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Friends of the Connecticut College Library

1-1-2013

Winter Newsletter 2013

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Recommended Citation

Panciera, Benjamin, "Winter Newsletter 2013" (2013). *Friends of the Connecticut College Library Newsletter*. Paper 29.
<http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/fol/29>

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2013 LIBRARY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Every year the Friends of the Library offers an award of \$500 to a Connecticut College senior or alumnus/a who is or will be pursuing a degree in library or archival studies. Please help us spread the word about this opportunity by passing this information on to any aspiring librarian or archivist you may know. Applicants must provide a personal statement of about three hundred words describing their interests and goals in librarianship. The deadline for consideration is March 8, 2013. For more information please contact Benjamin Panciera at benjamin.panciera@conncoll.edu or (860) 439-2654.

SPRING EXHIBITS

In the Charles E. Shain Library Exhibit Area

January 2-March 8

Underexposed: Photographs from Connecticut College's Student Photography Journal

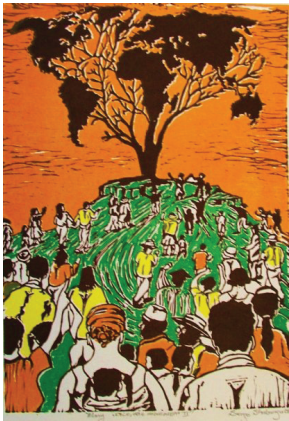


This exhibit puts on display gorgeous color and monochrome prints demonstrating the tremendous range of photographic art produced by Connecticut College students. The exhibit includes portraits and landscapes from many countries on three different continents as well as abstract and extreme close-up photography using microscopy.

March 25-May 19

"Moments Of Freedom: Revolutionary Art from China, South Africa and Tunisia"

Our next exhibit will feature artworks from internationally acclaimed artists, revolutionary posters, and archives, in addition to an initiative to sponsor a photography competition for emerging artists from Tunisia to support their fight against violence and in favor of freedom of expression. It is curated by CISLA scholar and Self-Design Major in Global Aesthetic Democracy, Ikram Lakhdhari '13 as an Honors Thesis research project conducting a comparative analysis of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, South Africa's anti-Apartheid struggle, and Tunisia's ongoing revolutionary artistic movement.



In the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room



February 7-March 7

Upholding the Tradition: Paintings by Mi Defang

The Chu Room hosts an exhibit of thirty traditional scrolls from China painted in color and black and white by the artist Mi Defang. These paintings feature birds perched on blossoming branches in the literati style, providing a contemporary interpretation of familiar subjects and techniques.

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 www.conncoll.edu/libraries-and-technology/about-is/friends-of-the-library/ 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.

2013 Friends of the Connecticut College Library Winter Newsletter

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

PATRON AND POET

When Anna Hempstead Branch went away to Smith College in 1893, her grandfather John Rogers Bolles felt there was a need and a place for a women's college in New London. Years later, Anna and her mother, the poet Mary Lydia Bolles Branch, fulfilled John Bolles' vision when they donated his farm to provide the land for the new Connecticut College for Women.

Land wasn't the only gift that Anna Hempstead Branch bequeathed to the new college, however. She also left behind a collection of letters, records, and manuscripts documenting her life and that of her New London family. This collection, which was assembled and donated by Ruth Newcomb, comprises about six linear feet and sheds light on the lives and activities of the intertwined Bolles, Hempstead, Rogers, and Prince families, as well as their family homestead, the Hempstead Houses, among the oldest surviving houses in Connecticut.

The bulk of the collection consists of letters received by Anna documenting her friends and family early in her life and her growing connections in the world of poetry and publishing as she became recognized as an author. Anna spent summers in her youth with family in New London as her father stayed behind in Brooklyn at his law practice. During this time he wrote her frequent letters telling her about his day and offering her encouragement. Anna also maintained a correspondence with classmates from Adelphi Academy, a progressive high school in Brooklyn, sharing summer adventures and college plans. Anna's early publishing ambitions are revealed by letters from editors of the children's magazine *Treasure Trove* when she was thirteen and seventeen offering compliments and critiques of her submissions.

As she grew older, Anna corresponded with some of the most widely read poets of the day and was an active part of literary life in both New York City and New London. Her correspondents included E.A. Robinson and Joyce Kilmer, as well as Vachel Lindsay, who is often credited with discovering Langston Hughes and promoting the poets of the Harlem Renaissance. Lindsay, in particular, appears to have been a devoted follower of Anna, sending her a work in progress and commenting on drafts of her poetry. One of the most extensive series of letters is with Katharine Lee Bates, Professor of English at Wellesley College and popular songwriter whose



Miss Branch on the grounds of her family home.

most famous contribution to American culture is the lyrics to "America, the Beautiful."

Anna's correspondence reflects her social concerns as well. She was active running a poets' guild in Christodora House, a Lower East Side settlement house that provided services to the immigrant community of Lower Manhattan. Over several

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PATRON AND POET

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years she corresponded with Nettie Weiss, an aspiring young Jewish poet living with her parents in the tenements. Nettie's frequent letters attest to the importance of Anna's efforts in the lives of the residents in the area.

The collection includes correspondence from Anna's family and residents of the Hempstead Houses throughout the nineteenth century, including Mary Bolles Branch; Martha, William, and Edward Hempstead; and Christopher and Hempstead Prince. They detail their personal lives and business in areas as diverse as farming, printing, and the Vaudeville circuit. They also tell of the politics of the day and of hearing famous temperance and abolitionist preachers passing through New London. California is featured in many letters of the early 1850s, as family and friends followed the gold rush. The new towns springing up in the West and the mild climate fascinated readers in New London, who in turn worried about the mass exodus of young men seeking their fortune out West and the decline of the whaling industry. The Civil War naturally

impacted the family and there are reports of its effects on business, a letter from a family member fighting in Louisiana, and fundraising letters requesting help for freed slaves and refugees in the aftermath of the war.

Manuscripts of Anna's poems fill a box in the collection. Many of these were published in collections or in magazines like the *Atlantic*, but there are several unpublished works as well. Among these is a series of notes on memories of Old New London and notes, sketches, and story fragments for a fantasy series for children called *The Invisible Village*. There are also several poems written by Mary Bolles Branch, story fragments from Nancy Hempstead, and manuscripts from poets with whom Anna corresponded. Finally, the collection contains photographs, postcards, drawings, and documentation on the Hempstead Houses and the national Hempstead Family Association. Together they make a remarkable contribution to the story of one of the leading families in our region and of Connecticut College.



Hempstead House: An engraving from a drawing by Nathan Hempstead

LEAR CENTER BECOMES HOME TO A COLLECTION OF CAMELS

A collection of camels and camel-related objects recently came to Connecticut College and is now housed in the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections & Archives. The Anne B. McLean Camel Collection includes many representations of camels made of various materials: wood, metal, textiles, and wax, to name a few. McLean's interest in camels was sparked during a visit to Kabul, Afghanistan with her brother Glen Bowersox in 1973. Bowersox was a representative of the Asia Foundation, a non-profit international development organization working to improve lives across Asia.

During her brief stay in Afghanistan, McLean became interested in many aspects of Afghan culture: Afghan hounds; Bushkazi, the national sport of Afghanistan; and particularly, the rough and rugged Afghan camels. McLean loved the camels of Afghanistan and purchased several camel statues and souvenirs to bring back home, thus beginning her camel collection. Upon her return to the United States, McLean continued collecting camels of all sorts. Eventually, friends and family started to give Anne McLean camels or camel-themed gifts to help expand her collection. Over the course of the thirty-nine years after McLean visited Afghanistan, she built a camel collection with hundreds of camel and camel-related items: stuffed camels of the soft and cuddly variety, carved wooden camels, leather camels, metal camels (some realistic and some abstract), porcelain and ceramic camels, camel jewelry, ornaments, candles, cookie-cutters, stickers, napkins as well as textiles featuring camels. The collection even includes a camel-themed call bell.

Upon Anne McLean's passing on July 21, 2012, her family and friends wanted to ensure that her collection of camels had a good home. After talking to Lear Center staff, the family felt confident that Connecticut College, whose mascot happens to be the camel, would be an appropriate home for the Anne B. McLean Camel Collection. The Lear Center staff would like to thank Anne's husband, Norman McLean of Meadville,



Camels of all shapes and sizes are now part of the collections at the Lear Center

Pennsylvania, for giving the collection to the College and Ed and Syd Bowersox of Somerset, Pennsylvania for coordinating and facilitating the gift to the College.

The McLean Camel Collection, now residing in the Lear Center, complements the George and Harriet Campbell Camel Collection given to the college by their nephew Jim in 1999. The Campbell Camel Collection can be viewed in

Becker House.

Although the McLean Camel Collection won't be further inventoried, cataloged and photographed until this summer, items from the McLean Camel Collection will be on display in the Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives through June.

— Nova Seals
College Archivist

NEW ACQUISITIONS

To the Wheatlight of June

We were very pleased to add to the Lear Center's holdings a new collection of photographic prints and an artist's book *To the Wheatlight of June*, a collaboration between photographer Ben Nixon and poet Steven Brown. The work contains ten platinum prints by Nixon that are also reproduced in a fine, handmade book paired with poems inspired by the photographs.

The photographs are produced by the wet collodion process, one of the earliest technologies for crafting photographic images. This difficult process involves the coating of a smooth glass plate with a mixture of chemical compounds, which is then dipped in a silver nitrate solution. While still wet, the plate is placed in a camera and exposed to light. The result is a negative image produced on a glass plate. The technique is considered particularly challenging because of the time-sensitive processing that must occur just before and after each photograph is taken. It was immensely popular for portraits, landscapes, and art photography beginning in the early 1850s but was gradually replaced by simpler methods. Ben Nixon is one of several photographers now reviving this technique as a modern art form.

Nixon's photographs are simple landscapes with a variety of subjects from the American West and South. The wet collodion process gives them an antique appearance, but with a sharpness and clarity missing from nineteenth-century photographs. They take up an important place in the Shain Library's photography collection, demonstrating both contemporary art photography and early photographic methods and they will be used by students in a variety of classes.



The Friends of the
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www.conncoll.edu/is/friends-of-the-library.htm
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Friends of the Library Newsletter
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This newsletter was designed by Susan Lindberg.

February 2013



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