

## CONNECTICUT COLLECTIONS

This exhibit is a sampling of the museum's artifact holdings representing its three major collecting themes: Connecticut government, military and industrial history. Among the objects relating to the early governance of the state are Connecticut's original manuscripts of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution and Articles of Confederation, a display of political signs and buttons, women's suffrage banners and a voting booth from the early 20th century. Historic photographs and personal artifacts linked with prominent Connecticut political figures include the legendary showman P.T. Barnum, who served several terms in the State Legislature and as mayor of Bridgeport.

In the area of military history, the exhibit contains flags, portraits, weapons and memorabilia relating to Connecticut's contribution to American military defense from the colonial wars to Operation Desert Storm. The display of civil War uniforms and weapons also includes an original diary and other artifacts preserved by Connecticut soldiers in Andersonville Prison. Also on display are service uniforms worn by Connecticut soldiers in the Spanish-American conflict, World Wars I and II, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War.



Civil War overcoat and equipment



Connecticut made industrial and consumer products

Connecticut's important role in the story of American industry and manufacturing is a major focus of the museum collections. Early in its history, Connecticut was known for the precision manufacturing of firearms, clocks, hardware and tools. Examples of the products of Connecticut inventors and manufacturers such as Whitney, Colt, Terry, Winchester, Stanley and others are highlighted.

## THE MITCHELSON COIN COLLECTION



\$ 20 Gold Double Eagle

In December of 1911, the State Library was given a vast collection of currency, coins and medals assembled by Joseph C. Mitchelson. A native of Tariffville, Connecticut, Mitchelson was a member of the U.S. Assay Commission and was the first American to be elected to the British Numismatic Society. Among the best aggregations of American coins in the world, the Mitchelson collection includes choice examples of every coin minted in the U.S. including patterns and trial pieces. The sampling of American coins on display spans the period from the 17th century to the present. Included are such rarities as Connecticut's 18th century Higley Copper token and the ultra high relief 1907 \$20 Gold Double Eagle.



The Museum is located in the  
Connecticut State Library.  
231 Capitol Ave. Hartford, CT. 06106

### Hours:

Monday - Friday 9:00-4:00

Saturday 9:00-3:00

*Closed State Holidays and State Holiday Weekends*

**Free Admission**

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**Web site: [www.cslib.org](http://www.cslib.org)**

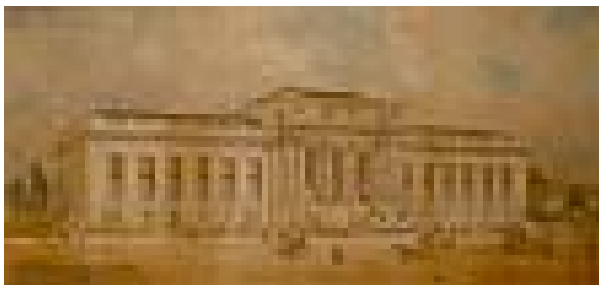
# The Museum Of Connecticut History Connecticut State Library



The Rampant Colt statue which was atop the Hartford factory of the Colt's Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company

**A Museum of  
Connecticut  
Government,  
Industrial and  
Military History**

Housed in the 1910 State Library and Supreme Court Building, the Museum consists of Memorial Hall, a magnificently restored beaux-arts style gallery, and three adjoining exhibit areas. On display are portraits of Connecticut Governors as well as historic documents, including the State's original 1662 Royal Charter, the 1639 Fundamental Orders, and the 1818 and 1964 State Constitutions.



Architect's rendering of the State Library and Supreme Court Building, circa 1908

**The focus of the Museum and its collections is Connecticut's government, military and industrial history. Permanent and changing exhibits trace the growth of the State and its role in the development of the nation from the colonial era to the present.**



### PORTRAITS OF THE GOVERNORS OF CONNECTICUT

The State of Connecticut officially embarked upon the acquisition of works of art in 1800 when the Legislature commissioned a portrait of George Washington from the Philadelphia artist John Trumbull. In 1830, a likeness of former Governor and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wolcott Jr. by Ralph Earle, was presented to the State and hung in the State House in New Haven.



Gov. Oliver Wolcott Sr. by Ralph Earle

By the mid-nineteenth century the State had acquired portraits of numerous former governors and lieutenant governors, including some of the colonial period. It has become the custom of the Legislature to appropriate funds to have portraits made of governors after their departure from office.

The collection of governors' portraits resided in the State House until 1878, when the current State Capitol building was constructed. In 1910, the State Library was completed and Memorial Hall became the repository of the collection. Among the artists whose works are represented in the portrait collection are Ralph Earle, George Wright, Charles N. Flagg, Deane Keller, and Herbert Abrams.

### LIBERTIES AND LEGENDS

Connecticut's history of constitutional government dates back to the seventeenth century and two significant documents: the 1639 Fundamental Orders, which bound the three original towns of Windsor, Wethersfield and Hartford into a colonial entity, and the Royal Charter of 1662 granted by King Charles II. Twenty-five years later, when agents of James II attempted to seize the charter, it was spirited away and hidden in a majestic oak tree on the Wyllys estate in Hartford, thereby preserving the charter and the rights of the colonists. For over a hundred and fifty years, the "Charter Oak" was a prominent and widely recognized Connecticut landmark until it was toppled during an 1856 storm. The exhibit "*Liberties and Legends*" tells the story of this venerated icon.

Above: The Charter Oak by Charles Brownell, 1856

### THE COLT FIREARMS COLLECTION



Col. Samuel Colt



Throughout the history of American firearms development, no name is more recognizable than that of Samuel Colt (1814-1862). Colt's genius in both inventing and marketing helped make Connecticut a major center for firearms manufacturing throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Revolving pistols and other weapons made in the Hartford factory of the Colt's Patent Manufacturing Co. played a prominent role in historic events in America and the world.

Left: Engraved Colt Model 1851 Navy Pistol

The Colt Factory Collection was given to the Museum Of Connecticut History in 1957. The collection constitutes one of the finest assemblages of early Colt prototypes and experimental firearms in the world. It also includes Colt-made Gatling guns, shotguns and automatic weapons.

**In 1995 the original "Rampant Colt" statue that had adorned the Hartford Colt factory was acquired by the museum.**



The Rampant Colt



Above: 1914 advertisement for the Colt model 1911 Pistol.

Left: Representative firearms collection from the Colt factory collection which came to the museum in 1957.