Nearly 18,000 visitors came to see *American Originals: Treasures from the National Archives* during its three-and-a-half-month run at the Museum of American Political Life, making the exhibit an unqualified success for the university and the Greater Hartford community.

“*American Originals* has been the most popular exhibition in the university’s history. It has also been one of our most important, underscoring the university’s role in educating the broader public,” said President Walter Harrison.

“Every one of the nearly 18,000 visitors to the exhibition came away with a newfound understanding of the history of the American democracy. That is *American Originals*’ most lasting legacy,” Harrison added.

Visitors came to see *American Originals* and its companion exhibit, *Connecticut Originals*, right up to closing time at 5 p.m. on Commencement Day, May 16. More than 100 school groups representing close to 4,000 students viewed the exhibits. In addition, many children visited the exhibits with their families. “It was particularly gratifying to see so many parents with their children, some only five or six years old,” said Vice President of External Relations Larry Gavrich, who was instrumental in bringing *American Originals* to the university.

Faculty played a major role in *American Originals*, by giving gallery talks and lectures, writing newspaper op-ed columns and articles for *The Observer*; and sharing their expertise in countless ways, said Senior Director of Communications Marcy Cain, who served as the university’s project leader for the exhibition. In particular, Warren Goldstein, associate professor and chair of the history department; Jilda Aliotta, associate professor and chair of politics and government; and Leslie Lindenauer, assistant professor of history, were key to *American Originals*’ success, she said. “The involvement and leadership of faculty were phenomenal,” Cain said, adding that the dedicated volunteer docents who guided school children and other visitors through the exhibition also contributed greatly to the exhibition’s success. Several docents were university staff members.


Students from the University of Hartford Magnet School (left) peer into the display case containing the Emancipation Proclamation as President Walter Harrison (left) and Walter Hill of the National Archives (far right) look on.

“What are the Women?” was the subject of a gallery talk by Leslie Lindenauer (right), assistant professor of history and executive director of the Connecticut Women’s Hall of Fame.
While nearly 2,000 miles and more than 2,000 years of history separate ancient Bethsaida and 20th-century Dresden, an exhibition now on display at the university brings the two cities together in an exposition of reclamation and Jewish survival.

*A Tale of Two Cities: Bethsaida and Dresden* is on view through Dec. 20 at the university’s new $1.5 million George J. Sherman and Lottie K. Sherman Museum of Jewish Civilization. Curator for the exhibition is Christine Dalenta ’91, ’94.

“A Tale of Two Cities is intended to tell the stories of Israel and the Diaspora—Bethsaida, a city in ancient Israel, and the city of Dresden in the midst of the European Diaspora,” said Richard Freund, director of the university’s Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies and the Sherman Museum. “Bethsaida, represented by the archaeological portion of the exhibit, tells us about a city linked to King David, Jesus and the Apostles, and Rabbinic Judaism in Babylonia and Israel that was cut short by catastrophic geological forces nearly 2,000 years ago; the famous key to the Fisherman’s (Saint Peter’s) House; and rare Roman coins, including one depicting Alexander the Great.

*Sources of Memory,* the Dresden part of the exhibition, features 16 large panels that illustrate the many aspects of Jewish life in Dresden before and during World War II—ranging from music and culture to sports—and the families who lived there. School photos, letters, and other memorabilia, such as a grandmother’s passport to the United States, are on display.

The exhibition is part of the William Singer Pre-Holocaust and Holocaust Era European Jewish History Collection made possible by Bruce Singer, his son. The collection will feature changing exhibitions from this period. *Sources of Memory,* which has been on display only in Dresden, Germany, before coming to the university, has been facilitated and also partially sponsored by the Federal Republic of Germany Consul General in Boston.

An opening conference on May 13 for *Sources of Memory* featured remarks by Gunter Wehrmann, deputy consul general of Germany; Lilli Ulbrich of Dresden, an originator of the exhibition; and Peter K. Breit, professor emeritus of politics and government at the University of Hartford. Breit, whose family is featured in the exhibition, left Dresden as a child in 1939.

After completing its only stop in the United States at the university, the exhibition will travel to Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust memorial park and museum.

Located in the former Senior Common Room of the university’s Mortensen Library, the Sherman Museum was made possible in large part by a generous donation from William Sherman to stand as a testament to the lives of his parents. The two immigrated, individually, to Hartford from Russia and Eastern Europe when both were very young children and both were active in Hartford area politics and local Jewish organizations. For museum hours or additional information, visit www.hartford.edu/greenberg or call 860.768.4963.

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**Pottery from the Bethsaida Excavation Project**

**Peter K. Breit (left), professor emeritus of politics and government, and Lilli Ulbrich of Dresden, Germany, addressed those attending the opening of *A Tale of Two Cities.* Breit described Frau Ulbrich as the “guiding spirit” for *Sources of Memory.*

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**One of 16 panels depicting the lives of Dresden’s Jewish families before and during World War II.**