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***At Risk - The Federal
Investment in Libraries,
Archives, and Museums***

*By State Librarian
Kendall F. Wiggin*

On March 16, 2017, President Donald Trump proposed a budget (*America First - A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again*) for discretionary spending in federal Fiscal Year 2018. It detailed proposed spending by department, amounting to an overall 10% increase in defense spending and a 10% decrease in non-defense outlays. Of great concern to libraries, archives,

museums and other memory institutions is the proposal to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Over the years these programs have funded a variety of important projects in libraries, museums, and archives across Connecticut. The State Library receives annual funding from IMLS under the Grants to States program as part of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and has been the direct beneficiary of several NEH and IMLS grants. For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016, the State Library received \$2,022,715.00 in LSTA funds. Over the past several years the State Library has received NEH grants totaling \$524,034 under the National Digital Newspaper Program. That funding is being used to digitize historically significant Connecticut newspapers for inclusion in the Library of Congress' Chronicling America project.

As a rule, presidential budgets are pretty much dead on arrival. But we are in a political climate where some of the old rules don't apply. With Republican control of the Presidency and Congress, there is some reason to be concerned about the future of NEA, NEH, and IMLS. In 2015 the U.S. House Republicans issued "The Path to Prosperity: Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Resolution" which called for eliminating, you guessed it, the NEA, NEH, and IMLS. In reference to the IMLS, the plan said "[t]his function can be funded at the state and local level and augmented significantly by charitable contributions from the private sector." I think we all know the state and local funding situation. The LSTA funds have a maintenance of effort requirement which has been important in maintaining state funding for libraries.

The federal government has provided aid for public libraries since 1956. On June 19 of that year, President Eisenhower signed the Library Services Act (LSA) into law. Although the federal role in support of libraries has been questioned over the years, one constant has been the need to serve the underserved and the disadvantaged. There has been debate over the years as to whether the program should foster innovation through grants for demonstration projects or fund ongoing services.

A theme throughout the history of this program is the important role libraries play in providing the citizenry with access to learning opportunities and information in a variety of formats in a rapidly changing economy, and the need to support libraries in these efforts.

Throughout its history, the program has been state based. With overall goals established by Congress, the states have administered their grants to best meet the needs of their libraries and the citizens they serve.

Congress debated the Library Services and Construction Act in 1963 as the successor to LSA. In the debates, Thomas McIntyre (D-NH) stated that:

We are living in a complex and rapidly changing age. It is an age built upon the creation, the collection, and the rapid dissemination of accurate information. At the very heart of this communications chain stands the American free public library which collects and makes available books and other materials to all who have need of them.

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Those words could not be more true today. Funding for public libraries in Connecticut derives mainly from local tax dollars and private support. State funding supports the sharing of resources across all libraries, lessening the burden on any one library while providing the citizens of the state with the information they need. Federal funds are matched by state funds to support library services to the blind, those with print disabilities and those with physical disabilities; resource sharing; and innovation in libraries through small grants. Libraries are a national resource that deserve support from government at all levels. Now is not the time to cut the modest, but effective, federal investment in libraries. In fact, let's think big - how about a federal investment of \$1.00 per capita.

Federal funds are matched by state funds to support library services to the blind, those with print disabilities and those with physical disabilities; resource sharing; and innovation in libraries through small grants.

Bring History Alive for Kids

*By IT Analyst
Jacqueline Bagwell*

The Museum of Connecticut History has great stuff but not every school can get their students to Hartford to see many of these treasures first hand. So our Museum

Curator Patrick Smith goes out to many schools every year to connect students with Connecticut history. To make history vibrant and engaging in schools the Museum of Connecticut History wants to do more and bring the historical treasures to the schools.

History on the Move project intends to use a refurbished bookmobile, for our Museum Curator to load up with fascinating artifacts for display and present wonderful programs to schools around the state

Would you like to help our Museum Curator Patrick Smith bring items from the Museum of CT History to school children across the state? Our goal is to retrofit the bookmobile, pictured here, to accommodate books and historical items from the Museum of Connecticut History.

This would enable Patrick to carry educational items to schools throughout the state. If you are interested in helping support this fine project read more on our [website](#) or go straight to the [Go Fund Me](#) page!



Museum Curator Patrick Smith speaking with an attentive group of children at the Somers Public Library during a “Connecticut Invents” program. To the right is Patrick with the Connecticut made wiffle ball.

**Voices of WWI-CRIS
Radio Project-Kick Off**

*By State Archivist
Lizette Pelletier*



NATIONAL
ARCHIVES

NATIONAL HISTORICAL
PUBLICATIONS
& RECORDS COMMISSION



Project Launch-March 6 2016 in the Museum of CT History-From left to right, Secretary of the State Denise Merrill, Director of Education and Rehabilitation Brian Sigman, CRIS Radio Executive Diane Weaver Dunne, CRIS Radio Chairman Paul A. Young, U.S. World War One Centennial Commissioner John Monahan, Education Consultant Steve Armstrong, and State Librarian Kendall Wiggin.

Picture Credit: CRIS Radio

On March 20, 2017, state officials, historians, archivists, educators, and CRIS Radio (Connecticut Radio Information System) board, staff and volunteers gathered in Memorial Hall of the Museum of Connecticut History to launch a collaborative pilot project called “Voices of World War I.” CRIS Radio, the Connecticut State Library, and IDEAL Group have worked together over the past two years to develop a first-of-its kind service to provide access to historic records and documents through human-narrated recordings for individuals who are blind or unable to read due to other print disabilities. The goal of this project is to demonstrate that archives and libraries can provide these individuals with access to the same historic documents that other students, researchers, and citizens have enjoyed. Financial support for this project is provided in part by the [National Historic Publication & Records Commission \[NHPRC\]](#), which is the funding arm of the National Archives and Records Administration [NARA] in Washington DC.

Because the project coincided with the centenary commemoration of WWI, State Archives staff along with the project's advisory committee selected more than 100 historic WWI era documents from the State Library's extensive archival and government documents collection, including servicemen's diaries and letters to home, government-pamphlets such as “Cutting Your Meat Bills with Milk,” and selections of articles published in Connecticut newspapers from the era. The staff also selected a number of the military service questionnaires that State Librarian George S. Godard developed and collected during 1920-1930 from veterans and family members of those who died in combat that captured their memories and feeling about their service. Staff from the State Library's Connecticut in WW1 project scanned the documents. Other staff and volunteers provided transcripts of handwritten materials. CRIS radio volunteers then recorded each item as the person writing would have read it aloud. Careful attention was paid to pronunciation. The audio files are available on the CRIS website <http://crisradio.org/>.

As part of the launch celebration, State Archives staff put a selection of the documents recorded in two display cases in Memorial Hall. CRIS staff provided for each of the documents QR codes developed for its [CRISACCESS™](#) museum service. Visitors are able to use their smart phones to listen to the human narrated

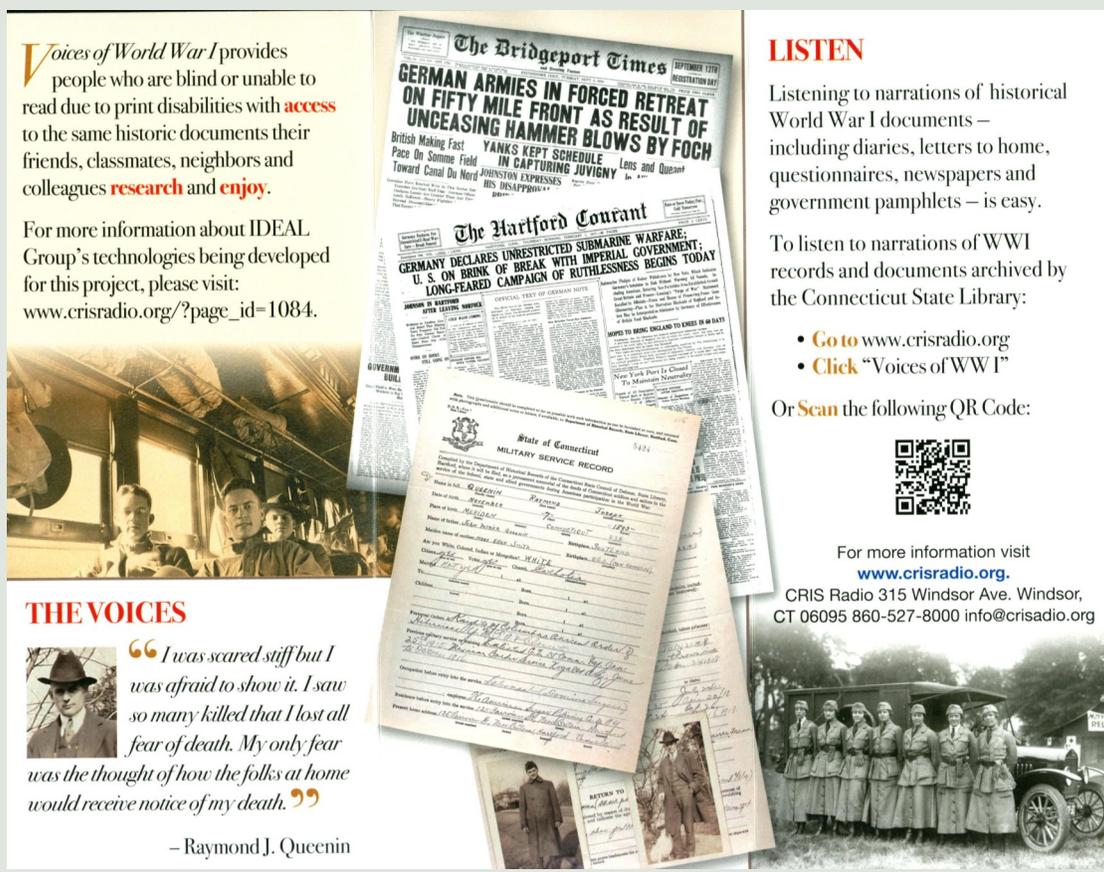
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recording for each document while they are viewing it in the case.

The project also included the development of new technologies to help teachers, librarians, and archivists render hard-copy historical documents into accessible formats for individuals with print disabilities as well as make them searchable. The new technology tools were developed by IDEAL Group, an Ohio-based company that makes accessible mobile applications for people with disabilities. Following the launch celebration, Ideal Group President Steve Jacobs and CRIS Radio Executive Director Diane Weaver Dunne demonstrated the new technology to members of the [Connecticut State Historical Records Advisory Board](#) and interested State Library staff members at the State Library's 75 Van Block Avenue facility. At the end of the grant, the tools will be made available free of charge to archives, libraries, and other institutions to allow them to expand accessibility of their collections.

As the project progressed, educators on the project advisory committee realized that the recordings will also benefit classroom teachers by bringing history alive for their students. Rather than just reading about an event or viewing static images, students will be able to hear a letter, diary or other contemporary account read aloud.

To listen to recordings go to www.crisradio.org and click on “Voices of WWI”. For more on the State Library’s WWI collections and events, visit the *Connecticut in the Great War* website at <http://ctinworldwar1.org> or the State Library's website at www.ctstatelibrary.org. For more information about IDEAL Group see: <http://ideal-group.org>, <http://infyreader.org>, <http://apps4android.org>, and <http://kds.global>.



Voices of World War I provides people who are blind or unable to read due to print disabilities with **access** to the same historic documents with their friends, classmates, neighbors and colleagues **research** and **enjoy**.

For more information about IDEAL Group's technologies being developed for this project, please visit: www.crisradio.org/?page_id=1084.

THE VOICES

“I was scared stiff but I was afraid to show it. I saw so many killed that I lost all fear of death. My only fear was the thought of how the folks at home would receive notice of my death.”

— Raymond J. Queenin

LISTEN

Listening to narrations of historical World War I documents – including diaries, letters to home, questionnaires, newspapers and government pamphlets – is easy.

To listen to narrations of WWI records and documents archived by the Connecticut State Library:

- **Go to** www.crisradio.org
- **Click** “Voices of WWI”

Or **Scan** the following QR Code:



For more information visit www.crisradio.org.
CRIS Radio 315 Windsor Ave. Windsor, CT 06095 860-527-8000 info@crisradio.org

***For the Benefit of Our
Children and Their
Children: Documenting
World War I***

*By State Librarian
Kendall F. Wiggin*

*(This article first appeared in Connecticut Explored Vol.15, No 2,
Spring 2017.)*

In Connecticut, we are very fortunate to have incredible primary and secondary resource materials in unique collections around the state. The fact that some of the most significant records are held in the Connecticut State Archives is largely attributable to the vision and drive of one man, State Librarian George Godard (1900-1936).

In 1917 the General Assembly passed legislation that provided for the depositing in the State Library all of the files and other official papers relating to the State Council of Defense, the Connecticut State Military Census, and other similar organizations in connection with the World War. At that time the State Council of Defense established the Department of Historical Records within the State Library under the direction of Godard.

On November 2, 1918 the Committee on Historical Records, which advised the Department of Historical Records and was chaired by Godard, met and decided that it was of great importance to secure from the several committees and departments that had been created by the Connecticut State Council of Defense a "full statement covering the work accomplished or in progress . . ." Godard was instructed to request these reports and on November 14, 1918, just three days after the armistice was signed, Godard wrote to the chairman of the Town War Bureaus across Connecticut saying that their reports "will be essential to an adequate understanding" of the services their committee provided. He went on to say that the committee was "interested in having available when needed the material necessary to formulate a true and adequate narrative of the part it has been Connecticut's duty and privilege to take. It is the duty of the Department of Historical Records to see that such official and reliable data is secured and made available here in our State Library."

In 1919 the Department of Historical records became the Department of War Records by act of the General Assembly. The goal of the War Records Department was, according to Godard, "to collect, classify, index and install all available material relating to Connecticut's participation, public or private, in the World War . . . or the benefit of our children and their children." So eager was Godard to show off the work of the Department of War Records, that he invited a reporter from the *Hartford Courant* for a tour. The story appeared in the *Harford Courant* on July 27, 1919 under the headline "Preserving the Records of Connecticut's Soldiers" with the sub heading "Our state leads all others in the way it is tabulating the information concerning the sons who went forth to do their part in making the world safe for democracy." The reporter noted that Godard was "intensely interested in this work" and "convinced of the great value" of the records the Library had acquired and continued to acquire. While many state's had found the task of indexing and classifying their war related records daunting, Connecticut was "sailing along serenely under the leadership of the state librarian, with a system that is simplicity itself."

In 1975 the General Assembly repealed the language establishing the Department of War Records and instead substituted language calling for the State Library to maintain a collection of war records which it continues to do to this day.

Few states have the breadth and depth of documentation of the state role in the buildup to the United States entry into the war and participation in the war as does Connecticut. Because of Godard's leadership and his innate sense of the importance of documenting history and the diligent work of the women and men in the State Library's Department of War Records, today we are able to tell the story of Connecticut's Role in the Great War.

April 6, 2017 CT State Library WWI Centennial Commemoration

By the Editor, Ursula Hunt

The Connecticut State Library commemorated the 100th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War I with an event in Memorial Hall that included the Posting and Retiring of the Colors by the Connecticut National Guard, remarks from Governor Dannel Malloy, State Librarian Kendall Wiggin, Commissioner Dianna Wentzell, State Historian Walter Woodward, Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Sean Connolly, Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Tomcho, George King III and Dr. Jeffrey Klinger from the Ambulance 255 Project. The event began with a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem sung by Sgt. Joseph Colavito, 102nd Army Band. Kendall Wiggin began the presentations by thanking the former State Librarian George Seymour Godard for recognizing the value of collecting the 'treasure trove' of records from Connecticut World War I Veterans. He commended Christine Pittsley for her efforts in organizing *Connecticut's Remembering World War One: Sharing History/Preserving Memory* project, which has evolved over the past year. Please visit the website at <http://ctinworldwar1.org/> to see images collected from over 100 descendants of the war and news about digitization and other events taking place throughout the state. Governor Malloy recognized the State of Connecticut for its many contributions to the war. State Historian Walter Woodward spoke about Connecticut's massive role in manufacturing efforts and the impact on Connecticut's workforce (*see his remarks on the next page*). He also spoke of Governor Holcomb's involvement and the great patriotism shown by Connecticut residents. Education Commissioner and State Library Board Member Dianna Wentzell spoke about the importance of bringing the history of WWI into the classroom and she thanked the organizations that have helped provide the necessary material for history and social study teachers in the state. Military Department Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Tomcho spoke about the Connecticut National Guard's contributions and Connecticut Legislation passed during the war period that was instrumental to our success. Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Sean Connolly welcomed and recognized veterans from all wars and the importance of organizations that work together to preserve their legacy. George King III from the Ambulance 255 Project and his colleague Dr. Jeffrey Klinger were not able to bring a 1914 model ambulance, which they restored, due to rain, but they did bring photographs and a video. The ambulance was used to evacuate soldiers during the war. Dr. Klinger spoke about the challenges and tragedies faced by both drivers and soldiers. He also mentioned the value of being able to share these stories with others, however difficult that may be. [Watch the CTN Video of the Event](#) on the CTN Website or watch the video from the [CSL Website](#).



Education Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell with other distinguished guests.



Sgt. Joseph Colavito, 102nd Army Band, singing the National Anthem

**Remarks from the World War I
Centennial Commemoration**

By State Historian Walter Woodward

(These remarks were presented at *The Yanks Are Coming: Connecticut's Centennial Commemoration of the U.S. Entry into World War I on April 6, 2017 in the Museum of CT History*)

When World War I began in July, 1914, most Connecticutans viewed it as a spectator event – someone else's fight, in a place far away. In his 1915 state of the state speech to the General Assembly, Governor Marcus Holcombe failed to mention the war as something that would affect Connecticut.

But affect that state it did – profoundly and almost immediately.

From the beginning, the warring European powers flooded Connecticut's arms makers with huge orders. Connecticut became England and France's armory years before it became its ally.

In Bridgeport, New Haven, Hartford and the Brass Valley, munitions factories ramped up production on a massive scale, hiring thousands of new workers – never enough - and pushing them to provide maximum output. The pressure to produce led to labor strife– the 422 strikes affecting 68,000 workers in 1915 and 16 were the most in the state's history, though the arc of increased production was unwavering.

Holcombe was quick to conclude that American involvement in a war of this scale was a question of *when* not *if* and even as the nation prepared to reelect Woodrow Wilson on a campaign slogan that said "He Kept Us Out of the War". Holcombe bent his efforts to preparing Connecticut and Connecticutans for the battles to come.

The sinking of the passenger liners Lusitania in May 1915, and the Sussex in 1916, fed Connecticut's anti-German hostility, as did rumors – related to the state's massive defense production – that Germany secretly planned to use the state as a base for fifth-column saboteurs. Warned by a Holcombe official that "the penalty for failure to prepare is national death," Connecticut mobilized well in advance of American entry into the war. In 1915 and 1916, encouraged by state officials, business men paid their own expenses to receive military training at a camp in Plattsburgh New York. Yale alumni funded construction of an on campus armory. 100,000 spectators lined Hartford streets to watch 17,000 marchers stage a patriotic preparedness parade in June of 1916. Similar marches were held in cities and towns around the state. That same summer, the Connecticut State Guard was the first to answer Woodrow Wilson's call to mobilize troops to stop the cross border incursion of the Mexican guerilla Pancho Villa into Arizona.

Other states may have voted for isolationism, but Holcombe, without making a single campaign speech, was reelected in the fall of 1916 on a platform of preparedness.

When Germany, in January of 1917, declared their intention to sink all North Atlantic shipping, Holcombe recognized war was imminent, and called on Connecticutans to set aside any and all differences and "meet on the common plane of patriotism".

Within two months, a volunteer group of over 10,000 citizens conducted and completed a statewide census of every Connecticut male over 16 years to determine their capacities and ability to serve in the military in case of a draft. A home guard was created to protect the state's factories and infrastructure from sabotage, and in three months 10,000 men ranging from Civil War veterans to high school students, were organized, uniformed and armed. So by the time this day came, 100 years ago today, Connecticut and its people were ready for war. Connecticut troops would be among the first to see action in France, and earn fame, honor, and respect for their battlefield bravery and courage under fire. And they would be supported back home by a populace of men women and children committed to sacrifice and service on the home front, in the cause of peace. And sacrifice they did, but that's another story, for another time.

As Governor Holcombe would say. "The war aroused us from our lethargy and for eighteen months we thought seriously, and acted patriotically, and unitedly." It is that seriousness, and patriotism, that readiness to pay the price of freedom, that we remember, and give thanks for today.

“The Great War” in 8 Weeks

By Curator Patrick Smith-Museum of Connecticut History



Connecticut’s role in World War I was featured as part of a class “*Send the Word....The Yanks are Coming*” presented to a group of 4th-6th grade home schooled students. I recently finished teaching this eight-week class, which I created, to seventeen students as part of the Monday Home School classes hosted by the Lutz Museum in

Manchester. Each week the kids and I delved into a new topic related to the Great War and Connecticut’s role in it. Objects, documents, and images from the Museum and Library made the topic come alive for the kids who were thrilled to see what new treasures I brought in each week. The students who signed up for the class were also provided with the book *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo, and as a group we read the book and explored topics in it each week. We covered a lot of history in eight weeks!

The class began with a look at the pre-war political situation in the world and several events that acted as a trigger for the war. We of course looked at famous battles and soldiers' stories from the many nations that took part. Letters, descriptions, and documents from Connecticut soldiers brought the war closer to home for those in the class. One of my favorite classes was one where we looked at trench fighting during the war. I set up the classroom as a “trench” using desks and tables for the trenches and overturned chairs as barbed wire in “no man’s land.” I had the kids tucked down low as I read descriptions of the miserable conditions in the trenches and showed them pictures from several fronts of the war. Periodically I lobbed paper “mortars” to keep them on their toes.



WWI “Brodie” helmet from the Museum’s collection

The technology of war really changed during WWI. We examined the role of airplanes, submarines, and tanks. Connecticut aviators were highlighted and our industrial output, including tanks, other weapons, and military supplies made in the Nutmeg State were featured. The effort on the home front back here in Connecticut included learning about war bond drives, Red Cross efforts, and food conservation. A different perspective on the war was shown by using art, music, and poetry of the period. We all went “Over There” for a time.



Stubby with his owner/best friend PVT. James Robert Conroy

The book *War Horse* allowed us a chance to look at many different wartime experiences. Animals played a big part in the war, and we learned about the use and care of horses, pigeons, and of course dogs, including Connecticut’s own Sergeant Stubby. The book

also gave us a glimpse into the disastrous effect the war had on civilians throughout Europe and beyond, including children and young adults who fought in many battles or suffered its consequences. As we finished the book and the semester, the kids and I discussed the outcome of the war and what came after the “War to End All Wars” -- it was of course World War II. A few of the kids and parents asked if I was teaching about that next -- I think I’ll need more than eight weeks!



Major Gervais Raoul Lufberry (and a unit mascot!) who lived for a short time in Connecticut and flew for the Lafayette Escadrille during the war.

World War I Twitter Project

*Submitted by WWI Project
Coordinator Christine Pittsley*

State Library Launching WWI Twitter Campaign Featuring Hartford Courant's Original Coverage

*Article written by Staff Writer Gregory Hladky, Copyright ©
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A century after the U.S. joined "the war to end all wars," the [Connecticut State Library](#) is launching a project to use Twitter as a vehicle for historical posts featuring the daily coverage of World War I from the Hartford Courant.

The "Over the Top: Hartford Courant Reports the Great War" social media campaign is intended to give today's internet-oriented generation a sense of how the war was reported on a day-to-day basis when the U.S. entered the conflict. Each post will show the Courant's front page from that particular day during the war.

Library officials plan to follow each day's [Hartford Courant](#) posts with other tweets about other Connecticut stories relating to the war, both at the front in Europe and at home.

"We've been thinking about this for a while," said Christine Pittsley, project manager for the library's new Twitter campaign. About a month ago, officials decided to go ahead with the social media effort.

"This is a way to get this information out there," Pittsley said, and to give 21st Century people a feeling for how newspapers covered major events 100 years ago. "Most people on social media probably don't read newspapers anymore," she said.

Additional, more in-depth stories on topics including manufacturing of gas masks to whether public schools should be required to provide military training will also be posted on the [Library's Facebook](#) page. Pittsley said

Library officials will be working on those in-depth articles with [Connecticut History.org](#), an arm of the non-profit group, [Connecticut Humanities](#).



There will also be images from the Hartford Courant added to Instagram. Those images will come from ProQuest, which has put together a digital database of the Hartford Courant's archives to make it available to libraries and researchers.



Anyone interested in the World War I Twitter campaign can follow it via @CtinWW1, or #OTTHC. The in-depth content on Facebook can be accessed by going to @Ctin WorldWar1 or on Instagram, @CtinWW1.



President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress on April 2, 1917 for a declaration of war against Imperial Germany. His request came more than two-and-a-half years after the start of WWI at a time when Germany and its opponents, Great Britain, France and Italy, were locked in a trench-war stalemate across Europe.

Wilson's decision came after a series of controversies, including the sinking of the British passenger ship the Lusitania in 1915 that resulted in the deaths of 128 Americans and disputes over Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare. In early 1917, Germany infuriated the U.S. by sending the famous "Zimmerman Telegram" to Mexico, urging that nation to go to war against the U.S. in the event American declared war on Germany.

The war ended on Nov. 11, 1918 with Germany's defeat.

**2017 Futures Conference:
Imagination - Inspiration –
Information**

*By Library Development Director
Dawn La Valle*



In May of 2007, a partnership between the New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, and Delaware state libraries along with what was then PALINET produced the first Mid-Atlantic Library Futures Conference. The planning for the conference not only focused on the future of libraries but on the future of the world. Futurists often ponder the inevitable questions of what will the world look like? What will everyday life be like? What will people need to function in the future?

Rather than looking inward to libraries the partnership looked beyond the library walls to seek visionaries from all aspects of life to bring them together with librarians to discuss what changes in the future will impact libraries over the next decade. The resulting conference was groundbreaking, touted as the one conference to attend. Librarians walked away with ideas and plans to help them navigate through the possibilities and challenges of the future of public libraries.

Fast forward to 2017, a new, expansive collaborative partnership has been formed between New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia with support from COSLINE (Council of State Libraries in New England) and LibraryLinkNJ to offer a retrospective of libraries in the last decade and to look forward to the new future.

For two days librarians will be immersed in the future, including the future of communication, immigration, and other demographic changes. Futurists, thinkers, and demographers (keynotes subject to change) such as David Pescovitz, co-editor at Boing Boing and research director of The Institute for the Future; James Hughes, Distinguished Professor and Dean of the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University; Neil Gaiman, author; Rohwit Talwar, CEO of Fast Future Research and noted futurist; Miguel A. Figueroa, director at the ALA Center for the Future of Libraries and many more will attend. Not only will librarians be able to participate in discussions with noted futurists, they will be offered hands-on training in forecasting and will leave the conference with trend spotting skills as well as information to navigate and engage the future.

Sound exciting? Please join us at the Borgata Hotel in Atlantic City, NJ on September 24th and 25th. Details:

Registration Cost: \$195 for Partners (CT is a Partner state) / \$395 for all others

Hotel: \$135 per night

Breakfast and lunch will be included on both days.

Registration is scheduled to open on June 1st, 2017.

For more information please contact Dawn La Valle at dawn.lavalle@ct.gov or 860-757-6665.

New MLSC Hours - Pilot

By request IT CT Coordinator
Stephen Cauffman



The idea for new hours originated at All Staff Day. Once a year State Library staff gather together for a day of learning, networking, and discussions about our services. At one point during the most recent All Staff Day, State Librarian Kendall Wiggin asked everyone to come up with ideas to improve our services, but only if they could be accomplished at no extra cost to the state. I was at a table with three colleagues from the Middletown Library Service Center (MLSC) and we came up with the idea of staying open later to accommodate librarians who couldn't visit us during our regular hours.

After discussions among MLSC staff members and receiving support and encouragement from Dawn La Valle, Director of the Division of Library Development, we conducted a survey to see what options librarians preferred for new hours. Of the 60 survey responses, 40 people expressed interest in being able to visit MLSC outside the hours we were currently open. The top three options were to stay open one evening per week, to open on Saturday morning, and to open early one morning per week.

In an effort to accommodate as many people as possible, we decided to try each of the top three options once a month. In addition to our regular hours, MLSC will be open one hour early the first Wednesday of the month, open until 8:00 p.m. the first Thursday of the month, and open 9:00 a.m. to noon the first Saturday of the month. MLSC staff members are volunteering to cover the new hours and we have to make sure we remain able to cover our regular hours, so we cannot offer the new hours every week. We are offering these new hours from April to September 2017 and we will evaluate the new hours at the end of this pilot period.



MLSC Hours from May to September 2017

Regular Hours- Mon. to Fri. 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Plus these new hours:

May 2017

Wednesday, May 3: 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 4: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 6: 9:00 a.m. to noon

June 2017

Thursday, June 1: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 3: 9:00 a.m. to noon

Wednesday, June 7: 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

July 2017

Saturday, July 1: 9:00 a.m. to noon

Wednesday, July 5: 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 6: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

August 2017

Wednesday, August 2: 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 3: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 5: 9:00 a.m. to noon

September 2017

Saturday, September 2: 9:00 a.m. to noon

Wednesday, September 6: 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 7: 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

As an added service: If you need Juvenile, YA, or Adult Large Print books and you would like to pick them up at MLSC during our new hours, please let us know one week in advance of your visit. We will retrieve the items from the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) in Rocky Hill and will have them ready for you to pick up. Contact Grace Burchard (grace.burchard@ct.gov) to request Large Print books. (Note that librarians can visit LBPH Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. to browse, select, and check out items from the Large Print collection.)

About: The Middletown Library Service Center (MLSC) is a library for librarians. Librarians from Connecticut libraries can borrow our materials and then circulate the items to their patrons. We have conference rooms and a computer lab that we use to host library-related meetings and offer Professional Development training for librarians.

Questions? Contact us at 860-704-2200, our main phone number. Contact Linda Williams (Linda.Williams@ct.gov) for specific theme/grade level requests. Contact Grace Burchard (grace.burchard@ct.gov) to reserve book sets. Contact Grace or Judy Crooks (judy.crooks@ct.gov) to pull general selections of children's books or Books on CD in advance of your visit.

Restoration of the 1908 Model of the Connecticut State Library and Supreme Court Building

By Museum Curator David J. Corrigan

With funding from the Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society, the Williamstown Art Conservation Center in Williamstown, Massachusetts recently completed restoration of a plaster model of the Connecticut State Library and Supreme Court Building. The New York firm of architect Donn Barber created the model as part of the design competition for the

building in 1908. Barber's design won the competition, and groundbreaking for the building took place in June 1908. Construction continued through 1909 and into 1910. Finally, in November 1910, State Librarian George Godard moved the Library's collections from their cramped quarters in the State Capitol into the newly-completed building.



**Image Courtesy of Williamstown Art Conservation Center
Williamstown, MA**

building in 1908. Barber's design won the competition, and groundbreaking for the building took place in June 1908. Construction continued through 1909 and into 1910. Finally, in November 1910, State Librarian George Godard moved the Library's collections from their cramped quarters in the State Capitol into the newly-completed building.

The model, which contains detailed architectural elements, was constructed from molded slabs of plaster of Paris and shows the front and side elevations of the State Library wing on the left and the Supreme Court Room on the right. The third wing, housing Memorial Hall, was not included.

The first step in the restoration process was the careful removal of accumulated dust and grime, with the major focus of the restoration the flat horizontal surface surrounding the model. The model sits on a one inch piece of plywood, and plaster covers the exposed wood. Over the years, changes in humidity caused the wood to expand and contract, cracking the plaster in numerous places. A skim coat of plaster was applied at some point, which then also cracked. The skim coat was carefully removed, stress cracks were stabilized, the chips and shards were reattached where possible, and any remaining plaster losses were filled and reintegrated into the surrounding surface. A large stress crack on the back of the model was also stabilized and repaired. A fragment of the right rear corner which had broken off was reattached, and three of the four statues atop the entry portico connecting the two wings were recreated and attached.

On May 3rd the restored model was unveiled in a ceremony in the foyer of the Connecticut State Library and Supreme Court Building, where it will remain on exhibit.



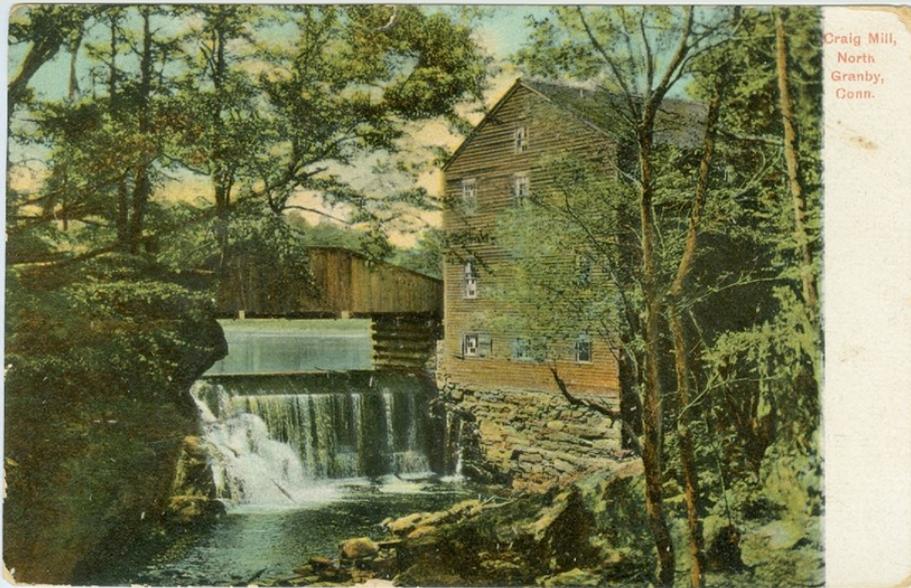
**Model in foyer of State Library
and Supreme Court Building**



**Picture of entrance taken
before unveiling**

***Digitization of Factory View Post Cards in the
Museum of Connecticut History***

by Museum Curator David J. Corrigan



Craig Mill, North Granby, CT Accession #2001.929



General Electric Co., Bridgeport, CT Accession #2001.1016

A project to digitize the factory view post cards in the collection of the Museum of Connecticut History, is nearing completion. The Museum received a generous donation from the Connecticut Post Card Club, earmarked “for the purpose of maintaining, preserving, digitizing and expanding the Museum’s collection.” Christina Nhean, a recent graduate of Central Connecticut State University, was hired to digitize the nearly 1100 post cards in the collection. Christina previously worked at the Library as a student, an intern and a volunteer, digitizing various parts of the extensive World War I collection.

The factory view post cards comprise a significant element in the Museum’s Connecticut Industrial History collection. Images range in date from the early 1900s through the 1970s, and include views of 19th-century mills which survived into the 20th century, as well as images of the large-scale, multi-story brick factories which came to dominate both the urban and rural Connecticut landscape.

Such cards document a largely-vanished industrial past, as well as changes in factory design and architecture, and many of the images in the collection may be the sole surviving view of some of these factories. When digitizing is completed, the images will be added to the “Digital Collections” section of the State Library’s website.

The Strange Case of Jesse Montgomery Seaver, Rogue Genealogist

by Library Technician
Glenn Sherman

No area of human activity is without its share of scandals and schemers, so it should come as no surprise that a fraud can be found in the field of genealogy. During the Great Depression, Jesse Montgomery Seaver built a small empire based on the mass marketing of family name histories to people who believed they were purchasing proof of their descent



(PHOTOGRAPH BY BACHERACH)
J. MONTGOMERY SEAVER

from the likes of William the Conqueror and Richard the Lion-Hearted.

In 1934, Mr. Seaver was sentenced to fifteen months in a federal penitentiary. This was not his first brush with the law. How did he end up in prison for fake genealogy? A look at his story illustrates how murky the ethical waters can become. It also introduces us to someone who seemed to possess both good intentions and a proclivity for outright mischief.

Jesse Montgomery Seaver was born Dec. 30, 1890 in Bethlehem, Indiana, the tenth of fifteen children. His father, George Washington Seaver, was a Union Civil War veteran who ran a general store and, in Jesse's words, "for a time had one of the largest fruit plantations in the state." Aside from the large number of siblings, there seems to be nothing particularly unusual about his childhood. He attended public schools, where he developed a real flare for public speaking. In his 1924 book *The Seaver Genealogy*, Jesse claims that he was a licensed Methodist preacher at age 17, but "did not choose to follow that profession." There was more to the story than he let on.



Headline as it appeared in *The Richmond Morning News (Richmond, Ohio)*, March 2, 1911 (photo left)

He claimed to have attended Taylor University, an evangelical Christian school in Upland, Indiana. If so, that would have been a fine choice for an aspiring minister. He also claimed to have attended Moors Hill College (now University of Evansville), Evansville, Indiana, a well respected Methodist school, and Temple University, in Philadelphia. This all may be true, but what is eye-catching was his means of financing his education. A story in the March 3, 1911 edition of the Elyria Ohio *Evening Telegram* entitled "Divinity student proven a forger" had this to say:

Jesse Seaver, 20, a former theological student arrested at Lima O., last night and brought to Richmond to answer to the charge of passing a forged check on Earlham College, was today sentenced to the state reformatory for 2 to 14 years. He pleaded guilty.

Seaver said he was prompted to use fraudulent methods to obtain funds in order to pursue religious studies. He told the court he had obtained about \$600 from various colleges during the last few months, and he had with him a complete record of his transactions.

Seaver also said he had applied recently to Andrew Carnegie to assist him in order that he might pay back moneys he had obtained unlawfully. His home is in Scott County.

It should be noted that \$600 in 1911 is equivalent to about \$15,000 today. This news story exposes an odd bundle of contradictions in Seaver. On one hand, he was pursuing religious studies; on the other hand, he was conning people out of money in order to do so. Thirdly, he was keeping scrupulous records so that he might redeem himself at some point in the future. Finally, he hatched a not-very-realistic scheme to enlist a wealthy patron to get him out of trouble.

Direct evidence of his whereabouts during his "college" years is obscure, except for two events. During May of 1910, the Federal Census indicates that the nineteen year old was living at home with his parents and several siblings, and his occupation is listed as "none". However, the census taker did note that he had attended school during the six months prior to the canvas. Seaver also shows up in an August 21, 1910 local news column in the *Lebanon Pioneer* (Lebanon, Ind.), where it was reported that he preached at a Methodist church indicating he may have been still pursuing his theological studies between episodes of grifting. In any case, it was off to prison in 1911.

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After prison, Seaver surfaced in Kansas City, Kansas, where he could be found doing "humorous readings" at the Friendship Club (*Kansas City Star*, April 21, 1915). His parole date, July 13, 1913, appears in an article in the *Evening News* (Jeffersonville, Ind.) of May 12, 1916. It was part of a larger piece that convinced me that Mr. Seaver was thoroughly a scoundrel, and not just misunderstood. This time he had a new scam, and found himself in the hands of federal authorities, who caught up with him in Kansas City, Missouri, for "using the United States mails for fraudulent purposes." His idea was very simple and quite cruel: he would pore over various newspapers and other publications, looking for ads seeking lost relatives. He would reply, posing as a man of the cloth, saying he located the missing person – who was in dire straits, and desired to return, if only some cash could be provided to pay for a ticket and some fresh clothes.



Headline as it appeared in the *Evening News* (photo left)

I do not know how long his second visit to prison lasted, but by this point, it was abundantly clear that his life needed a change of direction. In 1917, he joined the Navy. His service records show that he received an honorable discharge and attained the rank of Chief, having served aboard the destroyer USS McDougal. After mustering out at Philadelphia, he returned to Indiana and got a job as a piano salesman in Indianapolis, and by the time of the 1920 Federal Census, he was married to Margaret Blanche Marlow, and had a son, named Jesse, Jr. The marriage did not last, however, and was over before the 1924 publication of *The Seaver Genealogy*, and a move back to Philadelphia.

There is no doubt that Seaver's first book, *The Seaver Genealogy*, is legitimate. While not quite up to today's standards for citations and sourcing, it contains some original research and lots of references, and is no worse than many first efforts. The first edition of 200 copies was published privately, available for the not unreasonable price of \$2.00 (about \$28 today). The year, Nineteen twenty-five saw the publication of *The Holcombe Genealogy*, which was about his fraternal grandmother's side of the family. This was legitimate too, but in it we see hints of things to come. This time the book was published by subscription, and even before it came off the press – but after the orders had been placed – the price was raised to three dollars from two. This book also featured the debut of the American Historical-Genealogical Society, of which Jesse claimed to be the principal organizer. Making a debut, as well, was the inclusion of a song (in fact, two) of topical lyrics set to a popular tune to be sung at family reunions.

The American Historical-Genealogical Society was little more than a post office box, with its "library" in a bedroom, but being head of an incorporated society gave Seaver some pull. He was able to find his way into the National Wilson Association (an organization founded by descendants of James Wilson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence), and in 1928, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, was elected secretary-treasurer, and served as toastmaster of the annual dinner. This was no mean feat, as other Society officers included a former ambassador to Mexico and the retired head of the U.S. Naval Academy (and former Atlantic Fleet commander).

The first book published under the aegis of the American Historical-Genealogical Society appeared in 1927. There were four more titles issued in 1928, all authored by J. Montgomery Seaver – just a trickle, really – and arguably still somewhat useful and reasonably priced at two dollars apiece. Seaver married Pearl A. Stewart that year in Philadelphia – and the year that follows tells a whole different story: In 1929 alone, Seaver churned out a remarkable 41 of the 57 volumes he would eventually author, and had perfected his model and, some would say, his scam. The books were boilerplate, and he made no attempt to hide the fact. An ad on the last page of each volume, promoting the other titles, could not have stated it more clearly: "The contents are similar in all of these books." Each volume featured "The Battle Hymn of the [surname here]" with lyrics about the family's most notable ancestors, set to the tune of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," to be sung at family reunions. The volumes mixed liberal amounts of filler with content lifted from other published works, and tended to be slim, generally about 80 pages, but they were expensive! Most were ten dollars,

continued from previous page

or about \$180 in today's dollars. He could fairly claim that there were no known inaccuracies, and that the content came from respected sources. And he did use end notes to identify those sources. He did not claim full authorship: below his portrait on the frontispiece of each title, he would identify himself as "*the compiler of*" this volume.

Simply put, these books were a terrible rip-off. That would be fine if no one bought them, but Seaver brought elements of his two old scams together to really clean up. The first element was passing worthless paper – this time books instead of forged checks – and the second was targeting peoples' interest in long-lost family – inspired by his "missing relatives" con. According to the *Chase Chronicle*, July-Oct., 1930 issue, he would use directories and phone books to identify people with surnames that matched his titles, and aggressively pitch the books as valuable family history and excellent gifts, with the promise of discovering famous and important ancestors. One could even have the books personalized with gold stamping. Color coats-of-arms were available for an additional three dollars.

This was a very successful business model. The *Morning News* (Florence, S.C.) reported on March 25, 1934 that the Postmaster General had determined Jesse raked in \$100,000 in five years (an amount approaching \$2 million today). The problem with confidence games, of course, is that eventually you will run out of easy marks, and someone will become suspicious. This is especially true if you get careless, and that is exactly what happened. The *Evening Huronite* (Huron, South Dakota) offers the best summary of what followed:

**University Of South Dakota Professor
Responsible For Revealing New Racket**

Headline as it appeared in the Evening Huronite (Huron, South Dakota), March 29, 1934, p. 7 (photo left)

VERMILLION, Mar. 29. -- A genealogy racket involving \$100,000 and persons living all over the United States was recently unearthed by federal authorities upon a "tip" given them by Dr. A. L. Keith, professor of Greek at the University of South Dakota.

About two years ago, one J. Montgomery Seaver, who had three offices in Philadelphia and one in New York, wrote to Dr. Keith requesting information that might be used in writing a genealogy of the Keith family, and adding that Dr. Keith would be named as the author of the history.

Dr. Keith, who has done much genealogical research, sent the material, but said that he did not wish his name to be used in connection with the book.

Soon afterwards, however, he received a letter from a woman in Georgia who said that, knowing Dr. Keith to be an authority on genealogies, she had paid \$80.00 for eight copies of a family history alleged to have been written by him, but which turned out to be a "fake."

Dr. Keith immediately notified the federal authorities, who began investigations and discovered that Seaver had made \$100,000 in five years by digging around the roots of family trees and "discovering" that they extended to William the Conqueror and other notables.

The whole business, in spite of the four offices, was a "racket," according to Postal Inspector A. T. Hawksworth.

Seaver, 42, was tried in the United States District court and was sentenced to 15 months in the federal penitentiary. Twenty-two persons testified that they had paid him \$10.00 for a book of family history and \$3.00 for a coat-of-arms.

It took four years of complaints and criminal investigation to make the charges stick, and were it not for Dr. Keith, Jesse might have remained a free man. After doing his time, Seaver lived in Hammond, Indiana, where he kept a low profile until about 1937, when he moved back east. Somewhere along the way, he and his second wife divorced, and anywhere for too long, the Federal Census informs us that one year later, he was living in Washington, DC, working as – of all things – a door-to-door book salesman. A city directory shows that in 1948 the Seavers could be found in Roanoke Rapids, in his wife's home state of North Carolina. It would also seem that his scamming days were finally over,

continued from previous page

although not, perhaps, his methods. As it turns out, Seaver just couldn't stay out of the limelight. Several years after coming to town, he placed himself in a position of influence again, this time as the founder and president of the "Carolina Christian Unions," an organization promoted as an "Interdenominational Christian-Temperance-Patriotic Reform program." Unlike the American Historical-Genealogical Society, this group had a real board of directors and several active chapters and accomplished real things too. In an article in the *Rocky Mount, N.C. Telegram*, August 10, 1965, announcing one such event, Jesse Seaver, speaking for the Union, hoped that it would be the "greatest dry mass meeting ever held in eastern North Carolina!" Here, he claimed he got his start "over 50 years ago," adding: "I helped bring in the XVIIIth Amendment and I helped fight against repeal."

What a character! He was three times married, and three times sent to prison, yet he also had dozens of books to his credit, and finished his life as a pillar of virtue in his community. Jesse Montgomery Seaver died December 21, 1975 at Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, at age 84. He was survived by his third wife, Mary, and thousands of chickens, as he had become a poultry farmer. He is also survived, to this day, by thousands of copies of all those books he cranked out between 1924 and 1932. Many of the titles are still in print, and can be found at Amazon, in paperback, for about ten dollars apiece. They can also be found in many libraries, including the Connecticut State Library, where the value of keeping them on the shelves is still a matter of debate.

There is a Connecticut connection to this story. The informant for his death certificate was Virginia Lowell of Ashford. Why was she in North Carolina at the time of Jesse's death and how she is related to him? I know that Jesse Seaver had at least two children – one by his first wife, who seems untraceable – and one who died in infancy, by his third wife, and with fourteen siblings, it is quite possible that she could be a niece – but this is research for another time.

Sources consulted:

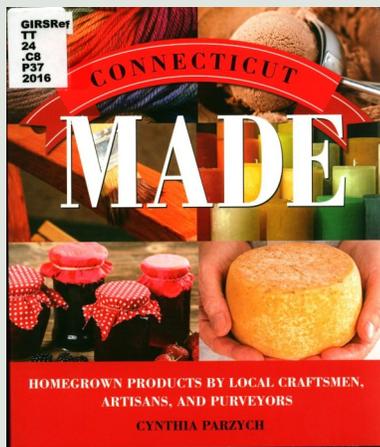
- 1910 United States Federal Census. Census Place: Jennings, Scott, Indiana; Page: 11B; Enumeration District: 0139.
- 1920 United States Federal Census. Census Place: Indianapolis Ward 2, Marion, Indiana; Page: 12B; Enumeration District: 57.
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- Chase-Chace Family Association. *The Chase chronicle*. Cambridge, Mass. vol. 20: no. 3-4, July-Oct. 1930, pp.33-34.
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- Evening News* (Jeffersonville, Ind.), May 12, 1916, p.1.
- Evening Telegram* (Elyria, Ohio) March 3, 1911, p.1.
- Hammond Times* (Hammond, Ind.) September 30, 1937, p.1.
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- Seaver, Jesse Montgomery. *The Seaver Genealogy*. Philadelphia, Penn., 1924.



From *The Rocky Mount, N.C. Telegram*, August 10, 1965, p.7A

Additions to the Collection

Submitted by Staff

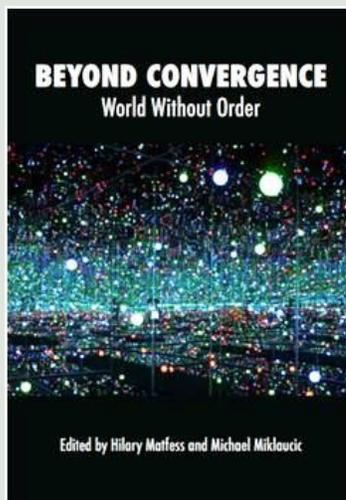


**Connecticut Made :
Local Craftsman,
Artisans, and
Purveyors**

Cynthia Parzych

[TT24.C8 P37 2016](#)

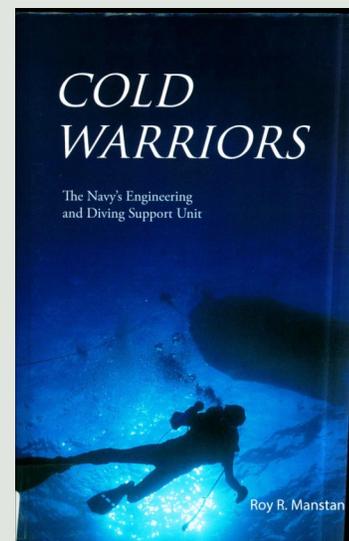
[Online access also available](#)



**Beyond Convergence:
World Without Order**

Edited by Hilary Matfess
and Michael Miklaucic

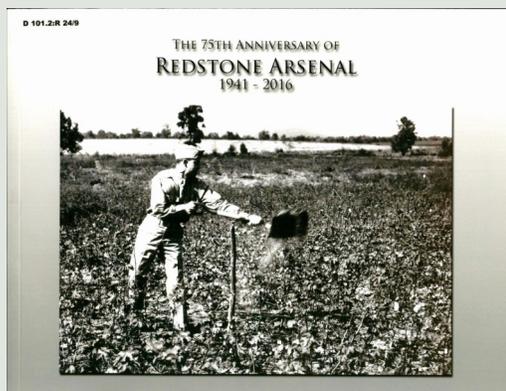
[Federal Documents D
5.417/2:C 76/3](#)



**Cold Warriors: The
Navy's Engineering
and Diving Support
Unit**

Roy R. Manstan

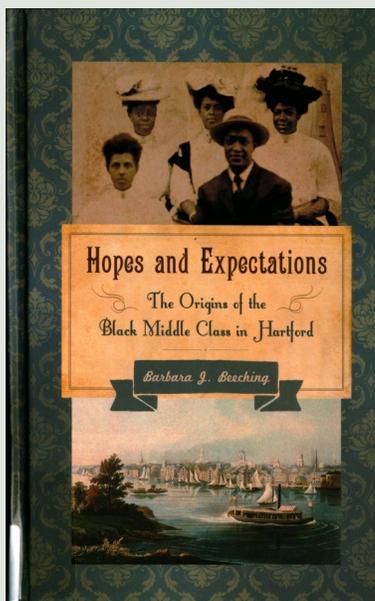
[VM981.M26 2014](#)



**The 75th Anniversary
of Redstone Arsenal, 1941-2016.**

United States. Army Materiel
Command

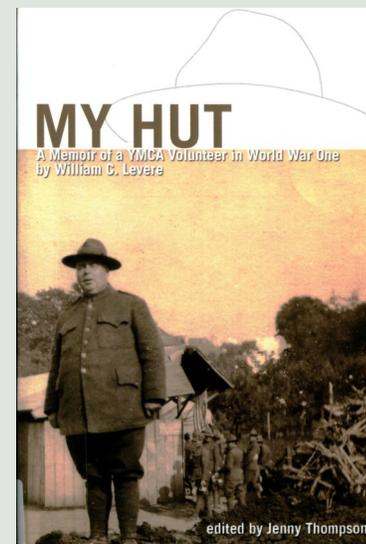
[Federal Documents D 101.2:R
24/9](#)



**Hopes and
Expectations: The
Origins of the Black
Middle Class in
Hartford**

Barbara Beeching

[F104.H3 B44 2017](#)

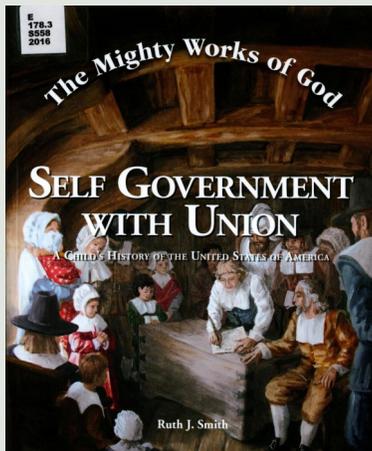


**My Hut: A Memoir of a
YMCA Volunteer in
World War One**

William C. Levere
(William Collin)

[D640 .L4847 2006](#)

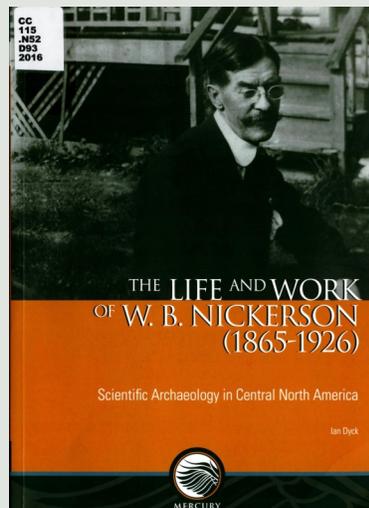
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Self Government With Union: A Child's History of the United States of America

Ruth J. Smith

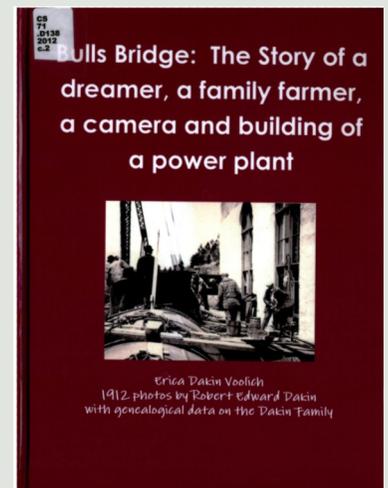
[E178.3 S558 2016](#)



The Life and Work of W.B. Nickerson (1865-1926): Scientific Archaeology in Central North America

Ian G. Dyck

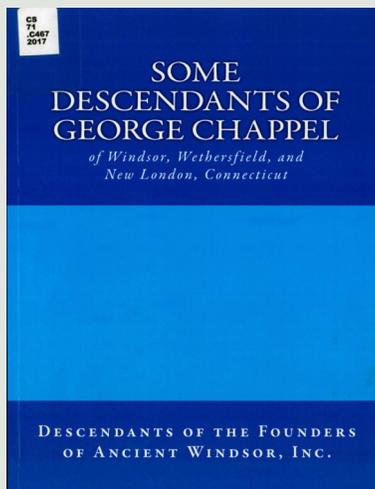
[CC115.N52 D93 2016](#)



Bulls Bridge: The Story of a Dreamer, a Family Farmer, a Camera and the Building of a Power Plant: With Genealogical Information on the Dakin family

Erica Dakin Voolich

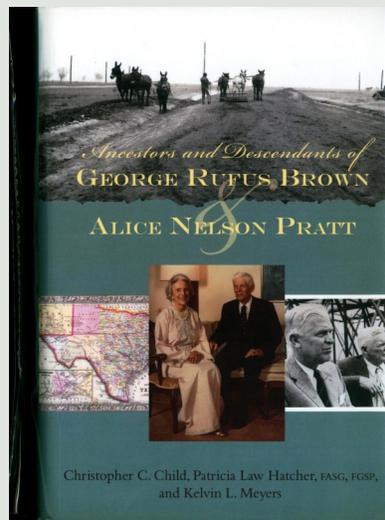
[CS71.D138 2012](#)



Some Descendants of George Chappel of Windsor, Wethersfield and New London, Connecticut

Edwin W. Strickland Editor

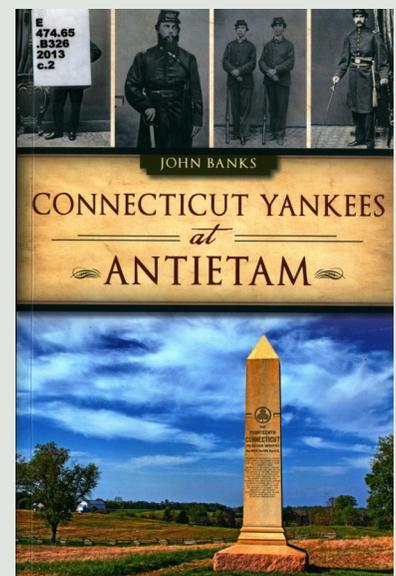
[CS71.C467 2017](#)



Ancestors and Descendants of George Rufus Brown and Alice Nelson Pratt

Christopher Challenger Child 1980-Patricia Law Hatcher; Kelvin L. Meyers

[CS71 .B88 2013](#)



Connecticut Yankees at Antietam

John Banks

[E474.65 .B326 2013](#)

*Photos of Past Third Thursday
Events at the Connecticut State*

February 26, 2017 -

**Former Negro League Baseball
player Gilbert Hernandez Black**

shared stories about his long successful history with baseball. The talk included his triumphs and challenges. His love of the sport was evident in his spirited talk.

The audience were very receptive and enjoyed seeing the memorabilia shown in these pictures, which included shirts, pictures, ball, and glove.



**April 20, 2017 - What it
Means to Commemorate
War** (Left)- Dr. Matt

Warshauer, professor of History at CCSU, is the Founder, Co-Chair, and was Project Coordinator of the Connecticut Civil War Commemoration Commission, from 2008-2015. (Middle) Commissioner John Monahan, one of twelve

members of the U.S. World War One Centennial Commission, is a Connecticut resident, and a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Army. (Right) Steve Thornton is a retired union organizer who now writes for the Shoeleather History Project, which documents and explores progressive organizing from Hartford's grassroots.



May 11, 2017- Dr. Allison Horrocks' presentation on Connecticut's History of Youth and Recreation During The Progressive Era-Presented by the Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project.

Dr. Horrocks contributed a study guide on this topic to the Connecticut Digital Newspaper Project, <http://ctdigitalnewspaperproject.org/> which is sponsored by the National Digital Newspaper Program. The National Digital Newspaper Program is a joint partnership of the Library of Congress and the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities. Dr. Allison Horrocks is a public historian who teaches at the University of Connecticut. Her primary research interest is the history of home economics.

Third Thursdays



at the CT State Library

Preserving the Past. Informing the Future.

**June 15, 2017
12:00-12:45**

**Katherine Noonan Will Discuss
World War I Poet
Wilfred Owen**



**Connecticut State Library
231 Capitol Ave.
Memorial Hall
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 757-6668**

State Library Board Update

***By State Librarian
Kendall F. Wiggin***

Justice Andrew J. McDonald

Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers has appointed Justice Andrew J. McDonald as her designee to the State Library Board. Justice McDonald succeeds Justice Peter Zarella who retired in December 2016. Justice

McDonald, a Connecticut native, received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1988 from Cornell University. He earned a Juris Doctor degree, with honors, from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1991. In January of 2013, Governor Dannel P. Malloy nominated Justice McDonald to be an associate justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court. He was confirmed by the Connecticut General Assembly on January 23, 2013, and was sworn into office on January 24, 2013 by Governor Malloy. Prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice McDonald served as the General Counsel to the Office of the Governor for the State of Connecticut from 2011 to 2013. In this role, he served as chief legal advisor to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and senior staff of the Executive Branch of government.

From 1991 to 2011 he was engaged in the private practice of law, first as an associate and then as a partner, with the firm of Pullman & Comley, LLC. From January of 1999 to July of 2002, Justice McDonald also served as the Director of Legal Affairs and Corporation Counsel for the City of Stamford.

Justice McDonald was a State Senator from 2003 to 2011. He represented Stamford and Darien in the twenty-seventh district. Justice McDonald served as the Senate Chairman of the Judiciary Committee for all eight years he was in the General Assembly. During periods of his legislative career he also served as the Senate Vice Chairman of the Energy and Technology Committee and as a member of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee, the Transportation Committee, the Education Committee and the Regulations Review Committee. From 2005 to 2011, he served as Deputy Majority Leader of the Senate.

Mary Etter

House Minority Leader Representative Themis Klarides has appointed Mary Etter to the State Library Board. Mary spent fourteen years as a children's librarian in Massachusetts and Connecticut before becoming the Director of the South Windsor Public Library in 1985. She received a bachelors degree in English Literature from the College of New Rochelle and a masters degree in Library Science from Simmons College. She has spent many years in leadership roles in the Connecticut and New England Library Associations, was active in the formation of the Connecticut Library Consortium, participated in the Governor's and White House Conferences on Libraries, and was a member of the Advisory Council for the Connecticut Center for the Book, chairing the committee responsible for the Connecticut Book Awards. She presently chairs the Governance Committee for Library Connection, Inc., (LCI) is co-chair of the Connecticut Library Association's Legislative Committee, and is involved in library advocacy on the state and federal levels. She first served on the Connecticut State Library Board from 1992–1998.

Sandy Ruoff

Senate President Martin Looney has appointed Sandy Ruoff to the State Library Board. Sandy worked at the Buley Library, Southern Connecticut State University, and at the New Haven Free Public Library before joining the staff of the Guilford Library as a Children's Librarian in 1977. At the Guilford Library she served as Assistant Director from 1978-1987 before becoming Director in 1997. She received a bachelor's degree from Southern Connecticut State University and a master's in Library Science from Rutgers University. She has been actively involved in a number of library organizations including: the Connecticut Library Association, serving as President, 1993-1994, Legislative Committee Chair, 1988-2000, and was chosen as "Outstanding Librarian in Connecticut" in 1994; board member and legislative liaison on the Connecticut Library Consortium; the American Library Association Awards Committee, 2003-2004; President of Board of Directors, Libraries Online (LION) 1996-1998 and 2000-2002; and President of the Fairfield Library Administrators Group, 2001-2003. She is also active in numerous civic groups in Guilford.

In Memoriam



It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to our colleague and friend, Mark Smith. Mark passed away on May 2, 2017. Mark was the Fiscal Administrative Manager for the State Library since 2010 and was respected by everyone who knew him. His constant kindness, humor, and friendship is a huge loss to us all and we miss him very much.



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