



# HARTFORD HERITAGE PROJECT

“Hartford Authors Project and Presentation”

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Suggested Partners: *see pages 3-10 to correspond author heritage with partner site*  
Wallace Stevens' grave (Cedar Hill Cemetery), the Wallace Stevens Room and Hartford History Center (Hartford Public Library), the former Talcott Street Church (located at the corner of Talcott and Market Streets), the Auerbach Library (the Wadsworth Atheneum); Connecticut Historical Society, the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, the Watkinson Library (Trinity College), the Mark Twain House & Museum, and more.

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## ENGLISH 222 (INDIVIDUAL PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS)

This project aims to introduce you to Hartford’s literary figures through a place-based approach (i.e. by getting out and seeing a place in the city where your author lived!).

Here’s what you will do:

- Read about each author on BlackBoard and list the authors in order of your preference.
- Choose one of these authors for your project via a lottery to be held in class.
- Research the author and his/her association with Hartford.
- Read and study some of the author’s literary works (beyond what we read in class, if applicable)
- Visit a site related to the author.
- Create a poster to share your findings and experience with the class.

### The Project

*You will produce a poster presentation to show the class what you have learned about your author and his/her relation to Hartford (you will learn how to do this in a workshop later this semester)*

**Required Components:** You will submit components 1-4 as a written draft as part of your project grade.

1. **Bio with specific focus on Hartford:** Who is the author? Why is he/she significant? What is the author's connection to Hartford? (written draft: apx. 250 words)
2. **Reflection on a work by the author.** Read a story, poem, or novel excerpt by the author and express your thoughts about it. Do not choose a work we read in class. (written draft: apx. 250 words)
3. **Reflection on your site visit (and “selfie”).** Visit one of the recommended sites and write about your experience. You must include a selfie taken at the site! Site visits for the project do not count toward extra credit. (written draft: apx. 250 words)
4. **Conclusions:** your personal reflection on what you learned doing this project. (written draft: apx. 250 words)
5. **Visuals** – you will need to collect visuals for your presentation, which may include photos that you took on your site visit.

## ENGLISH 222 (GROUP PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS)

This project aims to introduce you to Hartford's literary figures through a place-based approach (i.e. by getting out and seeing a place in the city where your author lived!).

Here's what you will do:

- Find a partner for this project and list the authors in order of your team's preference.
- Choose one of these authors for your project via a lottery to be held in class.
- Research the author and his/her association with Hartford.
- Read and study some of the author's literary works.
- Visit a site related to the author.
- Take notes at the three Hartford History Lectures to build historical context for your project.
- Create a poster with your team to share your team's findings and experience with the class.

### The Project

*You will produce a poster presentation to show the class what you have learned about your author and his/her relation to Hartford (you will learn how to do this in a workshop later this semester)*

**Required Components:** You will submit components 1-5 as a written draft as part of your project grade. Each member of your team must submit his or her own draft. This part of the assignment is individual, but team members should discuss and coordinate the project together.

6. **Bio with specific focus on Hartford:** Who is the author? Why is he/she significant? What is the author's connection to Hartford? (written draft: apx. 250 words)
7. **Reflection on a work by the author.** Read a story, poem, or novel excerpt by the author and express your thoughts about it. Each member of your team should write about a separate piece of literature. Do not choose a work we read in class. (written draft: apx. 250 words)
8. **Reflection on your site visit (and "selfie").** Visit one of the recommended sites and write about your experience. You can visit as a team or individually. You must include a selfie taken at the site! Site visits for the project do not count toward extra credit. (written draft: apx. 250 words)
9. **Hartford Historical Context.** Take notes at the Hartford History lectures and write up a historical sketch of Hartford based on what you learned. This information should appear in your poster as historical context. (written draft: apx. 250 words).
10. **Conclusions:** your personal reflection on what you learned doing this project. (written draft: apx. 250 words)
11. **Visuals** – you will need to collect visuals for your presentation, which may include photos that you took on your site visit.

### Due dates:

- Draft of text that includes components 1-5 due on Bb on **Friday, April 26** by midnight
- Project presentations in class on **May 8, 5:30**
- Potential poster daytime presentation at CCC Library TBD (participation receives extra credit)

**On Library Reserve:** *Literary Connecticut* by Eric Lehman & Amy Nawrocki (2014, The History Press)

## AUTHOR LIST

### Option 1 - Wallace Stevens

Pulitzer-prize winner **Wallace Stevens**, considered one of the great modernist poets, composed much of his poetry while walking to and from his office at the Hartford Insurance Company or strolling in Elizabeth Park. His poetry is famously difficult, but it is playful and fun to read.

**Suggested websites/articles:** <http://www.stevenspoetry.org/index.htm>; [“Searching for Wallace Stevens”](#) by Steve Kemper; [“For the Poet Wallace Stevens, Hartford was an Unlikely Muse.”](#) New York Times; “A Sense of the Now” in *Literary Connecticut* (2014) by Lehman & Nawrocki.

#### **Place-based activity:**

**Activity Option A:** Go on part or all of the [Wallace Steven’s Walk](#), recording your thoughts on walking in the poet’s footsteps and reading each stone monument leading to his house on Westerly Terrace.

**Activity Option B:** Visit the Wallace Stevens Room on the third floor of Hartford Public Library and note the images on the wall – what makes them significant to Stevens’ time in Hartford? Go into the Hartford History Center (open Tuesday through Saturday, 1-5 p.m.), across from the Wallace Stevens Room on the library’s third floor, and ask to look through books by Wallace Stevens or about his work.

**Activity Option C:** Visit Wallace Stevens’ grave site at [Cedar Hill Cemetery](#) and combine this with a portion of option A or B.

**Suggested Readings:** Choose a couple of poems that we did not read in class. For example, “Girl in a Nightgown,” “Of Hartford in a Purple Light,” or any poem of your choosing.

### Option 2 – Ann Plato

Ann Plato was of African American and Native American origin and among the earliest women of color to publish a book – as a teenager, no less! She was a member of the Talcott Street Church, Hartford’s first free black church, pastored by Reverend James Pennington. Many of you walk by the site of this church every day coming into Capital Community College!

**Suggested websites/articles:** find her entry and read a poem at the [Poetry Foundation website](#); look up the book *Hartford’s Ann Plato and the Native Borders of Identity* by Ron Welburn (SUNY Press, 2016; for information on her famous pastor, James Pennington, who wrote the preface to her book, see this article at [connecticuthistory.org](http://connecticuthistory.org); view [this needlework](#) by Ann Plato that sold at auction for over \$10,000!

**Place-based activity:** view this [website on an installation by artist Mel Chin](#) that reconstructs Talcott Street Congregational Church and then visit the site yourself (it’s right outside our back door!); visit [Faith Congregational Church](#), which was formerly the Talcott Street Church, to learn something about its history and view portraits of Reverend Pennington and others.

**Suggested Readings:** access Ann Plato’s book, including all essays and poems, at [Digital Schomburg African American Women Writers of the 19th Century](#).

### **Option 3 - Lydia Sigourney**

Did you know that Sigourney Street gets its name from the poet **Lydia Sigourney**? She was known throughout America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the “sweet songstress of Hartford.”

**Suggested websites/articles:** <http://cwhf.org/>; [the Victorian Web](#) ; see also “Defining America” in *Literary Connecticut* (2014) by Lehman & Nawrocki.

#### **Place-based activity:**

**Activity Option A:** Visit the [Wadsworth Atheneum](#) and view several items related to Sigourney on exhibit. Look for a cradle carved out of wood from the Charter Oak that includes a poetic inscription written by Sigourney. There is also a John Trumbull portrait of Lydia Sigourney on view. The [Auerbach Library](#) at the Wadsworth Atheneum is a beautiful library that has several first editions of Sigourney's works – *The Weeping Willow* (1847) and *Margaret and Henrietta* (1852), both tiny volumes that you can hold and leaf through. Hours are limited (W, Th 11am-5pm; Saturdays). You must call to make an appointment since the books will need to be retrieved from the archives for you. Call Amy Kilkenny at 860-838-4116. Free entry with CCC ID.

If you read Sigourney’s “Fall of the Charter Oak,” you can make many other connections from the exhibits at the Atheneum: the painting of the Charter Oak by Frederic Edwin Church is a must see (and great for a selfie!). If you focus on the Charter Oak, you can read about the legend on [connecticuthistory.org](#), find more items at the [Old State House](#) (entrance free with CCC ID) and [Connecticut Historical Society](#), and also look up what Mark Twain had to say about the items you are seeing at the Atheneum in his [1868 Alta California article reporting on his very first visit to Hartford](#). Show your CCC I.D. card to get in free.

**Activity Option B:** You can also visit the [Hartford History Center](#) at Hartford Public Library and request to view Sigourney’s letters and papers. There is no charge to go through these collection materials; the History Center is free and open to the public. You will need a form of identification and you must call the History Center in advance of your visit, 860-695-6297, so the archival materials can be readied for your visit. Additionally, the History Center holds a number of books by Sigourney in its collection. History Center staff can help you locate titles. The library, of course, is free.

**Activity Option C:** Visit the [Connecticut Historical Society](#) research center to request to view [Sigourney’s letters and papers](#). There is a small fee to use the research center. CHS is at 1 Elizabeth Street, Hartford.

**Suggested Readings:** choose any of Sigourney’s poems (the [Victorian Web](#) resources include a biographical sketch and links to her poetry). If you choose Option A, you might want to read “The Fall of the Charter Oak.”

### **Option 4 – Charlotte Perkins Gilman**

One of the most famous literary works to come out of the early women’s rights movement in American literature, “The Yellow Wallpaper,” was written by Hartford native Charlotte Perkins

Gilman. She was born in the Nook Farm neighborhood where Twain and Stowe lived, and she was the grand-niece of Harriet Beecher Stowe.

**Suggested websites/articles:** <https://connecticuthistory.org/charlotte-perkins-gilman/>; <http://cwhf.org/>; see also “This is the Women’s Century” in *Literary Connecticut* (2014) by Lehman & Nawrocki.

**Place-based activity:** Visit Charlotte’s great-aunt’s home at the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center (view the permanent exhibit on Stowe and Uncle Tom’s Cabin and take a house tour). Show your CCC I.D. card for a free tour for you and a guest.

**Suggested readings:** we are reading “The Yellow Wallpaper” and “Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper” in class, so choose something else here: [Charlotte Perkins Gilman Digital Collection](#).

CCC students are welcome to make research appointments with Elizabeth Burgess to access the Stowe research library. Email [bburgess@stowecenter.org](mailto:bburgess@stowecenter.org) to set up an appointment.

### **Option 5 – Noah Webster**

Noah Webster was born in Hartford in 1758 in an area of the town that later became West Hartford. “Through the promotion of education, laws, human rights, and language,” says the Webster House website, “Noah Webster helped to create a national identity for a fledgling nation. Though he accomplished much more during his life, Webster is best remembered for authoring two of America’s most influential books, the *“Blue-Backed Speller”* and *An American Dictionary of the English Language.*”

**Suggested websites:** <https://connecticuthistory.org/people/>; see also “Defining America” in *Literary Connecticut* (2014) by Lehman & Nawrocki.

**Place-based activity:** Visit the [Noah Webster House](#) in West Hartford and take a tour. Entrance with a valid college ID is \$5.

**Suggested readings:** the preface and introduction to [An American Dictionary of the English Language](#); Introduction to [The Blue Backed Speller](#), first published in 1783, was the #1 schoolbook in America for about 100 years and educated millions of Americans on how to be American; [“Sketches of American Policy”](#); [“Effects of Slavery on Morals and Industry”](#).

### **Option 6 – Isabella Beecher Hooker**

Isabella Beecher Hooker is known for her pioneering work in the women’s rights movement. She was not a writer of creative works of literature, but her articles and speeches qualify her as an American writer. She was the half-sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe and was the founder, along with her husband, of the Nook Farm community to which Stowe and Twain later moved.

**Suggested websites/articles:** <https://connecticuthistory.org/people/>; <http://cwhf.org/>; *Tempest-Tossed: The Spirit of Isabella Beecher Hooker* by Susan Campbell.

**Place-based activity:** Visit Isabella’s half-sister’s home at the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center (view the permanent exhibit on Stowe and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and take a house tour). You can

also see Isabella's home from the outside – it is still standing opposite Hartford High School, but hidden behind other houses. Ask at the Stowe Center for directions or look them up on line. Show your CCC I.D. card to get a free tour of the Stowe house for you and a guest.

**Suggested readings:** "[The Constitutional Rights of the Women of the United States](#)", a speech Hooker delivered in Washington D.C. on March 30, 1883.

CCC students are welcome to make research appointments with Elizabeth Burgess to access the Stowe research library. Email [bburgess@stowecenter.org](mailto:bburgess@stowecenter.org) to set up an appointment.

### **Option 7 – The Hartford Wits**

The Hartford Wits was an influential literary society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century which, as its name suggests, was centered in Hartford. Members of the Hartford Wits produced poetry and other writings that reflected and influenced American culture around the time of the American Revolution.

**Suggested website:** <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-hartford-wits/>; [Encyclopedia.com](#)

#### **Place-based activities:**

**Activity Option A:** John Trumbull (the poet) was a central figure in the Hartford Wits. Read something by Trumbull (maybe portions of [the Anarchiad](#), to which he was a contributor), and then visit the [Wadsworth Atheneum](#) to view paintings by his cousin, John Trumbull (the painter). What connections can you make between the poetry of John Trumbull (the poet and member of the Hartford Wits) and his cousin John Trumbull (the painter)? Show your CCC I.D. card to get in free.

**Activity Option B:** Research Noah Webster's connection with the Hartford Wits [and read these pages from a book about Webster written in 1912 by his granddaughter](#). Then take a house tour at the [Noah Webster House](#) museum in West Hartford. Entrance with a valid college ID is \$5.

**Suggested articles:** "[Hartford Wits – Or Were They?](#)" by Steve Courtney (Hartford Courant, Aug 4, 2002); "The Revolution of the Hartford Wits" in *Literary Connecticut* (2014) by Lehman & Nawrocki.

**Suggested readings:** Preface and excerpts from "[The Anarchiad](#)"; "The Progress of Dulness" and other [poetical works by John Trumbull](#).

### **Option 8 – Charles Dudley Warner**

Mark Twain wrote his first novel, *The Gilded Age*, with his Nook Farm neighbor Charles Dudley Warner. Warner was the editor of the Hartford Courant and a nationally known author of articles and books that delighted readers with their charm and wit.

**Suggested website:** short but interesting biographies from [Cedar Hill Cemetery](#) and [Washington State University](#). A fuller biography by Warner's contemporary [Annie Adams Fields](#) was written in 1904 and can be found [here](#).

### **Place-based activities:**

**Activity Option A:** Visit the Watkinson Library at Trinity College and ask to view Charles Dudley Warner's papers (i.e. his letters and manuscripts). The library's manuscript holdings are described [here](#) (just scroll down to Warner to read the description of the Warner papers). Call the Watkinson Library Front Desk at 860-297-2268 or view the [website](#) for information on hours and to make an appointment to see these documents from the archives.

**Activity Option B:** Do two or three of the following: (a) Visit Warner's grave at [Cedar Hill Cemetery](#); (b) take a tour of his good friend [Mark Twain's house](#) and reflect on walking in Warner's footsteps; or (c) request to view a first edition of *The Gilded Age*, the novel Warner and Twain co-authored at the [Auerbach Library](#) located at the Wadsworth Atheneum. Hours are limited (W, Th 11am-5pm; Saturdays). Call Amy Kilkenny at 860-838-4116 for an appointment.

**Suggested readings:** Online versions of Warner's writings can be found at [Project Gutenberg](#) and [Washington State University](#). Reading excerpts of *Back-log Studies* would give you a sense of what life at Nook Farm was like (note: the "neighbor" is Mark Twain and the Parson is Twain's best friend the Reverend Joseph Twitchell). *My Summer in the Garden*, one of Warner's most popular books, likewise gives insight into the Nook Farm neighborhood where Warner, Twain, Stowe, and other notables lived. "Calvin: A Study of Character" is a lighthearted remembrance of the Warner family cat.

### **Option 9 - Mark Twain**

Mark Twain wrote his most famous works while living in Hartford, the city he called the most beautiful he had ever seen.

**Suggested websites/articles:** <https://connecticuthistory.org/people/>; <http://twain.lib.virginia.edu>; Twain's *Alta California* articles from his first visit to Hartford in 1868; see also "A Tramp Abroad Finds a Home" in *Literary Connecticut* (2014) by Lehman & Nawrocki.

**Place-based activity:** Visit the [Mark Twain House & Museum](#) (view the permanent exhibit on Twain's life and take a house tour). Show your CCC I.D. card to get in free.

**Suggested Readings:** There is a lot to choose from. For example, the first few chapters of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* or *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; "The War Prayer"; "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"; "A True Story, Repeated Word for Word as I Heard It." Or try these Hartford-based pieces: "Facts Concerning the Recent Carnival of Crime in Connecticut"; "The McWilliamses and the Burglar Alarm"; "Experience of the McWilliamses with Membranous Croup."

### **Option 10 – James Mars**

James Mars was enslaved in Connecticut and later gained his freedom and moved from Norfolk CT to Hartford, where he worked in a dry goods store. He wrote and published an important account of how he gained his freedom. Mars was a deacon of the Talcott Street Church,

Hartford's first free black church, pastored by Reverend James Pennington. Many of you walk by the site of this church every day coming into Capital Community College!

**Suggested websites/articles:** "[James Mars' Words Illuminate the Cruelty of Slavery in New England](#)" by Peter P. Hinks at [Connecticuthistory.org](#); "[1850s Equal Rights Activist James Mars](#)" at [Connecticuthistory.org](#).

**Place-based Activity:** view this [website on an installation by artist Mel Chin](#) that reconstructs Talcott Street Congregational Church and then visit the site yourself (it's right outside our back door!); visit [Faith Congregational Church](#), which was formerly the Talcott Street Church, to learn something about its history and view portraits of Reverend Pennington and others. Or, if you are feeling adventurous, visit his grave in [Norfolk's Center Cemetery](#).

**Suggested Readings:** read the electronic edition of [James Mars's short book Life of James Mars, A Slave Born and Sold in Connecticut](#). Written by Himself.

### **Option 11 - Harriet Beecher Stowe**

Litchfield-born **Harriet Beecher Stowe** studied and taught in Hartford as a young woman and moved back to Hartford after the success of her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the novel that many, including Abraham Lincoln, credited with prompting Americans to action against slavery.

**Suggested websites/articles:** <https://connecticuthistory.org/people/>; <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/>; <http://cwhf.org/>; see also, "Uncle Tom's Fire Still Burns" in *Literary Connecticut* (2014) by Lehman & Nawrocki.

**Place-based activity:** Visit the [Harriet Beecher Stowe Center](#) and take a house tour. Show your CCC I.D. card for free entry for you and a guest.

**Suggested Readings:** choose several chapters from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that we did not read for class or any of her novels. She also wrote some poetry and short sketches. Her writings are available online.

CCC students are welcome to make research appointments with Elizabeth Burgess to access the Stowe research library. Email [bburgess@stowecenter.org](mailto:bburgess@stowecenter.org) to set up an appointment.

### **Option 12 – Reverend James W. C. Pennington**

James Pennington escaped from slavery at the age of 15 and made his way north. He learned to read and write and eventually attended Yale Divinity School as a non-matriculated student, officiated Frederick Douglass's wedding, and served as pastor of the Talcott Street Congregational Church in Hartford, where he authored a number of abolitionist works, including the first text book on the history of blacks in America.

**Suggested websites/articles:** Here is a [short biography and a photo of the Talcott Street bible at the Smithsonian](#), and here is a short [biography from the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum](#). A more detailed account is available from [the Presbyterian Historical Society](#).



**Place-based Activity:** view this [website on an installation by artist Mel Chin](#) that reconstructs Talcott Street Congregational Church and then visit the site yourself (it's right outside our back door!); visit [Faith Congregational Church](#), which was formerly the Talcott Street Church, to learn something about its history and view portraits of Reverend Pennington and others.

**Suggested Readings:** You can read Pennington's Text Book on the Origin and History of the Colored People online, for example [here at Google Books](#).

### **Option 13 – Reverend Hosea Easton**

Hosea Easton, whose ancestry can be traced to both African and Native American roots, was a pastor of the Talcott Street Congregational Church in Hartford, which was located on Talcott and Market Streets just out the back of our college. He was an important writer on race prejudice and abolition and presided over the Talcott Church during a series of race riots.

**Suggested websites/articles:** there are numerous biographies online about Easton, including this [Encyclopedia.com biography](#). There is also this book chapter on Easton found on [Google Books](#).

**Place-based Activity:** view this [website on an installation by artist Mel Chin](#) that reconstructs Talcott Street Congregational Church and then visit the site yourself (it's right outside our back door!); visit [Faith Congregational Church](#), which was formerly the Talcott Street Church, to learn something about its history and view portraits of Reverend Easton, Reverend Pennington, and others.

**Suggested Readings:** Search online for sermons and other writings by Hosea Easton, including his most important publication: [A treatise on the intellectual character, and civil and political condition of the colored people of the U. States : and the prejudice exercised towards them : with a sermon on the duty of the church to them.](#)

### **Option 14 – Catherine Beecher**

Catherine Beecher is known for her pioneering work in women's education, having founded important schools such as the Hartford Female Seminary that was once located on Pratt Street and where her famous sister Harriet Beecher Stowe attended and later taught. She was an author in her own right and wrote a number of influential works.

**Suggested websites/articles:** [Catherine Beecher, Champion of Women's Education](#) by Michael Sturges

**Place-based activity:** Visit Catherine's sister's home at the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center (view the permanent exhibit on Stowe and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and take a house tour). Before going, contact the Stowe research library for an appointment to learn more about Catherine.\* Show your CCC I.D. card to get a free tour of the Stowe house for you and a guest.

**Suggested readings:** Catherine Beecher's books are available online on [Project Gutenberg](#). The following is a list of notable works: *Circular Addressed to the Benevolent Ladies of the United*

*States* (1829) a protest to Jackson's Indian Removal Act; *An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism with reference to the Duty of American Females* (1837); *A Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School* (1842); *Physiology and Calisthenics for Schools and Families* (1856); *The American Woman's Home* with Stowe (1869); *Woman's Profession as Mother and Educator, with Views in Opposition to Woman Suffrage* (1871).

\*CCC students are welcome to make research appointments with Elizabeth Burgess to access the Stowe research library. Email [burgess@stowecenter.org](mailto:burgess@stowecenter.org) to set up an appointment.

### **Option 15 – Ocean Vuong**

Ocean Vuong was born in Vietnam but moved to Hartford at the age of two. He is an award-winning poet and the recipient of a McCarther Genius grant. His 2019 novel *On Earth we are Briefly Gorgeous* is set in Hartford.

**Suggested websites/articles:** there is a lot of information on Ocean Vuong on the internet, including his [official site](#). Search for articles and biographies that you find interesting.

**Place-based activity:** there is no specific site dedicated to Ocean Vuong. After reading more of his novel, discuss some site visit options with Professor Partridge.

**Suggested Readings:** read more of the novel *On Earth we are Briefly Gorgeous* and some of his poems.

### **Option 16 – Juliet Grames**

Juliet Grames was born in Hartford and her debut novel *The Seven or Eight Deaths of Stella Fortuna* follows an Italian family that immigrates to Hartford in the 1940s.

**Suggested websites/articles:** there is information on Juliet Grames on the internet, including her [publisher's website](#) and this [interview](#). Search for articles and biographies that you find interesting.

**Place-based activity:** there is no specific site dedicated to Juliet Grams. After reading more of her novel, discuss some site visit options with Professor Partridge.

**Suggested Readings:** read more of the novel *The Seven or Eight Deaths of Stella Fortuna*, focusing on the Hartford segments (e.g. the long section "Rape").