

Connecticut Historical Society  
museum & library

Newton C. Brainard Old State House research

A Guide to the collection at the Connecticut Historical Society

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Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut
<b>Creator :</b>	Brainard, Newton Case, 1880-1964.
<b>Title :</b>	Newton C. Brainard Old State House research
<b>Dates :</b>	1906-1984
<b>Extent :</b>	0.75 linear feet (1 1/2 boxes)
<b>Location:</b>	Ms 80542
<b>Language:</b>	English

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Historical Sketch

Newton Case Brainard (1880-1964), President of the Connecticut Historical Society from 1953-1963, collected the bulk of this material. It was under his leadership that the Historical Society entered into an agreement with the City of Hartford concerning ownership and management of the Old State House, and researched and carried out a restoration of the 1792 historic building.

The courts and General Assembly met in what is known as the Old State House in Hartford, Connecticut, from 1796-1878 until a new capitol was constructed in Bushnell Park. Once the state government left the Old State House, Hartford city government moved in and used the building as City Hall until 1905.

The structure experienced numerous "improvements" over time and once the city left, the building fell into disrepair. Several citizen efforts saved the Old State House from demolition throughout the 20th century. On November 3, 1959, the City and the Connecticut Historical Society signed an agreement "assuring that the building would be owned and maintained by the City but managed by the historical society. Under the thoughtful leadership of Newton C. Brainard, the building was repainted, historical exhibits established, and the Senate Chamber restored as well as could be done at the time." (1) That agreement lapsed in 1975 when Hartford eliminated expenditures to maintain the Old State House. Again, citizen groups responded, and the Old State House Association was formed. The

Association signed a 99-year lease with the City and raised funds for another restoration and an endowment. In 2006 the building opened with a new exhibit "History is All Around Us" created by the staff of CHS, and under the direction of the historical society serves a large school population with educational programs.

(1)Friedland, Joan W. and Wilson H. Faude. Birthplace of Democracy. (Chester, Conn.: Globe Pequot Press, 1979).

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## Scope and Content

The accession record for this collection indicates that Newton C. Brainard donated the collection in 1980. However, Brainard died in 1964. That accession record also indicates the gift consisted of three boxes. Only two boxes were found under that number.

The collection consists primarily of correspondence, 1959-1960, and research notes, pamphlets, newspaper clippings and transcripts of manuscript items, 1910-1984, illustrating the history of the Old State House and the numerous attempts to "save" it.

In addition to Brainard's collected research, several other interesting items ended up here. One is correspondence and fund raising notices from the Society of the Colonial Dames in their efforts to raise funds to save the Old State House in 1910-1911. There also is a folder containing information on the return of the Senate chairs, 1927-1961.

Dating after Brainard's tenure are slides of the building, taken in 1967-68, a file on the Old State House from Jon M. K. Davis, 1978-1982, and notes and correspondence concerning an exhibit, "Connecticut's Own" proposed by the Historical Society for the Old State House, 1984.

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## Restrictions

### Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

### Use Restrictions

Use of the material requires compliance with the Connecticut Historical Society's Research Center regulations.

## Subject Headings

### Corporate Names

Old State House (Hartford, Conn.)

### Geographic Names

Hartford (Conn.) -- Buildings, structures, etc.

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## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Item, Collection Title, Collection number (Box #, Folder #). Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut.

### Processing Details

Collection was processed by Barbara Austen in 2007.

EAD Finding Aid created July 2012.

### Accruals

The collection is closed.

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## Contents:

### Research

Box	Folder	
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1	1	Publications by or about the Old State House, 1906-1979
1	2	Colonial Dames correspondence and fund raising, 1910-1911
1	3-6	Newspaper articles and transcribed excerpts, 1910-1979
1	7	"Senate Chairs", 1927-1961
1	8	Newton C. Brainard, letters and articles, 1959-1960
1	9-13	Newton C. Brainard, research notes and copies

**Box Folder**

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|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | Research notes (possibly Brainard's)                                    |
| 2 | 2 | Typescript history of the Old State House                               |
| 2 | 3 | Color slides, 1967-1968   |
| 2 | 4 | John M. K. Davis, information on the Old State House, 1978-1982         |
| 2 | 5 | "Connecticut's Own", a proposed exhibit at the Old State House,<br>1984 |