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Respondent: **Avatar Simpson**

Library Research Prize 2020: Application Form

Date Research Undertaken

Fall 2019

Class Year

Senior

Title of Paper

Using Contextual Information to Extrapolate the Reasons Behind Severe Environmental Ignorance in New London During the Era of Urban Renewal

Affiliated Course

Architectural Studies: Urban Renewal/America: New London (ARC 473)

Faculty Name

Professor Anna Vallye

Student Major

Environmental Studies major, Economics and Religious Studies double-minor

Citation Style Used

Chicago 17th Edition (Notes & Bibliography)

Describe how you came to choose your topic, specifically noting any pre-research that you did. What sources did you use in this pre-research? To

what extent did you consult with librarians, faculty, or others? How did this pre-research lead you to your topic?

Although I had never taken an architectural studies course before last semester, Professor Vallye asked me to take ARC 473 because she wanted the students in her class to come from various majors. I chose to research the environmental impacts of urban renewal in New London because it combined my interests in environmental studies and urban planning. My preliminary research was comprised of relevant newspaper articles from the CT State Library, information on the CT DEEP website, and an article written by Professor Niering from the Linda Lear Center. These sources emphasized the important ecological roles that wetlands serve, so I decided to focus on the impacts that development had on wetlands in New London. After conducting this research and obtaining a broader sense of wetlands importance and destruction, I consulted with librarians and faculty members to help me better understand the contextual history of wetlands within New London. Over the course of the semester, I worked with Rose Oliveira and Andrew Lopez, as well as Maggie Redfern, Dr. Maria Rosa, Professor Doug Thompson, Professor Beverly Chomiak. Also, I coordinated with librarians at New London Landmarks and with Brian Rogers, a librarian at the Custom House Maritime Museum. Through these consultations, I realized that there was very little information on wetlands destruction during urban renewal in New London. This lack of knowledge was also prevalent throughout Connecticut, so I decided to research why New London did not properly manage and protect its wetlands during the era of urban renewal.

Describe your process of finding information for your project. Note specifically the tools you used to undertake your research, as well as the specific search strategies you used within these tools. (Note: "Ebsco," being an umbrella vendor, is not a specific enough response when identifying tools; listing the "library

database” is also an unacceptably vague answer. Specific tools include JSTOR, America: History & Life, Web of Science, etc., along with OneSearch, the new library system.)

After compiling a considerable amount of my preliminary materials from various sources, I had a very general understanding of wetlands protection and legislation in Connecticut. With the help of Rose Oliveira, I was able to identify all the relevant documents found in the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives. Since Professor Niering was widely regarded as a leader in wetlands research, I started by looking through his collection and then expanded my search to the arboretum collection and Professor Goodwin’s collection. Through this research, I learned about the significance of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act (IWWA) of 1972 in Connecticut. I then used OneSearch to find articles and other sources pertaining to the IWWA. Furthermore, I worked with Andrew Lopez, who gave me early access to his collection of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Citizens’ Bulletin. This Bulletin had information on all of the DEP’s (now known as the DEEP) initiatives between 1973 and 1991. Since this time period immediately followed the implementation of the IWWA, it had a lot of relevant information.

Describe your process of evaluating the resources you found. How did you make decisions about which resources you would use, and which you wouldn’t? What kinds of questions did you ask yourself about resources in order to determine whether they were worthy of inclusion?

My research primarily consisted of three parts: how the perception of the ecosystemic role of wetlands evolved over time, how wetlands legislation evolved in Connecticut, and how wetlands were treated in New London during the era of

urban renewal. For the first part, I needed resources that highlighted the widespread negative perspectives of wetlands before the mid-twentieth century as well as the scientific support of the importance of wetlands that gained momentum after the mid-twentieth century. I made sure that these sources were either published by government departments or scientific experts in wetlands to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the sources. Since this information was not unique to specific regions, I was able to use sources that covered the entire United States. For the second part, I only used historical information available on the DEEP's website and from Andrew Lopez's collection of the DEP's Citizens' Bulletin. Using these sources ensured that the information was solely focused on wetlands legislation in Connecticut. For the third part, I held the resources to the highest standard because very few focused on wetlands in New London during the era of urban renewal. Most of my resources for this part were either newspaper articles or archived material from the Linda Lear Center, the New London Custom House Museum, and New London Landmarks. In the end, the lack of resources for this part helped support my conclusion that wetland protection was almost entirely ignored in New London during the era of urban renewal.