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MEMORIAL DAY 2020

WE HONOR ALL THE SACRIFICES MADE BY OUR HEROES

Hello Friends!

Happy Friday! We're glad to be with you all again.

By this point you won't be surprised when we tell you it's been an interesting and busy week from the satellite offices of Brigid, Patrick, and Michele. In addition to the now standard webinars, we were able to participate in a really useful New England Museum Association workshop on jump

starting our work when we eventually return to the museum, and it left us pretty inspired.

Thanks to some very generous corporate sponsors, the American Alliance of Museums was able to offer a very much reduced attendance fee for their national annual meeting and convention and Michele was *virtually* able to spend an entire Monday with AAM keynote speakers and will conference with them again June 1-3. It's such a great opportunity to attend a national conference at a very affordable fee. Adult distance learning for the win!

As we approach Memorial Day weekend, the unofficial start of summer here in New England, we'll be looking toward a little more normal schedule for the museum staff. We're all trying to figure out exactly what more time at the museum for staff means, but with that in mind, we'll be transitioning to a monthly newsletter over the summer. We've got some great little partnership plans that you'll want to be part of, but we also know that you'll be spending less time at home in the coming months. We're tentatively looking to have newsletters for you on June 15, July 15, and August 15, to keep you all in the loop.

We're grateful to John O'Donnell for his essay this week on Connecticut's own Deane Keller, one of the famous WWII *Monuments Men*. John explores the great crossroads of history and art and we've added links to a few documentaries for your viewing pleasure.

For our puzzle people. . . this week there is a Jumbled Memorials and Monuments puzzle up over at [Museum From Home](#) and we've added new puzzles to our [Jigsaw Planet](#) page as well.

A couple of other reminders--great Dad and Grad gifts can be found at our [online shop at TEEPUBLIC!](#) The museum gets a cut of everything purchased, so you not only get some swell Danbury merch, you're supporting the museum, too. If you know of a student interested in a Virtual Internship at the museum this summer, please direct them to our [Museum From Home](#) page where all the info is available.

We know you know the drill, but if you see the three little dots or get the *view entire message* prompt, please click so you don't miss anything!

And finally, thank YOU for following and supporting the Danbury Museum and museum staff for the past 10 weeks, it's much appreciated. At the AAM meeting, Laura Lott, (President and CEO of American Alliance of Museums) said, "Their doors may be closed, but you just cannot stop museums from providing opportunities for joy, solace, and inspiration when people need it most." We hope we've been able to provide a little bit of that for you all.

Keep well and we'll see you again in June!

Brigid Guertin (Executive Director, City Historian, Fearless Leader)
Patrick Wells (Research Specialist, Social Media Manager)
Michele Lee Amundsen (Collections Manager)



Deane Keller

World War Two -The Art War

By John O'Donnell

World War Two is an incredibly complex subject which is full of many sub-topics which will keep an historian busy for a lifetime. One of the most interesting of these is what I like to call the art war within the major war itself. How did art become such an important part of the history of World War Two?

As many of you will remember, Adolf Hitler was a youthful painter whose driving ambition in life was to attend the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna to fulfill his great artistic ambitions. However, he was rejected by the prestigious school twice (in 1907 and 1908) and this was one of the bitterest disappointments of his life. Nevertheless, he continued to paint and inflated his artistic talents which were meager at best. But he still thought of himself as a great artist with impeccable taste and vision.

When he started World War Two in 1939, one of the offshoots of the mission of the Nazi movement was to savagely loot the artistic treasures of their enemies. They succeeded in their mission. The Nazis systematically and methodically pillaged artistic treasures on a scale heretofore not seen in human history. And the hierarchy of the Nazi party exuberantly participated in this theft. They competed among themselves to see who could loot the most. Hermann Goering, the head of the Luftwaffe, was notorious for his thievery on a grand scale and probably led this pack of wolves. But he was surely not the only one. There were a myriad of other Nazi figures who sought to emulate him.

The Allies became aware early on that this systematic plundering of the treasures of Western civilization was actively proceeding on a massive scale. To combat this pillaging, they created the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section (the acronym was MFAA since all World War Two organizations had acronyms) in 1943 to identify and protect European art treasures. The unit had 350 men and women from thirteen countries and was known informally as the *Monuments Men*. They were a collection of museum curators, art scholars, architects, archivists, artists, and historians (average age 40). Some of these people were put right on the front lines and two members perished in combat. What is even more remarkable about this group is that they performed their mission while the war was in its active phase and not when the war ended.

Their first mission was to assist combat troops in protecting churches, museums, and cultural artifacts from damage in Allied attacks. But as the Allies advanced across the European continent, their mission changed to the rescue, recovery, and the preservation of the art and artifacts looted by the Nazis. They performed their mission heroically and saved an enormous amount of the artistic heritage of Europe for future generations to see and admire.

One of the heroes of MFAA was Deane Keller (1901-1992) who was born in New Haven, Connecticut, where his father served on the Yale faculty. He attended the Taft School in Watertown and then Yale, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. He became a prominent artist, academic, art restorer, preservationist, and portrait painter. These talents led him to serve in MFAA in Tuscany. He was responsible for the preservation of the murals at the Camposanto, a medieval cemetery in Pisa. His yeoman efforts saved the frescoes. In recognition of his efforts, an urn containing his ashes was interred in the Camposanto in 2000.

John O'Donnell first became a history devotee while in elementary school. He was raised in Brooklyn and frequently went to Prospect Park which has a Revolutionary War monument. He was hooked!

Click [here](#) for an interview with Robert M Edsel, author of *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History* at the National WWII Museum.

Robert Edsel discussing The Monuments Men at the [National WWII Museum, via C-Span](#).

And a BookTV panel discussion at the National Archives with Robert Edsel and NARA Staff can be watched [here](#).



Deane Keller with statue of Cosimo I de' Medici



Some of the "Monuments Men" with recovered artworks

Danbury Museum Social Media



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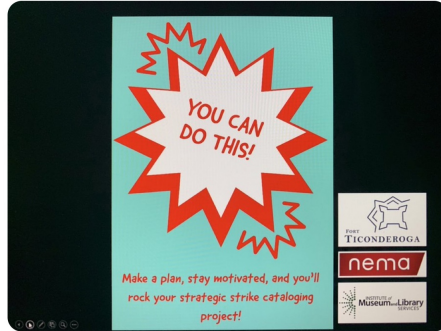
When it's [#BikeToWorkDay](#), but you're [#workingfromhome](#) so you bring out the velocipede just to show off.
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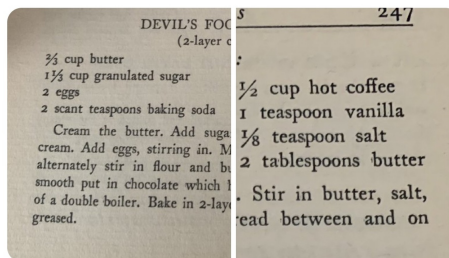
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Thank you to the team
[@FortTiconderoga](#) and [@NEMAnet](#) for a
most useful (and fun!) webinar on
"Achieving a Cataloging Breakthrough
When You Return to the Museum."
[#MuseumFromHome](#) [#distancelearning](#)



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Who wants to try a vintage cake recipe
for [#DevilsFoodCakeDay](#)? The White
Turkey Inn was on the Danbury/
Brookfield border and was a local
favorite for decades. Some of the
recipes were printed in "Let's Talk
Turkey" in 1948. [#museumfromhome](#)
[#cookingathome](#)





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The White Turkey was about as classic as they come for New England inns. The original house/main structure was built in the 1760s. [#hatcityhistory](#)
[#newengland](#) [#inns](#)
[#MuseumFromHome](#)



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Documenting COVID-19

At the Danbury Museum, we've been collecting and archiving items that document our city's past for **more than 75 years**. Our collection includes several buildings worth of archival materials as well artifacts that tell the tale(s) of our collective past, that inspire and inform the present and that we will be preserving for future scholars, researchers, students and Danburians.

We are currently living through a momentous, somber moment in our collective history. We need your help to document what is going on in your homes, at your jobs, and in communities across Connecticut. We want to hear your story. We want to know how you and your family are experiencing the current pandemic and "new normal."

Below are examples of what we're looking for:

Writings - letters, notes, emails, postcards, poems

Signage - images of window signs, directions, posted community information

Photos - of you, your family, your neighborhood, your street, YOUR Danbury!

Drawings, paintings, and other forms of art you're creating and documenting

Short videos (limited to 500MB file size) for larger files please email to Patrick Wells, Research Specialist, at p.wells@danbury-ct.gov.

Please stay safe when documenting these historic times. Do not put yourself in danger when capturing photographs or videos.

Why is this Important?

The Danbury Museum collects material that documents the full range of our lives in Danbury, CT

because...you INSPIRE us, you INSPIRE the future. Documenting our community response to COVID-19 is a way to preserve the daily struggles of our stay at home community, our work from home community, our students, our critical care and healthcare workers, our first responders and our essential workers. From every perspective, what you are doing right now matters, to us right now, and to future Danburians.

So, when you email Collections Manager, Michele Lee Amundsen at m.amundsen@danbury-ct.gov or mail us your submissions to 43 Main Street, Danbury, CT 06810, please include any or all of the following information:

What else should we know about this object? Please explain who is in the photo, why you created this piece...basically all the information YOU would want to see to give context to a museum exhibition item or an archival file.

Please know that:

By providing my material to the Danbury Museum & Historical Society Authority (DMHSA) I hereby give the DMHSA a royalty-free, non-exclusive, worldwide, perpetual, irrevocable, and fully sub-licensable license to copy, digitize, reproduce, edit, translate, create derivative works, distribute, and publicly display and perform certain materials described below. I agree that the DMHSA may add the material to the collection according to the DMHSA Collection Management Policy and to make it available to researchers in a manner consistent with the practices of the DMHSA. I agree that the DMHSA may utilize any medium or media now existing or that will exist in the future to achieve the above-described purposes.

Thank YOU for entrusting the Danbury Museum with your memories, your stories, your art, your images. We take this responsibility seriously and will maintain your gift for future generations so they too may understand what it was like to be here, in Danbury, during the COVID-19 pandemic.



The COVID-19 health crisis has had a strong impact on the Danbury Museum, not unlike other public service organizations. To help us continue doing the work we love--from home and from behind the scenes over the next few months--please consider making a donation. Your gift, regardless of size, is important to us as we regroup and continue to work toward eventually reopening to the public.

[Donate here.](#)

[Become a member here.](#)



Danbury Museum pollinator garden, spring 2020

We'll keep in touch, and we hope you will, too. Be well, take care of yourselves, and we'll look forward to meeting here again in June.



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