WELCOME TO EMILY VOSS

The Wesleyan library welcomes Emily Voss, a new librarian, effective August 1. Emily will be working closely with the Research Services Department as the library’s outreach and academic engagement librarian.

Emily joins us as a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a master’s degree in Library and Information Studies and in Language, Literature, and Translation. She also has BAs in English Literature and Italian studies from UWU. She has worked as a marketing and sales assistant, special events coordinator at the UWM School of Freshwater Sciences.

At Wesleyan, she will be our first outreach librarian and academic engagement librarian, a new position that resulted from work done last year to reorganize the library in line with long-term planning. The position is designed to work collaboratively with library staff and the broader Wesleyan community to further strengthen relationships between the library and other departments and programs on campus, and particularly to build library-related, learner-centered programming with students and faculty.

Emily will also be working closely with the Friends of the Wesleyan Library on programming that supports outreach to not only the campus but also to the broader Middletown community. This will provide opportunities to work with local organizations where natural collaborations would be enhanced by Wesleyan’s presence.

Emily’s background is in folk music, and archival projects, research prize, or events, and she will be investigating the possibility of digitizing and making available whatever we can.

Emily was recorded folk-music concerts from the Hudson Valley region, deposited by Phil Ciganer, the owner of the Towne Crier Café in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. (now relocated to Beacon, N.Y.). The concerts were recorded by Ciganer in the Café, and these feature a long list of celebrated performers including Woody Guthrie, contemporary singer-songwriters such as Richard Thompson and Robin and Linda Williams, and world musicians such as Alhaji Bé Kante. But Ciganer’s activities also included organizing and recording several folk festivals in the area.

The Great Hudson River Revival festival was an outgrowth of the Clearwater Foundation started by Pete and Toshi Seeger in the 1960s, with folk-music concerts raising environmental awareness in the Hudson Valley. In 1978, the concerts found a permanent home at Croton-on-Hudson in the Bear Mountain Festival of World Music and Dance, which lasted two years before folding. Recordings of stage performances from both of these festivals came to the World Music Archives, along with most of the recorded Towne Crier performances, when Phil deposited them in hopes of preserving them and making them available for research and education.

In 2017 the Archives submitted an application for a pilot round of digitization grants, and as part of the work project, targeting a small subset of the Great Hudson River Revival festival recordings. Our application was rejected, but we were encouraged to apply in a later round with a larger collection. In this new application, submitted in February 2018, we included all the Great Hudson and Bear Mountain festival recordings, comprising over 240 hours of performances on both cassettes and reel-to-reel tapes, and were rewarded with the grant in May. Our partnering applicant, the New York Historical Society (NYHS), did all the digitization work, while Wesleyan will store all the digital audio files on its servers. Listening access will always be provided in-house for visitors to the World Music Archives. While online access to the recordings in the future will depend on securing performers’ permissions and archiving budgets, we will endeavor to pursue these permissions and make available whatever we can.

These festival performances are a wonderful representation of not only a quintessentially American musical culture but also an environmental movement. To quote Anthony Seeger, “The Great Hudson River Revival was an important moment in the ecology movement to clean up the Hudson and it enlisted many musicians who were very concerned about the environment.”...they may not have been recorded elsewhere. One of the great strengths of these archival collections is that they include not only the sounds of the music but also the voices and ideas of the performers as they interact with their audiences.”

— KENNEL WOdds, RESEARCH LIBRARIAN AND COORDINATOR OF RESEARCH SERVICES —

The Friends are grateful for your generous donations including contributions by Stephen Dansell and numerous book donations.

If you would like to contribute to the work of the Friends through membership donations towards our digitization, preservation and archival projects, please contact the Friends of the Wesleyan Library at www.wesleyan.edu/libr/friends.

WORLD MUSIC ARCHIVES RECEIVES RECORDING PRESERVATION GRANT

T he World Music Archives has received a grant of over $40,000 from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) for the purposes of digitizing and preserving a significant collection of American musical history.

Since around 2004 the Archives has been the repository of over 30 years of recorded folk-music concerts from the Hudson Valley region, deposited by Phil Ciganer, the owner of the Towne Crier Café in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. (now relocated to Beacon, N.Y.). The concerts were recorded by Ciganer in the Café, and these feature a long list of celebrated performers including Woody Guthrie, contemporary singer-songwriters such as Richard Thompson and Robin and Linda Williams, and world musicians such as Alhaji Bé Kante. But Ciganer’s activities also included organizing and recording several folk festivals in the area.

The Great Hudson River Revival festival was an outgrowth of the Clearwater Foundation started by Pete and Toshi Seeger in the 1960s, with folk-music concerts raising environmental awareness in the Hudson Valley. In 1978, the concerts found a permanent home at Croton-on-Hudson in the Bear Mountain Festival of World Music and Dance, which lasted two years before folding. Recordings of stage performances from both of these festivals came to the World Music Archives, along with most of the recorded Towne Crier performances, when Phil deposited them in hopes of preserving them and making them available for research and education.

In 2017 the Archives submitted an application for a pilot round of digitization grants, and as part of the work project, targeting a small subset of the Great Hudson River Revival festival recordings. Our application was rejected, but we were encouraged to apply in a later round with a larger collection. In this new application, submitted in February 2018, we included all the Great Hudson and Bear Mountain festival recordings, comprising over 240 hours of performances on both cassettes and reel-to-reel tapes, and were rewarded with the grant in May. Our partnering applicant, the New York Historical Society (NYHS), did all the digitization work, while Wesleyan will store all the digital audio files on its servers. Listening access will always be provided in-house for visitors to the World Music Archives. While online access to the recordings in the future will depend on securing performers’ permissions and archiving budgets, we will endeavor to pursue these permissions and make available whatever we can.

These festival performances are a wonderful representation of not only a quintessentially American musical culture but also an environmental movement. To quote Anthony Seeger, “The Great Hudson River Revival was an important moment in the ecology movement to clean up the Hudson and it enlisted many musicians who were very concerned about the environment.”...they may not have been recorded elsewhere. One of the great strengths of these archival collections is that they include not only the sounds of the music but also the voices and ideas of the performers as they interact with their audiences.”

— ALEC INCLANE, MUSIC LIBRARIAN AND DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD MUSIC ARCHIVES —

“SEVEN COLLECTIONS IN SEARCH OF A "THESIS" EXHIBIT”

On view in the Special Collections & Archives exhibit cases from April 2018 until October break, “Seven Collections in Search of a Thesis Exhibit” highlights little-known book collections with significant research value. Each of the featured collections demonstrates the old adage, “the whole is more than the sum of its parts.” By looking at these collections as coherent wholes, rather than just groups of individual books, new research paths and new ways of understanding the past emerge. Each collection also takes on new meaning when visualized through a modern lens.

The show includes collections of interest to students in a variety of disciplines. For American studies and English majors, the Basilon Collection of Victorian Bittinian Books and the D.H. Lawrence Collection support the study of literary publishing and readership in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Basilon Collection includes a significant number of American antebellum literary annuals containing works by both very famous authors and people who are virtually unknown today. The Lawrence Collection provides many editions of a work that has one of the most fascinating and complex collection of published and modern histories of times, Lady Chatterly’s Lover. These materials may find a wealth of sources reflecting the history of performance, a celebrity in the collection of Harold Moulton, an American actor (and book collector) who performed with Eva Le Gallienne’s Civic Repertory Theatre Company (1926–1939). Both the Bellamy Collection (yes, books about fishing) and the Beales Collections are the result of intriguing topics to captivate social historians. Featured in the exhibit are Beales pamphlets related to women, to the very scarce One Thousand Ways of Popping the Question (London, 1878) to treat of issues that were relevant in the 19th century as they are today, including human trafficking, police brutality, refugees, and fair housing. The Jarvis Nichols Hunted Medical Library includes about 1,500 volumes bequeathed by a member of the Class of 1845. Among its many strengths are numerous books on epidemiology and military medicine. The Williams Memorial Reference Library is a chemist’s dream. Collected by Boston secondary school — (continued from cover)

From the Library University Archivist, Leith Johnson, Retires

Leith Johnson, University Archivist since 2012, retired on June 28, 2018. As archivist, Leith was responsible for all aspects of the Wesleyan archives, manuscripts, and history collections. He also served in other positions at Wesleyan throughout the years. In 2009, he was the project archivist for the William Manchester Papers in Special Collections & Archives, and from 1990 to 2007, he was the associate curator (later co-curator) of Wesleyan’s Cinema Archives. Leith’s colleagues, faculty, and staff praised his deep knowledge of American and Wesleyan history, his professionalism, his teaching and presentation skills, and his sense of humor. Testimonials included admiration for Leith’s unfailing helpfulness and flexibility; his well-calmed presence in all kinds of circumstances.

To honor his 25 years of service, donations were made to WESU, where Leith is a DJ, and to the Friends of the Wesleyan Library Adopt a Program, to restore a set of historical highlights that was chosen Actively for the State of Connecticut, in America (New London, T. Green, 1784). This volume has a rich local provenance, having belonged to Matthew Rassell (1794), a member of the Class of 1823, a Middletown schoolmaster, who ran a school for boys attended by future President Rutherford B. Hayes. Webb, best known at Wesleyan for Webb Hall, the dormitory for women in the last ten years, first president of the Wesleyan School (1802–1812), gave the book to Wesleyan’s Philanthropic Society, one of our earliest student organizations.

Leith will be greatly missed, but we gratefully and wish him all the best for an enjoyable retirement.

— JENNIFER RAGSDALE, 19, B.A. ’66 AND SUZY SARABAN ’71, MALS ’73

(continued from cover)
Suffering from an excess of ambition, we sought to not only recover these treasures, but to reconstruct the narratives surrounding the evolution of our museum. Combining through heavily flourished scripts from the former museum in the Special Collections & Archives was a surreal experience. It was transportive and made the effort to assemble massive collections in the 19th century contextualize research valuable. From the Annual Curators Report, we learned that curators were fanatically writing neatly penned correspondence to fellow collectors and institutions to invite material exchanges, seeking the next great size to "complete" our collections. Their aim was to collect all known species in all of the natural world. As we immersed ourselves in the proceedings of Wesleyan's Curricular Society meeting minutes, it dawned upon us as to why that was a worthwhile endeavor. Members were never tired of reading published descriptions of new groups of animals at the meeting; the entirety of the natural science was based upon the observation, description, and classification of all species-taxonomy. We began to empathize with the noble effort and began seeing the natural world through the eyes of a 19th-century natural historian. Working with sheafs of handwritten notes is never short of surprises. Days after day, anecdotes from the accession books kept piling up. A memorable instance was when we discovered that two unlabeled dolphin skulls in our bone collection were donated by Dr. Barratt, a local Middletown doctor and former Cuvierian Society president. We were amazed to learn from his account that "dolphins were sighted alive for several days in the Connecticut River." We look forward to the next exciting moment of discovery in the archives.

—ANDY TAN '21 AND YU KAI TAN '20 —

FRIENDS OF THE WESLEYAN LIBRARY

The library received a "face lift" this summer courtesy of a major project to renovate, refurbish, and put back in place the building located in the original (ca. 1928) building. Although the windows have held up well for being 90 years old, improvements in glass options, the ability to increase energy efficiency, and the need to address mechanical issues to tighten the "building envelope" make the project welcome, despite the occasional strange noises associated with the task.

The project began right after commencement in May and is expected to be completed by late October, weather permitting. The windows, once removed, are being sent to Fenemella & Associates, a company in New Jersey that specializes in restoring these types of impressive (and irreplaceable) windows to their past glory. In the meantime, should you happen to come by the library, you’ll see temporary windows in place so you’ll still be able to enjoy the rest of the library’s impressive architecture.

— DIANE KLARE, ASSOCIATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN FOR RESEARCH AND ACCESS SERVICES —

HISTORY OF LIFE

It is always mind-bending to imagine even the most idle of men toiling for thousands of hours to amass millions of shrinky-dinks in dusty cabinets into which few would see. In the years we've known about Natural History, we manage hundreds of thousands of specimens collected since the early 1800s. In the decades since the dissolution of the former Wesleyan Museum in the Judah Hall of Natural Sciences, the specimens fell into disregard and many of their original accession data. The most tragic part of this history is the loss of many irreplaceable treasures from the heyday of natural history museums that lost their original accession data. The most tragic part of this history is the loss of the Judd Hall of Natural Sciences, the specimens fell into disregard and many early 1800s. In the decades specimens collected since the hundreds of thousands of Joe Webb Peoples Museum of which few would see. In the HISTORY OF LIFE

— DIANE KLARE, ASSOCIATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN FOR RESEARCH AND ACCESS SERVICES —

BLACK MIDDLETOWN LIVES: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH COMMUNITY HISTORY

O f New England's most historically significant African American communities, dating back two centuries, stood on what is now Wesleyan's campus. In spring 2018, Visiting Assistant Professor of African American Studies Jesse Nasta '97 designed and taught "Black Middletown Lives: The Future of African American History," an American Studies and service-learning course devoted to sharing the history of this remarkable community. Poring over rare books and manuscripts in Wesleyan's Special Collections & Archives, students found original descriptions of new groups of animals that formed the Natural Science Society. The entirety of the natural science was based upon the observation, description, and classification of all species-taxonomy. We began to empathize with the noble effort and began seeing the natural world through the eyes of a 19th-century natural historian.

T o celebrate Constitution Day on September 17, 2018, Assistant Professor of Government Justin Craig Peck will give a talk entitled "Progress, Preservation, and the Constitution After Trump." He will focus on the ways in which the Constitution aids and constrains reform movements in American politics. The aim will be to examine how the Constitution, and in that way, we should be concerned with constitutional "preservation." Originally from Georgia, Peck received his PhD in government from the University of Virginia in 2014. Prior to graduate school he worked for two years in the Senate office of Christopher J. Dodd. Peck's research explores the tensions that exist between the modern presidency and the rule of law, as well as Congress's role in the promotion and enactment of War policies.

The Friends of the Wesleyan Library are pleased to be collaborating with Russell Library on this event and thank their staff for hosting it. We look forward to this opportunity for the members of the Wesleyan and Middletown communities to connect and exchange ideas.

The annual book sale will take place on Saturday, September 29, in Olin lobby during Family Weekend. It is always a wonderful all-ages community celebration of books and reading.

If you would like to join the Friends, donate books, make a gift towards special library projects or events, or volunteer, please email libfriends@wesleyan.edu. Your support helps make many projects possible at the library, and we would like to accomplish even more.

—JENNIFER NAGLEY, LIBRARY ASSISTANT, FRIENDS OF THE WESLEYAN LIBRARY —

— Before "photos of Olin windows

“BLACK MIDDLETOWN LIVES: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH COMMUNITY HISTORY”

— ANDY TAN ’21 AND YU KAI TAN ’20 —

— JESSE NASTA, VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES —