants Windsor Public Library, New Milford Library and Janet Carlson Calvert Library (soon to be created library in Franklin) were approved by the State Bond Commission on March 20, 2004.

The State Library will be accepting applications in 2004. If there is no funding, these applicants will be put on a waiting list. Westbrook Public Library and Essex Library are currently on the waiting list. Grant applications are due on September 1, 2004. If you would like more information about this grant program, contact Mary Louise Jensen, Building Consultant, Connecticut State Library, 231 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT 06106. Phone: 860-566-2712 or e-mail: mjensen@cslib.org.



Schematics, Windsor Public Library



Connecticut State Library
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1537

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This newsletter is published quarterly in January, April, July, November. The deadline for contributions is the 10th of the month prior to publication. Please send them to Editor, CSL, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford CT 06106-1537 (bdelaney@cslib.org)

The Connecticut State Library is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



April 18 - 24, 2004, National Library Week

Here are some excerpts from the suggested program for Library Day in 1915 by the Connecticut Public Library Committee.

Program

- “1. Song by the children
2. Roll call (Each pupil may respond with the author and title of the best book he or she has read during the last year or with a quotation about books)
3. Address by the librarian or by the teacher, if exercises are not conducted in the library. Subject “Our Library”
4. Talks by several pupils on Connecticut authors or books dealing either with Connecticut or with their particular locality
5. Song by children
6. Short reviews of books read recently by several pupils
7. Address by school supervisor, teacher or other visitor
8. Song by the children”

Most of the photographs in this issue are copies of originals in the State Archives. In this, the 150th Anniversary of the State Library, the State Archives welcomes photographs that readers may have of its building, activities, events and staff.