



PRESS RELEASE

Contact:

Steve Scarpa

Manager, Communications and Public Relations

Cell: 860-559-4873

E-mail: sscarpa@hplct.org

Hartford History Center Online Exhibit Wins Award of Merit

HARTFORD, April 22, 2021 – Hartford Public Library’s Hartford History Center online exhibit on centennial of women’s suffrage in Hartford has been recognized by the Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO) with a 2021 Award of Merit.

The award was announced on Tuesday, April 20 at CLHO’s annual meeting.

“We are delighted to receive the Award of Merit from the CLHO. The story of women’s suffrage in Connecticut is such an important one. The Hartford History Center’s voter registration records gave us the opportunity to bring to life the women who fought for this essential American right. We are grateful for the recognition and for the chance to share this piece of history,” said Brenda Miller, the Library’s Executive Director, Culture and Communications.

In October 1920, with the passage of the 19th Amendment, thousands of Hartford women queued up to register for the newly acquired right to vote in the upcoming presidential election. Hartford Public Library’s Hartford History Center (HHC) sought to commemorate that important moment in state history with an online exhibit called [October 1920](#).

The spine of the project comes from a collection of voter registration cards preserved in the HHC. The cards from that landmark year offered a trove of demographic and biographic information about who came to the polls in that historic election. HHC History Research Specialist Maureen Heher and Archivist Jennifer Sharp were leads on the project.

“The committee uniformly agreed that voter registration cards offered a unique and revealing window on the experiences of the women who gained the franchise in 1920. By examining, analyzing, and contextualizing these seemingly mundane primary sources, the project opened up a new lens on the voter experience, placing it in historical perspective while also connecting it to current debates,” wrote Amrys O. Williams, executive director of the Connecticut League of Historical Organizations, based at Central Connecticut State University.

The exhibit went live September 14, 2020, the 100th anniversary of the day when the state of Connecticut ratified the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, giving women the right to vote. Through the historical records, we are introduced to a diverse contingent of civic-minded women - whether

single, married, or widowed; black or white; Jewish or Christian; housewives, stenographers, undertakers; native born or foreign born – who took advantage of this long-fought opportunity to register to vote.

The digitization of the Hartford Voter Registration Collection held in the Library's Hartford History Center, and the subsequent transcription of the cards and making the cards' digital images accessible online through the [Connecticut Digital Archive](#) was made possible through the generous support of Abraham Ford Jr., Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Michael Howser, Janice Mathews, Anne E. McAloon, B. Miller and Pradeep Bajaj, Pomeroy-Brace Fund, Brenda Roggeveen, Gilda and David Roncari, and Stephen and Amy Saunders.

To see the exhibit, visit hplct.libguides.com/October1920.

Additional resources and a curriculum appropriate for 10th grade can be found here:
hplct.libguides.com/October1920/resources

For more information about the Hartford History Center, visit its [webpage](#).

About Hartford Public Library

Now celebrating its 127th year, Hartford Public Library remains at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st Century. With seven locations throughout the city, the library provides education, intellectual enrichment and cultural development for thousands of children, youth and adults every year. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance and youth leadership training. www.hplct.org.