



The CONNector

CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1999

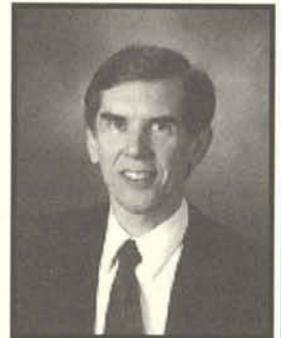
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The State Librarian's Column

Kendall F. Wiggin
Connecticut State Librarian



The number of Americans connected to the nation's information infrastructure is soaring, but a digital divide exists and is widening. That is the conclusion of *Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide* ([HTTP://WWW.NTIA.DOC.GOV/NTIAHOME/DIGITALDIVIDE/](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/digitaldivide/)) a report on the telecommunications and information technology gap in America issued this summer by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The report also found that what they termed community access centers (CACs) - such as schools, libraries, and other public access points - will play an important role in providing Internet access to Americans without ready access to the Internet either from home or work.

This particular finding should come as no surprise to the library community. Libraries have long provided free access to information to those who lack the means to acquire information. This finding does, however, validate the efforts libraries have been making to increase public access to electronic information resources. It also supports ongoing efforts to develop a plan to provide high band width, high speed connections and Internet access to libraries and educational institutions in Connecticut.

As important as it is for libraries to serve as access points, the data in the report suggests that libraries can use the technology to reach those on both sides of the digital divide. Consider that in 1998, 95.1% of the households in Connecticut had

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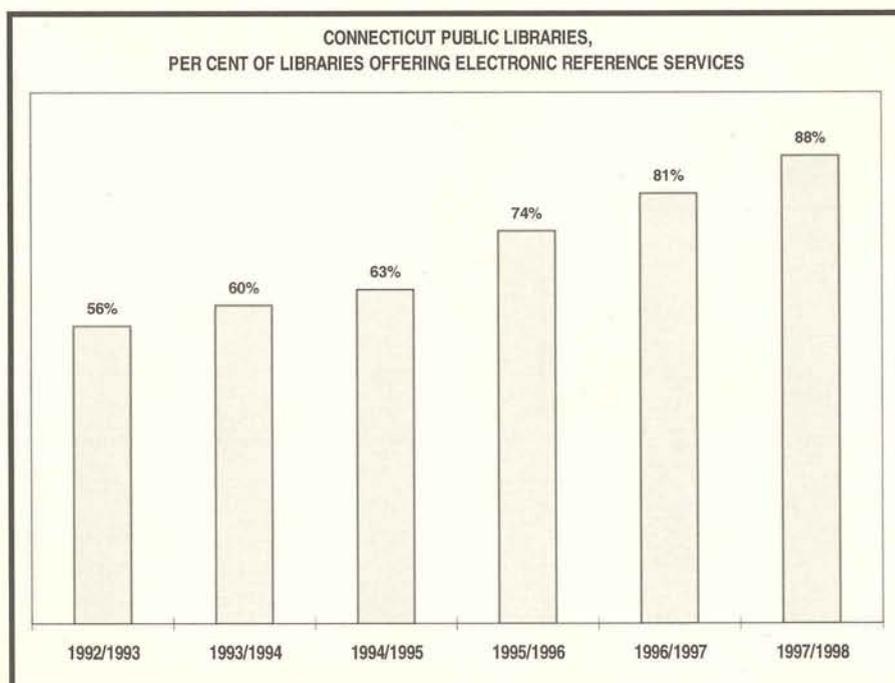
Re-enactment of Thomas Hooker landing at Hartford. Bulkeley Bridge Week, 1908 (newly opened bridge in background).

Connecticut State Archives

The State Librarian's Column

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telephones, 43.8% of households in Connecticut had computers; and 31.8% of households in Connecticut had Internet Access. These households are positioned to use our libraries as an online source of information. We need to position libraries to be providers of electronic information and not just passive access points. Consider that households with incomes of \$75,000 and higher are more than *twenty times* more likely to have access to the Internet than those at the lowest income levels, and more than *nine times* as likely to have a computer at home. It is probably safe to assume that these people are more likely to be voters and decision-makers and if they use libraries at all would do so electronically. A "Connecticut Virtual Library" is just one of many ways we could reach the electronically connected while at the same time adding value to those using CAC's to access information.



A "Connecticut Virtual Library" is just one of many ways we could reach the electronically connected while at the same time adding value to those using CAC's to access information.

Falling Through the Net not only defines the digital divide, it challenges the library community to help bridge that divide. If in fact there are many Americans who do not realize that the Internet is relevant to their lives, we can help reach out through library programs to let them know why they should care and how new technologies can open new opportunities for them and their children. Establishing and supporting community access centers, among other steps, will help ensure that all Americans can access new technologies. We need to convince policy makers to provide more resources for libraries and other public institutions such as museums to support public access and electronic information services.

The Information Age is here. Access to computers and the Internet is becoming increasingly vital. It is in everyone's interest to ensure that no American is left behind. At the state level we must continue to advocate for a Connecticut Education Network that connects all schools and libraries, a digital library and distance education. Efforts such as these will go a long way to bridge the digital divide.

The CONNector Editorial Board Kendall F. Wiggin, State Librarian

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Public Libraries Respond to Growing Demand

Leon Shatkin
State Library Data Coordinator

Where will you find more than 51,000 Connecticut people today getting answers to nearly 10,000 reference questions and borrowing 71,500 books, tapes and other items, enough books to make a stack higher than six Empire State Buildings? At a public library, of course. According to the 1999 Pocket Digest of Connecticut Public Library Statistics, recently published by the State Library, those numbers represent an average service day in the state's 194 public libraries.

More than half of Connecticut's citizens are registered public library borrowers. During the past eight years, Connecticut's public libraries have seen a 10% growth in circulation and an 18% increase in requests for information of all types. Annual circulations per capita climbed from 6.5 in 1993 to 7.1 in 1998, and reference transactions from .99 per capita to 1.16.

Data compiled by the US National Center for Education Statistics shows that for the past two years Connecticut has ranked first in the number of library visits per capita. It takes a lot of professionally trained librarians to answer 10,000 questions every day; and Connecticut has 665 of them, nationally the third highest per capita.

Connecticut public libraries have also responded to increased demand by adding hours. They were open a total of 532,577 hours last year, 49,149 (10%) more than in 1993; and 51 libraries offer Sunday hours.

The state's public libraries are adding materials at an increasing rate and spending a higher per cent of operating budgets on books. Average per capita expenditures on materials rose from \$3.51 in 1992 to \$4.66 in 1998, but Connecticut dropped from 9th in books held per capita in 1997 to 10th in 1998 and from 8th to 17th in audiotapes held. Most libraries have also added electronic resources and services to satisfy their community's information needs: 169 now provide access to the Internet and 93 have a home page on the world wide web.

Although Connecticut's public library per capita operating income ranks 8th at \$29.43, \$7.51 higher than the national average, public libraries in this state are much more dependent on endowments and private support for operating dollars than public libraries nationally. Connecticut's libraries received 79.8% of operating funds from local, state and federal government and 20.2% from other sources; national library income was

90.8% government and 9.2% other sources.

Connecticut ranks 39th in state support of public libraries at \$.37 per capita or 3% of public library income. The national average is \$1.54, 12% of library income. Local tax support for libraries in Connecticut averages \$23.04, 7th among the 50 states.

Connecticut citizens spend about \$23.50 in tax dollars annually on public libraries, about 6 ½ cents a day. No wonder 51,000 people are using their public library today. Connecticut folks know a bargain when they see one.



Affirmative Action Plan Approved

David Peck, Manager
Human Resources and Affirmative Action

At its September meeting, the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities voted to approve the State Library's Affirmative Action Plan marking eleven consecutive years of approval. Submitted in March of each year, this two hundred plus page document details the agency's good faith efforts and progress in achieving numerical and programmatic goals and its commitment to affirmative action and diversity in the workplace.

Managing Public Access to Computers at the Ferguson Library

William Sullivan, Administrator
Connecticut Library Network

The Ferguson Library (Stamford), like many public libraries, has seen a significant increase in the public's demand for computers since offering public access to the Internet. The type of use varies from entertainment, web mail and chat – the large majority of use – to research. Along with this demand has come the dual challenge of providing an adequate number of computers to avoid waiting lines, and regulating usage fairly among those competing for machine time. At Ferguson, even though the total number of computers increased by over 400% over a five-year period, the task of managing all these machines with limited staff was becoming increasingly difficult until the installation of an innovative computer program conceived and developed by Gary Giannelli, Director of MIS.

Before the new program, library staff spent a considerable amount of time taking reservations over the phone and functioning as “traffic cops”. At one time, patrons had to sign up a day in advance. The new sign-in program enables any patron with a library card to walk up to a

computer and login by entering a library card number. The system immediately validates the number against a patron file that is updated at least hourly. Visitors without a library card can obtain a temporary, in-library card. The general rules are: only one person to a workstation, and anyone under the age of 18 must have a guardian/parent permission slip on file.

The sixteen Internet machines are arranged in two groups of eight. One group is reserved for “entertainment” uses, such as chat and Hotmail. Users in this group are guaranteed a minimum of 30 minutes of use. The program prevents patrons from using PC's in this group more than once every two hours. The program provides the person at the staff desk a listing of who is logged onto each machine and what time each user logged on, and is used to decide who will be the first to give up their PC when others are waiting to get access. Computers automatically return to the login screen after two minutes of idleness.

The second group of Internet machines is

designated for research. Here the minimum time allocated to each user is one hour with no maximum time; users may log in as many times as they want. However, the library reserves the right to set a one-hour maximum time limit during busy periods. Again, the sign-in program takes care of all the details as to who signed in when.

The program has helped Ferguson library staff to more equitably regulate computer usage and has enabled the population and use of machines to grow without a proportional growth in staff. Gary created the program using Filemakerä and runs it on an NT server. He says the program is “bulletproof”; a user must have a valid library card number to use any of the Internet terminals. There's no faking the number. All the id's are instantly verified against a master list that identifies users by name.

For further information about this program, please contact Gary Giannelli at (203)964-1000 ext.270.

State Archives Issues New Finding Aids

Mark Jones
State Archivist

The State Archives recently issued three finding aids to significant parts of records of the General Assembly and of the Governors. Two, compiled by Assistant State Archivist Bruce Stark, cover Papers of the General Assembly from 1821 to 1870 and the intriguing rejected bills from 1808 to 1870. State Archivist Mark Jones compiled the third publication that covers records of the Governors from 1820 to 1858, the year that Civil War Governor William A. Buckingham took office. The three include important historical introductions, scope and content notes, and folder-level container listings. The Governors aid also has a brief annotated listing of extraordinary documents. All three contain clear copies of representative documents.

The aids should be helpful to Civil War researchers and those interested in the local, state, and national issues that came before the Governor and General Assembly during the Ante Bellum Period. The aids were distributed to all public and academic libraries in the state. Copies are available at no cost upon request as long as supplies last.

Southbury Public Library's 30th Anniversary Celebration

Mary Louise Jensen
Building Consultant



The grand prize drawing: Al Candido, Jr., First Selectman, and Louise Pesca, Member of the Friends

If you are thinking about having a celebration, take some cues from the Southbury Public Library. The volunteer committee, library staff, and library board created a successful thirtieth anniversary celebration. On July 17, 1999, Southbury Public Library had a full day of events. The library was decorated in a balloon motif because the grand prize of the day was a hot-air balloon ride. Papier-mâché balloons made by the children were displayed. The Southbury Garden Club created beautiful flower arrangements. Volunteers and staff handed out free souvenirs that included bookmarks, pens, pencils, post-it notes, plastic bags, hard candy, and chocolate kisses.

Some of the events that occurred that day were

- a presentation by Nancy Tafuri, author and illustrator, who spoke about her illustrated books
- line dancing for all ages with Betty Navage and her group of traditional line dancers
- an open house of the CVSHB recording studio with a demonstration on how to make a talking book for the blind and handicapped
- the official cake cutting with comments from Shirley Michaels, Chairperson of the Library Board
- a slide show by Wendell Minor, author and illustrator, showing his thirty years of illustrating book jackets
- a storytelling by Joyce Rayno, a skilled storyteller

It was a very successful day with approximately 300 people attending the festivities.

CSL Law Unit Prepares Clerks For a Challenging Year at Supreme Court

Denise Jernigan, Unit Head
Law/Legislative Reference

Each June, twelve or thirteen law students fresh from the challenge of three years of law school arrive at the State Library and Supreme Court Building in Hartford to begin another type of legal experience – clerking for the Justices of the State Supreme Court. These students have been selected from an impressive number of candidates, and represent the best and brightest of recent law school graduates from Connecticut and across the country.

An orientation session, which is updated yearly, introduces them to the impressive array of resources available at the Library. The Law and Legislative Reference Unit Head, Denise Jernigan makes a PowerPoint presentation to the new clerks which highlights CSL's wide-ranging legal collections, the enormous collections of state and federal government documents and the State archives. Special emphasis is placed on the role of the law librarians in helping the clerks find their way among these many resources, which may be in traditional book or manuscript format, or on microfiche, CD, online, or on the Internet.

The process of researching legislative history is outlined, with examples quoted from recent state Supreme Court cases. The circulation policy is explained, and the clerks are sent on their way with a folder full of policy handouts, law book locators, and civics outlines. Along with the paperwork goes the reassurance that the Law/Legislative Reference Unit staff stands ready to help them find whatever they need in order to make the most of this unique opportunity to take part in the service of justice.

New Coin Has Its Roots in the State Library

Dean Nelson, Administrator
Museum of Connecticut History

The new twenty-five cent piece issued by the United States mint to honor Connecticut sports a familiar image – the Charter Oak. Among the exhibits at the Museum of Connecticut History at the State Library - *Liberties and Legends* - traces the history and popularity of this fabled arboreal icon.

Juxtaposed with the State's original 1662 royal charter, the exhibit relates not only the historical tale of the Charter Oak, but also its adaptation and afterlife as a popular symbol and cipher. Used in programs, logos, advertising, manufacturing, and license plates for over 150 years, the Charter Oak has often appeared on commemorative coins and medals. The official Connecticut Tercentennial Commission in 1935 issued a souvenir medal which is on display. Following the demise of the Charter

Oak, which collapsed in 1855, its limbs and branches were collected by souvenir hunters and have survived to the present day in a variety of forms. Pistol grips, picture frames, tables, chairs and a wide assortment of "Charter Oak relics" are on display.

Several examples of the newly minted U.S. coin will be added to the State Library's Mitchelson Coin Collection, which is one of the most comprehensive numismatic collections in the nation.



The Charter Oak framed by the words "THE CHARTER OAK" and a stone wall.

The Museum of Connecticut History is located in the Connecticut State Library, 231 Capitol Avenue, in Hartford. The museum is open to the public Monday through Friday, from 9:00am to 4:00pm, but closed on State and national holidays. Admission is free. For further information, call the museum at (860) 566-3056.

1000th Reel Microfilmed by Connecticut Newspaper Project

Jane Cullinane
Preservation Librarian

In June, the Connecticut Newspaper Project (CNP) prepared and sent five newspapers from Cheshire for microfilming. They constitute the 1000th reel done by CNP. Cheshire Newspapers, 1870 - 1940, including *Times* (Wallingford, CT.) includes the only known issues of the *Cheshire Monthly Review* (Nov. 10, 1870), the *Conn. Ec-lec-tic Weekly* (Aug. 2, 1884), the *Cheshire Enterprise* (Oct. 23-30, 1896), and the *Cheshire Standard* (Oct. 19, 1926 and Aug. 30, 1927).

The *Cheshire Enterprise* is an interesting example of getting two newspapers in one. The inner two pages have a separate title, *The Times*, which includes news for Wallingford. Subscribers in Cheshire received their newspaper with the pages folded in such a way that the title appeared to be the *Cheshire Enterprise*. Meanwhile, subscribers in Wallingford found the same newspaper on their doorsteps with the pages folded so that they got *The Times*. Using this device, publishers could control costs while still reaching a wide audience.

By April of 2000, CNP will film 904,200 pages. But this, even with the efforts of other Connecticut projects, still leaves an estimated 2.75 million pages that need preservation on film. Local libraries and historical societies will have to get involved to help save Connecticut's newspapers before they are lost forever. For more information on the importance of microfilming check [HTTP://WWW.CSLIB.ORG/CNP/HTM](http://www.cslib.org/cnp/htm). If you have questions on how to get a local microfilming project started, call Laura J. Moulton, CNP Project Librarian, at 860-566-3557 or lmoulton@cslib.org

Connecticut State Library Board Notes

July 26, 1999 State Library Board meeting

At this meeting, Ann Clark was elected Chairperson and Ed Sullivan was elected Vice-Chairperson. In other action, the Board passed a resolution acknowledging the dedicated service of Barbara Wilson, an employee of the Records Center who was killed in a tragic automobile accident, and expressing sincere condolences to her family, friends and colleagues.

Upon the recommendation of State Library Building Consultant Mary Louise Jensen, the Board approved extensions of Public Library Construction grants for the Cora Belden Library and the Mansfield Library.

The State Library Board allocated \$308,464 in FY 2000 LSTA grants. More than 77 grant applications requesting \$685,856 were reviewed by the Division of Library Development.

The Board approved the transfer of archival records relating to the history of Western Connecticut State University to the Ruth A. Haas Library at WCSU. The State Archives had acquired the records in 1986 at a time when the University did not have room to store the records. The Haas Library is now in a position to develop a university archives and State Archivist Mark Jones recommended that custody of the records be turned over to the Library.

September 27, 1999 State Library Board meeting

The meeting was hosted by the Meriden Public Library. State Librarian Kendall Wiggin updated the Board on the recent hiring freeze and budget reductions imposed by the Governor. The hiring freeze will make it difficult to refill vacancies as they occur. Librarians are unclassified and are exempt from the hiring freeze. Budget reductions averaging 5% will affect the Library's book and materials budgets, the Connecticut Library Network's budget, and the budget for the Cooperating Library Service Units (CLSU's). The general operating expenses budget was also reduced.

After careful consideration of each request, the Board approved extensions for the West Haven Public Library, the Watertown Library Association for the renovation of the Oakville Branch Library, the Hagaman Memorial Library (East Haven), the Beardsley and Memorial Library (Winsted) and the Bethel Public Library.

Director of Library Development Sharon Brettschneider presented revisions to the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five-Year Plan. The revisions were the work of a Task Force established by the Advisory Council on Library Planning and Development (ACLPD). The Institute of Museum and Library Services allows the revision of state plans at any time. The Five-Year Plan determines the allocation of the federal LSTA funds. The State Library Board approved a revised Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five-Year Plan.

In other action, the Board approved the appointments of the following individuals to the Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development (ACLPD) for a term beginning October 1, 1999, and ending on September 30, 2001: Charlotte Organschi (Library User Region 1), W. Clay Howe (Library User Region 5), Valerie Harrod, Director, Durham Public Library (Small Public Libraries), Mary Rogers, Sacred Heart University (Academic Libraries), Karen Roesler, Wallingford Public Library (Conn. Library Association), Patricia Holloway, Director, Eastern Connecticut Libraries, Inc. (Cooperating Library Service Units), Barbara Williams, J.B. Gates Correctional Institution (Institutional Libraries).

Carol Taylor, Director
LBPH

Connecticut Volunteer Services for the Blind and Handicapped, Inc. Honored



Kendall F. Wiggin, the Connecticut State Librarian, volunteering.

Connecticut Volunteer Services for the Blind and Handicapped, Inc. (CVSBH) was honored at a reception on October 29, 1999 by the Connecticut State Library's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH). A plaque was presented in recognition of its 25 years of dedication to the production of "Talking Books". Each of the recording studios was recognized for the time and talents given to the program by the more than 250 volunteers statewide. Those present were given tours of the library and shown how the volunteers' recordings are incorporated into the library program.

CVSBH is a private, nonprofit corporation that works with LBPH to record books, pamphlets, and magazines onto cassette tape for those who cannot hold or read regular-print materials to ensure their access to the same range and quality of reading materials as the public library patron. CVSBH is an all-volunteer program using five studio locations for recording in public libraries in East Hartford, Litchfield, Milford,

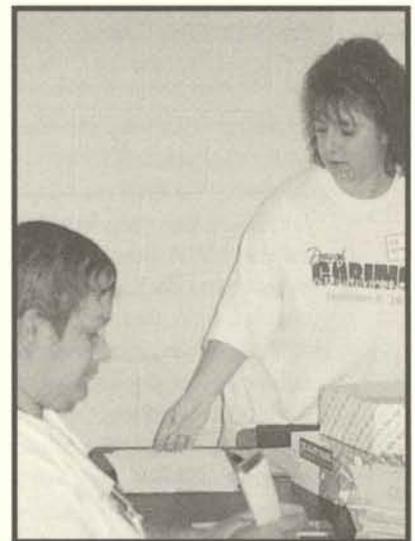
Ridgefield, and Southbury. A long-term time commitment on a regular basis is required of each volunteer. Using the recording procedures and standards of the Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, more than 1675 cassette books have been produced and added to the LBPH collection. Many of the titles include books about Connecticut and New England, local history and information, and books by Connecticut authors.

Day of Caring *Volunteers Lend Helping Hand*

On September 9, 1999 the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped participated in the United Way and Combined Health Appeal's eighth annual Day of Caring. This event is an excellent opportunity for agencies to build visibility and relationships with the corporate community. Corporations allow their staff time off from their jobs to assist with special projects in local agencies.

Eleven volunteers from Aetna spent the day working "behind the scenes" on projects that would benefit the many patrons served by the library. An overview of the program was given to help them understand the value of the service they were providing. They inspected cassette books, prepared mailings for a senior outreach campaign, typed new labels for cassettes and containers, prepared catalog packets, sorted and shelved incoming cassette books, and entered patron requests into the computerized circulation system.

Aetna volunteers have worked with the library for the past several years as part of the annual Day of Caring. It was wonderful for staff to see some familiar faces and welcome new ones. The day was a great success with many projects completed and an expanded relationship with our partners from Aetna.



Volunteers from Aetna

Education Network Takes a Big Step Forward

Governor Rowland issued a press release on August 6, announcing that he had asked Lt. Governor Rell to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure that Connecticut's schools and libraries are prepared to meet the computer and information technology needs of the 21st Century. This announcement dovetailed nicely with the work of an ad hoc group that had begun meeting after the close of the 1999 legislative session to move the education network and virtual library initiative forward. On Friday, October 1, 1999 the leadership of the group was turned over to Lt. Governor Rell. Mrs. Rell also invited representatives from the four legislative caucuses to join the group.

Lt. Governor Rell developed five subcommittees to address the actual education network, governance issues, distance learning, the virtual library, standards for students and teachers, and funding. On October 29, the five subcommittees made their final reports to the Lt. Governor. At Mrs. Rell's request, the subcommittees work focused on concepts, goals and objectives and not on a lot of specific detail. Mrs. Rell will then use these reports to develop a plan to present to the Governor by December. It is then expected that Governor Rowland will bring a legislative proposal to the year 2000 session of the General Assembly. As currently envisioned, the education network would significantly improve the ability of schools, libraries, and academic institutions throughout the state to work together to meet the information needs of the students, teachers and the residents of Connecticut.



Memorial Hall at CSL decorated for the 1939 Holidays. The Hall was decorated in a similar manner for at least 20 years. It is reported that candles (rather than electric lights) were used at one time.

Winning the Great War Without Some Books

Mark Jones, State Archivist

It is appropriate that this issue of *The CONNector* stands between two annual events. Between September 25 and October 2, the literary community celebrated intellectual freedom in *Banned Books Week*. On November 11, we shall commemorate Veterans Day. Most will enjoy a day off, not remembering the terrible sacrifices of World War I. It is appropriate, therefore, to revisit an inglorious attempt to censor libraries in Connecticut.

President Wilson's war speech before Congress on April 3, 1917 did not catch Connecticut divided and complacent. State munitions industries were operating at full capacity to satisfy Allied contracts. Governor Marcus Holcomb had won reelection in 1916 on a "preparedness" platform. In February, he authorized a State Military Census and in March, the formation of a Home Guard for protection against saboteurs. After the Declaration of War, Holcomb created the State Council of Defense, one of 48, to mobilize citizens, industries, labor, and organizations to win the war.

"Truth" is said to be the first casualty in war; freedom of speech and print declined under the pressure of anti-German war hysteria and paranoid suspicion that foreigners were enemy agents. In April 1918, Governor Holcomb designated English as the only language to be used in teaching and prohibited schools from employing "alien enemies." Amid this excessive patriotism and resurgent nativism, Connecticut's librarians supported campaigns to raise money to purchase books and to collect books for use in military base camps and field hospitals in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. Books, according to one ALA poster, were the basis of civilization that the war intended to protect. However, it followed that some books were not suitable.

In January 1918, State Librarian George Godard expressed concerns to Joseph W. Alsop, Secretary of the State Council of Defense. "I feel, somewhat sure that some material that is really a German propaganda is not looked upon by such by some of our librarians." He suggested that Council members visit their public libraries and examine the collection for pro-German works. He sent a questionnaire to public librarians to determine the degree of the problem. His survey yielded poor results. Only 50 librarians responded and according to the *Hartford Courant*, provided little information. In March, the Hartford newspapers carried a story that Trinity College Professor Edward F. Humphrey had found enemy propaganda in the Hartford Public Library. Calling for the removal of Thorstein Veblen's *Inquiry into the Nature of War on the Nature of Peace*, Humphrey asserted that "every day I am finding things like this in our libraries, and if some of them are not treasonable, they are dangerously close to it." "Certainly," he advised, "we should not countenance them."

Still there was no official campaign to enforce censorship. Standards for unpatriotic literature did not exist. The public viewed libraries as patriotic centers for exhibits and community meetings, not plans of espionage. In June 1918, the National Council of Defense issued the inevitable list of unpatriotic literature. In a memorandum marked "Confidential," the Council justified the list by stating that it had been annotated and approved by the American Library Association. "Great care should be exercised in the use of this list," the memo warned. Only librarians should receive it. Books on the list should be "withdrawn temporarily from circulation." Moreover, the loyalty of authors whose works were published before the war should not be questioned. The memo warned that "an argument or controversy over a book would give it the very publicity which it is deemed advisable to eliminate during the present period."

In July, the list and a letter from the State Council of Defense were sent to public and academic librarians in the state. Thirty-six responded. Most had removed one or more of the books on the list. One librarian wanted to remove all suspicious books, but her office already was filled with other titles. Some responded that they handed the list and letter to trustees for action. A few reported total cooperation. The list confused many respondents because many titles in their removal were pro-Ally. The State Council advised that each librarian should exercise his/her own professional judgment. The most defiant answer came from Andrew Keogh, the distinguished Head Librarian at Yale University. He wrote that the list appeared to be intended for small public libraries and not academic libraries like Yale's. He labeled the recommendation that all biographies of Frederick the Great and Bismarck be removed as "absurd." "It might interest you," he continued sardonically, "to know that practically all the books in the list are already in our possession; the few that are not here will be obtained as quickly as possible, if for no other reason, as curiosities of censorship."

Four months later the war ended. Connecticut's brief experiment in official censorship produced mixed results. More librarians failed to respond than replied. Did this mean that censorship was unpalatable or had they already engaged in their own brand of removal in order to avoid the protests of local jingoistic patriots? We simply do not know.



The Connecticut Militia Heritage Gallery

David Corrigan, Museum Curator

Since 1997 the Museum of Connecticut History and the Connecticut Military Department have collaborated in the preparation and installation of a series of permanent and temporary exhibitions in the Connecticut Militia Heritage Gallery at the Connecticut State Armory and Arsenal in Hartford. These exhibitions provide increased awareness and appreciation of the civil and military activities of the Connecticut National Guard and affiliated organizations, known collectively as the "Connecticut Militia." Upon completion of the Armory restoration in 1996, the main lobby was designated as an exhibition area and additional space was set aside for the creation of the Connecticut Militia Heritage Gallery. This collaboration between the staff of the Museum of Connecticut History and the Connecticut Military Department has proved mutually beneficial. The Gallery provides a venue for the Museum to partially fulfill its mission to exhibit and interpret Connecticut military history and the Military Department is able to present its rich history to the public with the assistance of professional Museum staff.

The focal point of the Gallery is a graphic time-line which traces the history of the Militia from its origin in the colonial "train-bands" through its participation in every major American military conflict to its most recent duty in Bosnia as part of the NATO Peacekeeping Force. Photographs, maps, documents, quotations from participants and explanatory text depict the major events and personalities which have shaped Connecticut's proud military tradition. Other exhibits document the histories of the 1st and 2nd Companies Governor's Foot Guard and Horse Guard and highlight the black experience in the state's militia, notably the participation of Connecticut African-American soldiers in both the American Revolution and the Civil War. Other exhibitions trace the 1781 route of the French General Rochambeau through Connecticut on his way to join forces with George Washington's army and detail Connecticut's role in the Spanish-American War of 1898. Two exhibit panels are devoted to a history of the State Armory and Arsenal building and to the two-year, multimillion dollar restoration project.

In addition to their military duties, Connecticut National Guard units have responded to every major natural disaster in the state from the Hurricane of 1938, to the Floods of 1955 and more recent tornados and ice storms. An exhibit panel in the Gallery chronicles the Guard's activities during these crises, as well as its role during the Hartford Circus Fire of 1944.

Currently on exhibition in the Armory lobby is Stubby, the heroic canine mascot of the Connecticut National Guard's 102nd Infantry Regiment. Stubby adopted the Regiment prior to its sailing for France in 1917, and was smuggled aboard a U.S. Navy transport ship. Once in France, he served with his Connecticut buddies, participating in 17 engagements in four major World War I offensives. Stubby was wounded in action during one of these engagements and received the Purple Heart medal. After the War, Stubby regularly attended reunions and American Legion conventions. He was awarded numerous other medals, including one presented by General Pershing. Upon his death in 1925, Stubby's owner presented him to the Smithsonian Institution, which recently loaned him to the Connecticut Military Department for exhibition.



The Connecticut State Armory and Arsenal is located at 360 Broad Street in Hartford, due west of the State Capitol. The Connecticut Militia Heritage Gallery is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8AM to 4PM. For more information about the Gallery and exhibitions, contact Museum Curator David J. Corrigan at 860-566-3056 or at dcorrigan@cslib.org.



Connecticut State Library

231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106-1537

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