118,000 digital images being added to the Connecticut Historical Society
NHRPC grant brings online access to revolutionary assets

Hartford, CT (June 2014) – The Connecticut Historical Society (CHS) is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a grant of $35,000 from the National Historical Records and Publications Commission (NHRPC) to digitize eleven important colonial-era manuscript collections that were previously on microfilm. The collections include the papers of such founding fathers as Oliver Wolcott Jr., Jonathan Trumbull, Silas Deane, and William Williams, along with the papers of Indian preacher Samson Occom and the artificially created collection of American Revolution papers. These represent some of the most heavily used collections in the Waterman Research Center at CHS. Once completed, approximately 118,000 digital images will be made available online via the CHS website (CHS.org).

This project is part of an ongoing, institution-wide initiative to put more of CHS’s historical content on the internet. The collections selected are important to understanding Connecticut’s role in the growth of settlement in the colonial period, English relationships with Native Americans, the steps to Revolution, and the development of the new federal government after 1783.

The eleven project collections currently exist on 59 rolls of film that were produced more than 20 years ago to serve as surrogates for the original material housed in our climate-controlled locked storage area connected to the Research Center. Microfilm, while still important as a preservation tool, is not easily accessed—researchers must come to CHS to use the original manuscripts or use the microfilm, or order copies of the film for use offsite.

CHS staff and volunteers, led by project archivist Barbara Austen, are currently conducting quality control and creating metadata on the first batch from this project, the Oliver Wolcott Jr. images, in preparation toward the online access of these resources to the public. Wolcott served as the Secretary of the Treasury from 1795-1800 and as Governor of Connecticut from 1817 to 1827. Both of these offices are represented in his papers. The digitization process is being done by Hudson Archival of Port Ewan, New York. Follow the CHS blog for ongoing updates at CHS.org/blog.

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About the Connecticut Historical Society (@ConnHistSoc):

Founded in 1825, the Connecticut Historical Society is a non-profit museum, library, research and education center. CHS strives to inspire and foster a life-long interest in history and ignite a passion for learning about history through research assistance, exhibitions, tours and programs for all ages. Visit CHS online at chs.org or call 860-236-5621.

About National Historical Records and Publications Commission (NHRPC):
Established by Congress in 1934, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), a statutory body affiliated with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), supports a wide range of activities to preserve, publish, and encourage the use of documentary sources, created in every medium ranging from quill pen to computer, relating to the history of the United States.