



# STATE LIBRARY NEWS

For the People, the Government and the Libraries of New York State

Summer 2011

## LEGISLATORS: FOLLOW THE MONEY

The State Library recently awarded 177 construction and renovation grants to libraries and library systems throughout the state. The grants were made possible by the 2010-2011 state budget appropriation of \$14 million for public library construction and renovation. Libraries receiving grants provide matching funds.

"The Public Library Construction Grant program is not really just about money," says Linda Todd, State Library staff. "It's about the value and impact the money has on improving library buildings and services." With the nation's continuing economic problems, more people than ever flock to libraries to find help with job searches, literacy programs, and other essential services.

To identify award-winning libraries and the amount of their grants, call (518) 486-4858 or go to:

[http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/construc/14m\\_pls11.htm](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/construc/14m_pls11.htm)

### New York State Library News

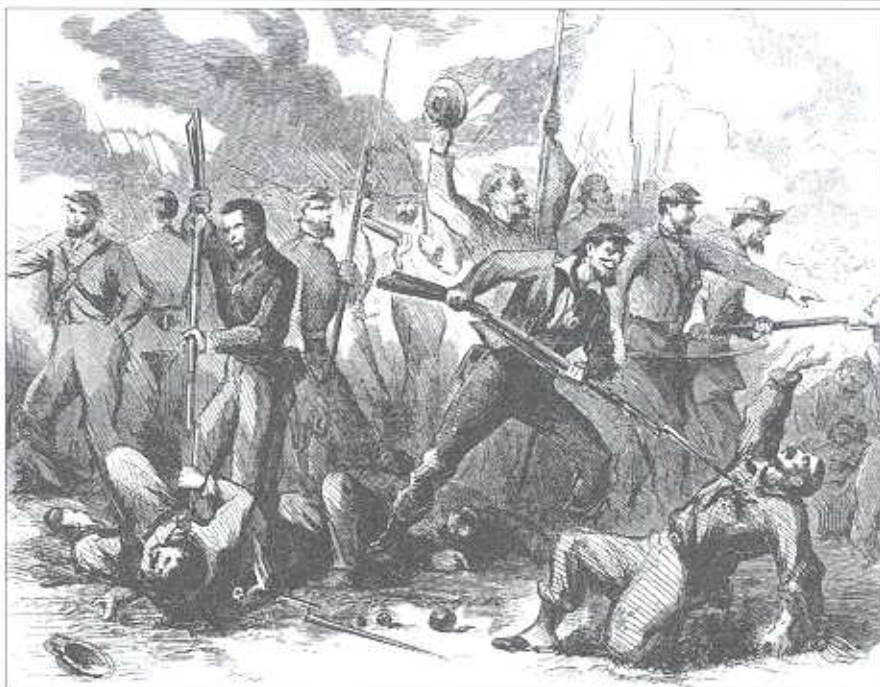
is produced by the Friends of the New York State Library to inform New Yorkers about the collections and services of the State Library.

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## BLOOD BATH IN VIRGINIA



Rebels discovered a sheltered area where a surgeon was operating on wounded Union troops and "fiendishly bayoneted them," says *New York Illustrated News*, August 5, 1861.

Commemorate the sesquicentennial of the Civil War by viewing the State Library's online exhibit, "The First Battle of Bull Run." A number of skirmishes had taken place since that fateful Friday, August 12, when the Confederates started the Civil War with an attack on Fort Sumter, but Bull Run was the War's first major confrontation. It was the bloodiest battle in the U.S. up to that time.

On July 21, 1861, the Union Army, led by Brigadier General Irvin McDowell attacked Confederate forces situated at Bull Run, Virginia, northeast of Manassas Junction and a few miles from Washington, D.C. Confederates called it the

Battle of Manassas. Union soldiers envisioned a quick victory, a march on Richmond, and a speedy end to the war. At first they succeeded. Confederates, led by General P.G.T. Beauregard, were driven back but reinforcements arrived in the afternoon, and Union soldiers were forced to retreat.

About a week after the battle, *Harper's Weekly* and *New York Illustrated News*, both in the collections of the State Library, featured graphics and articles about the conflict and reported throughout the war. "The First Battle of Bull Run" displays about 75 of these graphics.

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## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The names of the generous people who joined the Friends of the State Library at the \$50 or more levels are listed below. They help preserve New York's heritage and make a major difference in sustaining the vital activities of the State Library and the Friends. Thank you:

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 Katherine Storms  
 Robert Venables  
 Stewart Wagner  
 Diana Waite  
 Meyer Wolin  
 Jerome Yavarkovsky

## "TILL WE MEET AGAIN"



**Myra Strachner Gershkoff**

*"So... till then my darling, till we meet again, till then, nothing counts except that we love each other, and we'll be together when it's over."*

Pfc. Bernard Staller,  
 March 13, 1945

Three weeks after Pfc. Staller wrote this letter to Myra Strachner Gershkoff, he was reported missing in action. On April 16, the Staller family was informed that their son was killed on March 18 in a German artillery barrage on the Siegfried Line. The letter of the 13th and those Myra, hoping that Bernie was safe, wrote during the following week were the culmination of an exchange of letters between Myra and Bernie that began when they were 15 years old. Although they both lived in the Bronx, Myra and Bernie expressed their love in letters. Rich in detail about life during the Great Depression and World War II, the 700 letters they exchanged comprise the "Myra Strachner Gershkoff Papers, 1941-1945," now in the collections of the State Library.

Bernie was attending City College of New York when in



**Pfc. Bernard (Bernie) Staller**

February 1944, he joined the army and was sent to Fort Dix. Eventually he was assigned to the 4th Army, 63rd Division, known as the Blood and Fire Division. In November 1944, Bernie was promoted to Private First Class and sent to France where his division was attached to the 7th Army. His letters detail life at the front during the final months of the war. Myra was living at home and attending New York University and wrote about life on the home front.

The collection also contains items from Myra's scrapbook, a recording Bernie made and 67 photographs. "The collection contains an exceptional group of letters. Myra and Bernie were natural writers and their letters are articulate and humorous," says Laura Cohen, author of the collection's finding aid. For more information call (518) 474-6282.

### TELL US

Send comments and questions about the New York State Library and its newsletter to:  
 Mary Redmond  
 <mredmond@mail.nysed.gov>

## Visit the State Library's Website

<<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov>>



- o Access national and regional databases
- o Search Excelsior, the Library's online catalog
- o Access NOVEL, the State Library's online library

For more information, call (518) 474-5355  
Or email: <[refserv@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:refserv@mail.nysed.gov)>

## ORDER 9066

On February 19, 1942, a little over a year after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II, Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 authorizing the internment of all individuals of Japanese ancestry living on the Pacific Coast. Congress ratified the order about a month later. Although many of the people targeted were American citizens, and some had family serving in the U.S. Army, they were forced to go to War Relocation Camps. The U.S. Census Bureau denied that they furnished confidential information to advance these efforts but in 2007, evidence proved they cooperated.

In 1988, the U.S. government issued an apology to Japanese Americans who had been interned during World War II. The bill passed by Congress

and signed by President Reagan blamed "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership" for the action. Reparations were paid to internees and their heirs.

You can learn more about the World War II internment of West Coast Japanese Americans from the State Library's recently acquired microfilm collection, "The Internment of Japanese Americans: Records of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library." The collection's six rolls of microfilm document the facilities, justifications given for the relocation, the legality, and other aspects of the struggles of tens of thousands of Japanese Americans interned during World War II.

The collection is available at the State Library and can be borrowed. For more information, call (518) 474-5355.

## BE A FRIEND

Join the Friends of the New York State Library. Get the deep satisfactions of preserving your heritage and sustaining a world-renowned public research library. You can also get a special discount at a local bookstore. Select:

- **Sustaining Membership.** \$25. Receive 25% off one purchase at the Open Door Bookstore in Schenectady.
  - **Contributing Membership.** \$50 or more. Receive the above plus database access, a gift, and recognition in *New York State Library News*.
  - **Excelsior Membership.** \$100 or more. Receive all of the above plus a behind the scenes tour of the State Library, a \$10 copier card, and an invitation to a private special exhibit or program.
- Every Friend also receives:
- **Free admission** to the Friends Annual Meeting featuring a talk by an author of a recently published book
  - **Invitations** to other stimulating programs at the State Library.
  - **A subscription** to the *New York State Library News*, an illustrated quarterly newsletter.

*To join Friends of the New York State Library, complete the form below and mail it with your check.*

## New York State Library News

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Make check payable to *Friends of the New York State Library* and mail to: Treasurer, Friends of the New York State Library, PO Box 2247 Empire Plaza Station, Albany, NY 12220.

## CREATING JOBS

Take a virtual tour of Albany in 1937 and sample a government effort to fight joblessness. "Albany Guide," an illustrated pamphlet, was part of a series produced by the WPA Writers' Project, organized in 1935 when the Great Depression was draining the nation's strength.

The Project hired writers, editors and researchers who were on relief. Prestigious authors such as Conrad Aiken, Saul Bellow, and Ralph Ellison wrote over a thousand publications about the nation's geography, architecture, history and commerce as well as ethnic studies, folklore, local histories and nature studies. Federal sponsorship ended in 1939 but state sponsorship continued until 1943.

To access "Albany Guide," a motor tour of the city, go to <http://purl.org/net/nysl/nysdocs/4869350>.

### IN MEMORIAM

*Gerald W. "Jerry" Yauch, who worked in the State Library mail room for almost 20 years, passed away on August 2, 2011. Mr. Yauch, also known as "The Singing Mailman", will be remembered as a helpful and cheerful co-worker and a great football and baseball fan.*

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Albany, NY 12230

### State Library Hours

Monday through Friday  
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
For more information, call  
(518) 474-5355 or e-mail  
[refserv@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:refserv@mail.nysed.gov).

## RETIREMENT



**Sally Legendre**

Sally Legendre, principal librarian for public services, retired after 43 years at the State Library. She specialized in law and legal research, served as state law librarian for two years, and was an associate librarian for humanities reference.

Ms. Legendre played key roles in improving public access to the State Library's collections and services, extending borrowing privileges and restoring public service on Saturdays.

"Sally strived to be a consistently fair and highly ethical public servant, always keeping the welfare of library users and library staff uppermost in her mind," says Research Library Director Loretta Ebert.

## BLOOD BATH

*Continued from page 1*

The exhibit is a boon for professional historians, civil war buffs, and for anyone who would just like to know more about the Civil War. It is also a rich resource for researchers seeking illustrations for print or online articles about the Civil War. Graphics depict life in the camps and scenes of the brutality of soldiers on both sides. Also included are pictures of recruitment, Lincoln and the Cabinet viewing the troops, portraits of army officers, and a host of other historic and emotional moments during the early days of the Civil War.

The virtual visit to the Battle of Bull Run reminds us of the great contrast in 19th and 21st century weapons of war and the difference in the method and speed of news reports from the front. It is also a testimonial to the constancy of war's death and destruction.

"The First Battle of Bull Run" was conceived and designed by State Library staff. Cara Janowsky came up with the idea. Vicki Weiss selected the images, Victor Des Rosiers scanned them, and Diane Madrigal assembled the material and put it online. To access "The First Battle of Bull Run," go to: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/mssc/bullrun/>.