



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mary F. Crean, 860.695.6360, mcrean@hplct.org

From the Fundamental Orders to the Royal Charter to the Charter Oak

Hartford, Connecticut (September 13, 2012) —The present joins hands with the past in the Hartford History Center at Hartford Public Library next Monday, September 17, when a naturalization ceremony for new Americans and a discussion exploring the story of the Charter Oak will kick off national Constitution Day and the beginning of National Welcome Week, Building a Nation of Neighbors.

Beginning at 11 a.m. in the third-floor Hartford History Center of the library's 500 Main Street branch, the naturalization ceremony will include a public conversation on the subject of a great tree that came to symbolize colonial Connecticut's passionate independence, and the shared meaning of public art.

Standing at the corner of Charter Oak Avenue and Charter Oak Place in Hartford's downtown, the monument to the Charter Oak, which blew down in a storm in 1856, consists of a round column topped by a globe and supported by a base with four whales and sea shells. It reads, "Near this spot stood the Charter Oak, memorable in the history of the colony of Connecticut as the hiding place of the charter October 31, 1687."

Today, the "Charter Oak" is also the subject of Hartford's City Canvas project, a one-time initiative aimed to enhance public spaces through the commissioning of large-scale works of public art.

Internationally renowned Connecticut artist Adam Niklewicz has installed the 30- by 45-foot water-activated mural "The Charter Oak" on the western exterior wall of a long-vacant synagogue at 215 Pearl Street. The image the artist created is based on Charles DeWolf Brownell's painting of 1857 in the collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum. Artist J.D. Richey aided Niklewicz in bringing the project to realization.

A second work, a related video projection, will be presented high on the exterior of the adjacent AT&T building. By day, Niklewicz's water-activated mural "The Charter Oak" depicts the enduring symbol of Connecticut's revolutionary spirit. By night, the artist's large-scale projection, "Walking Around a Tree," animates a young oak tree that revolves 360 degrees providing the experience of circling a tree.

Monday's spirited conversation on art and history and immigration will include:

Kip Bergstrom, executive director of Connecticut Culture and Tourism;

Wilson H. Faude, Hartford historian;

Will Wilkins, executive director of Real Art Ways; and

Adam Niklewicz, the artist for Hartford's city canvas project and a naturalized citizen.

About [Hartford Public Library](#)

The Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 860,000 visits per year. Services include access to a large collection of materials for reading and research, as well as music and video. Programs provide education, information and enrichment to the people of Hartford in such areas as citizenship training, literacy, business skills and cultural awareness. The mission of Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. Visit hplct.org and the library's new blog at blogs.hplct.org