



The CONNservator

Newsletter of the Office of the Public Records Administrator

February 2004

Volume 4 Number 1

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A New Year's Resolution

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

The start of a new year is a time for reflection on past events, as well as making resolutions for the year to come. This holds true for the Historic Preservation Grant Program. We can look back on the tremendous accomplishments made during the past four years. The State Library has made a great effort to develop and administer a successful records preservation grant program, and the municipalities, especially the town clerks, have worked very hard to develop successful grant applications. This has led to a rewarding partnership.

The Historic Preservation Grant staff was busy this past fiscal year (2004). We awarded 132 grants for a total of \$1,098,300 and 33 grants for an additional \$276,000, in cycles one and two respectively, for a total of \$1,374,300. Since the grant program's inception, we have awarded an impressive \$2,826,040, making this one of the largest local records grant programs in the country.

The next grant round remains limited to targeted grants; however, we have added new projects within the categories and increased the list of eligible expenses. We are planning to offer competitive grants on a limited basis in the first cycle of FY 2006, providing we are able to hire additional staff to handle this

new program element.

However, as with any endeavor, there are always areas that require further attention. The staff has worked with applicant towns to resolve problems or obtain additional information, often up to the date the State Library awarded the grant. We have also had numerous problems with the submission of grant expenditure reports by the date mandated by statute. We ask that you help to make our job easier by paying careful attention to the required submission dates as outlined in our grant guidelines for FY 2005.

In the coming grant year, we will impose stricter standards for submitting these materials. Failure to submit grant applications and backup materials within the specified time-frame will make the application ineligible for that grant cycle. Such applications will be deferred to the next cycle. Failure to submit a Project Evaluation/Grant Expenditure Report by the mandated date will make a town ineligible for a future grant. For more information, refer to the article on changes to the grant program included in this newsletter. Please pay attention to these dates, and **make this your resolution for the New Year.**

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Changes to the Grant Program for FY 2005

There are a number of changes to this year's grant program. Please read the new guidelines carefully, especially regarding the filing and reporting deadlines.

The most obvious change is in the project categories, which have been consolidated and renamed to better reflect the grant program's funding priorities and to provide applicants with the greatest possible options for a grant

project. The long-term goal is to lay a foundation for the program's future development. Eligible projects have been increased within the new categories. There are also more eligible expenses including additional types of equipment as well as the option to hire temporary help or increase existing staff hours for the duration of a project.

The new grant categories are: Inventory and
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Grant Program Changes (Continued from page 1)

Planning; Program Development; Preservation/Conservation; Organization and Indexing; and Storage and Facilities. **Inventory and planning** includes all previously eligible surveys and the newly approved disaster planning and facilities assessment surveys. The State Library strongly encourages towns to apply for one or more planning grants as a basis for future grant applications. Completion of at least one type of planning survey will be a pre-requisite for applying for a competitive grant when that phase begins. A municipality may now conduct one or more of these planning activities in a grant period. **Organization and indexing** includes index recreation projects to correct poor indexing or other projects designed to increase access to town records by improving either the physical order within documents or by creating new indexes/descriptive guides or both. **Program development** advances the records management and/or historic preservation practices within a town usually by implementing the operational recommendations made in an earlier planning document. **Storage and Facilities** improves the physical environment for public records.

For this grant cycle, stand-alone purchases of equipment are the only eligible projects under this category. Future grant cycles may include facilities construction and renovation. If the town is purchasing equipment in conjunction with projects in another category, the applicant should designate the other category on the application. **Preservation/Conservation** consolidates the preservation microfilming and paper preservation projects from previous grant cycles into the same category.

There are new eligible expenditures this year as well. The following items may be purchased if they directly relate to the proposed project: computer hardware and/or software to be used exclusively for indexing and/or records retrieval, environmental monitoring equipment such as a hygrothermograph or data logger, HEPA (High efficiency particulate air) filter vacuum for cleaning storage areas, and a photocopier with an edge platen or an edge platen attachment for an existing photocopier, [i.e. Binder Minder™] to prevent damage to book bindings. Some personnel expenses are now eligible. Towns may apply for grant funds to cover the base pay for temporary

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FY 2004 Cycle 2 Grantees

The Office of the Public Records Administrator announces thirty-three additional grants totaling \$276,00.00 from the Historic Documents Grant Programs. This year's grants range from \$7,000 to \$17,000. The awards consisted of \$73,000 for Archival Storage Equipment; \$19,000 for Index Re-creation; \$144,000 for Paper Conservation; \$33,000 for Preservation Microfilming; and \$7,000 for Records Management Surveys. The total for FY 2004 is 165 grants for \$1,374,300.

Municipality	Grant	Amount	Municipality	Grant	Amount
Andover	Paper Conservation	\$7,000	New Britain	Index Re-creation	\$12,000
Beacon Falls	Paper Conservation	\$7,000		Paper Conservation	
	Archival Storage Equipment		New Haven	Paper Conservation	\$17,000
Bethlehem	Paper Conservation	\$7,000	New London	Paper Conservation	\$12,000
Bridgewater	Paper Conservation	\$7,000	North Haven	Preservation Microfilming	\$7,000
Chaplin	Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000	Norwalk	Preservation Microfilming	\$12,000
	Paper Conservation		Pomfret	Preservation Microfilming	\$7,000
Chester	Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
	Paper Conservation		Putnam	Paper Conservation	\$7,000
Colebrook	Paper Conservation	\$7,000	Roxbury	Paper Conservation	\$7,000
Coventry	Paper Conservation	\$7,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
Deep River	Preservation Microfilming	\$7,000	Scotland	Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000
	Archival Storage Equipment			Paper Conservation	
Derby	Paper Conservation	\$7,000	Suffield	Paper Conservation	\$7,000
	Preservation Microfilming		Trumbull	Paper Conservation	\$12,000
Eastford	Paper Conservation	\$7,000	Union	Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000
	Archival Storage Equipment			Paper Conservation	
Fairfield	Archival Storage Equipment	\$12,000	Washington	Paper Conservation	\$7,000
Granby	Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000		Archival Storage Equipment	
	Paper Conservation		West Haven	Archival Storage Equipment	\$12,000
Hampton	Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000	Wolcott	Paper Conservation	\$7,000
	Paper Conservation		Woodbridge	Index Re-creation	\$7,000
Lebanon	Archival Storage Equipment	\$7,000	Woodbury	Records Management Survey	\$7,000
Naugatuck	Paper Conservation	\$12,000			
	Preservation Microfilming				

State Library Preservation Projects

Each month, the town clerks submit to the Connecticut State Library a payment consisting of \$2.00 of the \$3.00 fee charged for every land transaction they record. As required by statute, the State Library returns to the towns seventy percent of the money submitted to it in the form of grants.

A portion of the money retained by the State Library pays the program's administrative costs including staff salaries and the expenses for the two annual workshops offered by the Public Records Administrator. How, you may ask, is the

rest of the money spent?

PA 00-146, which created the grant program, stipulated that the State Library use the funds to preserve and manage its own historical records. Although staff reductions last year have hindered the agency's ability to move forward on its own preservation efforts, work is progressing. The articles on the following pages describe two of the projects that the State Library is currently undertaking using Historic Document Preservation Program funding.

1934 Aerial Photo Mosaic Project

by Jane Cullinane, Preservation Librarian, Connecticut State Library

Connecticut was the first state to complete a statewide aerial survey in 1934. In 1935, the *Hartford Daily Courant* reported that, "Two men in a cabin plane circled around in a cloudless sky. They flew, at 100 miles an hour, up the state. Every 25 seconds the photographer took a picture of three and one quarter miles."¹ That survey produced 10,484 photographs that showed the location of houses, buildings and farms as they existed seventy years ago. The photos have been available to researchers since 1935 at the State Library. (See <http://www.cslib.org/arcrules.htm> for the rules and procedures for access to this collection.)

Governor Wilbur Cross recommended the 1934 aerial survey to the State Planning Board. Dr. Charles G. Chakerian, director of the Board, said, "The Water, Tax, Health, Highway and other departments had wanted one for years." To make it easier to use the photograph collection, in 1935, employees of the Connecticut National Guard and the State Highway Dept. pieced the 7 x 9 inch photos together, like a jigsaw puzzle. The resulting mosaic was photographed and divided into 24 x 29 inch photos.

In 2004, history repeats itself as the State of Connecticut makes available on the Worldwide Web the first statewide mosaic of an historical aerial photographic survey. After discussions dating back at least to 1988, the State Library and the University of Connecticut joined together in 2003 for this first phase, to improve access by making the 239 mosaics available on the Internet. This was accomplished using funds provided by the Historic Document Preservation Program. Another phase under discussion is to preserve the 10,484 small photographs by making new negatives. This is appropriate because the life expectancy of properly made and properly stored photographic materials is 500 years. We can't say the same for digital data.

DataVault of Stafford, CT scanned the mosaics. Earlier tests had been performed to determine the best resolution by scanning a sample mosaic at 300, 400, 600 and 800 dots per inch (dpi). Given that these images were third generation photographs, it was decided that 400 dpi was the best choice.

The process of geo-referencing is a painstaking one to determine the map coordinates of pixels (the dots in a scanned image) and assign them to the online map of the state. Ben Smith, a Master Degree student in Natural Resources Engineering and Management at the University of Connecticut, did the geo-referencing. Each of the original mosaics has corner tics showing the latitude and longitude for that point on the photo in units of five (5) minutes of degrees. The tic marks were used to geo-reference each image when available; however along the state's borders and shoreline, other ground control points such as road intersections or buildings were often needed.

The 239 mosaics scanned at about 100 Megabytes each and, when merged, they created a 27 Gigabyte file. This file has been compressed using a 'wavelet' compression that allows the user to browse through the state.

The result is one very large picture of the entire state, as it looked five years after the statewide paving project "Get Connecticut Out of the Mud" enabled the new-fangled, but popular automobiles to climb the state's hills and cruise its valleys. Users can select which town they want to 'zoom' to and explore a time when most homes had a small orchard and there were still more horses than automobiles and a whole lot less trees!

The 1934 Historical Aerial Survey of Connecticut is available at <http://mapserver.lib.uconn.edu/magic/index.htm>. Use Internet Explorer. This brings you to the site of the UConn Map and Geographic Information Center. Click on the aerial photograph, then click on the 1934 aerial photograph and when the view of the entire state displays, go to the bottom of the screen. Use the "hand" or "magnifier" button to navigate or jump to an enlarged view of some towns by using "Go to." --The "hand" moves the image from left to right. --Drag the "magnifier" to the left to enlarge the view and to the right to shrink it.

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

“Court Records Project”

by Debra Pond, Project Archivist, Connecticut State Library

In July 1814, Frederick Wolcott, Clerk of the County Court for Litchfield County, was nearing the end of his fourth volume of Executions. In this book, Wolcott had hand-copied executions granted against land owned by defendants in his court since early 1806. By ordering a new volume from local printer Oliver Goodwin, Wolcott was able to start fresh for the September court session. Goodwin delivered the new record book to Wolcott on August 7, 1814; his \$10 invoice was paid on delivery.

Wolcott passed Goodwin's receipted bill on to the county in his account for the September term. Other charges included those for “Stationary used by the Bar &,” possibly pre-printed writ forms, and a \$20 counterfeit bill drawn on the New York State Bank, which had been passed in court by “some person unknown.”

Many of Wolcott's records, including Goodwin's receipt and the counterfeit bill, are preserved today in the Connecticut State Library's archives thanks to a records preservation act passed by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1909. The law, entitled “An act concerning the preservation of books, records and documents,” permitted state and local officials, with the State Librarian's permission, to deposit for permanent preservation at the State Library, official books, records and original documents no longer in current use. Litchfield County deposited original court records at the State Library in 1928.

Early court records are a valuable source of information about the lives of women, children, minorities, and the poor, who are otherwise under-documented. Although unable to vote or hold public office, they could sue and be sued, give testimony or deposition, or file petitions seeking to have grievances redressed. In court dockets, researchers can find important details of child labor and indenture, the costs and customs of childbirth, and how law and medicine were practiced. Court records also provide evidence of the personalities and contemporary reputations of founding fathers such as Oliver Wolcott (father of clerk Frederick) and Ethan Allen.

So why are court records seldom used? While there are books, such as those kept by clerk Frederick Wolcott, that record basic information about court cases, there are no subject indexes. And these sometimes crumbling case file documents are currently folded into narrow rectangles and wrapped in string-tied bundles. This packaging can result in additional damage each time the dockets are used.

Archivists at the State Library are currently in the middle of a two-year project to process and preserve Litchfield County court records from 1751/2 to 1855, as well as those of the New London County Court up to 1855. Funded by a National Historical Records and Publications Commission [NHPRC] grant with matching funds from the state Historic

Documents Preservation Program, the Court Records Project aims to make early records of these two county courts more accessible to researchers by processing, arranging, preserving, and describing these historically valuable materials.

An important element of the Court Records Project will be the creation of searchable computer databases of records dealing with African Americans and Native Americans. Researchers in the History and Genealogy Unit at the State Library will be able to search the database by the name of the litigants or the African-American(s) or Native American(s) involved in the case. A box/file reference will be included to enable researchers to view the case files.

At the end of the project, all the records will be unfolded and carefully arranged in buffered, acid-neutral files. Professional conservators will mend badly damaged items. These fragile and irreplaceable documents will be photocopied, with the copies made available to researchers. The originals will be withdrawn from use to ensure that they will be available far into the future, as is the practice with other important parts of the Archives' collection. Finding aids for each county describing the scope and content of the collection will include a container listing to assist researchers in navigating the sometimes-frustrating maze of the early Connecticut court system and its surviving records.

Early court records can provide scholars with contemporary evidence crucial to expanding our understanding of the development of American society in the early National years. We are fortunate that Connecticut's long history of support for public records preservation safeguarded this evidence of life in Litchfield county.

Careful clerk that he was, Frederick Wolcott would approve.



Counterfeit currency. RG 003 Litchfield County Court. Papers by Subject. Expenses. 6/#17 1814. Court Expenses, 1765-1817. Box 6.

“A Word from the Archives”

by Mark H. Jones, State Archivist, Connecticut State Library

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the appointment of the first state librarian making the Library one of the oldest state agencies. Preservation of public archives has been a function of the State Library from its beginning. In 1855, the Secretary of the State transferred all early General Assembly papers prior to 1820 to the State Library. In 1886, the Assembly requested the Secretary of the State and the State Librarian to “make an inquiry . . . in regard to any ancient, colonial or state records of any of the territorial organizations now or formerly existing within the state, for the purpose of taking measures for the observation and indexing of state records.” The report issued in 1889 was one of the first by any state to assess the condition of public records in local settings.

In 1879, the legislature showed its concern for local government records by enacting a law that required all town selectmen to provide “a fire – proof safe, vault, or building for the protection of its records against fire.” The law, however, did not create an official to monitor its progress. In 1895 the State Librarian and Connecticut Bar Association got a bill introduced to create the post of Examiner of Public Records, modeled after a similar official in Massachusetts, but it died.

Four years later, lawmakers set up a Temporary Commission on Public Records to survey towns, probate judges and churches about the condition of historical records. The Com-

mission issued two reports in 1900 and 1902. In 1903, the Assembly created the position of Temporary Examiner of Public Records. In 1911, it made the post permanent assigning it to the State Library. Thus, began a partnership that has evolved until the present day.

The Examiner and then the Public Records Administrator regularly visited each town clerk to advise them on records management issues. The office changed over time and though visits to each clerk once every three years are no longer feasible, the Administrator maintains communication through new technologies such as email and its website as well as the old fashioned telephone. The goal remains the same - to provide clerks with the most accurate and state of the art records management standards. In 2000, the General Assembly added the Historical Document Preservation Program that for the first time in Connecticut’s history makes available money to the towns to manage and preserve their public and historical records.

Why commemorate the 150th? It is good to remember and acknowledge the positive relationship between the State Library and town clerks. Perspective on the past also provides a benchmark for evaluating progress in the management of public records. As of 2004 the Office of the Public Records Administrator and town clerks are positioned by legislation and resources to make great gains in the pursuit of their common goal.

Grant Program Changes (Continued from page 2)

help or additional hours for existing staff to work on a grant project. The grant application must indicate the exact hours and duties that temporary or existing staff will devote to the grant project. The town is responsible for any additional payments for overtime; employee benefits and/or applicable payroll taxes as required by statute and/or local collective bargaining agreements, if any.

Finally, we have instituted a number of procedural changes. When we began the grant program four years ago, we had two eligible projects – paper conservation and a preservation survey. Reviewing grant applications was fairly straightforward. Did the budget add up, were the T’s crossed, the I’s dotted, and the dates and signatures in the proper order? As we added new elements, evaluating the grant applications became more complicated and time consuming. The evaluation process will be even more complicated for FY 2006 when we hope to institute the competitive phase. Given the small size of the program’s staff, we must devote our limited staff resources to more critical administrative functions.

Therefore, after the application deadline for each cycle, applicants will have fifteen (15) business days to supply additional information or submit changes requested by staff. **If the information is not provided within that time frame, the application will be deferred to the next grant cycle.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss any questions regarding their project with the staff prior to the application deadline.

Another procedural change for this year is that towns may now submit a continuing resolution for the certified resolution. The maximum length of the resolution may be no longer than the chief executive officer’s term of office or four years for a non-elected position. The application must include a copy of the continuing resolution and the dates on the application and the resolution must agree. The town clerk must still certify that the resolution remains in affect. **Failure to obtain the certified resolution by the application deadline date will cause the application to be deferred to the next cycle.**

Finally, grantees **must** submit a detailed Project Evaluation/Expenditure Report to the Office of the Public Records Administrator consisting of a narrative report summarizing the project’s success at meeting its objective, and the impact on the municipality and a financial expenditure report **on or before September 1, 2004 for grants awarded in July and December of 2003 and September 1, 2005 for those awarded in 2004. Failure to complete the grant work by June 30th or to file the Project Evaluation/Expenditure Report by September 1st may result in the grant’s termination and the town may be required to return the full grant amount as well as loose eligibility for a future grant.** Please notify the Office of the Public Records Administrator immediately if difficulties arise that could impact the timely completion of all grant work. The Attorney General’s office has advised the Office of the Public Records Administrator that there is no statutory provision for extensions of the filing deadline for this report.

NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ADMINISTRATOR

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This newsletter is published semi-annually by the Office of the Public Records Administrator. Please send submissions to:

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Financial Report

As of Dec 31, 2003

Total Receipts:

Town filings	\$6,516,137.00
Interest	<u>\$ 109,355.79</u>
	\$6,625,492.79

Returns

Unexpended grant funds	<u>\$ 11,031.78</u>
	\$ 11,031.78

Disbursements

Grants awarded	\$2,826,040.00
Operational expenses	<u>\$ 592,225.04</u>
	\$3,418,265.04

Set asides

Disaster Recovery Grants	\$ 100,000.00
Competitive Grants (future)	<u>\$ 300,000.00</u>
	\$ 400,000.00

Balance

\$2,818,259.53

Committed Funds FY2004

Operational expenses (est.)	\$ 168,810.00
State Library preservation projects	<u>\$ 510,000.00</u>
	\$ 678,810.00

Available Balance \$2,139,449.53

Reminder Dates/Upcoming Events

LeAnn Johnson, Public Records Grant Program Specialist

Surviving a Disaster:

A major flood doesn't have to occur for you to face a water disaster. Water problems result from accidents, deferred maintenance, or negligence. If you're not prepared to deal with such problems on a small scale, an emergency can quickly turn into a disaster. This hands-on workshop will provide you with the knowledge and skills to respond to a water disaster in your municipality. We will stage a mock disaster to provide you with the opportunity to learn and practice such recovery techniques as air drying books, packing out wet materials, separating and drying documents, applying a triage approach to photographic materials, and handling maps and other oversize formats. Discussions will focus on the salvage operation and what can be done prior to a disaster to make any recovery effort successful. Lori Foley, Field Service Representative for the Northeast Document Conservation Center, will conduct this workshop. In addition, the Hartford Fire Department will be offering hands-on fire extinguisher training.



The workshop date are March 24th and March 25th, 2004. There are two separate sessions due to a thirty-person limit per day. You can expect to receive the workshop brochure in February. Please register early to ensure yourself a spot for this instructive program.