

CHECK IT OUT

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WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
SINCE 1998



IN MEMORIAM

The library and the Wesleyan community mourn the unexpected passing of Caleb T. Winchester University Librarian Daniel Cherubin on September 13, 2017, as this issue was being prepared. A full article will appear in the next issue.

TWO PROJECTS OF WHICH DAN WAS PROUD

ONESEARCH: A POWERFUL DISCOVERY TOOL

This summer, after more than a year of intensive preparation, Wesleyan University Library staff and their consortium partners at Connecticut College and Trinity College implemented a new library system and discovery tool to replace the former library catalog.

OneSearch is now the primary place to search for records of library materials, both print and electronic, and to discover and access journal articles, images, databases, and all types of library publications. The new system, using the ExLibris Primo platform, was chosen because it is powerful and user friendly, adaptable to mobile devices, handles multiple formats and electronic resources well, and will enable staff to make resources available more efficiently. Over the next year, we will continue to enable additional features of the OneSearch system, as well as add more sources of content searchable from OneSearch. If you have any questions or comments, e-mail librarysystems@lyris.wesleyan.edu.



NEW LIBRARY WEBSITE DESIGN

Along with implementing a new library system, the whole Wesleyan Library website was updated this summer as part of a campus wide program to update the entire Wesleyan University website to a responsive design that works well on phones and tablets as well as larger computer screens. Rather than just change the programming in the background so the site adjusted to different screen sizes, we took the opportunity to revise and reorganize the content and navigation. To prepare for the update, we conducted a series of interviews and usability tests with several students and a few faculty to see how people were using the library's website, what was working well or not so well, and what features people wanted to see in a revised site. Based on those tests, we worked with University Communications and ITS to design a site that better fits the needs and expectations of current students and faculty. Now the more frequently used features are more prominently displayed, and the full range of resources and services are easier to find. Along with all the resources and services, you can easily keep up with the latest library news from the social media feeds displayed on the library home page. If you have any comments or ideas for further improvements, please let us know at reference@wesleyan.edu.



— KENDALL HOBBS, REFERENCE LIBRARIAN —



IMAGE COURTESY OF BILL DENISON



▲ Students and staff view the exhibit curated by Wesleyan's French 325 class.
IMAGE COURTESY OF OLIVIA DRAKE MALS '08

STUDENTS REFLECT ON DISPLAYING THE "OTHER"

This past spring, "Uncovering Wesleyan Treasures: A Critical History"—a pop-up exhibition presenting objects, publications, and documents from Special Collections & Archives and the Archaeology and Anthropology Collections—took place in the Davison Rare Book Room. Students enrolled in Museums, Objects and Empire (French 325) curated the exhibition and introduced the results of their semester's coursework through bilingual guided visits.

How can the appeal of "exotic" objects to the Western world, from the Renaissance until today, be explained? How can the voices of the people who produced those objects be heard? What political and moral implications are at stake in the exhibition of such objects? These questions, which directed the organization of the exhibit, emerged from course readings focusing on the history of French private collections and museums in France. Then the curatorial work itself began. During several individual and group sessions led by Archaeological Collections Manager Jessie Cohen and SC&A Director Suzy Taraba, the students were able to select the objects and documents they wanted to present and, at the same time, to become familiar with the analytical methods specific to material culture and primary sources. Once the selection was made, the group devoted itself to researching the history of those objects and their significance. This phase seemed to be the most exciting for the students, as visiting graduate student Esther Rodriguez Camara pointed out: "Personally, understanding the relations that can be established between documents and objects has been one of the best things about the process of organizing a pop-up exhibition."

The objects selected were very diverse, from Edward Curtis photographs to antique Egyptian items to documents on the gamelan of Wesleyan. The set of objects chosen addressed three aims: presenting the history of the collections, comparing American and French practices in exhibiting and collecting non-Western objects, and enabling the public to question the gaze directed at these objects, in both the past and present.

From this ephemeral exhibit, there remains the memory of a rich pedagogical experience enabled by the resources of Wesleyan collections and the staff managing them. The results of the research (in French), which the students published as blog posts, can be read here: <http://french325.site.wesleyan.edu/>.

— CAROLINE HERBELIN, VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF FRENCH (2016-2017) —

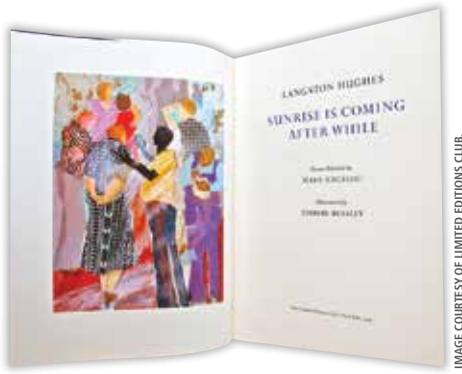


IMAGE COURTESY OF LIMITED EDITIONS CLUB.

ANDRUS FAMILY GIFT OF ILLUSTRATED BOOKS

Books published by the Limited Editions Club (LEC) are well known as beautifully illustrated, tastefully designed editions of enduring literary classics. Even the name suggests luxury and desirability. This past year, Special Collections & Archives became the lucky recipient of a superb collection of more than 125 titles published by LEC, the generous gift of the Andrus family. Perhaps best known at Wesleyan for the eponymous Andrus Field (named for John Andrus, Class of 1862), the Andrus family has a long tradition of collecting both art and books. Their recent gift reflects those interests.

Founded in 1929 by George Macy, LEC books marry classic literature with illustrations by prominent artists, sometimes commissioned by LEC. By the mid-1980s, the Macy family was no longer involved, and Sidney Shiff (1924–2010) revived the publishing program. Shiff transformed the LEC, expanding the offerings to include many more artists and writers of color and limiting the edition size to only 300 copies for most titles. The Andrus family gift is especially rich in LEC books published during the Shiff period. These books are truly impressive: large in scale, seductive to the eye, lovely to the touch. Handmade paper, richly textured book cloth in deep colors, spectacular artwork—the experience of reading a Shiff-era LEC book is a sensory delight.

Artists and photographers ranging from Berenice Abbott to John Wilson are represented in the Andrus family gift. Offerings include works as varied as Genesis (illustrated by Jacob Lawrence), Rainer Maria Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* (with color woodcuts by Balthus, printed and editioned with woodblocks cut by Wesleyan's own Keiji Shinohara), and selections from Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* (photogravures by Henri Cartier-Bresson). Especially notable are several books that pair African American artists with authors of color. Several of these books have already enhanced visits to Special Collections & Archives for Professor Peter Mark's students studying African American art, among others. Betye Saar's serigraphs enliven *Bookmarks in the Pages of Life* by Zora Neale Hurston, Phoebe Beasley's vibrant collaged silkscreen prints illustrate *Sunrise Is Coming After While* by Langston Hughes (introduction by Maya Angelou), and John Wilson's color etchings are as strong and deep as the text in Richard Wright's *Down by the Riverside*.

A substantial collection of LEC ephemera enriches the Andrus gift. Each of the Shiff-era books is accompanied by a prospectus providing fascinating background about the author, the artist, and the printing of the volume. A long run of LEC monthly newsletters, covering the period from 1959 through the 1970s, sheds light on the books of that era and the way they were marketed to subscribers. All of these materials, which complement the 1930s LEC volumes given to Wesleyan by George W. Davison (Class of 1892) and others many years ago, offer a rich window into the publication of some of the most attractive books of the twentieth century.

— SUZY TARABA, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES —

STUDYING MEDIA HISTORY THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES

On May 4, students in the Media and Power in Latin America: From Quipus to Twitter course staged a pop-up exhibition in Olin's Special Collections & Archives. Over the semester, students worked with a team of library and staff members to identify original media objects housed in Wesleyan's collections that were produced in or about Latin America. As individuals, they researched the history of objects ranging from a pre-Columbian paper beater to a seventeenth-century choir book commissioned by the Archbishop of Cuba to twentieth-century artists' books and political pamphlets. Students were particularly successful at reconstructing the broader cultural meanings of the objects by examining not just the textual content but also the formal and material qualities of the objects. Then they worked together to develop a cohesive exhibition that interpreted these diverse objects in relation to each other and to a series of broader exhibition themes. As opening day approached, students tackled the logistics of exhibition design and gallery interpretation, and even put together an impressive digital exhibition showcasing their research efforts. At the exhibition opening, students displayed the results of their hard work to the Wesleyan community, complementing the exhibit with gallery talks that delved more deeply into the history of the objects on display.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the collective endeavor was admittedly experimental from the beginning. As students transitioned from working as individuals to working as a group, they had to navigate new challenges. As they entered crunch time, good communication emerged as the most critical element for success. Reflecting on the semester, students offered a number of observations that may prove useful for others interested in conducting similar project-based learning efforts. They realized collectively that it would have been



COEDUCATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES: RESEARCHING GENDER, SPACE, AND MONEY

When I started doing research at Special Collections & Archives the fall of my senior year, I had only a broad sense of what I was looking for. I knew I was interested in Wesleyan's decision to coeducate in the late 1960s and how the admission of women reshaped the campus. Through the many reports that the SC&A staff managed to unearth for me, I found a story of how Wesleyan's volatile economic state significantly affected its ability to update the physical campus. Whereas a big budget and even bigger plans led to excess spending in the 1960s, by the 1970s Wesleyan found itself cutting programs and increasing enrollment to cover costs. As a result, women entered a Wesleyan that couldn't afford to build new spaces, and, therefore, the bulk of dining and social events were run through all-male fraternities. The current debate about fraternities, as well as the increasingly expensive wood-frame house system, can be traced back to this time.

At the beginning of my research process, I wasn't expecting a story about gender to become so intertwined with university economics. But Wesleyan's administration was remarkably transparent about its financial state, providing a paper trail that tied gender, space, and economics together. During the 1970s the school publicly released a series of reports detailing its monetary situation and the various fiscal options it could pursue. Today, they are incredible historical artifacts that detail how institutions manage financial uncertainty and complex decision-making processes. My favorite of these reports was the 1975 "A Plan for Action," known around campus as the Red Book. The Red Book captured my attention because it looks both forward and back. It reflects on the last few years of financial insecurity while considering how to move forward after all excess expenses have been cut. It both probes at the big questions (What is the role of higher education? How do we best achieve that?) while giving equal weight to the smallest considerations (What happens if we take out the trash once a week instead of twice?). In this way, it is a glimpse inside the complex machinery of higher education at a time when much of the existing structure was being rethought.

— ANNIE FERREIRA '17/THESIS: THE UNINTENDED COSTS OF COEDUCATION AT WESLEYAN —

simpler to start with a broad guiding exhibition theme before pursuing individual research projects. Yet, since imagining what this theme would have been without understanding the individual components may not have been feasible, some kind of balance should probably be struck between the two approaches. Students also felt that the exhibition offered a great chance to learn about Wesleyan's impressive campus resources—including Special Collections & Archives, the Archaeology Collection, and the Davison Art Collection. Hopefully, such an introduction can inspire more in-depth student research projects in the future. Finally, students valued the opportunity to build confidence in their own knowledge, hone and acquire new skills—including in exhibition design and graphic design—and work collaboratively, beyond the traditional format of the semester paper. Our partners across campus helped to make these experiences a reality! Check out the online exhibition at <https://wesomeka.wesleyan.edu/mediaandpower/>.

— CORINNA ZELTSMAN, VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY (2016–2017) —



▲ Bishop Evelino y Hurtado's Choir Book, 1687.

IMAGE COURTESY OF OLIN DIGITAL LAB

ARCHIVAL ASSIGNATIONS

My time at Wesleyan has afforded me many great opportunities, including being able to craft and write a thesis on nineteenth-century Middletown, Connecticut. Wanting to travel back to the nineteenth century to learn about historical figures and historical goings-on is an endeavor that required much research, which is why the Special Collections & Archives (SC&A) reading room became so important to me and my project.

Researching in the SC&A reading room was equivalent to going on a new adventure every day. I started out looking to find information on one subject and by the end of my research, I had transformed my ideas into an entirely different story with a new focal point—Ruth Peck Fisk, the wife of Willbur Fisk, Wesleyan's first president. Out of the many boxes I dug through to compile my notes, two were specifically dedicated to items belonging to Mrs. Fisk. These boxes contained glimpses into the daily activities of the life she led, anecdotes about those she cared for, as well as those she did not, and exquisitely written letters and poetry.

One of my favorite experiences in SC&A was finding a book in which Mrs. Fisk kept her poetry. After going through and documenting most of her correspondence, I felt a deep connection to Mrs. Fisk. Being able to read, as well as hold, something so personal was very special for me. She was keenly observant and very aware of the racial climate and political state of the country and often noted how this translated through Wesleyan University and its members. More than many women of the nineteenth century, she was willing to speak up and shed light on events around her. Through her avid, persistent, consistent, and astute writing, she inserted herself into nineteenth-century politics in Middletown and the surrounding towns and was able to effect change.

Places like SC&A are important because by preserving specific moments in time they are allowing people like me to discover these moments and share them with a wider audience. I appreciate and support the hard work that goes into keeping these types of resources open. While I am no longer a student at Wesleyan University, as I graduated this past May, I intend to continue to visit SC&A and utilize its resources for my own personal enjoyment.

— SHELDYN OLIVER '17/THESIS: RUTH PECK FISK: A HISTORY OF LOVE, FAITH, AND POLITICS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY MIDDLETOWN —



FRIENDS OF THE WESLEYAN LIBRARY

Welcome to new Friends of the Wesleyan Library board members Christine Clarke '18, Hana ElSafoury '19, Rachel Prehodka-Spindel (facility and events manager for Memorial Chapel), and Courtney Weiss Smith (associate professor of English and the Science in Society program). And many thanks to our outgoing board members, J. Kehaulani Kauanui, David Low '76, and Cecilia Miller, for their ideas, energy, and support of the library.



FALL EVENT:

Constitution Day Talk: On September 18, we were honored to host Professor José Luis Morín, chairperson, Department of Latin American and Latina/o Studies, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, as the Constitution Day speaker. His talk was titled "The U.S. Constitution, Puerto Rico, and the Unfinished Business of Realizing Our Best Ideals."

Save the Date: Annual Friends of the Library Book Sale: Saturday, November, 4 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Over 3,000 books for sale. Part of Wesleyan's Homecoming /Family Weekend festivities. Book donations are welcome through November 1.

If you would like to contribute to the work of the Friends through membership or specific donations towards our digitization, preservation and archival projects, research prize, or events, please e-mail libfriends@wesleyan.edu or visit wesleyan.edu/libr/friends.



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EDITOR:
Jennifer Hadley
Friends of the Wesleyan Library
jthom@wesleyan.edu
(860) 685-3897

CONTRIBUTORS:
Library staff and the Wesleyan community