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Newsletter

Friends of the Connecticut College Library

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Fall 2018

## Fall Newsletter 2018

Benjamin Panciera

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# 2018 FRIENDS of the CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY Fall Newsletter

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

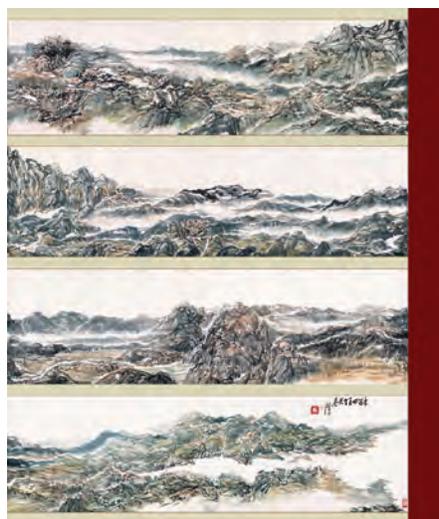
## FOUR HUNDRED MILES OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER CELEBRATES CHARLES CHU

On September 28, the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room in the Shain Library played host to a very special exhibition opening. *Four Hundred Miles of the Connecticut River* celebrates the 100th anniversary of the birth of Charles Chu, former professor of Chinese at Connecticut College and the first curator of the Chu-Griffis Collection of Asian Art. The opening was attended by Professor Chu's friends, family, colleagues and students. They shared stories about the inspiration behind some of the paintings and memories of impromptu post-dinner painting parties.

The exhibition features paintings from both Chu-Griffis and the Chu family's private collection as well as photographs from the College Archives showing Professor Chu as a teacher and artist. The centerpiece of the exhibition is a 23-foot-long hand scroll depicting the entire length of the Connecticut River. In addition, there are 24 smaller scrolls spanning nearly four decades of Chu's career.

Charles Chu was an entirely self-taught master of traditional Chinese ink painting and calligraphy, both during his career as a professor and especially after his retirement from teaching in 1984. Like many of his fellow painters in exile from their native China (Professor Chu left his home in 1945 to pursue graduate study in the United States), Chu relied on the subjects long familiar to Chinese painting, like flowers, birds, animals, and landscapes. Unlike his Chinese-American contemporaries who continued to paint their beloved Chinese subjects

from memory, Chu elected to paint his adopted American surroundings: wisteria, wild berries, plovers, squirrels, bald eagles, not to mention the campus of Connecticut College.



康河四百里  
纪念朱继荣先生百年诞辰  
FOUR HUNDRED MILES OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER  
CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY OF CHARLES CHU

This brings us to the central work in the exhibition, the hand scroll. It is modeled on the famous Qing dynasty hand scroll by an anonymous artist, *Ten Thousand Miles of the Yangtze River*. But unlike the exiled painters Zhang Daqian and Pu Ru who provided their own response to the great painting by repainting the landscape of the Yangtze from memory, Chu adapted the original vision and technique to capture the four hundred miles of the Connecticut River from its mouth in Old Saybrook back to

its source in northern New Hampshire. In so doing, he elevated the Connecticut River to be New England's equivalent of China's Yangtze: both the heart and the backbone of the region. Exhibition curator Yibing Huang compares Chu's memorialization of the New England landscape to the work of the Hudson River School a century and a half earlier, "Whereas the artists of the Hudson River School in the 19th century utilized the European oil techniques to emphasize the effects of light and to depict the rugged Hudson river scenery as a romantic symbol of the sublimity of a newborn nation, Charles answered his own challenge and charted the Connecticut River with ambition and confidence. He simultaneously demonstrated his deep immersion in the great ink tradition of Chinese landscapes and also his own masterful, studied attention to the geographic grandeur and minute details specific to the Connecticut River. By doing so, Charles proved his Americanness and his gratitude and commitment to his adopted homeland, but all in his unique art language and spirit."

The exhibition will be open to the public until the end of the fall semester. The scroll of the *400 Miles of the Connecticut River* is considerably longer than the largest display case in the library so that in order to show it in its entirety, every week one foot of the right-hand side of the painting has to be rolled up, while a foot of the left-hand side is unfurled. In this way, repeat visitors to the exhibition will be able to make a three-month journey up the river through the entire length of New England.



THE PALMER LIBRARY CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

The Friends of the Connecticut College Library  
<http://www.conncoll.edu/information-services/friends-of-the-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/fo/>

This newsletter was designed by Susan Lindberg.  
 October 2018



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

## CIVIL WAR ONLINE

Over the past year, Lear Center staff, working together with student assistants, have been selecting letters from collections of correspondence written by Connecticut soldiers during the Civil War. They are being included in a substantial digital exhibition documenting soldiers' activities and experiences in battlefields, camps, hospitals, and headquarters from Gettysburg to Key West and from New Orleans to Richmond. The exhibition is organized by region, depicting on an interactive historical map where Connecticut soldiers were and providing links to their letters with complete transcriptions.

The work is happening in phases, with four exhibition modules already completed. The eleven letters from Louisiana include William Ingram's descriptions of illness ravaging the Union camps (Ingram would later die of malaria) and Charles McCracken's complaints about corruption among Union contractors. The five letters from the Gulf Coast by Cornelius Gold describe the Union blockade of Confederate ports and give an account of the reaction when the news of the end of the war reached Mobile. The seven letters from South Carolina and Georgia contain Romulus Loveridge's description

of the Union's disastrous defeat at the Battle of Olustee and Cornelius Gold's experiences working in the military bureaucracy at Hilton Head. Finally, the nine letters from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. include William Smith's harrowing account of the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg and Homer Curtis's descriptions of the Capitol in wartime.

The next phase of the project will contain letters from Connecticut, where friends and family describe their concerns and political sentiments at home for and against the war. The project will conclude with letters from Virginia, where most Connecticut soldiers whose letters survive in the Lear Center spent the bulk of their service. These letters include eyewitness accounts of the Union defeat at Fredericksburg, the siege of Petersburg, the fall of Richmond, the Appomattox Campaign, and the reaction to Lincoln's assassination. We will complete this phase in stages with a goal of having all of the letters selected, digitized, and transcribed by summer of 2020. Pages will then be added so that users can browse the letters by subject or author and view the letters along a timeline. The partially completed exhibition can be seen here: <http://lc-digital.conncoll.edu/neatline/fullscreen/civil-war>.

Under Lear Center Digital Commons and Exhibitions

The Connecticut 12th Volunteer Infantry in Louisiana

William Ingram, 12th C.V.I., December 2, 1862

William Reynolds, 12th C.V.I., July 21, 1862

William Ingram, 12th C.V.I., November 19, 1862

William Ingram, 12th C.V.I., November 5, 1862

William Reynolds, 12th C.V.I., May 14, 1863

William Reynolds, 12th C.V.I., July 26, 1863

Charles McCracken, 12th C.V.I., June(?) 27, 1864

## EXHIBITS

### CHARLES CHU ASIAN ART READING ROOM

*400 Miles of the Connecticut River: Celebrating the Centenary of Charles Chu, September 28-December 21, 2018*  
(see cover story)

### CUMMINGS ART GALLERY

*Loose Leafs and Bindings: Book Arts and Prints, January 22-March 1, 2019*

The Friends of the Library will be supporting an exhibition and two gallery talks in the Cummings Art Gallery this winter. *Loose Leafs and Bindings: Book Arts and Prints* will feature works by Connecticut book artist Emily Larned, Italian graphic novelist and student of pop culture Daniele Marotta, students from ART 235 (Artists' Books), ART 202 (Intaglio Printing), and from the artists' books collection of the Linda Lear Center. Daniele Marotta will lecture about graphic novels in the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room on Tuesday, February 19, at 4:30. Emily Larned will speak in the Cummings gallery on February 20 at 4:15, followed by a reception and viewing of the exhibition.

### LINDA LEAR CENTER EXHIBITION AREA

*Encountering Nature: Exploring the Natural World in Children's Literature, August 20-December 21, 2018*

This exhibit showcases how children were encouraged to interact with and explore nature in America and Britain from the 19th to the 20th century. It features educational materials such as identification books that encouraged children to observe the world around them and works from the Nature Study Movement in America, a popular educational model during the Progressive Era that aimed to reconcile scientific observation with personal and spiritual experiences of nature. It influenced major conservation leaders like Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold. The exhibit also includes literature of the scouting movements of the early 20th century, which promoted the idea that physical fitness and mastery of the environment was linked to the development of one's morals and character.

*Connecticut College and the Hurricane of 1938, September 5-December 21, 2018*

The hurricane of 1938 dealt a devastating blow to New London and the New England coastline. While the College and the Arboretum suffered significant damage, miraculously there were only a few minor injuries on campus. The day after the storm struck, despite impassable roads and the lack of power, classes resumed as normal. This exhibit features items from the Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives depicting the effects of the hurricane on Connecticut College and New London.

## SHAIN LIBRARY EXHIBITION AREA

*An American Vision: Rockwell Kent, 1882-1971, November 5, 2018-January 18, 2019*

Rockwell Kent is one of the most important and influential book illustrators of the 20th century. Known for his bold modernism,

Kent illustrated a wide variety of books, ranging from classics to children's literature to progressive political tracts, with particular emphasis on depictions of nature. Early in his career, Kent also worked as an architectural illustrator and among his last commissions was a series of drawings for the newly planned Connecticut College. These illustrations and a selection of works from across his career will be displayed.



## NEW ACQUISITIONS

In response to increased interest from students and faculty, the Linda Lear Center has been building ephemera

collections relating to student activism. These materials have been used in classes from a variety of departments, including History, Gender and Women's Studies, Anthropology, and Dance, as well as in several First Year Seminars. The materials include zines, newspapers, flyers, pamphlets, and similar publications from national organizations, such as the Students for a Democratic Society and



the Black Panthers and less well-known local activists. They include actions around labor organizing, peace movements, reproductive rights, and anti-discrimination.

*continued on page 4*

## SOUND LAB

2018 marked the 21st year of the Sound Lab Foundation lecture. This year's speaker, Suzie Flores, discussed issues of pressing concern, climate change and sustainable food production, and what's being done in our own backyard to address them. Suzie runs Stonington Kelp Co., a family owned and operated New England-based kelp farm off the coast of Stonington and part of a movement all along the Connecticut shoreline that seeks to grow healthy food while restoring ecosystems and fighting climate change. It is one of the aquaculture initiatives in the



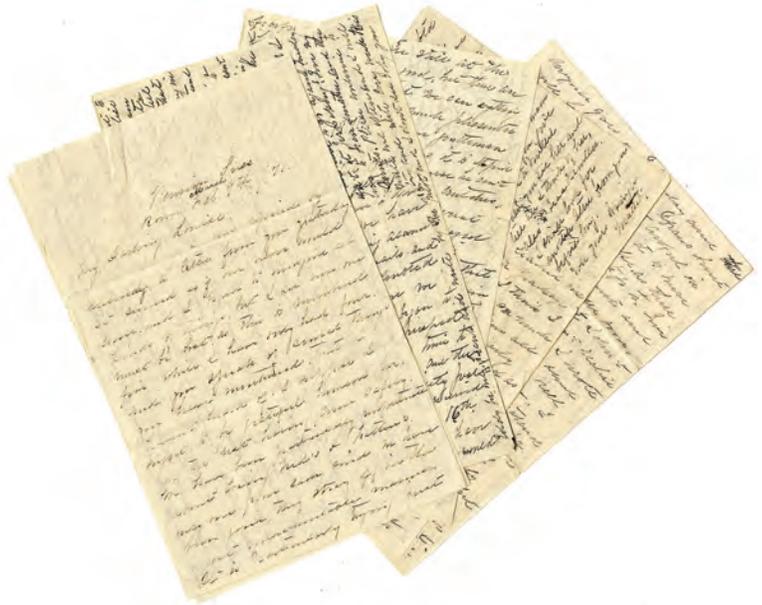
Long Island Sound supported by Green Wave, a multifaceted initiative seeking to

support farmers and fishermen, restore the Sound, sequester carbon, and identify new food sources for a growing population. Green Wave has been recognized in dozens of local, national, and international media outlets and Flores has appeared on CBS's *60 Minutes* and NPR's *Science Friday* to discuss her experience. She spoke to students, faculty, and members of the community about the development of the local kelp industry and its ecological benefits as well as her experience starting a business, dealing with regulators, and finding a market for her product.

## NEW ACQUISITIONS

*continued from page 3*

The Lear Center also recently acquired a substantial collection of letters of Mattie, a young woman from Maine taking the Grand Tour of Europe for nine months in 1870 and 1871. She seems to be traveling with friends and without any great extravagance, taking in traditional sites as well as the contemporary art scene in England, France, Italy, Austria and Germany. While in Italy she witnesses the ongoing struggle for reunification. These letters provide an extraordinary glimpse of Victorian tourism and join a growing collection of manuscript materials in the Lear Center documenting the foreign travels of 19th century Americans. They will be an excellent resource for students and researchers.



## 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 significant research collections held by the Connecticut College Library: Rachel Carson Collection (\$2500), Eugene O'Neill Collection (\$1000), Beatrix Potter Collection (\$500), Chu-Griffis Collection (\$250), Campus History Collection (\$100), Gildersleeve Book Collection (\$50), and William Meredith Collection (\$25). 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