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Friends of the Connecticut College Library

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Winter Newsletter 2011

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NEW ACQUISITIONS

Stonington Gazette

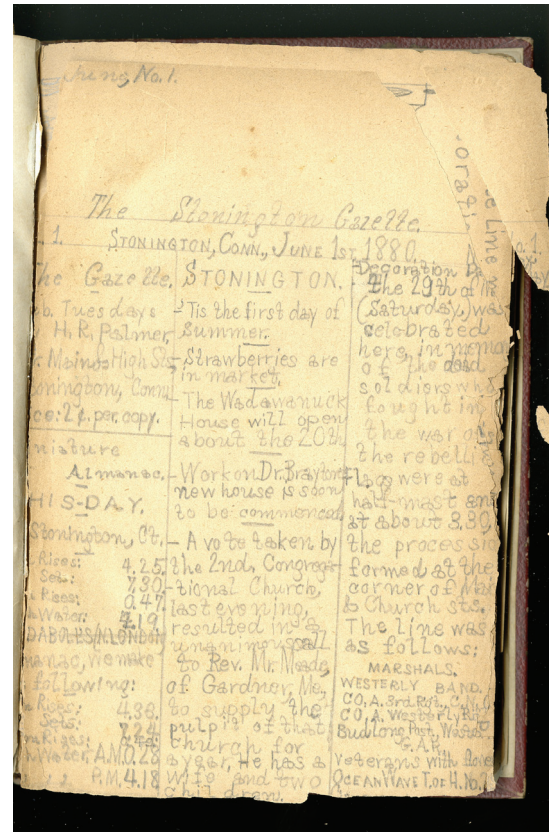
We can't really be sure how long the publishers of the *Stonington Gazette* produced their newspaper. It would appear that the only surviving issues are these from June 1, 1880-May 31, 1881. The newspaper is entirely written out by hand and seems to have been put together by one Henry R. Palmer, who appears to be about twelve years old. Young Mr. Palmer's weekly newspaper records international and national events, such as the presidential nominating contest and election of 1880 (Henry, an ardent Republican, was thrilled that the Borough went for Garfield); sports, such as the Harvard-Yale Regatta on the Thames River; local news, including the hiring of a grammar teacher and the painting of a hotel; and household tips, like the use of oxalic acid to remove stains from skin. This was Palmer's first foray into journalism, but hardly his last. He grew up to become the first editor of the alumni magazine at his alma mater, Brown University, and editor of the opinion page of the Providence journal and editor-in-chief of the Providence Sunday Journal.

Virtue and Vice

Artists' books have quickly become one of the most popular collections in the Lear Center for teaching and exhibitions. We are pleased to have added a major new piece to the collection this year by Mary McCarthy. *Virtue and Vice* is a reflection on the case of John Walker Lindh ("The American Taliban") and the ways in which vulnerable people can be lead astray by manipulative teachers. It is comprised of two panels: one containing seven strips of twisted parchment with the seven cardinal virtues and seven deadly sins written on opposite ends, the other with seven totemic faces painted on animal bones. Sand and rocks recall the beautiful, but harsh, landscape of Afghanistan.

TOP: *Issue 1 of the Stonington Gazette, June 1, 1880*

BOTTOM: *Virtue and Vice, by Mary McCarthy*



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.

There are several options for those wishing to join. Download a form at www.conncoll.edu/IS/10886.htm or contact Benjamin Panciera at bpancier@conncoll.edu or by calling 860-439-2654.

Membership has the following levels, named for important benefactors at the College's founding: Bolles (\$500), Palmer (\$250), Plant (\$100), Gildersleeve (\$50), and Wright (\$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 and for a gift of \$250 or more, we will personalize the bookplates.

2011-2012 FRIENDS of the CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY *Winter Newsletter*

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

TREASURES FROM THE ATTIC

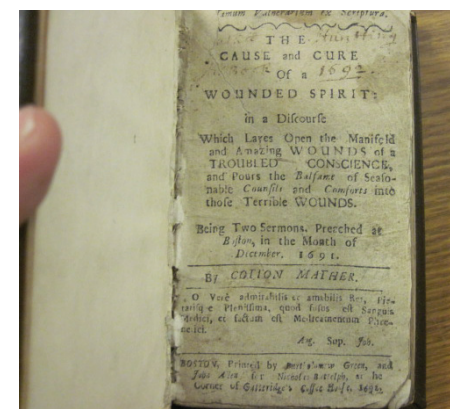
For over forty years a book backlog has been building at Connecticut College, first in the old Palmer Library and then in Shain. The backlog consisted of cataloging problems and books transferred from other collections, as well as from the generous contributions of many Connecticut College alumni and friends. Clearing this pileup of books, which amounted to over fifty boxes, often took a back seat to more pressing issues like support and instruction for faculty and students, processing archival collections, and ensuring that the books already in the collection were available in the library catalog. With demand for space in the library increasing, the time came for us to address the stacks of boxed books to make way for study areas and bookshelves. Are we ever glad that we did.

Nearly 750 volumes were added to the Library's collection from the backlog, most of them to the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives with some going to the circulating collection. They range from a rediscovered 16th century manuscript (profiled in the last issue of this newsletter) to a set of comic books in the 1980s depicting religious myths from South Asia. About a third of the books processed could be classified as children's literature and they were added to the Helen Gildersleeve Collection of Children's Books, one of the core strengths of the Connecticut College now owns one of the few surviving copies. In many instances the only known copy in North America is in the Lear Center. These include many religious treatises and didactic fiction for children from the 19th century, collections

of stories for adolescent boys and girls from the early 20th, and in one very unusual example, the Icelandic sagas of Little Black Sambo.

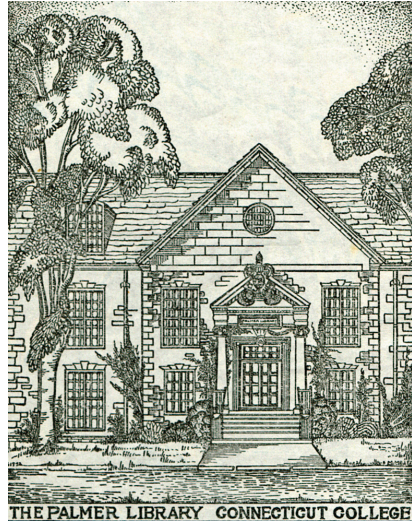
The Lear Center's collection of early American books was also substantially improved through discoveries among the backlog boxes. This includes several theological treatises from colonial times and two very early treasures: a sermon by the Massachusetts divine Cotton Mather printed in Boston in 1692 (one of only two surviving copies of the book) and a London edition of the King James Bible owned by a merchant, tavern owner, and tanner living in New London in the 1690s. The Mather treatise is now the oldest American book in our collection and the Bible is the oldest book we have that can be traced to the colony of Connecticut.

There have also been many modern books added to the collection. One outstanding collection donated to the Library is a group of nearly two dozen imprints from the Grabhorn Press, one of the leading American practitioners of fine printing. This collection was featured in an exhibit on the Grabhorn Press last year. We are also happy to have a substantial collection of examples of woodblock illustration donated by the estate of professor emeritus of Art, Charles Price. The books in his donation date back to 1915, but the bulk of them were produced during a revival of traditional forms of illustration from the 1960s through the early 1990s. These and other books rediscovered over the past two years have already provided great value to the College in exhibitions, teaching, and research.



TOP: *Pauline and the Matches, newly added to the Gildersleeve Collection of Children's Literature*

BOTTOM: *Cotton Mather's Cause and Cure of the Wounded Spirit, the oldest American book in the collection*



THE PALMER LIBRARY CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

The Friends of the Connecticut College Library
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This and other issues of the Friends of the Library Newsletter may be viewed online at
<http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/fol/>
 This newsletter was designed by Susan Lindberg.

December 2011



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

UPCOMING EXHIBITS IN THE SHAIN LIBRARY EXHIBIT AREA

Contemporary Art from Latin America
 January 15-March 15

This exhibit will draw on items from the permanent collection of the Latin Network for the Visual Arts, supplemented with books from collections in the Charles E. Shain Library. The exhibit will showcase work from around Latin America, including artists from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, and Mexico. The Latin Network for the Visual Arts is a local non-profit organization with the mission of enriching the community through exposure to contemporary art from countries where Romance languages are spoken.

Those Who Made a Difference: Connecticut College Influences the World
 March 20-June 15

Almost from our very beginning, our faculty, graduates, and trustees have had an effect on the world outside the College walls. This exhibit will examine the impact of the Connecticut College community in politics, society, education, culture, and the arts. Whether it is greater conservation awareness, increasing women's participation in the political process, or literary contribution, Connecticut College's light has always shone brightly, demonstrating that our campus activism does not stop at the college gates.

IN THE LINDA LEAR CENTER
Is That Supposed to be a Book?
 January 15-June 15

Over the last two decades, the Charles E. Shain Library has been building an impressive collection of artists' books, many of them with funds provided by the Friends of the Library. Among the items of particular interest are objects with unusual formats, stretching our notion of what constitutes a book. This exhibit will feature several recent additions to the collection, especially those that may not look like traditional books and will ask the question, "Can you really still consider this a book?"



THE "GREER" IN THE GREER MUSIC LIBRARY

Serendipity can often lead to interesting discoveries when least expected. That certainly is the case in the tale of tracing the roots of the name "Greer Music Library." The library is a branch of the Charles E. Shain Library and is located on the lower level of the Cummings Arts Center. It was dedicated in 1969 when the building opened. Collections of books, scores, periodicals, and recordings from various venues on campus were consolidated over time into this one location. A plaque placed prominently on the wall at the entrance to the library states: "The Greer Music Library, the Gift of Josephine Lauter Greer and Jesse Greer through the Lauter Foundation of Willimantic, Connecticut."

But who were the donors? Newspaper clippings announcing the gift of \$50,000 mention that the Greers were trustees of the Lauter Foundation, with Mrs. Greer also serving as president and treasurer. An article in the *Bulletin* from Norwich (June 21, 1967) lists several of the projects of the Foundation, including development of Lauter Park in Willimantic. The articles do not venture beyond this basic information, however.

When I first arrived at Connecticut College, I read these files and was curious about the Greers, but initial searches for information led nowhere. Since this was in the mid-1980's, the use of computers for this type of research left something to be desired. Several years later online searching was better, but turned up nothing substantive. Then we began the massive project of cataloging The Historic Sheet Music Collection (HSMC) housed in the Greer Music Library, and...seren-

dipity!

The HSMC consists of over 1200 titles of sheet music of mostly popular music, with the majority of pieces dating from the mid-1800s to the mid-20th century. The library did not set out to collect sheet music, the collection just ...

betically by title) and I picked up a piece with the cover illustration of a woman in a Spanish-style red flowered dress wearing a comb and mantilla. The title was *Climbing up the ladder of love* from Earl Carroll's *Vanities* 5th edition. The composer was Jesse Greer.

Now online searching proved to be of immense help. With a tangible time frame and a tie-in to a type of music, I could now seek information in a more cohesive way. June Ingram, the Assistant in the Music Library, joined in the fun and we finally uncovered the mystery of Jesse and Josephine Greer. According to the Naxos Classical Music web site (<http://www.naxos.com>), Jesse (1896-1970) was a pianist and composer who was most active in the 1920s and 1930s, writing popular songs and collaborating on music for various shows, publishing over sixty pieces of sheet music between 1920 and 1943. He married Josephine Lauter (d.1969), a vaudeville and cabaret singer who performed under the name Josephine Harmon.

We still have hundreds of titles of sheet music to catalog in the HSMC. I am hoping that additional copies of Jesse Greer's music will come to light as we go along. Although the HSMC is closed I will, of course, make room for "Greer" music should any come my way!

Carolyn A. Johnson
 Music Librarian



"Climbing up the Ladder of Love" by Jesse Greer, from the Greer Music Library's Collection of rare American sheet music

happened. Gifts of scores often included some pieces of sheet music and many of these were set aside, with some thought given to developing the collection in some way. Eventually we made the decision to close the collection (that is, not add to it) and to catalog it. Work on the project began in the summer of 2010. By September of that year we had made it to the letter "C" (the music is filed alpha-