A guide to some available resources and research methods for parishes investigating their past history in accordance with ECCT Resolution #7.
Dear Member Representatives belonging to ECCT Parishes:

This research guide has been developed to assist members of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut participating in parishes across the state who are engaging in the work directed by the 2020 Convention Resolution #7 (stated above). The rationale of this resolve is noted in the following recorded excerpt:

**HOW DOES THIS RESOLUTION FURTHER GOD’S MISSION OF RESTORATION AND RECONCILIATION WITH ALL OF CREATION?**

By definition, racism means the classification of human beings based solely upon skin color. Because of our nation’s history of chattel slavery in which White settlers on the American continent kidnapped and enslaved Black people from Africa, every institution of our nation is tinged with systemic racism, White supremacy, anti-Black bias, and the social, economic, and political repercussions of this 400-year history. White people too often are not aware of this dynamic because it is such a part of the fabric of our society, and yet we know that this history, and its continuing aftermath, separates us from one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Before we can heal as the Body of Christ, we must first affirmatively acknowledge our own participation in systemic racism and commit to eradicating it from community life in ECCT. This work is central to our participation in the Jesus movement and creating the Beloved Community that Jesus envisioned.

As participants in the Body of Christ, and as parish communities that continue to uncover their past histories for reasons of awareness, understanding, and reconciliation, we seek to realize the Beloved Community envisioned by Jesus. In so doing, it is important to develop knowledge through discovery and to work toward bringing new evidence to light in order to grow in clarity and truth. Much can be accomplished in this pursuit, if parish communities renew their commitment to explore their past history and to identify the stories that can be told that might help us better understand the realities of the early historical context in Connecticut -- a context within which many of the older Episcopal parishes in the state find their origins.
## Libraries and Historical Societies of Connecticut

### Connecticut State Library
- [library.ct.edu/csl](library.ct.edu/csl)

### Asnuntuck Community College
- [library.ct.edu/acc](library.ct.edu/acc)

### Capital Community College
- [library.ct.edu/ccc](library.ct.edu/ccc)

### Gateway Community College
- [library.ct.edu/gcc](library.ct.edu/gcc)

### Housatonic Community College
- [library.ct.edu/hcc](library.ct.edu/hcc)

### Manchester Community College
- [library.ct.edu/mcc](library.ct.edu/mcc)

### Middlesex Community College
- [library.ct.edu/mxcc](library.ct.edu/mxcc)

### Naugatuck Valley Community College
- [library.ct.edu/nvcc](library.ct.edu/nvcc)

### Northwestern CT Community College
- [library.ct.edu/nwcc](library.ct.edu/nwcc)

### Norwalk Community College
- [library.ct.edu/ncc](library.ct.edu/ncc)

### Quinebaug Valley Community College
- [library.ct.edu/qvcc](library.ct.edu/qvcc)

### Three Rivers Community College
- [library.ct.edu/trcc](library.ct.edu/trcc)

### Tunxis Community College
- [library.ct.edu/txcc](library.ct.edu/txcc)

### Central CT State University
- [library.ct.edu/ccsu](library.ct.edu/ccsu)

### Eastern CT State University
- [library.ct.edu/ecsu](library.ct.edu/ecsu)

### Southern CT State University
- [library.ct.edu/scsu](library.ct.edu/scsu)

### Western CT State University
- [library.ct.edu/wcsu](library.ct.edu/wcsu)

### Charter Oak State College
- [library.ct.edu/cosc](library.ct.edu/cosc)

Acquiring a CT public library card will allow you online access to available library resources and databases:

Visit the CSL website at [https://ctstatelibrary.org/about/library-card/](https://ctstatelibrary.org/about/library-card/)

### CLC Library Consortium
- [https://www.ctlibrarians.org](https://www.ctlibrarians.org)

Enter CLC site and go to “Explore” tab on top of web page. Choose type of library you would like to visit, and then scroll to bottom of that page to search for all available member libraries in your area.

Click on the following link for a complete list of [Connecticut's Historical Societies](https://www.ctlibrarians.org) by town (with website links).
https://connecticuthistory.org

https://chs.org

https://archive.org/

http://www.tracingcenter.org/
(sponsored by Diocese of Rhode Island)


https://archives.library.wcsu.edu/caoSearc
Slavery in Connecticut dates back to the mid-1600s. Connecticut’s growing agricultural industry fostered slavery’s expansion, and by the time of the American Revolution, Connecticut had the largest number of slaves in New England. After the war, new ideas about freedom and the rights of men brought about the movement to end slavery in the United States. In contrast to neighboring states, however, Connecticut emancipated its slaves very slowly and cautiously, claiming it wanted to ensure the process respected property rights and did not disrupt civic order. Connecticut passed the Gradual Abolition Act of 1784, but this act did not emancipate any enslaved persons, only those who would be born into slavery and only after they reached the age of 25. This gradual process meant that slavery in Connecticut did not officially end until 1848 — long after many other Northern states had abolished the practice.  
(source: Connecticut Historical Society)

**How many slaves did Connecticut have?**

The 1756 census concluded that the colony had 3019 slaves, an unquestionable undercount. By 1774, the number was estimated at 5100.

**Additional online learning resources:**

- [Yale University, Gilder Lerhman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, & Abolition. “Citizens ALL: African Americans in Connecticut 1700-1850”](https://www.yale.edu/gilderlerner/)

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*For more information, visit [Connecticut Freedom Trail](https://www.ct.gov/library).*
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research and Historical Investigation

- Evidence
  Find evidence -- the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid. In this located finally in "records".

- Establish more specific research targets and investigate persons, corporate bodies (record creators).

- Determine connections to historical context (i.e., social and economic relational factors).


Correlation

Context

Coherence
Research Checklist

- prepare your workspace ... create a filing system (analog and/or electronic) to store gathered materials (evidence, documents, notes etc.) and acquire necessary office supplies
- when working with partners or a team, plan and divide up tasks
- outline and become familiar with historical contexts (geography, chronology, demographics, social/cultural developments)
- create historical ‘landscape’ (excel spreadsheet, ‘mind map’, timelines)
- identify specific targets for investigation (i.e. people, groups) ... consider keyword search terms and types of available evidence (i.e. documentation manuscripts, letters, records, artifacts,, etc.)
- online search for information -- use URL browser address bar to search entire internet while performing keyword searches (review results beyond first page returned)
- use databases to locate journal articles, browse institutional and alternate internet resources for other online documentation (i.e. internet archive)
- save citations and breadcrumbs
- review findings, perhaps writing a brief research update for yourself or others as a means of interpreting research findings
- locate, and, if need be, consolidate local parish records ... review for indicators and subjects to discover and document for ongoing research
Typical search queries are not static, but rather evolve ... online searching is analogous to “berry-picking”

**Common Research Methods**
♦ footnote chasing (or “backward chaining”)
♦ citation searching (or “forward chaining”)
♦ journal run ... review available resources within single journal series
♦ area scanning ... discovering resources based on geographic location
♦ name searches in biographical indexes and subject searches other indexing services (i.e. citation index)
♦ author searching

**Keyword Search Queries**
♦ move from wide to narrow (“focused”), or general to specific (“exact”)
♦ every database uses a “vocabulary” and a “thesaurus” -- these are the categories upon which the database is organized ... search for documents using categories, simple to complex
♦ formulate return results by requesting a specific format type ... i.e. place **pdf file**; before keyword, and only .PDF files are returned (this is similar with other file formats, too)
♦ use Boolean operators “and”, “or”, or “not” to generate results with multiple keywords -- e.g. “Fairfield County” and “manumission” will generate results combining these two unique subject terms
♦ truncated search ... adding an asterisk (*) to word root yields all possible endings (i.e. keyword search “ slav* ” returns results for “slave”, “slaves”, “slavery”, etc.)
♦ save “breadcrumbs”, or the URL addresses followed that provide access to information that serves as documentation
♦ follow recommendations for finding records from institutional site ...for example, see [https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/colonies-dependencies-further-research/](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/colonies-dependencies-further-research/)

**Documentation Process**
♦ organize acquired materials (analog and digital) according to individual persons or social groups as research may yield
♦ use consistent digital folder and file names
♦ ‘research notes’ are a form of documentation accompanying a record
♦ consider collaboration using shared documents or “google .docs”
♦ record citations for quotes, anecdotes, or information accessed in compendiums, registers, or abstracts
Records that provide information about the past are various in form and their availability is often in the domain of public accessibility. They serve to ground and guide our research as we learn about the past, and provide the kind of documentation needed to more accurately envision the historical, as well as, the present lives of our parishes. The list below provides a sampling of the types of records that may be encountered by researchers, and links are provided also to the 1790 Census in CT and Complicity Annotated: A Guide To Connecticut Readers. This resource offers examples of how scholars use the records they discover to interpret the past.

**Types of records that may be encountered:**

- Censuses -- General (US, State) and Specific Enumeration (i.e. military, profession, etc.) see: [https://ctstatelibrary.org/research/](https://ctstatelibrary.org/research/)
- Maps, Surveys, Property Records (i.e. cemetery index)
- Registers -- Social (i.e. fellowship memberships, birth, death, marriage) -- Economic (i.e. account or cash books)
- Meeting Agendas, Minutes, Reports
- Media -- newspaper articles, advertisements, event reports
- Broadsides (public statements or published correspondence)
- Correspondence (Letters), Personal and Business
- Legal or Court Proceedings
- Papers and Manuscripts (narratives, anecdotes, historical reflections)
- Publications (books, pamphlets, reports, catalogs, biographies)
ECCT Parishes:

- historical narratives -- see pamphlets, anniversary publications, papers written by parish members, biographical accounts, and books written about the parish
- parish registers
- parish reports, meeting minutes, or other vital records

ECCT Archives:

- parish collections
- early parish registers
- special collection holdings (ebooks, vertical files, publications)

Greg Farr, ECCT Archivist / Record Manager
Episcopal Church in Connecticut
The Commons
290 Pratt Street | Box 52 | Meriden CT 06450
p 203-639-3501 x135
f 203-235-1008
gfarr@episcopalct.org
www.episcopalct.org
Additional Resources

https://www.whyisnewtownsowhite.info

https://witnessstonesproject.org