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HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY DIGITIZES PRATT STREET HISTORY FOR NEW UCONN RESIDENCE HALL
Highlighting Women's Suffrage Connections During Women's History Month

[HARTFORD, CT]— Hartford Public Library's Digital Library Lab (DLL@HPL) is helping bring the rich history of Pratt Street to life, as the University of Connecticut (UConn) prepares to open a new apartment-style residence hall at **64 Pratt Street** for students in Fall 2026. The building is managed by Campus Housing, in close collaboration with the team at UConn Hartford.

Through the partnership with UConn Hartford and UConn Campus Housing, the Library's Hartford History Center (HHC) and DLL@HPL have digitized historic maps, photographs, and archival materials documenting the development and cultural significance of one of Hartford's most vibrant historic corridors. The digitized materials will help interpret Pratt Street's history through displays and educational resources inside the new residence hall, offering students a deeper understanding of the neighborhood they will soon call home.

"Pratt Street's history is more than architectural charm. It carries the legacy of the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association and Hartford's leadership in the statewide fight for voting rights," said Brenda Miller, HPL's Executive Director of Culture and Communications. "With the Hartford Public Library's Digital Library Lab, we are able to safely reproduce these remarkable artifacts at the highest quality, ensuring that the stories they hold are preserved and shared with care. As UConn students move into 64 Pratt Street, we hope this history fosters a sense of belonging and pride, and reminds them that they, too, are part of a long continuum of people who have shaped this city."

Among the most compelling materials are items that illuminate Pratt Street's connection to the women's suffrage movement, particularly timely during Women's History Month. One highlight is a historic photograph of the headquarters of the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association at 55 Pratt Street, documenting the presence of a major statewide suffrage organization and underscoring Hartford's role in the fight for women's voting rights.

Additional suffrage-related materials that are part of the HHC collection and digitized by the DLL@HPL include:

- **1920 voter registration cards** for the Kavanaugh sisters—Anna, Elizabeth, and Margaret—who owned and operated Kavanaugh's, a women's clothing shop on Pratt Street. Their registrations mark the first year women could vote in statewide and federal elections following the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.
- A **1921 advertisement from** The Hartford Courant for Kavanaugh's shop, illustrating the sisters' role as women entrepreneurs during the early years of women's enfranchisement.



- An interior photograph of the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association headquarters, providing insight into the organization’s presence and operations in Hartford.

In addition to suffrage-related items, the HHC provided UConn with a wide range of historical materials illustrating Pratt Street’s long evolution as a commercial and cultural hub. These include historic maps dating to the 17th and 19th centuries, photographs capturing daily life on the street from the late 1800s through the 20th century, and advertisements highlighting the diverse businesses that once lined Pratt Street, from milliners and shoe stores to dance schools, bridal shops, and restaurants.

Together, these materials paint a vivid picture of Pratt Street as both a dynamic business district and an important site in Connecticut’s civic and social history.

UConn Hartford Dean and Chief Administrative Officer, Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, says the collaboration adds meaningful context to the student living experience.

“Partnering with Hartford Public Library has allowed us to bring forward the deep and multifaceted history of Pratt Street for our students,” said Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, PhD, UConn Hartford Dean and Chief Administrative Officer. “The materials digitized through the Library’s Digital Library Lab will give UConn Hartford students a richer understanding of the neighborhood they will soon call home, including Pratt Street’s pivotal role in Connecticut’s women’s suffrage movement. This work strengthens our shared commitment to preserving and elevating the stories that shape our community.”

By combining archival preservation with modern digitization technology, HPL continues to expand access to Hartford’s past—ensuring that historic materials remain accessible to educators, students, researchers, and the broader community for generations to come.

About the Digital Library Lab at Hartford Public Library

The Hartford Public Library's Digital Library Lab offers expert digitization services that transform physical items—such as documents, photos, audio, and video—into high-quality digital formats. These formats are easy to access, search, and preserve. As a mission-driven social enterprise, DLL@HPL supports nonprofits, businesses, government agencies, and individuals, all while advancing the Library’s goal of increasing access to knowledge, preserving community history, and fostering workforce development. For more information, visit dll.hplct.org.

About Hartford Public Library

Founded as the Library Company in 1774, Hartford Public Library has remained at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience for over 250 years. The Library has seven full-service locations, two Boundless Library locations, and multiple outreach services, including the Library on Wheels and Story Stash, a 24/7 pickup locker. HPL provides education, intellectual enrichment, and cultural development for thousands of children, youth, and adults. HPL has 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. For more information, visit hplct.org

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