

The CONNservator

Newsletter of the Office of the Public Records Administrator

August 2003

Volume 3 Number 2

State Library Board

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- LeAnn Johnson, Public Records Program Grant Specialist
- Lizette Pelletier, Archival Consultant and Editor
- Bruce Stark, Assistant State Archivist

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2004 Cycle I Grant Recipients

The Office of the Public Records Administrator announces one hundred and thirty-two grants totaling \$1,098,300.00 from the Historic Documents Grant Programs. This year's grants range from \$7,000 to \$17,000. The awards consisted of \$219,000 for Archival Storage Equipment; \$160,000 for Index Re-creation; \$595,000 for Paper Conservation; \$78,000 for Preservation Microfilming; \$20,300 for Preservation Surveys and \$26,000 for Records Management Surveys.

These grant awards bring the town participation in the program to one hundred percent as every town has received at least one grant. For a complete list of grantees, please turn to page 3.

Notes from the Public Records Administrator

Eunice G. DiBella, Public Records Administrator, Connecticut State Library

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” is the famous first line of Charles Dickens’ “A Tale of Two Cities.” Although Dickens wrote the novel in 1859, his observation easily applies today to the state’s public records and archives program. It certainly is the best of times when we look at the revenue accruing in the Historic Documents Preservation Account. The state’s strong real estate market combined with historically low mortgage rates and a high volume of refinancing has led to increased recordings statewide. Of course, this can’t go on forever, but we don’t have an accurate way to predict when it will end.

The State of Connecticut has one of the largest local records grant programs in the country based on the total number of grants and the dollar amount awarded. Connecticut is the only state that gives out non-competitive targeted grants. Any municipality that applies and meets the eligibility criteria receives a grant award.

It has been very satisfying during our vault inspections and town visits to see the grant program poster prominently displayed. The poster designed by the graphics design firm Cummings & Good of Chester, CT recently received awards from the Ad Club of Connecticut and from the Connecticut Art Directors Club (CDAC).

This last grant round was a great success. We awarded 132 grants for a total of \$1,098,300. Paper conservation remains the primary category that municipalities opted to apply for a total of \$595,000. The expanded grant categories as well as the ability to apply for more than one category encouraged new types of projects. Archival storage equipment was the second most popular category, with awards totaling \$219,000. Three towns, Brookfield, Groton and Simsbury, were awarded grants for records management surveys. We encourage more towns to apply for this category in future grant cycles as a

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precursor to future competitive grants. We also encourage every town that did not apply for a grant in the first cycle to do so in cycle two.

It is also the worst of times for the program due to the ongoing state budget crisis. The State Library, like every other state agency, has suffered from budget cuts, layoffs, and retirements. Layoffs hit the State Archives and Records Program especially hard due to the low seniority of the staff. Barbara Austen, the local government records archivist, was laid off in December. Our assistant state archivist, and two durational archivists for our court records project funded by the National Historic Preservation Historical Preservation and Records Commission (NHPRC) also received lay off notices.

We were able to restore the assistant state archivist position by shifting the funding source from the general fund to the preservation account by reassigning some of his duties to processing the local government records in our collection. We are working to restore the provisional positions so that our Federal grant project can continue. We remain cautiously optimistic that we will be able to do so.

The State Library continues its commitment to provide training to town clerks in topics relevant to both preserva-

tion and records management. The June 11th records management workshop had 70 participants, and received very favorable evaluations. We are planning a hands-on wet materials workshop with Northeast Document Conservation Center for next spring (2004). There will be two one-day sessions at the Van Block facility that will include fire extinguisher training to provide the most realistic environment. We are also working with the Town Clerks Association's education committee on a grant writing program for the advanced town clerk's school this fall.



Another initiative includes planning for competitive grants in the near future. Our ability to implement this phase of the grant program will largely depend upon our ability to add the necessary additional staff. We will continue to update you of our efforts in this area.

“A Word from the Archives”

by Bruce Stark, Assistant State Archivist, Connecticut State Library

State statute reserves thirty percent of the Historic Document Preservation Fund for the Connecticut State Library to manage the program and to preserve its historic records. Barbara Austen, the program's Local Government Records Archivist, unfortunately, was laid off last December. In her short tenure, she accomplished a great deal. After inventorying all the town and borough records from the 118 towns in the collection, Barbara documented the collection's preservation needs. She then devised a priority list for processing the records. Before leaving state service, she completed the records of Glastonbury and had made good progress on the records of Hartland.

After familiarizing myself with Barbara's processing and arranging format, I am continuing work on the Hartland records. I began interfiling, repairing, and taking notes on the materials for the finding aid. The bulk of my time has been spent on a large and significant collection of Hartland justice court records from 1770 to 1911. These re-

ords will fill 10 boxes and make up about forty percent of Hartland's records. Tax lists for individuals, 1856-1909, comprise the second largest group of records.

For anyone interested in local history, court records are a particularly valuable, although underutilized, resource. These types of records can be difficult to use due to the fact that the materials are often disarranged, in poor physical condition, folded, and stored in packets. These problems are inherent in all Connecticut court records, whether from local justice of the peace courts, county courts, or superior courts.

Town court records are particularly useful to genealogists and to researchers interested in judicial history including crime and legal practices, economic history, family history, social history, and women's history. The records consist of summonses or writs that name plaintiff and de-

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2004 Cycle I Grant Recipients

Municipality	Grant Category	Amount	Municipality	Grant Category	Amount
Ansonia	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000	East Windsor	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000
Ashford	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
Avon	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000	Easton	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000
Barkhamsted	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000	Ellington	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Berlin	Preservation Survey/Microfilming	\$ 7,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
	Archival Storage Equipment		Enfield	Paper Conservation	\$12,000
Bethany	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
	Archival Storage Equipment		Essex	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Bethel	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000	Farmington	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Bloomfield	Index Recreation	\$ 7,000	Franklin	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
Bolton	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000		Paper Conservation	
Bozrah	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000	Glastonbury	Preservation Microfilming	\$12,000
Branford	Archival Storage Equipment	\$12,000	Goshen	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Bristol	Paper Conservation	\$12,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
Brookfield	Records Management Survey	\$ 7,000	Greenwich	Index Re-creation	\$12,000
Brooklyn	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000	Griswold	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
Burlington	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Groton	Records Management Survey	\$12,000
Canaan	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000	Guilford	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Canterbury	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
Canton	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000	Haddam	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000
	Paper Conservation			Preservation Microfilming	
Cheshire	Index Re-creation/Microfilming	\$12,000	Hamden	Index Re-creation	\$12,000
Clinton	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Hartford	Paper Conservation	\$17,000
Colchester	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
	Archival Storage Equipment		Hartland	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Columbia	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Harwinton	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
Cornwall	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Hebron	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
	Archival Storage Equipment			Paper Conservation	
Cromwell	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Kent	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Danbury	Paper Conservation	\$12,000	Killingly	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000
Darien	Preservation Microfilming	\$ 7,000	Killingworth	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
Durham	Preservation Survey/Microfilming	\$ 7,000	Ledyard	Preservation Survey	\$ 6,300
				Archival Storage Equipment	
East Granby	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000	Lisbon	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000
East Haddam	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000	Litchfield	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
East Hampton	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Lyme	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
	Archival Storage Equipment		Madison	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
East Hartford	Archival Storage Equipment	\$12,000	Manchester	Archival Storage Equipment	\$12,000
	Paper Conservation			Paper Conservation	
East Haven	Paper Conservation	\$12,000	Mansfield	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
	Preservation Microfilming		Marlborough	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
East Lyme	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000			
	Paper Conservation				

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Municipality	Grant Category	Amount	Municipality	Grant Category	Amount
Meriden	Paper Conservation	\$12,000	Sharon	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
	Archival Storage Equipment		Shelton	Paper Conservation	\$12,000
Middlebury	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
Middlefield	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000	Sherman	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
	Preservation Microfilming		Simsbury	Records Management Survey	\$ 7,000
Middletown	Paper Conservation	\$12,000	Somers	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Milford	Paper Conservation	\$12,000		Preservation Microfilming	
Monroe	Preservation Microfilming	\$ 7,000	South Windsor	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
	Archival Storage Equipment		Southbury	Preservation Microfilming	\$ 7,000
Montville	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Southington	Preservation Microfilming	\$12,000
	Archival Storage Equipment		Sprague	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
Morris	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000		Paper Conservation	
New Fairfield	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Stafford	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
New Hartford	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000	Stamford	Paper Conservation	\$17,000
New Milford	Paper Conservation	\$12,000	Sterling	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
Newington	Archival Storage Equipment	\$12,000	Stonington	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
Newtown	Archival Storage Equipment	\$12,000	Stratford	Paper Conservation	\$12,000
	Paper Conservation			Archival Storage Equipment	
Norfolk	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000	Thomaston	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
North Branford	Preservation Microfilming	\$ 7,000	Thompson	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
North Canaan	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Tolland	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
North Stonington	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Torrington	Paper Conservation	\$12,000
Norwich	Paper Conservation	\$12,000	Vernon	Index Re-creation	\$12,000
Old Saybrook	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Voluntown	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
Orange	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Wallingford	Paper Conservation	\$12,000
Oxford	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Warren	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
	Archival Storage Equipment		Waterbury	Paper Conservation	\$17,000
Plainfield	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Waterford	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Plainville	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Watertown	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000
Plymouth	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	West Hartford	Archival Storage Equipment	\$12,000
	Archival Storage Equipment		Westbrook	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Preston	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000	Weston	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000
	Paper Conservation		Westport	Archival Storage Equipment	\$12,000
Prospect	Index Re-creation	\$ 7,000	Wethersfield	Paper Conservation	\$12,000
Redding	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
	Paper Conservation		Willington	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Ridgefield	Archival Storage Equipment	\$ 7,000	Wilton	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
	Paper Conservation		Winchester	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Rocky Hill	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Windham	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Salem	Preservation Microfilming	\$ 7,000	Windsor	Paper Conservation	\$12,000
	Archival Storage Equipment		Windsor Locks	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000
Salisbury	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000	Woodstock	Preservation Microfilming	\$ 7,000
	Archival Storage Equipment				
Seymour	Paper Conservation	\$ 7,000			

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defendant, describe the nature of the offense, specify the date the parties are to appear, and the name of the justice of the peace trying the case. The files often also include depositions by third parties or testimonies by parties in the case, short reports on pleading, information on the settlement of each case, and information on court costs.

The bulk of the cases brought before town courts concern debt, with plaintiffs suing to collect book debts or debts by note. Book debts consist of money owed by a defendant to a merchant or shopkeeper for goods purchased but not paid for, while debts by note consist of promissory notes where one party agrees to pay money or provide a service to the other party. To cite just one example, Austin Ensign sued Platt Beach, formerly of Hartland “but now absconded and out of this state” for \$10 damages on February 21, 1816. The defendant was indebted to the plaintiff by note but paid with a counterfeit bank note. Beach failed to appear at his June 1816 trial, was fined \$11 for debt, and obliged to pay court costs of \$3.94.

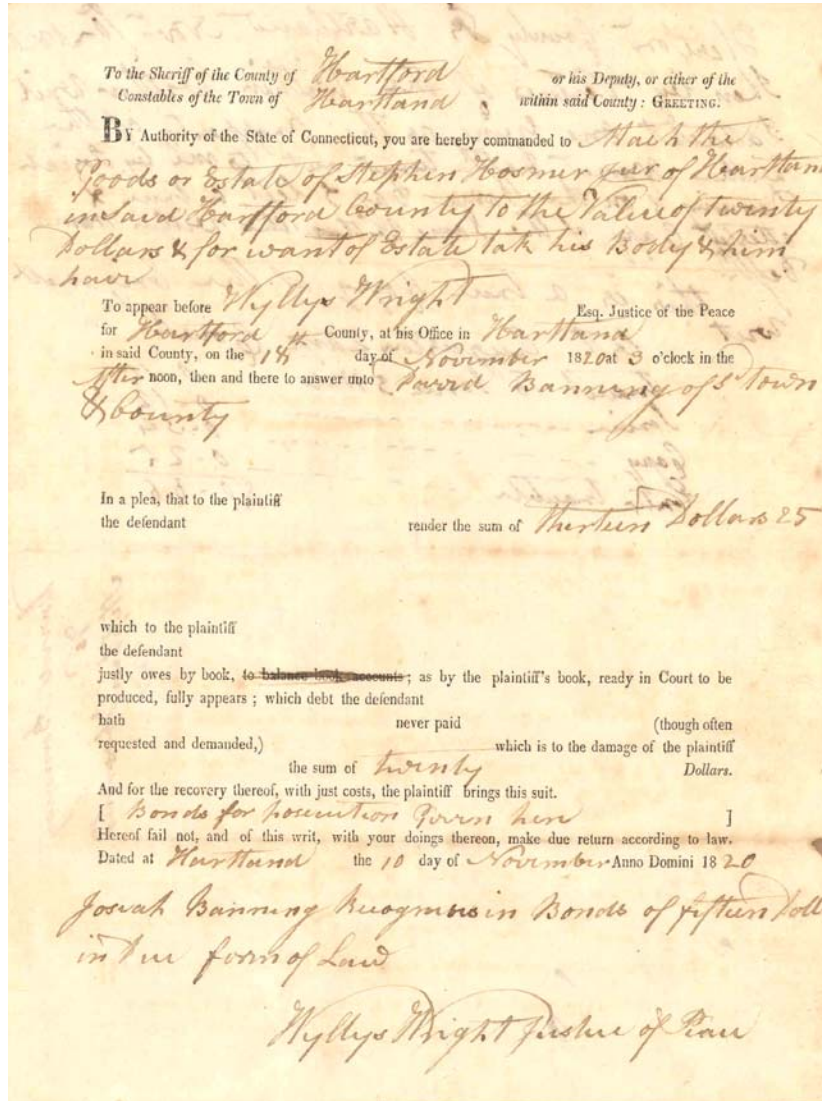
The files also include cases of adultery and fornication, assault, breach of Sabbath, defamation and slander, disputes over land ownership, false testimony, fraudulent sale, idleness and bad husbandry, lascivious carriage, malicious mischief, profane swearing, riot, theft, and trespass. A handful of examples follow. On September 8, 1794, grand juror Samuel Benjamin charged Jeremiah Wilcox with adultery. Specifically, Wilcox “being a married Man,

did unlawfully get into Bed with Elisabeth, Wife of Own Ruick of said Hartland . . . in a lascivious & unlawfull & indecent Manner.” In 1808, Louis Standly was charged with profane swearing in calling “Earl Standly . . . a god damed Lyar.” He plead guilty, was fined \$1.00, and ordered to pay court costs of \$.48. In still another case, Sylvester Stevens was accused in 1813 of stealing pork from a barrel in Hezekiah Atkins’ cellar. He plead guilty. In 1826, eight years after Connecticut adopted a new constitution that separating church and state, Samuel

Banning, George Spencer, and Orven Olmsted were accused of breach of Sabbath by laughing and playing with a pair of broken glasses and in so behaving “willfully disturbed the Congregation.” Banning and Spencer were found guilty at trial before justice Eli Wilder, while Olmsted was found not guilty. Finally, in State vs. Philander Emmons in 1846, Emmons was accused of falsely telling the Hartland Board of Relief that he had only \$20 to his name in order to avoid a tax assessment. The charges were later withdrawn.

Court cases like these are particularly useful for those trying to understand how the local economy functioned, the

nature of personal relationships within a community, and the incidence of crime and unsanctioned personal behavior. Anyone studying local history should make the effort to mine the riches found in court records.



Banning v. Hosmer November 10, 1820 RG 062: Hartland Town Records

NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ADMINISTRATOR

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Financial Report

As of June 30, 2003

Total Receipts:

Town filings	\$5,180,361.00
Interest	<u>\$ 98,664.35</u>
	\$5,279,025.35

Disbursements

Grants awarded	\$1,450,610.07
Operational expenses	<u>\$ 421,035.25</u>
	\$1,871,645.32

Set asides

Disaster Recovery Grants	\$ 100,000.00
Competitive Grants (future)	<u>\$ 150,000.00</u>
	\$ 250,000.00

Balance

\$3,157,380.03

Committed Funds FY2004

Grants approved but not awarded (132 towns)	\$1,098,300.00
Operational expenses (est.)	\$ 340,000.00
State Library preservation projects	<u>\$ 510,000.00</u>
	\$1,948,300.00

Available Balance

\$1,209,080.03

Reminder Dates/Upcoming Events

LeAnn Johnson, Public Records Program Grant Specialist

The deadline for filing Cycle 2 grant applications is **September 30, 2003**. 132 towns received grants in Cycle 1. The grant program staff's goal is 100% participation this year. The remaining 37 towns must apply in Cycle 2 to make this possible! Please contact the office for assistance.

Final Evaluation/Expenditure reports for last year's grant are due on September 1, 2003. All grant work must have been completed by June 30, 2003. Please go to <http://www.cslib.org/grantforms.htm> to obtain a copy of the final report form.

The grant program staff has developed a list of resources for your use including educational materials, internet listservs, recommended readings, software, and supplies that will be available on our website in the near future.

Our next workshop will be held in the spring of 2004 at a date to be determined. We will be scheduling two separate dates due to the limited number of openings per session. Lori Foley, Field Service Representative, at Northeast Document Conservation Center will conduct an indoor hands-on disaster recovery exercise with wet materials. The Hartford Fire Department will also conduct fire extinguisher training. Look for more information on this instructive program in the near future.

