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Friends of the Connecticut College Library

Spring 2021

Spring 2021 Newsletter

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2021 FRIENDS of the CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY Spring Newsletter

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

REMEMBERING THE 1971 FANNING TAKEOVER

May 6th this year marked 50 years since the 1971 student takeover of Fanning Hall. To commemorate the occasion, the current exhibition in Shain Library draws from materials in the College Archives to explore both the 1971 and 1986 Fanning takeovers, along with the College's broader history related to equity and inclusion.

In the early to mid-1960s Connecticut College, like many other higher education institutions, engaged in civil rights activities. Multiple speakers came to campus to talk about civil rights, students could participate in an exchange program with Spellman College in Atlanta, and the student Civil Rights Group sponsored an Intercollegiate Civil Rights Conference. Because there were few Black students at Connecticut College during this time, these activities were driven by white students and focused mainly on civil rights issues outside the campus community.

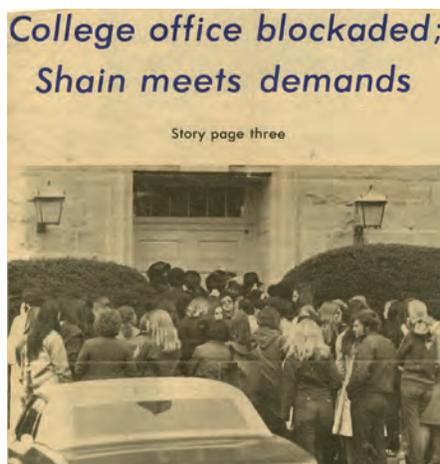
In 1967 this began to change. Increased recruitment efforts resulted in approximately 20 Black students at the College that fall, including 11 freshmen. Rejecting the previous generation's acceptance of white middle-class values and spurred by the uprisings that took place in cities across the U.S. that summer, these students formed the Afro-American Society "to develop an awareness of Afro-American culture within the community, to promote the academic and social welfare of, and to develop a greater degree of unity among, the Afro-American students" at the College.

The Afro-American Society made several proposals to President Charles Shain and others over the next three years. Among them was a call for stronger recruitment efforts known as the "Spirit of '71"—at

least 71 Black students at the College by 1971. However, the lack of results combined with poor communication led to increased frustration.

In response to the administration's failure to meet the needs of Black students and, as a result, failing to attract more to Connecticut College, members of the Afro-American Society locked themselves inside Fanning Hall early in the morning on May 6, 1971, demanding that the College honor the "Spirit of '71." Members of the SGA had supported their demands and many local newspapers covered the event. Shortly before 9 a.m. President Shain agreed to meet their demands after what he described as "a low-key confrontation on the east side of Fanning Hall," and he issued a public statement to that effect.

The specific demands made by the



The Groton News reports on the first Fanning takeover, May 6, 1971

students who took over Fanning Hall in 1971 were met within a few months. Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s the College made gains in recruiting

students of color, with increasing numbers of Latinx, Asian, and Asian-American students in addition to Black students, as well as a corresponding increase in faculty. A new cultural center, called Unity House, was established in 1973 to house the student groups Umoja, La Unidad, and (in 1985) Society Organized Against Racism (SOAR). But in spite of these changes, students would again be frustrated with the College's inadequate support for students of color in a cycle that was to repeat multiple times over the following decades.

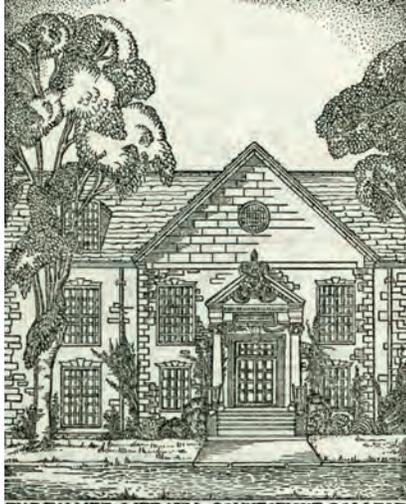
As the Afro-American Society had in the 1960s, Umoja repeatedly voiced their concerns. Their demands addressed concrete issues similar to those expressed previously in 1971 but also called for general efforts to improve campus culture surrounding topics of race—a demand



Students show their support for the protestors in 1986.

whose achievement is more difficult to attain and measure. Feeling that the administration had failed to respond

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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.

June 2021



CONNECTICUT
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NEW ADDITIONS TO THE CHU-GRIFFIS COLLECTION

The Chu-Griffis Collection of Asian Art welcomes several new pieces to its holdings in 2021. The artwork, by Wang Menshang and Charles Chu, continues to strengthen our growing collection of Chinese-American artists, who bring Asian materials and techniques to North American subjects.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM
Lonely and Free, In the Wind, Driftwood from the Hudson

will be the first such held in the Chu-Griffis Collection. These pieces, along with the rest of Wang's works, will again be exhibited this September and October in the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room.

Wang's artwork was the subject of a pandemic-shortened exhibition in February 2020, *From Silk Road to Hudson River*. Comprising 79 pieces of ink painting, calligraphy, photography, prints, and sketches, the exhibition traced Wang's journey of 30 years from the Silk Road where he was first inspired by traditional literati art to the Hudson River Valley, where he has lived and worked since 1998. From those exhibited works, Connecticut College has purchased three ink on paper paintings, *Driftwood from the Hudson*, *Lonely and Free*, and *In the Wind*, and a painted album. The album, a traditional Chinese medium for displaying multiple paintings in an intimate format, will be the first such held in the Chu-Griffis Collection. These pieces, along with the rest of Wang's works, will again be exhibited this September and October in the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room.



A mountain landscape by Charles Chu

The works by Charles Chu, a landscape painting and two pieces of calligraphy, come to the collection through the generous donation of Vivian Segall, an alumna of the College and former editor of *Connecticut College Magazine*. The landscape may already be familiar to some, as it was used as the cover illustration of the Summer 1980 issue of the magazine.

AUTHOR TO SPEAK ON CAMPUS

Investigative journalist and New York Times bestselling author Michael



Blanding returns to campus to discuss his latest research. Blanding, whose previous books dealt with the dark side of Coca Cola and a renowned map dealer who turned

out to be a serial thief, takes on a new subject: William Shakespeare. In *North by Shakespeare: A Rogue Scholar's Quest to Discover the Truth Behind the Bard's Work*, Blanding follows amateur scholar Dennis McCarthy and his attempts to use plagiarism software to prove that Shakespeare, though the author of the plays, borrowed heavily from the courtier Sir Thomas North. *North by Shakespeare* explores the world of Elizabethan England, McCarthy's controversial claims, and the struggles of a self-taught scholar to be taken seriously in academia. Michael Blanding will speak in the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room in the Shain Library on September 30 at 4:30.

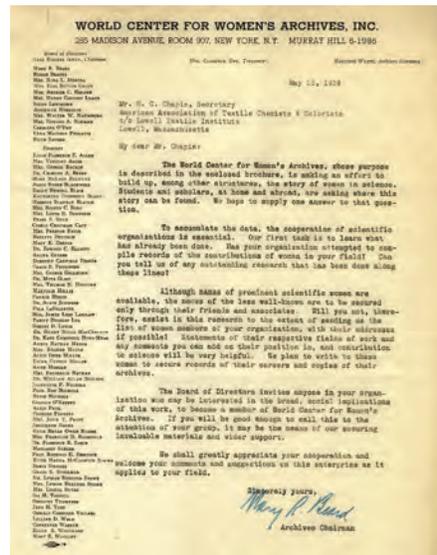
THE WORLD CENTER FOR WOMEN'S ARCHIVES AT CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

For five years, from 1935 to 1940, the World Center for Women's Archives (WCWA) collected materials focused on the historical accomplishments of the modern woman. The organization was founded by Mary Ritter Beard (feminist, historian) and Rosika Schwimmer (Hungarian feminist, author), with the goal, according to Beard, to "see this Center established and the finest possible collection of records assembled - records of individual struggle, aspiration and social achievement (or failure if such there be) and records of organized struggle, aspiration and achievement (or failure if such be)." Beard, wife of historian Charles Beard (author of *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, 1913) was a prolific historian and author in her own right. She published many articles and books and argued that women had always played a dynamic and important role in society. The problem, however, was that their contributions were little recorded or celebrated (*Woman as Force in History: A Study in Traditions and Realities*, 1946). She believed it was important to collect evidence detailing women's accomplishments; otherwise, their historical contributions would not be part of the historical record and subsequently lost forever. Her mantra was, "No document, no history!"

The membership of the WCWA included notable women such as Mrs. Vincent Astor, Alice Stone Blackwell, Fannie Hurst, Alice Paul, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Eleanor Roosevelt. The working members created exhaustive lists of information about professional women, their accomplishments, and professional organizations with whom they were affiliated. Due to lack of funding, the WCWA was disbanded in 1940, and the materials the organization compiled disseminated to various organizations and universities, including Connecticut College.

The WCWA collection housed in the Lear Center contains a substantial part of the women of science accessions compiled by the WCWA, and includes extensive research records as well as

1500+ notecards with meticulous details about women of science and scientific organizations. Also present in the collection are numerous correspondence to and from Mary Ritter Beard, correspondence and reprints of Florence Sabin's publications, and correspondence and reprints of the publications of approximately 50 other notable women of science who donated their collections to the WCWA. Sabin was a physician and the first woman on the faculty at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.



TOP *Mary Ritter Beard*; BOTTOM *Mary Beard writes looking for documents for the archives, 1939*

Mary Ritter Beard and the WCWA also collaborated on two radio broadcasts sponsored by the Works Progress Administration's Federal Theater Radio Division: "Women in the Making of America" and "Gallant American Women" which ran from 1939-1940. The Lear Center collection contains 30 scripts from these programs which sought to highlight women's work and achievements, "toward

establishing and preserving the American way of life, and their contributions to the arts, sciences and the economic progress of the nation."

The Lear Center hopes to embark



Florence Sabin

on a multi-institutional project to bring the WCWA collections back together in a digital form in order to realize the founders' vision of a centralized source for information on notable women of the early twentieth century. You can view the more information about the collection at: <http://archivesspace.conncoll.edu:8081/repositories/2/resources/77>

FANNING TAKEOVER

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sufficiently, 54 students from Umoja, La Unidad, and SOAR staged another takeover of Fanning Hall on May 1, 1986. After a full day of negotiations, the students and administration agreed on a timetable for action.

Following the 1986 takeover, momentum for change increased and institutional structures slowly changed. However, improved administrative response did not necessarily result in a corresponding improvement in campus climate. Incidents of anonymous hate speech in the form of graffiti, along with harassing email and phone calls, drew new waves of student protest in the 1990s and 2000s. These in turn led to new demands for the president and administration to take action, some of which were strikingly similar to those made in 1971 and 1986. Most recently, the anonymous student testimony on Instagram following the killing of George Floyd and others in 2020 illustrates that, 50 years after the first protest in 1971, the impetus for student action and organizing never stopped.



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

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EXHIBITIONS

"Consequently We Insist: Student Protest for Inclusion and Respect" runs through October on the first floor of Shain Library.

From Silk Road to Hudson River will be on exhibit in the Charles Chu Reading Room on the first floor of the Shain Library in September and October.

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 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.