

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**MATTATUCK MUSEUM
ARTS & HISTORY CENTER**
144 West Main St. Waterbury, CT 06702
www.MattatuckMuseum.org

Whittemore Letters Subject of History Bites Talk

Waterbury, CT - The Mattatuck Museum Arts and History Center will present an illustrated talk titled: *Letters from Paris...and Naugatuck* on Thursday, May 6th at noon by independent curator Ann Y. Smith. Smith will discuss the personal insights that letters can bring to larger historical narratives. In her newly published book *Hidden in Plain Sight: The Whittemore Collection and the French Impressionists* Smith constructs a vibrant account of the development of the magnificent art collection through the family's comments about the paintings as they were acquired. The program is part of the regional History Bites series.

Among the earliest collectors of French Impressionism, the Naugatuck-based Whittemore family assembled a collection of more than 1,000 works of art between 1890 and 1927, including important works by Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Mary Cassatt and James Whistler. First hand perspectives recorded in personal letters reveal the family's evolving attitudes about the paintings and Harris Whittemore's friendship with the artist Mary Cassatt. A book signing will follow the program. Ms. Smith, the former director and curator of the Mattatuck Museum Arts & History Center, has written and lectured about history in northwestern Connecticut and 19th century America for more than 30 years.

History Bites is a collaborative program co-sponsored by ten area cultural organizations and funded by the Connecticut Humanities Council. All lectures take place at noon. Admission is free, though donations are welcomed. Beverages and dessert are provided; attendees are encouraged to bring their own lunch. For more information or to register (requested but not required) in advance, call the museum at 203-753-0381 ext 10.

The Mattatuck Museum Arts & History Center features regional history and the work of Connecticut based artists. It is operated with support from the Connecticut Commission on Cultural & Tourism, and is a member of the Connecticut Art Trail, fifteen world-class museums and historic sites (www.artrail.org). Located at 144 West Main Street, Waterbury, the museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Convenient, free parking is located directly behind the museum on Park Place. For more information about museum programs or collections, please call 203-753-0381 ext 10 or visit the website at www.MattatuckMuseum.org.

The History Bites series will continue with a lecture May 13th at 12-noon at the Woodbury Senior Center in Woodbury. Timothy Beard, librarian and author will present *Making a Personal Connection to the Lives of Our Forefathers* for the Glebe House Museum & Gertrude Jekyll Garden.