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Friends of the Connecticut College Library  
Newsletter

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Spring 2014

## Spring Newsletter 2014

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### Recommended Citation

Panciera, Benjamin, "Spring Newsletter 2014" (2014). *Friends of the Connecticut College Library Newsletter*. Paper 31.  
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The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

## UPCOMING EXHIBITS

In the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room

Modern Chinese Art

May 1 – June 5, 2014

Students from the Modern Chinese Art course offered this spring by Professor Ning Qiang will curate an exhibition of modern Chinese art featuring paintings from the Chu-Griffis Collection. The students will explore different artists, periods, and genres from the past century displaying both tradition and innovation in the depiction of landscapes, animals, flora, and human figures.



**Strong Foundations:**

*Celebrating 100 Years of Connecticut College Presidents*

March 15 – June 5, 2014

As Connecticut College celebrates the inauguration of its eleventh president, we are presenting documents, photographs, and memorabilia of the presidents of Connecticut College from Frederick Sykes to Katherine Bergeron. This exhibition notes the accomplishments of our presidents in the growth and development of the College while celebrating the traditional pageantry of this change in College leadership.

In the Linda Lear Center  
for Special Collections & Archives

*Highlights of the Civil War Collection of Thomas La Lancette*

February 10 – June 5, 2014

This exhibition will display some of the letters, documents, and photographs compiled by Thomas La Lancette in researching his history of the 14th Connecticut Volunteers and their service during the Civil War. A more complete exhibition of Civil War books and manuscripts will be presented when the library reopens in 2015.

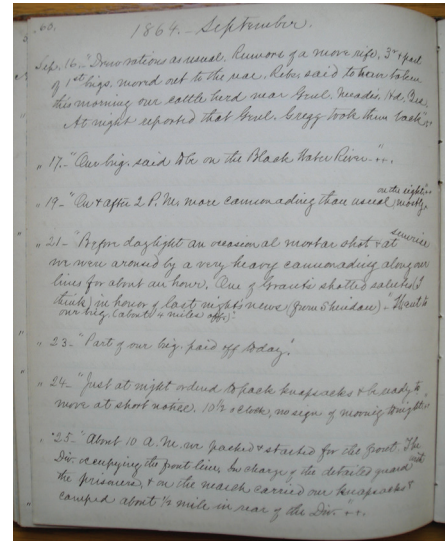


## FRIENDS OF THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP

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 important benefactors at the College's founding: Palmer (\$2500), Plant (\$1000), Harkness (\$500), Freeman (\$250), Branch (\$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.



The journal of Cpl. Edgar Ely of Company G of the 14th Connecticut Volunteers.

## CIVIL WAR

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the Battle of Spotsylvania that he writes vividly and unsparingly of the horror of the war.

The papers are supplemented by several unprocessed collections of Connecticut Civil War papers, including approximately 200 letters from an officer in the 2nd Connecticut Heavy Artillery, letters from a sailor participating in blockades of Confederate ports, and letters and documents from the 29th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry. Taken together, these separate collections will form an important group of manuscripts for the study of the period, providing an excellent training ground for undergraduate historians learning how to do archival research and new insights for researchers into soldiers' experiences of the war. The collections will be processed and made available to the public this summer.

Portions of the La Lancette collection will be on exhibit in the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives on the second floor of the Shain Library through May of this year. A larger exhibition will take place on the first floor of the library in late 2015. We are deeply grateful to Mr. La Lancette for his generosity in making this collection available both to students and faculty at the College and to all those in the area interested in this critical period of our nation's history.

# 2014 FRIENDS of the CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY Spring Newsletter

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

## NEW CIVIL WAR COLLECTION DONATED TO LIBRARY

As Union forces struggled in Virginia throughout the summer of 1862, the prospects of a quick resolution to the Civil War became increasingly dim. Responding to the new reality, President Lincoln called for 300,000 volunteers to commit to a further three years of war. Men in Connecticut responded in droves and the 14th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry was organized in Hartford on August 23rd, 1862. The regiment was comprised of ten companies recruited from across the state. Company B consisted largely of men drawn from Middletown and was led by Captain Elijah Gibbons.

In December of this past year, Thomas E. La Lancette donated to the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives a sizable collection he had assembled while researching his book on Company B and its captain. The most important part of the archive is a collection of 73 letters written by Pvt. William Digby Smith and a notebook compiled by Henry S. Stevens, chaplain of the 14th Connecticut Volunteers, containing a history of Company B by Sgt. Elnathan Tyler, a reminiscence by Cpl. John H. Bilson of Company D, and a journal by Cpl. Edgar S. Ely of Company G. Together with a few other documents and pieces of correspondence, the manuscripts in this collection form an invaluable addition to the teaching and research collections at Connecticut College.

While the manuscript material alone provides an important new resource to the College community, it is the supplementary material that makes this collection extremely valuable. In the course of his research, Mr. La Lancette visited libraries, archives, historical societies, and museums around the country acquir-



Hand-colored illustration of the Battle of Fredericksburg from Harper's Weekly, January 3, 1863.

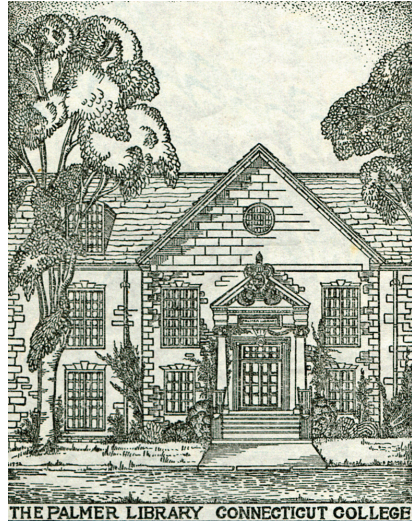
ing copies of letters and other historical documents that illuminated the activities of Company B and the entire 14th Regiment. He even succeeded in locating letters held in the private collections of descendants of soldiers. The result is a substantial collection of documents including letters from ten soldiers in Company B, diaries, journals, morning reports, pension records, and photographs among other things.

The story told by these manuscripts is a substantial portion of the history of the Civil War. The 14th Connecticut Volunteers were present at most of the major engagements from the time of their organization to the end of the war, including Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness Campaign,

Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor. The 14th was also present at the surrender of Gen. Robert E. Lee's forces at Appomattox.

The letters of Pvt. Smith paint an engrossing first-hand account of the War, beginning on September 2, 1862, just a few weeks before the Battle of Antietam, through May 19, 1865, a month after Lee's surrender effectively ended the war. Almost from the very beginning Smith expresses war-weariness and the desire to come home. He writes about the everyday details of infantry life such as illness, the weather conditions, what friends and neighbors he has seen, the price of apples, and the lack of rum (of which he seems to approve). But it is in the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg and in the midst of

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

April 2014



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

## ARBORETUM COLLECTION PROCESSED

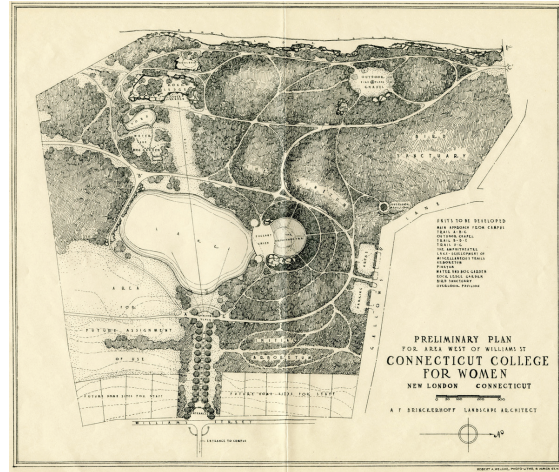
When Connecticut College for Women opened to its first class of students in 1915, it occupied just three buildings on a hilltop tract of land along the northern border of New London. To the west of the campus, however, lay an additional 64 acres of largely undeveloped land acquired from descendants of the Bolles and Rogers families that had owned and occupied the site since 1693.

“Fertile in soil and charming in outlook,” this tract of “rolling hills and little valleys,” with its craggy granite ledges, bogs, red maple swamp, pine plantations, and handsome hemlock groves, quickly became a favored natural escape for picnickers, hikers, and nature lovers from the College and town alike. Recognizing the unique opportunity the land offered to both the College and New London communities, President Katharine Blunt hired renowned New York landscape architect A.F. Brinckerhoff in April 1931 to design a preliminary plan for an arboretum, and formalized the commitment later that year by appointing newly-hired botany professor George Avery as the Arboretum’s first director.

Though initially plagued by operational difficulties — chronic funding shortages and few full-time staff left the Arboretum reliant upon the support and generosity of outside sources — the Arboretum continued to grow, and now amasses more than 700 acres of protected marsh, woodland, and wetland. Part educational research collection and part public space, the Arboretum is a lasting reflection of the College’s 80-year legacy of environmental preservation, research, and conservancy efforts.

The Lear Center holds approximately

15 linear feet of material documenting the growth, environmental goals, and operational difficulties of the Arboretum from 1930 to 1989, including extensive information about its founding and history, land acquisition, programmatic and educational efforts, and faculty and student research. The Connecticut College Arboretum Records collection is newly processed and now open for research — please contact Lear Center staff for more information.



*The Brinckerhoff Plan for the Connecticut College Arboretum.*



## NEW ACQUISITION

Book artist Laura Russell travelled the length of the old Highway 99 from Canada to Mexico photographing the landmarks of this now defunct (and largely disappeared) interstate. Her celebration of American roadside culture continues with the second volume of *Hit the Road*. *Hit the Road Two!* is an accordion-fold artist’s book featuring photographs of motels, restaurants, and tourist attractions of Oregon. It joins the first volume of her series, which depicts sites along Highway 99 in Washington state in tunnel book format.

## SHAIN LIBRARY RENOVATION TO BEGIN IN JUNE OF 2014

In May 2013 the trustees of Connecticut College approved a plan to dramatically enhance the patron experience at the Charles E. Shain Library. This \$9.1 million dollar renovation will increase the total number of seating spaces, provide more room for collaborative study or student projects, and create a new Technology Commons that will facilitate the creation of digital scholarship by students and faculty. What will be most apparent to visitors, however, will be a new glass entryway allowing plentiful natural light into the building. This will be complemented by expanded windows on all levels, creating light-filled reading areas on all floors of the library. A new reception area will grace the front of the building and an enlarged Blue Camel Café will move from the lower level to the first floor of the library.

Some of the renovations have already begun with the installation of new shelving units and the shifting of books throughout the library, most notably of the DVD and VHS collection from the lower level to the second floor. This will make room for the construction of new reading rooms on the second and third floors and for student and faculty work space on the lower level.

The work is expected to last for fifteen months. Although the Shain Library building will be inaccessible to all patrons, library staff will continue to provide the same level of service during construction. In order to do so, selected library departments will be transferred to other buildings across the campus. Circulation and reference services will be moving a short distance to the Ernst Common Room on the lower level of the Blaustein Humanities Building (the former Palmer Library). Open access computing stations will be distributed in several buildings across campus, including Blaustein. Greer Music Library will remain open, but will take on increased seating for students looking for quiet study space and available computers.

Because the collections will be staying in Shain Library, patrons will have to request books and movies in advance from the library catalog. They will no longer be able to browse the library shelves. Friends



of the Library with borrowing privileges (those who contribute \$50 or more per year) can request books by searching for an item in the library catalog at <http://www.conncoll.edu/information-services/libraries>, clicking on the “Make a Request” link on the right hand-side of the page, and reserving the item.

Materials will be retrieved from Shain Library in the evening and made available to patrons the following day in the Ernst Common Room on the lower level of Blaustein Hall.

Special Collections & Archives will remain in place through the construction. Researchers and students will be able to gain access to the Linda Lear Center but advance notice will be required. Researchers must contact Director of Special Collections, Ben Panciera, or College Archivist, Rebecca Parmer, at least twenty-four hours ahead of their visit. There will be no exhibitions during the renovation.

You can follow the progress of the



*Architect’s renderings of the renovated entrance of the Shain Library and the third floor reading room.*

renovation at the official website, <http://www.conncoll.edu/shainreno/>. Any Friends of the Library with questions or problems with library borrowing should contact Ben Panciera or James Gelarden, access services librarian.

Contact information:

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