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Newsletter

Friends of the Connecticut College Library

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Spring 2018

# Spring Newsletter 2018

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The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

# 2018 FRIENDS of the CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY Spring Newsletter

CHARLES E. SHAIN LIBRARY ☘ GREER MUSIC LIBRARY ☘ LINDA LEAR CENTER FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES

## CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF BOTANY AT CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Botany department at Connecticut College. To commemorate the occasion, the Linda Lear Center organized an exhibition exploring the history and impact of botanical education at the College, from its early focus on interdisciplinary research to its role in environmental stewardship.

### FOUNDATIONS

Addressing students and faculty at the first closing exercises of Connecticut College in June 1916, professor Arthur Graves laid out a vision of botanical education which emphasized not just the range of possibilities it opened for students, but the potential impact its graduates could have on the wider world.

To study botany, he explained, was to understand the interconnectedness of plants to the world around them — scientific, practical, agricultural, medicinal, and aesthetic. From work in horticulture, agriculture, or forestry to plant pathology, breeding, or bacteriology, “all these occupations have botany as their groundwork,” he said, “[and] depend for their successful operation on a correct knowledge of the principles which govern the life and growth of plants.”

### BUILDING A PROGRAM

Originally part of the College’s Biology department, Botany was founded as an independent

program in 1918 under the direction of Dr. Caroline Black. Black, the department’s first chair, shared Graves’



vision of a program which rooted botany in its inherent connectedness to other disciplines, from biology and chemistry to fine arts and home economics.

Three pathways were developed to enable students to focus their studies in either research or applied fields: preparation for teaching or graduate school, laboratory research, or landscape gardening/horticulture design. This intertwining of science and vocation echoed the College’s founding philosophy — a vision of education which, in the words of then-president Frederick Sykes, sought to “meet the demands of life,” to turn out graduates “really fitted to help in the work of the world, and assume places of immediate usefulness.”

The establishment of the Arboretum in 1931 opened new opportunities for research and study, and for understanding change in the environment over time. George Avery incorporated student research into the curriculum, developing nurseries and plant study collections in the Arboretum and across campus for course use, and requiring students to present their projects and findings at the annual Botany Department Flower Show. In 1952, the Bolleswood Natural Area of the Arboretum was designated a protected study tract, and became the site of student projects and several long-term research initiatives in vegetation analysis and breeding bird populations.

By the 1960s, the department was increasingly interested in exploring botany’s role in the interconnected

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The Friends of the Connecticut College  
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This newsletter was designed by Susan  
Lindberg.  
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CONNECTICUT  
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## EARTH DAY WIKIPEDIA EDIT-A-THON

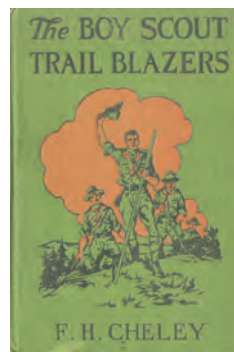
Botany Centennial celebrations continued on April 23rd, with an Earth Day Wikipedia Edit-a-thon hosted by the Lear Center in partnership with the Connecticut College Arboretum and the Office of Sustainability.

Wikipedia is the largest and most popular general reference work on the Internet. A Wikipedia Edit-a-thon brings together people who are interested in contributing to Wikipedia around a certain theme. The goal of this Edit-a-thon was to celebrate Earth Day by creating and improving articles on important Connecticut conservationists whose papers are held at the Lear Center, including Richard Goodwin and William Niering, key figures in the Botany department who had local and national impact with their work on land preservation and long-term vegetation management studies. Also highlighted was Roland Clement, who worked for the National Audubon Society and who helped to ban DDT, and Frank Egler, a plant ecologist who contributed to, supported, and defended the work of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. In preparation for the event, the Lear Center created basic pages in Wikipedia for Richard Goodwin, William Niering, and Roland Clement. Six editors then helped to improve these articles as well as those on Frank Egler and the Connecticut College Arboretum, adding over 1200 words to these entries. In just one week since their creation, the articles have been viewed over forty times.

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

### NEW COLLECTION OF CAMP BOOKS

This winter, Dean of the Faculty Abigail Van Slyck presented the Lear Center with a collection of books collected during her research for *A manufactured wilderness: summer camps and the shaping of American youth, 1890-1960* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006). These 35 books on American scouting and camping included scout manuals, early 20th century treatises on the virtues of camping, and children's novels featuring the heroic exploits of Camp Fire Girls and Boy Scouts. The books were added to the Gildersleeve Collection of Children's Literature where they complement the Lear Center's excellent holdings of serialized fiction for adolescents as well as the valuable research and documents on the British Girl Guides in the Lear-Potter Collection.



## GOUDY TYPE SPECIMEN

The Linda Lear Center holds a strong collection of materials relating to the history of printing, including several type specimen sheets. These sheets essentially served as advertising circulars, letting customers know what typefaces were available from particular presses or sellers of type. This recently purchased sheet dates from 1921, although it is in mint condition and appears never to have been handled. It features an elegant "Old Style" typeface patterned on models from the Renaissance by the renowned American printer and type designer Frederic Goudy.



## CURRENT EXHIBITS

### SHAIN LIBRARY EXHIBITION AREA

*Deep Roots: Botany at Connecticut College, 1918-2018, through July 31. See story on page 1*

### SHAIN LIBRARY, FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS

*Evolution of the Process, through June 30*



The works in this exhibit aim to demonstrate the intersection of thought, space and formation of design that defines architecture. The student-designers who created these individual projects are connected through their collective challenging of a customary understanding

of architecture. Together, the elements of their processes work to demonstrate the logic of their evolution.

### CHARLES CHU ASIAN ART READING ROOM

*Reconnecting with History: Chinese Studio Photography, 1950-1980, through June 30.*

This exhibition, presenting photographs taken in professional studios in China from about 1950 to 1980, is guest-curated by Connecticut College student Erica Yao ('20). "Curating this exhibition has been a personal journey for me," Yao explained. "First it has reconnected me to my beloved grandparents, allowing me to revisit the time period of their youth. It has also allowed me to study the history of my own country, especially for a historical era to which I would otherwise be given limited access in mainland China."



*New Worlds: Chinese Landscape Painting since 1949, through June 30*

This student-curated exhibit explores the range of modern Chinese landscape painting using works from the Chu-Griffis Collection of Asian Art and include some rarely exhibited works. Many of the landscapes display artists bringing contemporary influences to artistic traditions that are centuries old.

## UPCOMING EXHIBITS

### CHARLES CHU ASIAN ART READING ROOM

*Between Two Worlds: 20th Century Japanese Prints, August 20-September 25*



The turn of the 20th century brought divergent approaches to the ancient tradition of woodblock print in Japan. The Sōsaku hanga (creative print) artists sought personal expression, while the Shin-hanga (new

print) artists embraced the traditional Japanese collaborative system. This exhibit explores these two different movements exemplified in the collections of Japanese prints held at Connecticut College.

### LINDA LEAR CENTER FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

*The Hurricane of 1938, August 13-October 21*

On September 21, 1938, New England was hit by a devastating hurricane that caused extensive damage across Long Island and the southern Connecticut coast. This exhibit explores the storm's impact on Connecticut College and the region, using photographs and documents from the College Archives as well as from local publications.



*Encountering Nature: Exploring the Natural World in Children's Literature, August 13-December 20*

From natural histories and primers to adventure stories and guide books, this exhibit explores the variety of ways the environment has been introduced and represented to children from the 18th century to the 20th century. Included are selections from the Helen O. Gildersleeve collection and recently donated books from Professor Abby Van Slyck.

### SHAIN LIBRARY EXHIBITION AREA

*1968, August 20-October 21*

1968 marks one of the most turbulent, influential years in American history. From the Civil Rights movement to the Vietnam War, the events of 1968 inspired new movements across society and helped shape the modern era. This exhibit examines the effect of this social and political change at Connecticut College, from student activism to the changing face of the campus.



## SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The Friends of the Library fund two awards for Connecticut College students or alumni. The Library Research Prize, for the best example of student research using library resources in completion of a course project, was awarded to Dominic Lentini, a senior majoring in French and International Relations. Dominic's paper was a comparative analysis of the reporting on the protests in Ferguson, Missouri by the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. The Library Scholarship Award, given to a student or graduate pursuing a degree in library, archival, or museum studies, was awarded to Allison Blanning, of the class of 2016, who is enrolled in a dual degree program in archival management and history at the Simmons College School of Library and Information Science in Boston.

## CENTURY OF BOTANY

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relationships between the natural and human environments. In 1969, Richard Goodwin, William Niering, and Sally Taylor introduced an interdepartmental Human Ecology major, establishing new opportunities for students to consider ecological issues through the lens of the natural and social sciences.

Human Ecology became Environmental Studies in 1992. A year later, the Center for Conservation Biology and Environmental Studies (now the Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment) was established to help foster interdisciplinary research and College-wide programmatic efforts.

In 1987, Connecticut College received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to develop interdisciplinary programs in the humanities/social sciences, cognitive studies, and ethnobotany. Together with the anthropology department, botany faculty worked to investigate issues in ethnobotany, and to develop a field program to explore the relationship between human groups and their environments. Ethnobotany has been

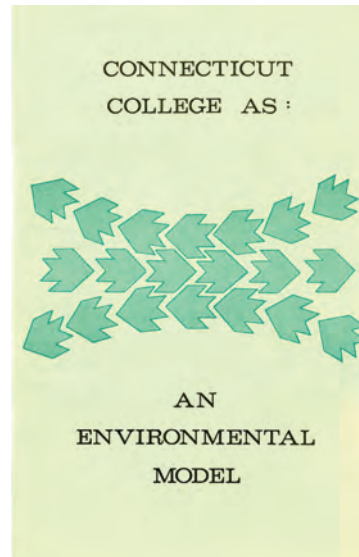
a featured component of the botany program ever since.

Today, the botany program remains deeply connected to its interdisciplinary roots, offering students opportunities to consider its role in understanding and shaping the future of natural environments and human

society. Chad Jones, Associate Professor of Botany and Suzi Oppenheimer '56 Faculty Director of the Office of Sustainability, explains that "through botany, we can develop sustainable agricultural techniques, understand and mitigate the impacts of climate change, more effectively provide fuel and medicines, and conserve biodiversity.

As we move into our second century, the Botany Department [...] will continue to develop a strong understanding of how plants work, but will increasingly focus on applying this foundational knowledge to understand and address these pressing issues impacting our world."

"Deep Roots: Botany at Connecticut College, 1918-2018" runs through July 31 on the first floor of Shain Library.



## FRIENDS OF THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Friends of the Connecticut College Library runs from January 1 to December 31, but it is never too late to join or renew your membership. The dues from the Friends are used to support the acquisition and preservation of materials, lectures, exhibitions, receptions, mailings, and scholarships.

If you wish to join, download a form at <http://www.conncoll.edu/information-services/friends-of-the-library/> or contact Benjamin Panciera at [bpancier@conncoll.edu](mailto:bpancier@conncoll.edu) or by calling 860-439-2654.

Membership has the following levels, named for distinctive collections held by the library: Rachel Carson (\$2500), Eugene O'Neill (\$1000), Beatrix Potter (\$500), Chu-Griffis (\$250), Campus History (\$100), Gildersleeve (\$50), and William Meredith (\$25). For recent graduates there is also a Young Alumni level (\$10). All members receive the newsletter and invitations to lectures and other events. Those who contribute more than \$50 will also receive borrowing privileges at both the Charles E. Shain and the Greer Music Libraries. Those who contribute at or above the \$100 level will receive a set of Friends of the Connecticut College Library bookplates.