



**Kendall F. Wiggin,  
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## CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY



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### *Is There a Future For Libraries?* by State Librarian Kendall Wiggin

What does the future of the library look like? Is there a future for libraries? I recently had the opportunity to address these two questions at the Association of Connecticut Library Boards' (ACLB) Leadership Conference. Librarians, trustees and friends usually ask the former question and policy makers, the press, and the general public often ask the latter. If you work in a library you know that they are busy places these days, yet many people perceive the library very differently. Two library expansion/renovation referenda failed on Election Day. While not the only reason for their defeat, there was a perception by some in each community that libraries are not needed – or at least don't need to be expanded.

For many, the digital explosion – especially the growing acceptance of the eBook – is fueling the sentiment that there is no future for libraries. If the perception is that all libraries do is loan books and most people are reading eBooks and printed books are going away then it makes sense that they would think libraries are becoming irrelevant. The same case could be made with DVD's – libraries loan DVDs (I know some still have VHS tapes) – most people use cable, Netflix or Hulu or some other digital source – therefore libraries are obsolete. Or – libraries have big reference collections to answer questions – most people use Google – therefore libraries are obsolete. More and more people are accessing information remotely. The number of people with mobile devices is growing. The International Telecommunication Union (2011) estimated that at the end of 2011, there were 6 billion mobile subscriptions. That is equivalent to 87% of the world population. And the number of media tablets is expected to go from 68.7 million sold in 2011 to sales of 106.1 million or more in 2012. So again, if you think libraries are only about loaning books and providing information you have reason to question the future of the library.

But we know it isn't all about loaning stuff and answering reference questions – or I hope you realize that.

The business of libraries is changing. Libraries are moving from **knowledge access** to **knowledge creation**. I am not saying that collecting and loaning books and providing reference services is a bad thing. For people who cannot afford to purchase books and information or who have limited literacy skills – be it reading or using computers, libraries play an important role. For those who cannot afford tablets, Internet access and eContent, libraries provide an important access role. But we cannot hang our future on being able to provide

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unlimited access to all the bestsellers in eBook format or advertize ourselves as the information place. We are not going to win that battle with the publishers or out Google Google.

We can continue to build collections, loan material and provide access but we need to invest more in knowledge creation particularly at the community level. Our collections should support our communities. What are the hot button issues in your town? Do you have information resources that educate the community on the issues?

David Lankes, one of the thought leaders of our profession and director of the Information Institute of Syracuse and an associate professor in Syracuse University's School of Information Studies, has said that since knowledge is created through conversations libraries are also or ultimately in the business of facilitating community conversations. He says that we need to expect more out of our libraries. To him, libraries should be places of learning and advocates for our communities in terms of privacy, intellectual property, and economic development. In his ground breaking *Atlas of New Librarianship* he states that "the mission of librarians is to improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in their communities." Lankes sees libraries as the infrastructure, tools, and places that librarians do their work in. In his view, and I tend to agree with him, libraries need to go from being "Houses of collections to Platforms for community innovation and learning." Some libraries are doing this already. Maker Space is a concept that is being tried at the Westport Library here in Connecticut and the Division of Library Development will be partnering with CLC and the Westport Library to turn Maker Space into a statewide initiative. Initiatives like this will hopefully begin to transform the perception of the library community by community.

Libraries can help connect people to the information they need throughout their lives. Meeting customer needs across a life cycle, through online and off-line touchpoints, is essential to the community-based innovation that is needed to keep libraries relevant. Today, continuing education is a survival tool and our library programs need to support that need. Find a job; find a new job; learn a new skill; learn another new skill; parenting; caregiving; the list goes on and on. Responding to these and other needs is yet another way the library can become fully engaged in the community and increase its relevancy.

It is often said that "Libraries Change Lives." But our future rests in people realizing that changing lives (and communities) need libraries.

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***The Map That Wasn't a Map*** by State Historian Walter W. Woodward

[This article originally appeared in the Spring 2012 issue of *Connecticut Explored*. Reprinted with permission. [Ctexplored.org](http://Ctexplored.org)]

The key document mapping out Connecticut's original boundaries wasn't in fact a map.

It was, instead, a royal charter. The Charter of 1662—arguably the most important document in Connecticut's history—contains among its other provisions a written description of the colony's boundaries that served the same function as a drawn map.

*"We, of Our abundant Grace, . . . have given, granted, and confirmed. . . unto the said Governor and Company. . . all that Part of Our Dominions in New-England . . . bounded on the East by . . . Narraganset-Bay, . . . on the North by the Line of the Massachusetts-Plantation; and on the South by the Sea; and in Longitude . . . From the said Narraganset-Bay on the East, to the South Sea on the West Part . . ."*

The "South Sea"—what we call the Pacific Ocean—was well known to early navigators, but its exact location in relation to Connecticut Colony was unclear in 1662. What England's King Charles II effectively granted Connecticut through that grandiose wording was a swath of land some 70 miles north to south, stretching from the Narragansett Bay on the east to the northern California/Oregon coast just west of Mount Shasta. Had the charter's provisions held through the centuries, our state today would include the cities of Scranton, Erie, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Des Moines, Omaha, Cheyenne, and Salt Lake City.

Historians have long marveled at the generous provisions of the 1662 royal charter. In addition to the transcontinental footprint, the king also granted Connecticut virtually complete governmental autonomy more than a century before the Declaration of Independence. The charter's provisions in this regard were so complete that when other states scrambled to create new constitutions at the start of the American Revolution, Connecticut simply replaced the king's name with "the people of Connecticut" and continued using the charter as its constitution until 1818!

Charles II's charter generosity is even more surprising given that he had every reason to be furious with his New England subjects. Connecticut was a Puritan colony, and the Puritans had been instrumental in the execution of his father, Charles I. Furthermore, during the period the charter was issued, several of the men who had signed the king's death warrant were being sheltered from prosecution in Connecticut and other parts of New England.

The king's benevolence was in large part a response to the persuasive powers of the Connecticut Colony's Governor John Winthrop, Jr. Winthrop, who in addition to serving as Connecticut's governor for 19 years was also America's leading scientist, used his London scientific connections to access the king's patronage network and ultimately the monarch himself. Charles II appears to have warmed to Winthrop—with whom he shared a surprising physical resemblance—seeing him as an ideal ally to help institute a royal plan to combine all the colonies of New England into a single entity under crown rule. Connecticut's especially favorable charter provisions were part of his effort to win Winthrop over to this plan.

But when Winthrop—having gotten the charter—refused to play along with Charles's consolidation scheme, the king quickly issued new competing charters that reduced Connecticut's transcontinental holdings to a small area of land east of the Connecticut River. Connecticut's officials, however, steadfastly maintained that the 1662 Charter was the only valid Connecticut charter. This hotly contested position helped them retain Connecticut's original lands as far west as the New York border, absorb the New Haven Colony (finalized in 1665), and later lay claim in the future to large areas of Ohio (the Connecticut Western Reserve and the Firelands) during the early days of the new United States. Connecticut's imprint is still an important presence in those parts of the Midwest, a direct result of the 1662 map that wasn't a map at all.

*Hiding the Charter: Images of Joseph Wadsworth's Legendary Action*

by Museum Curator Dave Corrigan



The Charter Oak, by Charles DeWolf Brownell, oil on canvas, 1856.

Museum of Connecticut History

According to the legend of the Charter Oak, on the night of October 31, 1687, Joseph Wadsworth spirited the Royal Charter of 1662 out of Sanford's Tavern and the clutches of Sir Edmund Andros, ran across the

bridge over the Little River, and deposited it in the hollow of an ancient oak tree on the grounds of Samuel Wyllys' house in Hartford. Although historical evidence for this event is lacking, the legend has endured, and long ago became Connecticut's defining political legend, in which Hartford residents resisted the attempt by an agent of the British crown to usurp their rights. To many nineteenth-century defenders of the legend, the hiding of the Charter presaged the later, more widespread, defense of colonial rights that led to the American Revolution and independence.

The basic story line of the legend seems to have emerged in the 1780s and 1790s, when Connecticut's Standing Order, the nexus of long-entrenched political, theological and educational institutions, and its traditional, aristocratic way of ruling, came under increasing attack from a more democratic, liberal faction, that demanded wider suffrage, an end to the official support of the Congregational church, elimination of the practice of returning the same men to office year after year, and the drafting of a state constitution to replace the Charter. The Charter Oak legend was apparently created as one line of defense against these democratic encroachments, and was one element of the argument that Connecticut's traditional way of governing should be maintained.

Anyone with a basic knowledge of Connecticut history will be familiar with the legend of the Charter Oak, how the tree came to be the repository of the Royal Charter of 1662, how it was revered for playing that role, how it was lamented and mourned when it fell in 1856, and how objects made from its wood extended the reverence accorded to it well into the nineteenth century. The legend of the Charter Oak remained popular throughout the nineteenth Century and many images of the tree were painted, engraved and published. In 1856, shortly after the tree fell in a storm, Charles DeWolf Brownell painted what became, and continues to be, the definitive and most recognizable image of the Charter Oak, helping to reinforce the belief that the tree was the most important element in the story.

If we temporarily suspend our critical faculties and posit the truth of the legend, it becomes obvious that Joseph Wadsworth's pivotal role as the intrepid agent of a well-conceived and flawlessly-executed plan to preserve the colony's most important legal and political document has been overshadowed by the purely passive role of a basically ordinary oak tree that his action elevated to historical prominence as the temporary repository of that document. Yet Joseph Wadsworth, described by James Hammond Trumbull in 1886 as "the hero of the Charter," has become the Rodney Dangerfield of Connecticut history – he doesn't get any respect – or much recognition.

But, truth be known, Wadsworth has been depicted in the act of hiding the Charter by numerous artists from the

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1820s to the 1970s and there is a wider variety of visually compelling images of Wadsworth hiding the Charter in the tree than there are variations of views of the Charter Oak itself, given the definitive authority accorded Brownell's painting. But no one image of Wadsworth hiding the Charter in the tree has achieved the iconic status of Brownell's rendering of the tree and most, if not all of these images, created in a variety of media, remain largely unknown. While Brownell strove to create an accurate representation of an actual tree, the artists who rendered images of Wadsworth in the act of hiding the Charter were not bound by the necessity of more or less rendering the scene accurately. Whether they thought the event actually happened or it was a legend, they could let their artistic imagination roam, since there were no constraining eye-witness accounts of what Wadsworth was wearing, how he approached the tree or how he placed the Charter inside it. They were free to interpret either a real or legendary action whatever way they chose.

Each artist's rendering of Wadsworth hiding the Charter restores the element of human agency to the legend, perhaps counterbalancing a lingering vestige of tree-worship fostered by the overwhelming influence of Brownell's painting. The artists depicted Wadsworth in various garbs, some actually approximating historical accuracy, although that was never their first priority. Several artists depict the hero Wadsworth looking over his shoulder, perhaps realizing that, while his compatriots at Sanford's Tavern could claim to have no idea what happened to the Charter, he actually had it in his hand and would pay dearly if his removal of the Charter and his flight to the oak tree were detected.



Woodcut, from Historical Scenes in the United States, John Warner Barber (New Haven: Monson & Co., 1827)

The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT.

In what may be the first artist's rendering of one of the most significant events in Connecticut political history, an athletic Joseph Wadsworth, in 19<sup>th</sup>-century garb, hangs from a limb of the tree (although there is no indication how he got there) as he inserts the Charter into the hollow of the tree with his right hand. The structure at the right is undoubtedly intended to be the Wyllys mansion, although the other structures and landscape elements are indeterminate.

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*Preservation of the Charter of Connecticut*

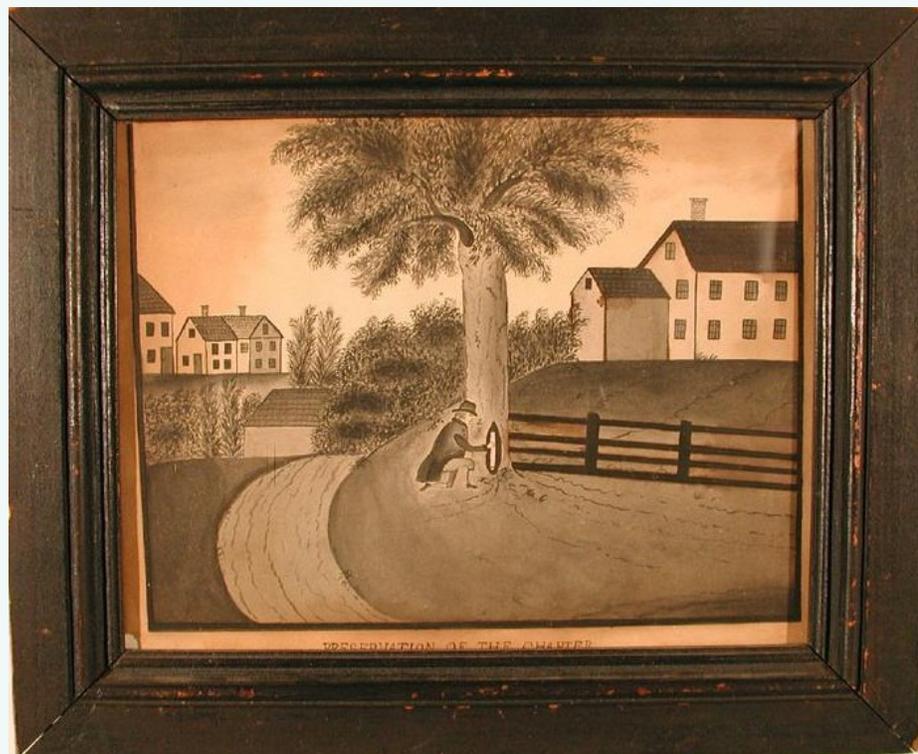
Woodcut, "Preservation of the Charter of Connecticut," from Interesting Events from the History of the United States," by John Warner Barber (New Haven, 1829)

The Connecticut State Library

Two years after depicting Wadsworth as hanging from the tree, Barber re-worked his woodcut, and placed him on one knee, inserting the Charter into a ground-level hollow.

"Preservation of the Charter," artist unknown, ink on paper, 1820-1840.

The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT.



This image is based upon Barber's 1829 version. While the exact genus of the tree may be uncertain, the focus of the drawing is clearly the Charter itself, accentuated against the darkness of the hollow. Although the legend states that the hiding of the Charter took place at night, this version seemingly depicts it as a day-time event.



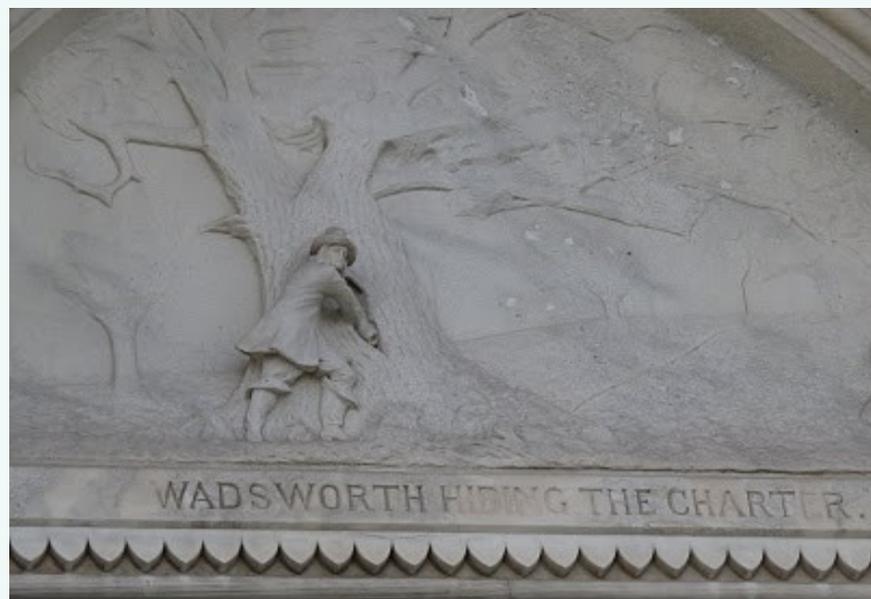
Trade card, "Connecticut," from the series "Pictorial History of the United States and Territories," lithographed by Donaldson Brothers, New York, NY, published by Arbuckle Brothers' Coffee Company, New York, NY, 1892.

Museum of Connecticut History

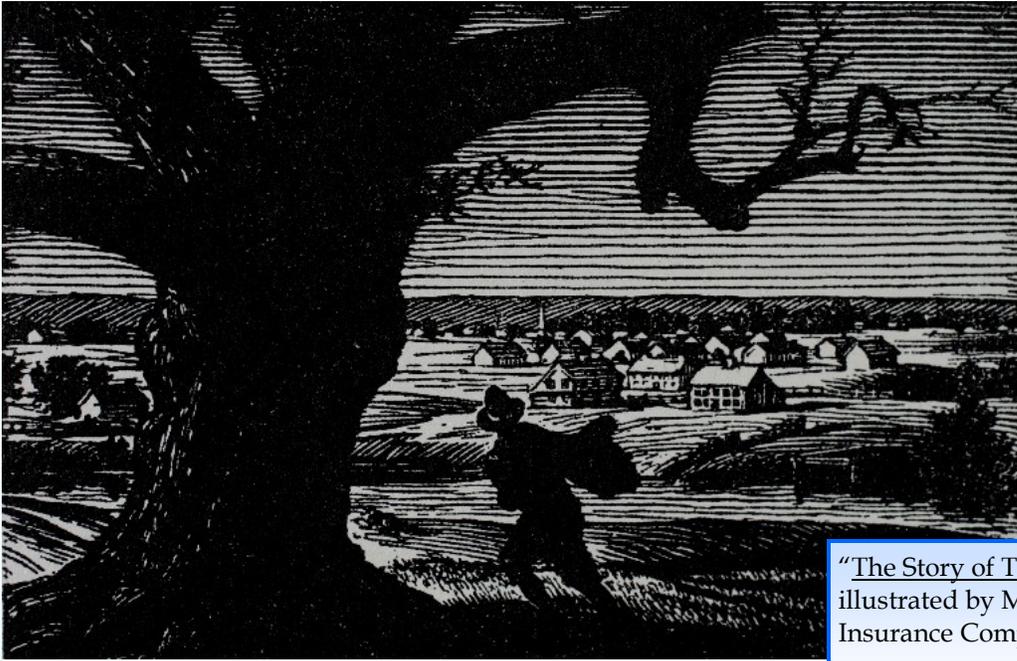
The Arbuckle Brothers' Coffee Co., which pioneered the roasting, grinding and bagging of coffee in small packages, allowing for the home brewing of coffee, produced several series of advertising cards that were included with the purchase of packages of their coffee. The "Connecticut" card depicted Captain Wadsworth in the garb of a French musketeer, complete with a plumed hat, a moustache and goatee. Also included were images of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch, Gov. Jonathan Trumbull, Sr. and scenes said to depict the defense of Stonington in 1814.

"Wadsworth Hiding the Charter," by Richard E. Brooks (1865-1919), Tympanum Sculpture, North Façade of the Connecticut State Capitol, 1915.

Museum of Connecticut History, Photograph by Gus Johnson.



Installed in 1915, Brooks' sculpture is the largest and most ambitious depiction of the hiding of the Charter. It is also the only state-sponsored and state-funded image of the event. Wadsworth is shown in the act of depositing the Charter, looking over his right shoulder, perhaps dreading the possibility that he had been followed.



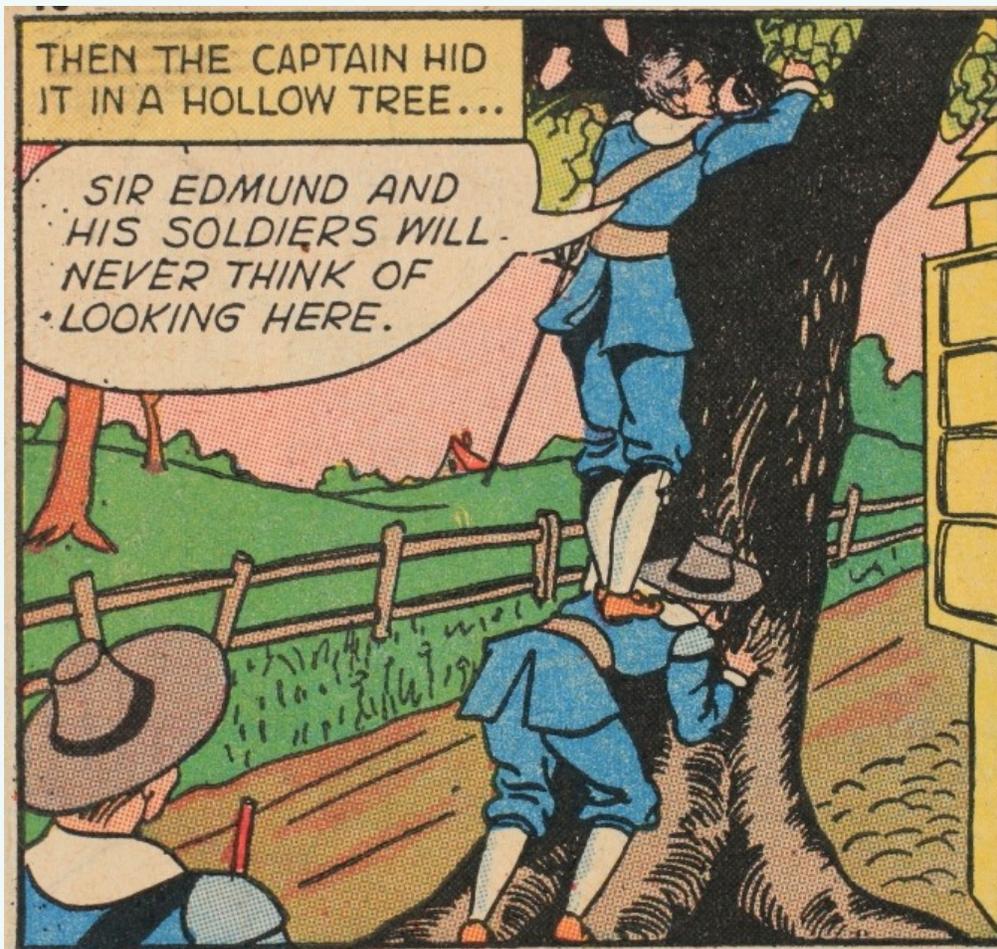
Morton C. Hansen depicted Captain Wadsworth approaching the tree, his cape billowing in the wind, as he looks back at the moon-bathed buildings across the Little River in Hartford. The soon-to-be Charter Oak dominates this dramatic scene, as Wadsworth looks back to Hartford, perhaps fearing that some of Edmund Andros' troops had detected his theft and subsequent trip to the Wyllys estate.

"The Story of The Charter Oak, by Colin Simkin, illustrated by Morton C. Hansen (The Charter Oak Fire Insurance Company, Hartford, CT, 1938).

Connecticut State Library

True Comics, published from 1941 to 1950, has been described as "a comic book and a newspaper combined." Comics historian Ron Goulart has stated that True Comics was started to "counteract the wild, rowdy superhero comics." Its stories portrayed historical events, discussed scientific discoveries, and profiled newsworthy and heroic individuals.

The panel depicting the hiding of the Charter injects a new element into the legend – it shows Wadsworth with two accomplices—one who assisted him by allowing Wadsworth to stand on his back to reach the hiding place and another who witnessed the historic event. All three are shown in vaguely Pilgrim uniform. Curiously, Wadsworth seems to be placing the unseen Charter in the crotch between two upper limbs of the tree, rather than in a hollow of the trunk.



"Charter Oak: How a Hollow Tree Helped Connecticut to Safeguard Her Liberties," True Comics, Vol. 1, 1941.

Museum of Connecticut History

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The Story of the Charter Oak of Hartford, by Elizabeth S. Moquin, illustrated by Clarence Hansen (Albert Lepper Printing Co., Hartford, CT), 1945.

Connecticut State Library



In Clarence Hansen's Disneyesque depiction, a rabbit and two squirrels are the only witnesses to Pilgrim-attired Captain Wadsworth's placing of the Charter into the tree, as he looks over his left shoulder, apparently to insure that there were no human witnesses to his deed.



Connecticut Medal, from National Governors' Conference Official Statehood Medals, The Franklin Mint, 1974.

Connecticut State Archives

In this version, Wadsworth is shown depositing the Charter in the tree with his left hand while holding a lantern in his right hand. A departure from earlier depictions in which Wadsworth was shown furtively approaching the tree, looking over his shoulder to see if he had been followed, this bolder Wadsworth's use of the lantern seems to indicate a lack of concern over being discovered.

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Commemorative Medal, "Connecticut Officials Hide Charter in Oak Tree, 1687," from the Official History of Colonial America, The Franklin Mint, 1976-77.

Museum of Connecticut History

As part of the nation's Bicentennial celebration, the Franklin Mint produced a series of fifty commemorative medals, depicting historic scenes from the history of the original thirteen colonies. Their depiction of the Hiding of the Charter is reminiscent of both the Brooks' 1915 depiction of the event on the north side of the State Capitol and Morton Hansen's 1938 image of a caped Wadsworth, although the tree shown here is fully-leaved.



First Day Cover, "Ruth Haynes Wyllys and the Charter Oak," from Women's History Series by National Organization of Women—New York, 1978.

Museum of Connecticut History

The introduction of Ruth Haynes Wyllys into the story of the hiding of the Charter began with William H. Gocher's odd book Wadsworth, or The Charter Oak, published in Hartford in 1904. (For a fuller description of this book, see the next article by Bonnie Linck.) Ruth Haynes Wyllys was the daughter of Connecticut's first Governor, John Haynes and the wife of Samuel Wyllys, on whose property the oak tree stood. Gocher wrote that Wadsworth snatched the Charter off the table and ran to the Wyllys mansion, where he encountered Ruth Wyllys, who suggested that he hide the Charter in the oak tree.

The National Organization of Women's image depicts Ruth Wyllys indicating to Wadsworth where he should place the Charter, and the accompanying explanation makes the claim that "...she conceived a daring plan to hide the beloved charter..." apparently convincing Wadsworth to assist her. While the True Comics version of the hiding provided a twist on the story, giving Wadsworth two accomplices, this version of the story turns it on its head and makes Wadsworth the accomplice.

The author would like to thank Nancy Finlay, Diana Ross McCain and Rich Malley of the Connecticut Historical Society for their persistence in locating early images of Wadsworth hiding the Charter.

## *Gocher and the Charter Oak: Fact or Fiction?*

by Bonnie Linck, History & Genealogy Reference Librarian

### A Packed Meeting

The best men in the Colony of Connecticut packed the upper room of the Sanford Inn in Hartford on that early November evening in 1687. There by candlelight they argued passionately, one after the other, to persuade Gov. Andros to allow them to keep their Charter, obtained with great cost of life and fortune. Andros was unmoved, and would soon confiscate the Charter.

Finally, Andrew Leete of New Haven, an epileptic, spoke. He became so upset that he had a seizure, falling forward onto the table holding the Charter, knocking the candles over. Confusion followed. The candles were re-lit, but the Charter was gone, handed through a supply door in the wall of the chamber to Jeremiah Wadsworth, who was waiting on the outside stairs.



**Wyllys Mansion & Charter Oak [Sketch from ?1800s]  
CSL / PG420 Taylor Coll. of Early Hartford Photos, Box 2, #295**

Wadsworth took the Charter to the Samuel Wyllys home just across the nearby Little River. Mr. Wyllys was away on business. Mrs. Wyllys and Wadsworth put the document in a leather pouch and hid it in a great oak on the property, in a hollow the size of a small child. They placed the family dog, Lion, in front of the hole. Wadsworth fled to Simsbury, there secluding himself in the safety of King Phillip's Cave for two weeks.

Gov. Andros still took over the government of the Connecticut Colony. The Charter secretly went down to New Haven, where it stayed hidden until Andros was deposed in 1688 and Connecticut regained its self-government.

### Special Documents

So goes the story of the stealing of the Charter, as told by William Gocher in his book, *Wadsworth or the Charter Oak* (1904). What makes this version different from any other is that Gocher claims it came from a manuscript handed down in the family of Jeremiah Wadsworth, the man who stole the Charter. It appears in the book as a first-person account.

A first-person account? Were this claim true, it would be amazing. No written contemporary record of the event has ever been found. And in Wadsworth's own words? Is it real? Or not? How did Gocher find it? Historians have scoffed at this narrative since it first came out. Was Gocher trying to perpetrate a fraud?

### The Newspaperman

To answer these questions, let us take a look at William Gocher, a newspaperman who, in many ways, was larger than life.

Born in Canada about 1864, William Gocher migrated to Chicago by the 1880s and was the editor of *The Chicago*

*Horseman*, a sports newspaper. By the late 1880s, he had moved to Cleveland, Ohio and was the editor and part-owner of *The American Sportsman*, again a sports newspaper.

Gocher had a special interest, however, and that was harness racing, or the racing of trotters. He faithfully recorded what trotters were running, their owners and breeders, and their times. He even wrote an authoritative book in the early 1890s on the trotters with the best times. So involved was he in the trotting race world that the American Trotting Association Board elected him its national secretary in 1895. In that same year, he became an American citizen.

In December of 1895, Gocher sold his share of *The American Sportsman* to his partner. Early in 1896, he was off to Hartford, Connecticut, where a racing revival was taking place.

The Charter Oak Racing Track in Hartford, Connecticut was built in 1871-1872. It had many good years, and was frequented by governors of the state and men of note in the community. But by 1895 it was in a run-down condition. New management came in and focused on revitalizing the racing park.

We may speculate that perhaps that is why William Gocher came to Hartford: to put the weight of the American Trotting Association behind the resurrection of the racing park. The new management redid the race track and stands, fixed and painted existing fences, added more attractive fences, did landscaping, and, as a further touch, placed benches next to the flower beds outside the racetrack, so the ladies would have places to rest. The remodeling was a success, and the park was popular once again.

When Gocher came to Hartford, a notable witness of his character appeared in the *Hartford Courant*. This witness is important because it speaks to his honesty, an important element in considering his book:

“... Will Gocher is an aggressive man, a natural fighter, and one who is prone to tell the truth no matter at what cost,...  
“ (”Secretary Gocher. Allen Lowe Gives Him A Good Word”. *Hartford Courant*, Jan. 2, 1896, p. 5.)

### Gocher Meets the Charter Oak Legend

Gocher’s coming to a race track named after the Charter Oak would connect him almost immediately with stories about the incident, surely told by the locals. His timing in coming to Hartford, early in 1896, would give him further easy access to the full legend. For it was in the July 1896 *Geer’s Hartford City Directory*, the directory in which Gocher first appears, that there is a recounting of the famous event (p. 624). City directories in 1896 being vital tools for businessmen, was this where Gocher first read of the treasured Connecticut tree?

His interest in the Charter Oak grew with time, Gocher tells us:

“ The Charter Oak incident has always ... had a peculiar fascination for the writer, possibly because it was a little out of the ordinary... . After becoming a resident of Hartford I made an effort to learn all the details, historical and legendary, in connection with it and the people who took part in the exploit which gave the tree a place in American history.” (*Wadsworth or the Charter Oak*, p.43 ,”Introduction”)

His newspaperman’s curiosity pushed him to know more. He looked up all he could on the subject at the Connecticut Historical Society. Then, he decided to visit Daniel Wadsworth, who lived in the former Wadsworth Inn, at the corner of Albany and Prospect Avenues, on the western edge of Hartford. Daniel Wadsworth was a many-times great-grandson of Jeremiah Wadsworth, the hero credited with stealing the Charter.

Daniel Wadsworth told Gocher he had heard his father and aunt speak many times of an old box of papers in the attic, but he had never seen it. He did locate it, and invited Gocher to come and get it:

“The find proved a time stained box made of inch pine boards fastened together with hand made nails. When found the cover was pushed to one side and many of the papers on the top were torn, while the edges of others were frayed

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... by mice . . . In this box I found scores of letters, accounts, and notes of all sizes and descriptions... ." (*Wadsworth or the Charter Oak*, pp 45–46,"Introduction")

The documents were from the times of colonial Connecticut to the days of its statehood. At the bottom of the box, he found a packet of brittle papers, tied with what appeared to be a deer sinew. The papers in that packet became the basis for Gocher's book.

### The Book

*Wadsworth or the Charter Oak* (1904) contains accounts of various events in colonial New England and the Colony of Connecticut. The section of most interest is "Hiding the Charter", the 100-plus pages that seem to be an account written by Jeremiah Wadsworth. There are footnotes and photos throughout the book, but not as many in the "Hiding the Charter" section, and no photos of the manuscript pages on which that section is based.

The supposedly first-person narrative runs into problems when it sometimes strays into a novel-like style, confusing the reader. Said one reviewer, not long after the book came out:

...It [the book] contains all ascertainable information about the hiding of the Colonial charter in the famous oak by Captain Joseph Wadsworth. The story is told in the form of a personal narrative by the hero of the tale. ... The story form in which the work is cast is apt to leave the reader rather uncertain as to whether it is fact or fiction. ..." "New Books at the City Library", *Springfield Republican* July 7, 1905 p. 11 (Early American Newspapers Online)

This "fact or fiction" problem has plagued the "Hiding the Charter" section since the book's publication. Historians and other reviewers have been very skeptical, even deriding the book. It looked like Gocher was making it all up and trying to pass it off as being from the pen of Jeremiah Wadsworth himself.

Then, there must have been the thought by some that Gocher was an outsider, not Connecticut-born, or even New England-born. Was he trying to impress some of the politicians and businessmen who came to the race track? Work his way up in Hartford society? What were we to make of these unusual pages ?



**Wadsworth Tavern, Albany Avenue  
CSL / PG420 Taylor Coll. of Early Hartford Photos,  
Box 2, #361**

### Making the Best of Things

To this day, there are raised eyebrows when Gocher's book is mentioned. It is seen as a version of the Charter Oak story that cannot possibly be what it purports to be. Yet some things about it are worth a deeper look, and will help us to understand what Gocher really did.

The structure of the book is somewhat deceptive, as what is titled "Introduction" is actually a first chapter of forty-eight pages. Many people, this writer included, are not prone to read introductions right away, especially lengthy ones. Introductions often include musings and lengthy acknowledgements. We want to get to the heart of the book, especially when it possibly contains a first-person account by Jeremiah Wadsworth.

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However, the "Introduction" in *Wadsworth or the Charter Oak* provides essential keys to understanding the section called "Hiding the Charter". It is in the Introduction that we find out what the packet of papers that Gocher found in the old box at Daniel Wadsworth's home was really like, and what he had to work with in writing the book:

"Upon examining the papers I found the material from which the following sketches were written. Whether they are fact or fancy, and my impression is that there is a little of both, must remain in doubt until another discovery of similar nature. Those who have read them are of the opinion that the material present is the basis of the Wadsworth family legends, which have been handed down from one generation to another..." (*Wadsworth or the Charter Oak*, p. 46 "Introduction".)

Gocher, as the Hartford Courant article of 1896 stated, was "prone to tell the truth no matter at what cost". He did it in the Introduction, but in a diplomatic way, making only a very vague comment on what the Wadsworth family papers were like. In effect, he was protecting the Wadsworths from judgment or ridicule.

Those who smile at the "Hiding the Charter" section may not have really noticed Gocher's comments on the manuscript. He never meant that section to be taken as a verbatim account. But if we do not read the background, we are tempted to take it as that. A few pages later in the Introduction, Gocher again hints at the situation he faced with the papers that were found:

"Memory plays many pranks with history. Its products are attractive, but as a rule unreliable, as like a snowball on a warm day in winter, the volume increases with each revolution on the hill of time. Still it supplies the gloss and spangles used to dress statistical matter.... By blending fact and fancy it is possible to weave a narrative which entertains and at the same time instructs the reader. Those who believe it can; those who doubt it may;--so let it go at that. (*Wadsworth or the Charter Oak*, p. 48, "Introduction")

This hints that the manuscript pages were full of memory, and perhaps some fact. Gocher did what he could with them. Fiction had to fill in where fact was lacking.

William Gocher never wrote anything on the Charter Oak again. He continued work in the world of harness racing the rest of his life, writing hundreds of articles on it for the Hartford Courant in the coming decades. He was Secretary of the American Trotting Association, still living in Hartford, at his death on November 20, 1937.

### Learning of the Controversy

This writer, a history reference librarian, came upon the Gocher controversy through a reference question. A patron wanted to know where the Wadsworth manuscript was. The writer contacted various institutions in the Hartford area and in Connecticut, as well as looking at some online manuscript sources, but there was nothing. A search was made for living family, and two descendants were found. Neither one knew about the Wadsworth manuscript and very little of the book.

The whereabouts of what pages that may have existed is unknown. Gocher did have some unnamed people read them (see previous quote from p. 46 of "Introduction"), but does not state if he returned them to Wadsworth, kept them himself, or kept copies of them. The whereabouts of the draft copy of the book that was sent to the publisher is not known. Again, if readers do not realize that Gocher did show the pages to people, it can seem that the manuscript's existence is fictitious. This perhaps is another part of what has cast suspicion on the account in the book, adding to the controversy. Gocher never publicly replied to the implication that the manuscript was a fake.

### And in the End

Time, then, may have been too hard on Gocher. Using Wadsworth family lore recorded through the centuries, a mixture of fact and fiction, he did the best he could, and created an entertaining version of the stealing of the Charter. His creation was never meant to be taken as a totally true first-person account, but human nature too often wants to skip the background and go right to the story. We believe what we want to believe. Or, as Gocher

*Continued on next page*

said:

“Those who believe it can; those who doubt it may;--so let it go at that.” (*Wadsworth or the Charter Oak*, p. 48, “Introduction”)

### Fun Facts About the Charter

1. There were actually three copies of the Charter of 1662: one for the English records office, and two to be taken back to the colonies. The two are considered copies of each other. When they were made, one was considered to be exactly the same as the other. One is now at the Connecticut State Library and the other is at the Connecticut Historical Society.
2. Over the years, the second copy of the Charter was lost. In 1818, the story goes, a woman needed some stiff paper to make a pattern for a bonnet. Her neighbor, Mrs. Wyllys, sent her a large piece of old parchment. As she began to cut out the pattern, one of the neighbor's boarders, a young man, happened to come through the room. Interested, he looked at the paper, which had writing on one side. It was the missing Charter. It is now at the Connecticut Historical Society and is known as the “Bonnet Charter”.
3. The phrase “stealing the Charter” ignores the probability that most likely both copies of the Charter were on the table at the meeting with Andros.
4. Stealing the Charter(s) was no easy task. Each Connecticut copy of the Charter originally consisted of two separate sheets of parchment, each about three feet by thirty inches. The most efficient way might be to wrap the documents around one's waist. There was a kind of very loose thigh-length coat that was in style at the time, that would be perfect for the job.
5. John Winthrop, Jr. was a consummate diplomat. It was through his court connections that Connecticut received a charter that was, by the standards of the time, very generous.
6. Legend has it that John Winthrop, Sr. gave his son, John Winthrop Jr., a ring he received from Charles I. John Winthrop presented that ring to Charles II when negotiating for the Charter. It moved Charles II greatly to have a souvenir of his father, who was executed by Cromwell. Charles II himself was forced to spend many years in exile and poverty. The gift of the ring supposedly inclined Charles II to be more generous with Connecticut.
7. The word “Howard” at the bottom of the Charter is the name of the man who hand-wrote all three copies.
8. There is controversy as to whether the meeting with Gov. Andros was held in the upper room of the Sanford Inn or in the Meeting House in the center of town. As the Meeting House had no fireplace, the gathering may well have been in the warmer upper room of the Sanford Inn. There are arguments for each location.

## Connecticut Forum on Digital Initiatives by Christine Pittsley, Digital Collections Technician

Connecticut may be a small state, but we are rich with institutions and organizations dedicated to preserving our history. This was especially evident on October 22, 2012 when the Connecticut State Library hosted its second Connecticut Forum on Digital Initiatives. This year's event was held at the Legislative Office Building and built on the success of last year.



showcased an amazing group of speakers, starting with Trevor Owens, a Digital Archivist at the Library of Congress, who gave the keynote titled "Doing Less More Often: An Approach to Digital Strategy for Cultural Heritage Organizations". Closing

tools. We heard from Elisha Alkazin, a student at Central Connecticut State University about the power of internships within the library, archives and museum community and from Stacie Parillo, from the Newport Historical Society, who inspired us with their new mobile app.

The greatest achievement of this Forum is the increased

The Forum was designed as a means to gather the multitude of libraries, archives, museums and academic institutions as well as other cultural heritage sector organizations within the state to talk about our shared digital future. This Forum is unique in that it gives these various groups, who normally have few chances to interact, an opportunity to discuss the common challenges we each face as well as encouraging collaboration and idea sharing. This year's event



the event was Greg Colati, Senior Director, University Archives, Special Collections and Digital Curation, University of



Connecticut who spoke about preserving Connecticut's digital heritage. Other speakers covered topics such as open source tools to present content, intellectual property, color standards and Linked Open Data.

communication and collaboration between libraries, archives, museums and academic institutions. A Google Group called CT Digital Projects was created to continue

Our attendees were just as integral in making the day a success were the Forum participants. Attendees this year came from diverse institutions like the Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center, Totoket Historical Society, Prosser Public Library and the Coast Guard

the conversation started at the Forum. Cards were exchanged and emails followed with ideas for projects, suggestions for tools and advice for moving forward. The Forum was a great success because of the knowledgeable speakers, diverse audience and the hard work of the Connecticut State Library staff. We look forward to making next year even better!



Academy. One of the highlights of the Forum are the micro-presentations, where the attendees have two minutes to come up and tell the audience about their project, ideas or



## Federal Art Project Exhibition Opens at Mattatuck Museum

by State Archivist Mark Jones

What did John Steuart Curry, James Dougherty, Stephen Jerome Hoxie, Irving Katzenstein, Mischa Richter and Blanche Waterbury have in common? All were in Connecticut in the Great Depression and all worked for the Federal Art Project (FAP) of the New Deal's Works Projects Administration (WPA). It is rare to see WPA art gathered in one gallery, but on September 13<sup>th</sup>, an exhibit, "Art for Everyone: the Federal Art Project in Connecticut," opened to a receptive audience. The Connecticut Humanities Council assisted the Mattatuck through a grant.



**Opening Night, September 13, 2012, "Art for Everyone: the Federal Art Project in Connecticut," Whittemore Gallery, Mattatuck Historical Museum. Left to right, Debbie Edwards, Amy Trout, Mark Jones, and Cynthia Roznoy standing in front of "Westport WPA Art Committee" by Ralph Boyer. Courtesy of the Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury.**

The exhibit began as an article by Amy Trout of the Essex River Museum, who worked for the New Haven Museum and put together an exhibit of New Deal Art in New Haven. With funds from the General Assembly, the Connecticut State Library, which holds the records of the Connecticut FAP in its State Archives, began a WPA Art Inventory by developing a list of the known 170 artists hired by the FAP and their works. (The list can be seen at <http://wpa.cslib.org>.) The Library also scanned around 1,300 black and white photographs taken of art during the period and put together biographical files of most of the artists. Debbie Edwards, working for the Museum, used the FAP records to seek out FAP art work that still exists. She traveled around the state and spoke with countless individuals, schools, libraries and museums and art galleries. The Mattatuck Museum became the headquarters of this search and along with the State Library, jointly planned the exhibit which opened on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

A team of four, Cynthia Roznoy, Exhibitions Curator at the Mattatuck, Edwards, Trout and State Archivist Mark Jones of the Connecticut State Library, were the primary planners of the exhibit, and on opening night, participated in a panel discussion about the project and the FAP. Several questions came from the audience for the panel to answer. Of course, the art was the main interest. Very rarely has so much of Connecticut FAP art been gathered in one place.

The exhibit will be up until February 5, 2013, when part of it will travel to the Fairfield Museum. Next year the Mattatuck Museum will publish through the Wesleyan University Press a book of essays on the FAP in Connecticut and the artists who took part in it.

For more information, go to <http://www.mattatuckmuseum.org/changing>.

## Lillian Grant, 1900–1991, by History & Genealogy Librarian Carol Ganz

On June 22, 1900, Walton W. Grant and his wife Gertrude welcomed baby Lillian Gertrude, their third daughter born in three years, to their home in Manchester, Connecticut. Toddlers Edith, age one, and Estella, age two, along with a new baby, must have made it a busy household. In the fall of 1904, however, Edith died, followed the next July by Estella, “after a short illness with typhoid fever.” Lillian was left alone with her parents, and she stayed close to them, always living in the family home, for the rest of their lives. This does not mean that she was shy and withdrawn. On the contrary, Lillian was outgoing and fun-loving, with a theatrical flair. She tackled three overlapping careers with confidence and notable success.

For a time, Walton rented a farm in South Windsor, but about 1910 he made a career change and started a real estate office in Hartford that would thrive and provide employment for him and eventually Lillian for several decades. For most of those years he commuted from Manchester to his Hartford office, but also maintained a small home office in their house at 22 Cambridge Street.



**Grant and Unidentified woman, North End of State Library Building, (undated) State Capitol in background. From State Archives Collections.**

By the time Lillian was hired as secretary to State Librarian George Godard in about 1923, she had graduated from Manchester High School (Secretary of the Class of 1918) and Lasell Junior College in Newton, Massachusetts, and held a brief job as a stenographer for a business on Main Street in Hartford. She plunged into social activities enthusiastically and frequently found opportunities to perform in dramatic productions, often humorous ones. When in 1924 the Business and Professional Women’s Club entertainment committee produced a musical comedy called “Omelet and Oatmelia” (a parody of *Hamlet*), Lillian portrayed “the Ghost.” She became corresponding secretary of that organization and secretary and treasurer of her alumni group, the Connecticut Valley Lasell Club. At the Connecticut State Library she quickly joined the Ex Libris Club and by 1925 was President.

Lillian must have had a serious side as well, because Mr. Godard respected her abilities and gave her considerable responsibility. When he was in, she had the opportunity to greet a stream of dignitaries, as well as keeping up with preparing his letters, filing, organizing and handing out the paychecks. Although she liked to complain about her “straight-back chair,” the view from that chair must have been very interesting. When he was away, he expected her to carry on and supervise others, even cover for him at speaking engagements. The State Librarian was not the only one who counted on her. When Lillian, “who is not supposed to be absent or sick,” was out for a week with the flu, “the office was like home without mother.” (*State Library Echo*, 1929)

In December 1934, George Godard was admitted to Hartford Hospital with an infected toe. As time dragged on and he remained confined, his room became a temporary office, and he continued correspondence, dictation and phone calls to stay on top of things. Lillian Grant and others kept him informed and kept the office running. The infection remained stubborn and in March he had surgery to remove his leg. By mid-April he was home and anxious to get back to work, and soon resumed his duties. In July 1935 the Connecticut State Library Committee voted to create and fill the position of Assistant State Librarian and Godard recommended the appointment of James Brewster for the post. He was inducted in October.

George Godard had a stroke on January 13, 1936, and died in February. Two weeks later Lillian wrote to Governor Cross, suggesting it would be most appropriate for the State Library Committee to announce the death of George Seymour Godard, State Librarian, and the appointment of James Brewster as acting State Librarian

*Continued on next page*

(which they had already done). She included a card edged in black already made up with that announcement. Picking up unfinished projects or research and correspondence she found in Godard's office, she did what she could to complete them. When the Governor's office received a request for a paving stone for a commemorative project in New Jersey, Lillian was informed that her boss had always taken care of such requests. She arranged for an appropriate piece of flagstone to be sent. She corresponded with the Navy and others as "Secretary to the Acting State Librarian."



**CSL Banquet - Front Hall, Mr. Godard's 30th Anniversary as State Librarian - 20th Anniversary of Bldg. Dinner Nov. 28, 1930. From State Archives Collections.**

By the end of June, the State Library Committee had not yet appointed James Brewster to the position of State Librarian. When at their June 30 meeting they chose to hold Mr. Brewster's appointment "in abeyance," Lillian took it upon herself to write a lengthy letter to Governor Cross. She reminded him that his friend, George Seymour Godard, had carefully selected James Brewster as Assistant State Librarian and "ultimately - as his successor" and that the committee had acted unanimously in appointing him Assistant State Librarian. Now, for apparently unknown reasons, they were reluctant to finalize his promotion. "This decision leaves the library staff without a plausible explanation to give to interested inquirers, or without the necessary information with which to quell the idle gossip which has already started as a natural consequence of such a postponement." Listing the candidate's qualifications, and pointing out the enthusiasm of the department heads for his

approach to the job, she finished by mentioning diplomatically that she was pleased to "again have the honor of being on the program with you on the Fourth of July morning at the State Capitol." Her letter caused a stir when the Governor forwarded copies to the State Library Committee and the Secretary of State, but it was not until December 15 that the Committee completed the appointment. The Governor made it official immediately, and Lillian fired off a letter the next day thanking him for making so many people happy, especially the "library family."

The December 1936 State Library holiday party honored the new State Librarian James Brewster. "Entertainment consisted of readings by Miss Lillian Grant and impersonations, sleight of hand and banjo playing by Wallace the entertainer."

Lillian was active in the social life of the library from the start. She joined the Ex Libris Club and soon promoted the idea of a publication. Issue #1 of "The Echo" (April 1925) proclaims, "Greetings from the "State Library Echo" to all Connecticut State Library folks, young and old, thin and fat, past and present! This outburst of the Ex Libris Club into print comes as the result of a suggestion of the club's president, Lillian G. Grant." Although on the masthead as "ex officio," she was the one who did the final typing of the manuscript Echoes for printing. When she was no longer President, she was sometimes listed as associate editor, or handled other facets of the publication.

From the Echo we learn that she was a decent bowler, played the banjo and the tenor lute, rode to work in a Buick, carried an extremely large lunch box, occasionally vacationed in New Hampshire and could sometimes be heard to say, "Just a minute...just a minute..." Meanwhile, Lillian's reputation as an entertainer had grown from performing at dinners for the Echo staff to serious study.

By 1928 Lillian was a student of Miss Coe's School of Oratory. At the annual recital, according to an item in



**"Rev. Heza Hitcher" as he appeared at Mary Godard's Shower, November 8, 1926. Follow [www.cslib.org/connector/Dec\\_1926EchoP3.pdf](http://www.cslib.org/connector/Dec_1926EchoP3.pdf) to link to the Echo article. From State Archives Collections.**

the Echo, "she easily carried off the honors of the evening as well as most of the flowers." Miss Coe, by that time Mrs. Clara Coe Bryne, had been teaching oratory and expression since before Lillian was born and acted as advisor, friend and teacher to her many pupils. The *Hartford Courant* gave notice in two separate issues of the upcoming recital when Lillian graduated in 1930 and a large crowd attended. "Miss Grant, a student at Miss Coe's School of Oratory, will be presented in her graduation recital Monday evening at 8:15 o'clock in Center Church house ... Those assisting Miss Grant will be Mr. Frederick W. Schlatter, violinist, Mr. Albert F. Schlatter, tenor, Mr. Ralph E. Schlatter, bass, and Mr. F. Albert White, accompanist." Albert was another library staff member and apparently a close friend of Lillian's. The February 1930 Echo reported in greater detail. "Our Lillian's Graduation" describes the recitations and ceremony at the Center Church House, with about 550 guests. "One piece, entitled 'Rosalind's Surrender' impressed us very much. For this number Lillian wore a special costume of the period of 1865 designed and made by Ruth Holmes [another CSL staff member]. Lillian not only can recite but also composes. Her 'own' composition was entitled 'Aunt Cecilia loses her false teeth.' It brought down the house."

A year later, Lillian and others presented a "living edition" of the Echo at the Ex Libris Club nineteenth anniversary, for guests of honor Mr. and Mrs. Godard and Judge and Mrs. William Maltbie. Lillian was frequently called upon to provide entertainment for organizations throughout the region in the form of dramatic readings both comic and serious, and began reading the Declaration of Independence for the annual Fourth of July celebration at the Capitol building.

When Miss Coe died in 1933, Lillian wrote a lengthy tribute to her in the *Hartford Courant*, citing Miss Coe's emphasis on genuineness, naturalness and simplicity. Lillian had been the last pupil to receive a diploma from the school, and she soon took up the mantle of teaching. The 1935 *Greater Hartford Directory* lists her as both secretary to the State Librarian and teacher of expression at 721 Main Street and in 1936 the Lillian Grant Expression Club was meeting at her home in Manchester. Her advertisement in a 1938 *Hartford Courant* read:

#### LILLIAN GERTRUDE GRANT

Dramatic Reader and Teacher of Expression

Announces the reopening of her Hartford and Manchester Studios, October 3, 1938, for special training in THE ART OF THE SPOKEN WORD through Body Technique, Conversation, Diction, Grammar, Literary Interpretation, Personality, Phonetics, Poise, Vocabulary, Voice Culture leading to Monologue Presentation, Play Reading, Lecturing, and other forms of Public Speaking. Private lessons with elective group work in the Expression Club.

The studios were at 721 Main Street in Hartford and at her home on Cambridge Street in Manchester. She continued both jobs, teaching expression or elocution while serving as Secretary to the State Librarian, and frequently performing dramatic readings around the region, for over a decade.

By 1950 Walton Grant, then about eighty years old and widowed, was still running his agency on Main Street, and Lillian left the State Library to help as an office manager and sales associate. She moved her elocution classes to the real estate office at 647 Main Street. When Walton gave up the Hartford office and moved his business to Manchester, closer to home, Lillian continued her classes in Hartford a while, but after her father's

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death in 1957 she concentrated on the real estate business, running the office on East Center Street in Manchester. As usual she threw herself into the work, and was soon elected President of the Manchester Board of Realtors. The January 1961 announcement stated that "Miss Grant is an honorary life member of the Real Estate Board of Hartford, Inc., and also a member of the Women's Council of the National Assn. of Real Estate Boards and of the National Institute of Real Estate Brokers." She was chosen the Manchester Board's "Realtor of the Year" in 1967.

Like her father, Lillian kept the business going until at least age eighty, then she retired, continuing activities at the Manchester Historical Society and Center Congregational Church in Manchester. Lillian Gertrude Grant died February 20, 1991, age 90, after a long life serving and entertaining the people of the Hartford area and making a success of three distinct careers.

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### ***New Director of the Division of Library Development by State Librarian Kendall Wiggin***

Connecticut State Librarian Kendall Wiggin has appointed Dawn La Valle of Brookfield to serve as the Director of Library Development. Dawn's first day was September 21.

For the past two years La Valle has served as the Assistant Director for Administrative Services at the Fairfield (CT) Public Library. She previously worked at the White Plains Public Library.

"The State Library plays an important supportive role in helping libraries remain relevant and instrumental to their communities at a time of rapidly changing community, demographic, economic and information needs," Wiggin said. "The State Library is also a leader in the development of library service statewide. Dawn La Valle has a solid background in librarianship and administration, coupled with a strong belief in community outreach. She is passionate about libraries and an enthusiastic advocate."

"I am honored and pleased to have been selected for this important position," La Valle said. "This position provides me an opportunity to work with libraries statewide in a time of great change."

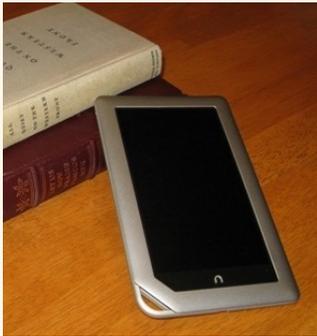


She continued, "Connecticut's libraries and library leaders are some of the best in the country. I look forward to visiting libraries and meeting with and hearing from librarians, trustees, and friends in the weeks and months ahead."

La Valle holds an MLS from the Palmer School at Long Island University with a Certificate in Archives and Records Management. She has a Master of Science in Secondary Education and a Master of Arts in Political Science, both from C.W. Post.

*E-Book Task Force Releases White Paper*

by Tom Newman, Library Specialist, Division of Library Development



In August 2011, the Connecticut State Library's Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development (ACLPD) created an e-book task force charged with examining library practices and license agreements, exploring

issues of e-book compliance with Connecticut regulations, investigating the possibility of a state-wide e-book cooperative, and generating some best practice recommendations for Connecticut libraries looking to purchase e-book content. The task force, made up of individuals from a range of libraries in Connecticut released its white paper recently.

The task force met during the fall, winter, and spring with e-book vendors, library personnel, and other organizations seeking solutions to library e-book challenges. Here is a summary of some of the task force's findings and recommendations:

**Connecticard.** Current licensing models do not provide a C-card-compatible solution for e-books, and libraries should not be required to lend them to non-residents.

E-book reading devices, however, should be lent to non-residents as any other physical library material.

**Vendors.** The task force recommends libraries evaluate e-book vendors carefully, but provides no specific vendor evaluations other than to suggest:

- a careful reading of all licensing agreements,
- short contract periods,
- collective purchasing when available,
- consideration of user interface, staff ease-of-use, device compatibility,
- understanding and evaluating the needs of your own users before acting.

**Ownership.** Licensing agreements trump copyright, and many of the benefits that libraries have enjoyed under first-sale doctrine do not apply to e-books. While vendors may promise ownership, it is the

publisher who grants it. Vendors can facilitate access to purchased e-books by helping a library work with each publisher should the library choose to move to a new e-book vendor.

**Publishers.** Though libraries are offering publishers the benefit of providing "discovery" (as they always have with physical books), publishers seem more concerned that there be enough "friction" so that the borrowing of library e-books does not dissuade individuals from purchasing e-books.

**Privacy.** Because library e-books are mediated by third parties, librarians must make their users aware that the library's stance on privacy may not be applied to the e-reading experience.

**Accessibility.** Though e-book readers should be a boon to accessibility, this promise has not yet been realized and vendors are still working on making devices more accessible.

**Equity of Access.** Connecticut residents enjoy some equity of access to physical library materials, thanks in part to the Connecticard program and the Connecticut service provided by the State Library. No such equity is ensured for current and future e-book collections in libraries. Therefore, the task force recommends that the State Library pursue funding to subsidize e-book collections throughout the state or to build a state-wide collection, preferably one that is developed and controlled by the State Library.

**State-wide E-book Collection.** The task force does not recommend the pursuit of one state-wide e-book vendor at this time. State networks already offer collective purchasing of vendor-specific e-book collections. The task force is more interested in a vendor-agnostic, library-driven solution at the state level. The task force endorses the State Library's partnership with Library Renewal, a non-profit organization seeking to create a new infrastructure for e-book purchasing and delivery for libraries.

A complete version of the [E-Book Task Force White Paper](#) is now available on the WebJunction Connecticut website. The task force will continue its work into FY2013.

## Staff Profile: Ruth Shapleigh-Brown, Law & Legislative Reference Office Assistant

[The following article is reprinted from the Spring 2012 FOSA (Friends of the State Archeologists) Newsletter; written by Ken Beatrice.]

### Volunteer Profile

Ruth Shapleigh-Brown is the founder and executive director of the Connecticut Gravestone Network. Her interest in cemeteries started with work on her family cemetery in Maine when she became President of the Shapleigh Family Association. During the 1980s, she went to her first Association for the Gravestones Studies Conference and was impressed with all there was to learn. "It was combining my interest in art, history, and archaeology, and being a detective all in one," states Ruthie.

After meeting John Spaulding and his wife Betty at a workshop at the Center Cemetery in East Hartford, Ruthie acknowledges, "It was during that time that the idea of the Gravestone Network started to form. The Network would have the objective of being an organization to help connect people and work on educating the public about protecting our historical burying grounds.

"My first experience working with Dr. Bellantoni was the exhumation of Henry Obookiah in 1993. A group of his descendants arranged for the remains of Henry Obookiah to be returned to Hawaii. (See FOSA Newsletter, Fall 2007 at FOSA website <http://www.fosa-ct.org>). It was a great experience to see large green Ti leaves brought by his descendants from Hawaii and placed in each corner of the coffin in preparation for his journey back to Hawaii.

"I get people telling me all the time that I work in places that are 'evil' or 'scary.' Often I feel very peaceful when visiting most old burying grounds. I immediately feel I've entered an 'old' place that has untouched history all around me.

"One time I did have a most interesting experience. I had knelt down to read a stone when my friend called out to me. I turned to respond to her and rested my hand on a small low stone next to me. All at once I felt something yank at my ring on that hand that was resting just above the stone. My hand suddenly and very forcefully pulled down to the small stone. I instinctively pulled my hand away but when I turned, expecting to see a small animal nearby, I saw nothing. I put my hand once again over the same spot and quickly I sensed what felt like a strong magnetic type energy that once again pulled my hand, mainly my ring, quickly down to the stone. I pulled back and tried a third time. The happening was gone. It was very strange but I must say not for a moment did I ever feel negative about it. Nothing



was there and for those that think it might have been a magnetic fluke, my ring was a wide sterling silver band. A few minutes later, as I gathered up my things, my attention was drawn to a stone just a few feet away. It was for two children. I suddenly felt like I'd been the victim of some childish prank and found myself smiling as if I had almost met them.

"Ruthie has contributed her knowledge as a consultant and is a member of several organizations and associations. Among the projects that Ruthie has been a consultant were the following:

Construction of language and bill passage in New York City regarding the reparation of Historic Connecticut Gravestones, The National Registry listing of the Old South Burying Ground in Hartford, and works with Townships and Municipal leaders for cemetery boundary concerns when threatened by development.

The long list of organizations of which Ruthie is a member includes the Association for Gravestone Studies for which she served as a Board member and Conference Chairperson. She is also a member of the Connecticut League of Historical Organizations, the Ancient Burying Grounds Association, the Connecticut Professional Genealogists, and is an active member of FOSA.

Countless honors and accolades have been awarded to Ruthie. Included among the many are Connecticut General Assembly Citation, Community Service from the Faith Trumbull Award of the DAR Chapter Norwich, the Connecticut Culture and Tourism Commission Distinguished Advocates Award, National Society Daughters of Colonial War Service Award.

Ruthie has been a tremendous asset to Connecticut's Office of State Archaeology and to Connecticut's many Townships. Her valuable knowledge and experience cannot be measured but is eagerly and enthusiastically shared. Each year the Connecticut Gravestone Network presents a symposium open to the public. This event is devoted to all that encompasses caring for and protecting our historic burying places. The program consists of informative lectures and displays from various historic groups, including an exhibit presented by FOSA.

Sincere thanks to you, Ruthie, for your dedication and all that you do for our State.

*Ken Beatrice*

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**Staff Profile: Ruth Shapleigh–Brown**

In June of 2012 Ruth received the Harriet Forbes Award from the Association of Gravestone Studies, an international organization that fosters the education and preservation of old burial grounds and gravestones. The award is presented annually to a member that has showed outstanding interest in educating others about these historic artifacts.

The award dinner was part of a five day annual conference which was held in June at Monmouth University in New Jersey. This past conference included a variety of lectures from members representing several countries.

The Forbes Award is named after author and researcher Harriet Mariette Forbes who was a pioneer in the field of studying the trade and lives of early gravestone carvers. Ruth has been a member of AGS since 1986, serving on the board of directors for two terms and chairing the 1993 conference held at New London College in Connecticut. Ruth's award presentation included a power point program she shared with the group highlighting workshops held with various groups around the state and those touting old friends, memories of mentors no longer able to celebrate the day with her.

Ruth initially got involved because of concerns about protecting the history of her ancestors gravesites in Maine and since the early 90s has been a leader in the efforts to educate and work with all areas of early cemetery history from studying local colonial stone carvers with mentors like Dr. James A. Slater to working with our the state archeologist Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni in protecting these fragile sanctuaries of our past. Ruth founded Connecticut Gravestone Network in 1994 and has since that time been doing lectures and programs around the state for local groups, historical societies and family associations as well as working with several Hartford cemetery organizations.

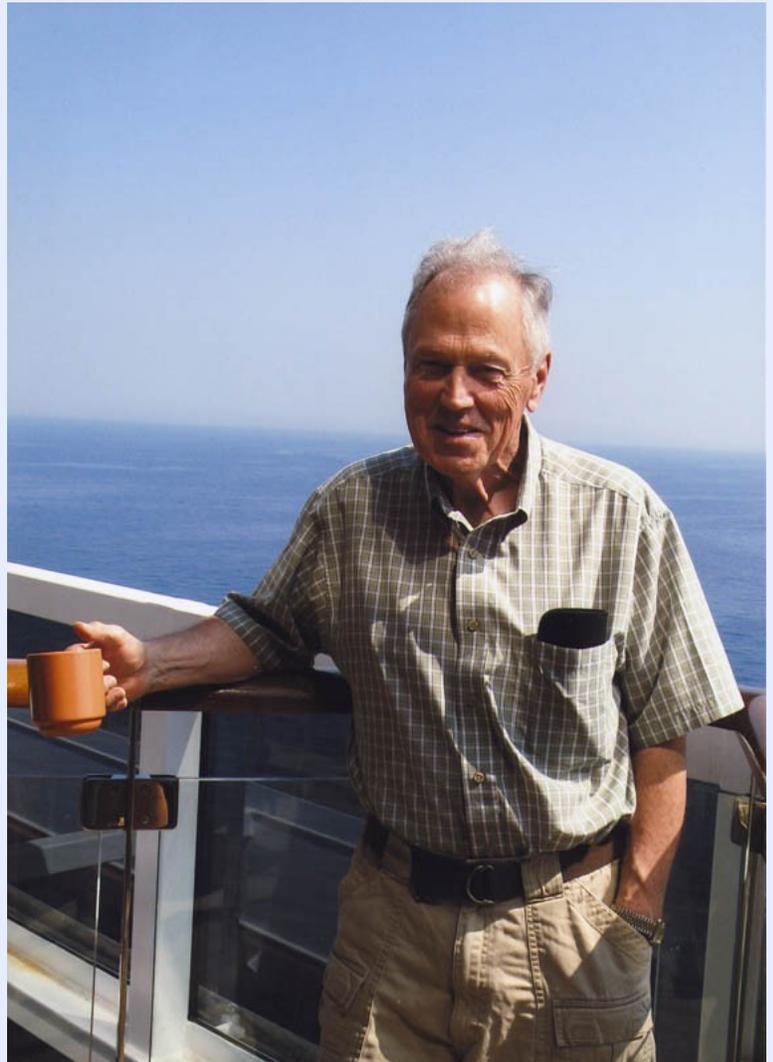
CGN also often works in concert with the Connecticut Society of Professional Genealogists and holds an annually symposium every spring with a full day of lectures, exhibits and vendors, all related to gravestones and cemetery history in one fashion or another.

*Staff Profiles are published in CONNector Issues at the request of CSL Staff.*

## *Chauncey Hosford War of 1812 Papers Donated to Connecticut State Library*

*by Paul Baran, Assistant State Archivist*

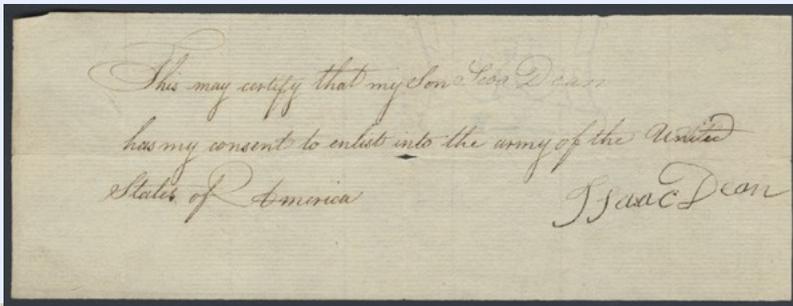
The State Archives recently acquired the Chauncey Hosford War of 1812 Papers. The papers were donated by David A. Gibbs and researched by Rosemary Pereira and are part of the larger David Arthur Gibbs Collection of Hosford and Gibbs Families Papers that is intended to come to the State Archives. In January 2012, I received a phone call from Rosemary in which she told me about the collection and asked if the Connecticut State Library would be interested in acquiring it. On April 11, Government Records Archivist Allen Ramsey and I visited David and Rosemary at their home in Massachusetts to view the collection. Spread throughout the living area of the house we saw family letters and ephemera that Rosemary organized chronologically into binders, diaries, account books, record books from various organizations family members had been involved in, photographs and daguerreotypes, family Bibles and published books that date from the late-eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century, although one of the Bibles dates to 1688. The bulk of the collection centers on the Hosford family of the Falls Village section of Canaan, Connecticut, and provides a slice of village life. Rosemary credits Julius Hosford (1807-1887), librarian of Douglas Library in North Canaan, and his wife, Esther M. Wickham, with having the foresight to preserve the family's papers. Julius's daughter, Marcella Minerva Hosford (1846-1899), married Arthur Foote Gibbs (1844-1926) in 1869 and the collection passed through her and was added to by members of the Gibbs line. It eventually came into the possession of Marcella's great grandson David Arthur Gibbs.



**David A. Gibbs, great-great-grandson  
of Chauncey Hosford**

Also present in the collection were 101 documents related to the War of 1812. Cognizant that 2012 marks the bicentennial of the start of the war, David and Rosemary were eager to bring that portion of the collection to the Connecticut State Library as soon as was feasible for them. On August 1 they delivered the War of 1812 documents along with the published books in the collection to the State Library. These papers relate to the war service of Julius' father Chauncey who was born on September 19, 1784, in Canaan to Jeremiah Hosford, Jr. and his wife Hannah Dean. He was known to have attended Morris Academy in South Farms (Litchfield) from 1804 to 1807. He married Mary Curtis on November 19, 1806. They had four sons: Julius, Hiram (1809-1812), Orville (1810-1840), and Samuel (1819-1875). Chauncey served as a Representative to the General Assembly in 1837 and 1838; as a Commissioner of turnpike roads, bridges,

*Continued on next page*



Isaac Dean's consent for his son Seba to enlist in the United States Army, circa 1813"

Regiment of Connecticut Militia as of April 28, 1810. The Thirty-seventh Regiment was stationed at Fort Griswold in New London. Hosford was assigned to the recruiting service and spent much of the time in his home town of Canaan in Litchfield County recruiting men from the area. Most of this collection reflects his recruiting activities and includes correspondence, orders, weekly recruiting returns that list the names and towns of recruits, and receipts for recruiting expenses. Other documents include a muster roll for Capt. Elizur Warner's Company, a broadside sent to Chauncey to be posted in Canaan from the captain of the Twenty-fifth regiment urging deserters to return to their duty, and a circa-1815 pen-and-ink drawing of *Fulton the First steamboat* by an unknown artist.

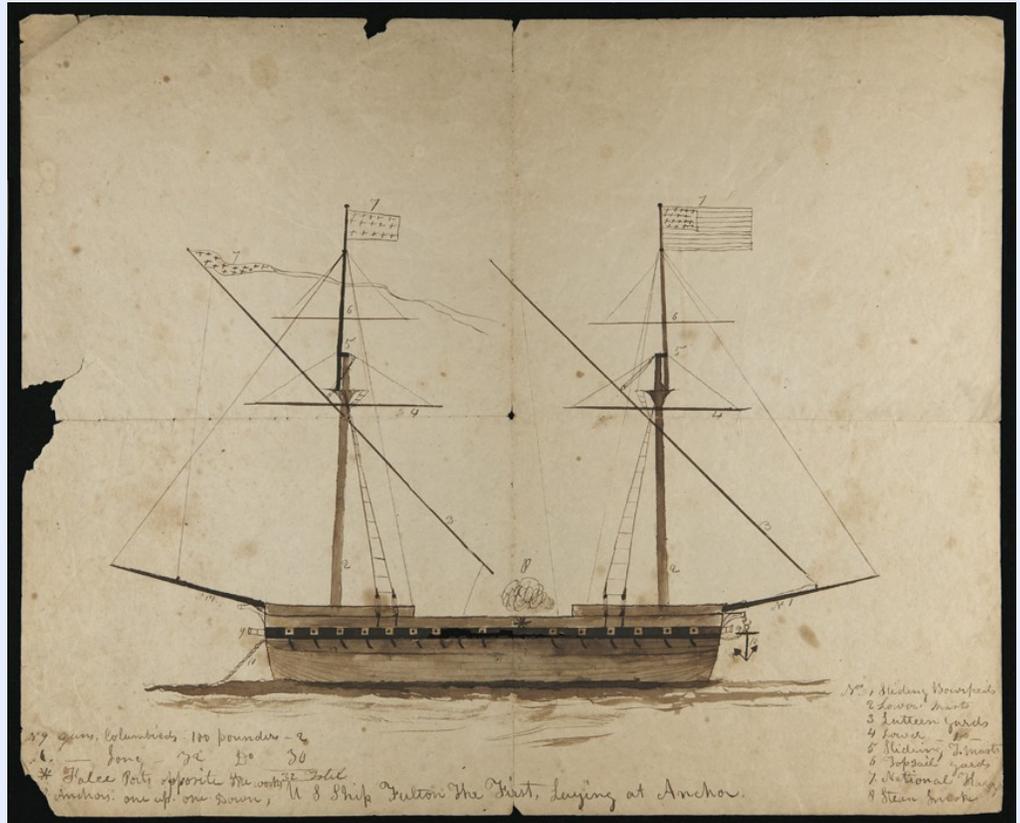
This collection adds to the State Library's resources on the War of 1812 and military history in general. It has been digitized and made

accessible through the State Library's digital collections. See

<http://www.ctstatelibrary.org/tags/war-1812> for additional resources at the State Library.

and ferries in 1832; and at various times in the local offices of Justice of the Peace, Sheriff for Litchfield County, Deputy Sheriff, and Assessor. He died on October 19, 1855.

During the War of 1812 Chauncey enlisted as a first lieutenant in Capt. Elizur Warner's Company of the United States Infantry Thirty-seventh Regiment on April 30, 1813. His prior military service included a commission as ensign in the Third Company of the Fourteenth



Fulton the First steamboat,  
artist unknown, pen-and-ink, circa 1815

## Barkhamsted Little Library

by State Librarian Kendall Wiggin



State Librarian Kendall Wiggin (L) and Drew Lauzier (R), a student at Oliver Wolcott Regional Tech at the unveiling of Barkhamsted's Little Free Library. The ceremony took place near the Barkhamsted Town Hall on Sunday, October 21<sup>st</sup>. Drew Lauzier, and his Dad, Keith, both of Barkhamsted built this replica of the Gatehouse at the Barkhamsted Reservoir. The second Little Free Library is an Eagle Scout project which will be completed over

the winter and installed next spring. It is a replica of the old Hitchcock Chair Factory in Riverton. The idea to build and install Little Free Libraries in town came from the Barkhamsted Economic Development Commission. It is hoped the creation of the small, book-lending structures will help engender community spirit and provide quick access to the world of reading. Though Barkhamsted has no library of its own, it does contribute funds each year so that residents have free use of the Beardsley and Memorial Library in Winsted. The Beardsley and Memorial Library has agreed to help provide books for Barkhamsted's Little Free Library. The Little Free Library movement started in 2011 with Todd Bol of Hudson, Wisconsin, who built one in the shape of a one-room schoolhouse in honor of his mother, a retired teacher. Anyone can build a Little Free Library – Bol and co-founder Rick Brooks ask only that people send a picture of their library to register it so that it can be posted on their website, [www.littlefreelibrary.org](http://www.littlefreelibrary.org). In return, they will be sent a *Little Free Library. Take a Book Leave a Book* sign to put on their structure and also receive a Little Free Library Charter number. The website offers a map with LFL locations. Speaking to the more than sixty people gathered for the unveiling, Wiggin said that "There's no substitute for really good library service, but in rural parts of the state it's not always easy to get to the library and this is a great way for people to share books with others."



## 2013 Third Thursdays at the Connecticut State Library

231 Capitol Avenue,  
Hartford

12:00–12:45 PM

Memorial Hall

**January 17** – Peter F. Burns, Jr., Professor of Political Science at Loyola University New Orleans – *Shock the World: UConn Basketball in the Calhoun Era*

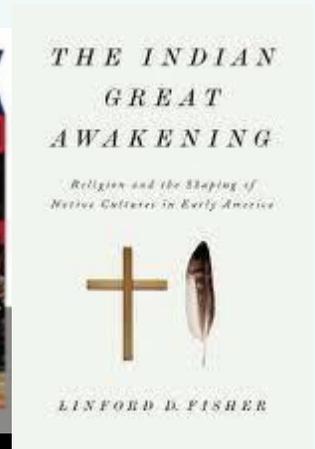
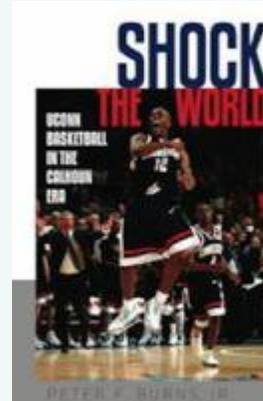
**February 21** – Cynthia Goetz – *John E. Cook, Conspirator: The story of a stone-cutter's son from Haddam, Connecticut who became a Captain in John Brown's army and helped light the spark that ignited the Civil War*

**March 21** – Linford D. Fisher, Assistant Professor of History at Brown University – *An Indian Great Awakening? Rethinking Native Religious Change in Early America*

**April 18** – Mark Jones, State Archivist – *Frederic Collin Walcott: Conservation Pioneer*

**May 16** – Jon Purmont, Professor of History at Southern Connecticut State University – *Ella Grasso: Connecticut's Pioneering Governor*

**June 20** – Kevin Johnson, Connecticut State Library, portrays – *William Webb, an African American Civil War Soldier from Connecticut*



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