Hillcrest Orchard, photographed near Belchertown, Massachusetts, one of Nancy O. Albert’s works in the exhibition Documents in Black and White.

PHOTO BY NANCY OTTMANN ALBERT

FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE WESLEYAN LIBRARY CHAIR: POLICING THE PLANET

On November 8, 2016, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, professor of American Studies and Anthropology and member of the board of the Friends of the Wesleyan Library, invited Christina Heatherton and Jordan T. Camp to present their new volume of essays, Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter (Verso Books, 2016). The successful event was held in the Smith Reading Room where a large audience of librarians, students, staff, faculty, and community members gathered to participate in discussions about pressing issues concerning surveillance in the United States and beyond. Suzy Taraba, director of Special Collections & Archives, and Leith Johnson, university archivist, also organized an open house to showcase some of Wesleyan’s holdings pertaining to policing and mass incarceration from the nineteenth century until today. The presentations, the Q&A, and the open house were informative, provocative, stimulating, and challenging, especially given that the event was held the day after the U.S. presidential election. The Friends of the Wesleyan Library sponsored the event, with special thanks to Jennifer Hadley who was instrumental in its organization.

— MICHAEL MEERE, CHAIR, FRIENDS OF THE WESLEYAN LIBRARY, AND ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF FRENCH —

THANK YOU TO THE LIBRARY FRIENDS

Thank you to those who have contributed membership donations, time, and books to support library programs sponsored by the Friends. This fall, we were honored to receive gifts in memory of Joan Jurale, Eugene Klaaren, and Margaret G. Schwendler. Our annual book sale in the fall was also very successful. If you would like to join the Friends or sponsor a meaningful project or event, please contact Jennifer Hadley at libfriends@wesleyan.edu.

PHOTO BY NANCY OTTMANN ALBERT

ALBERT DISCUSSES EXHIBITION OF HER PHOTOGRAPHS IN ARTIST TALK

Photographer Nancy Ottmann Albert (MALS ’94) gave an artist talk on October 28 in conjunction with the exhibition of her works, Documents in Black and White, curated by her and mounted by Special Collections & Archives. Dean of Arts and Humanities Ellen Nerenberg acknowledged and thanked her for the gift of her papers to Wesleyan prior to her remarks. Ms. Albert discussed the works that appeared in the exhibition. She began to photograph textile mills and industrial sites throughout New England in 1981. Shooting black and white film in a medium format camera, she returned over the years to record the buildings’ decline and disappearance. Further exploration led her to seek out other endangered structures and landscapes. These included mental institutions emptied by changing philosophies of treatment and a commissioned study of Long River Village, Middletown’s oldest housing project, prior to its demolition. The exhibition also contained images of roadside and urban vernacular architecture, barns and abandoned homesteads, filling stations, and drive-in theaters. All of the work, which included gelatin silver photographs, was printed by the artist. In 2014, Ms. Albert gave her papers to SC&A. They include images taken in New England, New York state, France, Cuba, Portugal, Spain, London, Italy, Eastern Europe, Vienna, Barcelona, Bosnia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Berlin, along with her research notes. The papers are now freely available for research and are described in an online finding aid (wesleyan.edu/libr/schome/FAs/al2014-33.xml).

On view October 5–December 16, 2016, Documents in Black and White was cosponsored by the Friends of the Library, University Librarian Dan Chenubin, and Special Collections & Archives.

— LEITH JOHNSON, UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST —

PHOTO BY JENNIFER HADLEY
INTRODUCTORY CLASSES INCORPORATE SC&A VISITS

In the Fall semester of 2016, Special Collections & Archives broke its pre-
vious record (set in Fall 2013) for the most class visits in a single semester.
That in itself is nothing new: it’s a record that is broken frequently. What is
new is the substantial number of 100-level courses taking advantage
of the rich resources of SC&A. Nearly one third of our 60 class visits were
incorporated into the vertical files – a collection of folders that
document many top-
ics related to Wesleyan
and Middletown. One
important documenta-
tion source is local
newspaper stories. After
three semesters of clipping articles, filing, and maintaining
the vertical files, I have gained an
insight into the dynamic and wonderfully expan-
sive nature of historical documentation.

The files are an excellent resource for researcher-
s, due to the sheer quantity of information they pro-
vide. Topics within the Middletown section include stories on recreation, his-
tory, school, government, business and, of course, a folder dedicated solely to
O’Rourke’s Diner: Wesleyan’s cover story from every American audience.
The Vertical Files to Zonker Harris Day, including faculty, alumni, student groups, departments, and buildings. The files are a great way to pursue a research project, as they
constitute our primary source materials.

I have always loved the depth of the vertical files. Especially as a freshman,
I was shocked by the breadth of both Wesleyan’s and Middletown’s history. By
clipping issues of Wesleyan magazine and the Wesleyan Argus, I was privy to the
academic and extracurricular accomplishments and activities of Wesleyan
students, faculty, and alumni, both past and present. Clipping years and years of
the Middletown Press was also an eye-opening introduction to Middletown.

From Philadelphia, I was initially skeptical of Middletown’s significance.
However, the vertical files construct a story of Middletown history and com-
pany. Its development on the Connecticut River spans centuries, recreation
efforts have built many parks, and people of different ethnic backgrounds have
established vibrant communities here over the years.

One of the best things about the vertical files is how dynamic they are. Since
every current issue of the Middletown Press and Argus is searched for appropri-
ate articles, and other publication sources and ephemera are added as well, the
files are constantly growing and evolving. Each article could signal the rise of
a new student group, the introduction of a new faculty member or academic pro-
gram, or the appearance of a campus speaker. They record the social and phys-
ical changes to the campus as Wesleyan develops the new and moves beyond
the old. The vertical files are an integral part of chronicling local and Wesleyan
history, and I urge you to make the turn into the archives to gain insight into
history in the making.

Note: The Special Collections & Archives reading room is open Monday through
Friday, 1-5 p.m. E-mail sca@wesleyan.edu for further information.

— SUZY TARABA, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES —

PHOTO AND COVER PHOTO BY OLIVIA DRAKE

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of the rich resources of SC&A. Nearly one third of our 60 class visits were
from these courses, across a wide range of subjects from Astrophysics to
Utopias. Several of the classes were part of Wesleyan’s First Year Seminar
initiative, which emphasizes writing at the university level. Others were
part of the new Introduction to History curriculum, a series of gateways to
the vertical files — a

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