HOT TOPICS IN STUDENT RESEARCH THIS YEAR

WHAT A TERRIFIC FALL SEMESTER we had in the library reference department! I alone met with 88 students for personal research sessions. Senior honors thesis writers are delving into such topics as:

• The correlation between personal income and sleeping patterns;
• how Chaebol can diversify so effectively;
• the integration of Jewish immigrants in the French Army during World War II;
• the rejection of lesbianism in black communities perhaps stemming from the historical ideology of femininity and black women’s roles in families during slavery;
• migrant workers especially focusing on Tibetan nannies in New York;
• and the history of Nepalese street children and how NGOs factor into that community.

I look forward to reading the final thesis. Keep up the good work!

Other research questions have been just as fascinating. Some students from California shared that their research in how Missions were a form of colonialism grew in part out of their 4th grade project building replicas of Spanish Missions from sugar cubes. I’ve also met with students about
• the history of the segregation of National Parks and how that is being memorialized;
• piracy laws in Somalia and Nigeria;
• climate change research;
• and the rise of democracy in Hungary.

I especially want to thank Professor Kauanui (see related article in this issue) for empowering her students by requiring personal research sessions to aid them as they explored how colonialism has affected everything from Native Americans in Maine or Alaska to the island of Hispaniola, or mascot naming, the West Bank, and even the Boy Scouts. Personal research sessions are a fantastic opportunity for students to gain a better grasp of the library resources and research strategies in an individual and personalized setting. Don’t forget to set up an appointment when your next project is assigned. We are also happy to help faculty and staff find just the right quote, citation, or reference for their research.

— NANCY PUTNAM, REFERENCE LIBRARIAN —

The full potential of joining HathiTrust will not be known for some time, but Wesleyan’s access to HathiTrust resources will be added to the online catalog for retrieval on campus by all users and off-campus by authenticated users. This will allow students, faculty, and staff to retrieve electronic copies of materials instead of paper copies if they prefer, and will be particularly helpful for those in the Wesleyan community who might be abroad and not able to come to the library.

The potential of joining HathiTrust will not be known for some time, but increased opportunities to access a deep library of core materials regardless of location is certainly a great start.

— DIANE KLARE, INTERIM UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN —

THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THE PLACE WE CALL MIDDLETOWN

On December 7, 2015, there was an exciting community event, “Indigenous Middletown: Settler Colonial and Wangunk Tribal History,” held at Russell House. The esteemed panel included Dr. Lucianne Lavin, director of research and collections at the Institute for American Indian Studies and author of Connecticut’s Indigenous Peoples: What Archaeology, History and Oral Traditions Teach Us about their Communities and Cultures, recently published by Yale University Press; Dr. Timothy Ives, the principal archaeologist at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, and historian of the Wangunk people; Reginald W. Bacon, member of the Society of Middletown First Settlers Descendants and editor of The Middle, as well as author of Early Families of Middletown, Connecticut, Vol. 1, 1659-1654 and Gary O’Neil, a descendant of Jonathan Palmer and genealogist of the remaining Wangunks in Middlesex County, who is also a Wesleyan alumnus of the Masters in Liberal Arts Program.

The event stemmed from a fall 2015 semester, service-learning course, “Decolonizing Indigenous Middletown: Native Histories of the Wangunk Indian People,” which I taught in partnership with the Middlesex County Historical Society. Students learned about the field of settler colonial studies, the rapidly transforming field of critical indigenous studies, along with Native American history and historiography addressing southern New England. Taking up a decolonizing approach, the class focused on the sparsely documented history of the Wangunk. Students closely examined both the era of Wangunk history and the history of Wangunk erasure. Class members conducted original research in the archives of the Middlesex County Historical Society with the guidance of director Debby Shapiro.

The course also included field trips to the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, Indian Hill Cemetery, and Founders Rock. Guest speakers included Vicki Welch, director of the Seven Generations Center for the Study of People of Color in New England; Tobias Glaza, assistant executive editor of the Yale Indian Papers Project; and Gary O’Neil, mentioned above. Two librarian specialists from Olin also supported the class members. Leith Johnson offered a training session on conducting research on the digitized issues of the Middlesex Gazette, and Kendall Hobbs offered a workshop on creating a Wikipedia page since one of the outcomes of the course was the collective production of an entry on the Wangunk, which can now be accessed at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wangunk.

Early in the spring 2016 semester, there will be another public event to showcase the course outcomes, with students presenting their final research papers. And plans are already in the works for a follow-up panel with another set of established scholars of Wangunk history for fall 2016.

— J. KERINALI KASHANU, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN STUDIES AND ANTHROPOLOGY —
Malinda is preparing to shoot a hand-painted page in the Stephen Henry Olin Regimenental Scrapbook (1886) from Special Collections & Archives. She supports one side of the scrapbook with a book mount, leaving the page to be imaged open flat on the table. She is gently holding the far side down to ensure that there is no undue shadow cast across the page she is imaging. On the near-side of the open page is an object-level color target that will be used during the quality control process to check that the colors in the image are accurate.

THE DIGITAL LAB AT OLIN LIBRARY IS OPEN!

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er the course of the past summer and fall, staff in the library and Physical Plant have been working to reconfigure Room 302B in Olin Library to make it a conducive space for digital imaging. The space already supported audio digitization and sound recording formatting (under the direction of Alastair Jenkins), as well as the annual funding for non-computer capital needs from Academic Affairs (under the direction of Francesca Livermore).

After a serious review of the equipment options for digitization, the Interim University Librarian used a combination of internal library funds as well as the annual funding for non-computer capital needs from Academic Affairs to purchase a 36 megapixel DSLR camera, a pair of strobe lights, and a copy table with a mechanized column. This combination of tools gives the library the ability to capture objects of sizes up to 20 x 30 inches in high-resolution and with good color accuracy.

Francesca Livermore, working with Malinda Johnston, has spent the last few months developing workflows and procedures in the space. They are testing lighting conditions seeking to achieve high resolution and with good color accuracy.

Francesca Livermore, Digital Projects Librarian — flivermore@wesleyan.edu

WESLEYAN LIBRARY TO JOIN HATHitrust

Wesleyan Library will be entering a new era of access to older materials when it joins HathiTrust early in 2016. HathiTrust describes itself as a “…partnership of major research institutions and libraries working to ensure that the cultural record is preserved and accessible long into the future.” As of early December 2015, members included four library consortia and 110 individual institutions. Several of these institutions, like Wesleyan University, are also members of the Olin Library.

HathiTrust dates from 2008, when the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), a consortium of the Big Ten universities plus the University of Chicago, partnered with the University of California system to establish a repository to archive and share digitized materials that were both in copyright as well as in the public domain. In the intervening years, many other institutions have joined in order to share their digital content (monographs and journals) as well as ensure their materials’ preservation for future scholarship.

Benefits of Joining the Trust are many. Beyond the primary benefit of ensuring long-term preservation and access to digitized materials, membership in HathiTrust will enable Wesleyan faculty, students, and staff to perform full-text searching of the repository, as well as be able to read and, in some cases, download selected materials. Public domain materials will be available for complete downloading, and in copyright materials where permission has been granted by the copyright holder will also be available to read via authentication. Those individuals with print/visual disabilities will be able to take advantage of agreements that will allow them special accessibility to in-copyright materials, also based on pre-arranged authentication, and use special online tools to facilitate reading.

With regard to an emerging area of research, that of digital scholarship, the HathiTrust Research Center will be available to assist scholars in mining the text of the digitized materials in the Trust. Text mining can reveal trends in word use, identify patterns in the written record, allow analysis of tagging or annotations, create opportunities for visualizations, and open new avenues for scholarship.

As a member of HathiTrust, Wesleyan is excited to be entering a new, collaborative community for digital scholarship.

— Francesca Livermore, Digital Projects Librarian

Cutting up the uniforms for paper pulp

Making paper outside (continued on the back)