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LIBRARY

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## Wellesley Digital Scholarship Initiatives

Jenifer Bartle, Library and Technology Services

As the Manager of the Digital Scholarship Initiatives program in Library and Technology Services, I coordinate the use of library resources and technical infrastructure in support of faculty-driven digital scholarship projects. Two such projects were funded by the Friends of the Library Innovations in Reading and Scholarship Fund in 2014: the *Dear Home* crowdsourced transcription project of the correspondence of Anne Whitney (Jacki Musacchio, Art), and the Mediterranean Antiquities Teaching Collection (Bryan Burns, Classical Studies).

Since 2011, Jacki Musacchio has been featuring the correspondence collection of nineteenth-century sculptor and Boston-area native Anne Whitney – over 4000 items of which are held by the Wellesley College Archives – in her teaching and research. In 2013, Musacchio approached LTS about the possibility of inviting the larger Wellesley community to transcribe the rest of this collection, both to improve access to the content of the letters and to facilitate the community’s engagement with this unique collection with strong ties to the history of the College.

With funding from the Friends, nearly 1000 letters were digitized, including those from such notable nineteenth-century individuals as artist Harriet Hosmer, abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison, and suffragist Caroline Healey Dall. Letters from Vida Dutton Scudder, Alice Freeman Palmer, and George

Herbert Palmer help to illustrate Whitney’s connection to the history of the College. Working with a team of faculty, staff, and students, we built a website to display the letters online so that contributors at Wellesley and around the world could read and transcribe them. As Musacchio writes on the *Dear Home* website, “by crowdsourcing our Whitney letters we can, in the future, post the resulting transcriptions in a computer-readable format, enabling more people to read and enjoy them, and allowing scholars to include them in the overall transmission of knowledge across diverse fields.”

We launched *Dear Home* at Reunion Weekend in 2014, with more than 500 alumnae registering to participate. As of March 2015, approximately one third of the original 956 letters have been partially or completely transcribed. We are currently working to add more letters to the website and open transcription to the wider College community.

Another digital scholarship project supported by the Innovations in Reading and Scholarship Fund is the first phase of the recently launched Mediterranean Antiquities Teaching Collection spearheaded by Bryan Burns.

This project seeks to produce high-quality digital images of the ancient Mediterranean artifacts held by various departments on campus and gather them into a single digital teaching collection.

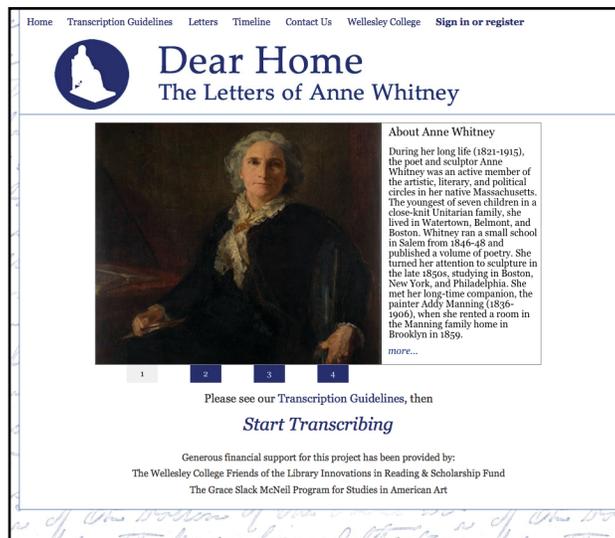


Image from the Dear Home website, which can be found at <http://omeka.wellesley.edu/whitneytranscribe/home>

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# Report from the Co-chair

*Ian Graham*

It's refreshing to take a moment to look out the window and realize that, yes indeed, the snow is melting and there may in fact be an end to this record-breaking winter in the Boston area. There were times that it seemed that perhaps the weather cycle had shifted permanently and it was never going to stop snowing. But as I write this message, Wellesley students have just left for Spring Break—hopefully to warmer climates—and at least in theory spring is on its way. And not a moment too soon.

When the weather becomes the top story on the news, and driving to work becomes a daily exercise in luck and patience, all the important things happening in the library seem to just, well, happen. But when we stop to think for a minute we realize that a tremendous amount has occurred as we have watched the snow pile up deeper and deeper.

For example, the Friends of the Library very generously purchased a new cutting-edge microfilm reader for the library. Before you laugh (I know I did), it turns out that new microfilm readers are pretty cutting edge, at least as far as microfilm readers go. The previous reader still worked fine, but it was so out of date with the computers in the library that it no longer had the ability to connect with one. And since digital is the standard for just about everything these days, it turned out that scanning microfilm to digital files (PDFs) is just what microfilm readers need to do and is just what patrons want them to do as well. Within days of the new reader being installed we had a very nice note from Lidwien Kapteijns, Elizabeth Kimball Kendall and Elisabeth Hodder Professor of History, telling us how grateful she was for its purchase.

The microfilm reader is just an example of the many generous ways the Friends of the Library have helped us navigate these continually turbulent library waters, as we manage increasing amounts of digital content as well as the premier (and growing!) print collection. The Friends support of new course materials continues to impress faculty as they find available funds when purchasing library books for new classes. The technology folks have been able to get us ahead of a dangerous curve by using Friends funds to investigate and establish long-term storage solutions for a huge amount of digital content, especially files of scanned images of archival photographs and other records.

This is of course just a sample of all the exciting things happening in the library now. We look forward to charting new territory with our great Friends as we continue to navigate our way through these turbulent, exciting, and soon-to-be ice-free waters.

# Wellesley's CLIR Hidden Collections Grant

*Ian Graham, Director of Library Collections*

The Wellesley College Library was one of 19 successful applicants from an original pool of 92 for a Council on Library Information and Resources (CLIR) Hidden Collections grant. Begun in 2008, and supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the impetus for the CLIR Hidden Collections grant program was, as stated on CLIR's website, "a widely shared acknowledgement of the need to rethink cataloging methods toward greater standardization, efficiency, and scholarly impact." From 2008 to 2014 grants were awarded to provide access—especially for innovative projects—to "hidden" or undocumented collections in cultural heritage institutions in the United States. Grants awarded beginning in the current cycle are specifically given to fund digitization of rare and unique materials; prior to this year that activity was not permitted.

The library prepared and submitted a proposal to digitize the historical records of the Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW), a set of materials measuring approximately 50 linear feet that had been transferred to the Wellesley College Archives in 2012. The records document four decades of activity and research for the WCW. The WCW is one of the premier centers on women- and gender-research in the world and has been engaged in work leading to social change since 1974.

Processing such a large and complex collection of records presents a significant challenge to the already busy staff of the Wellesley College Archives. When the Archives received other large collections, such as the records of former college presidents and other senior

administrators, outside processing help was hired. But with the WCW records the Archives saw an opportunity to find external funding through the CLIR Hidden Collections grant, because the records are of such scholarly significance.

Wellesley's CLIR grant allows the Archives to hire a full-time one-year project archivist dedicated solely to the processing and creation of finding aids for the WCW records. A search was conducted at the beginning of the year, and Mary Yearl '84 was hired and began work in mid-March. Mary has already found herself knee-deep in the 50 boxes of records and has started to develop a processing framework. She is using the newly released Archives Space archival collections management software to capture information about the collection. Archives Space can create industry-standard finding aids, and at the end of the project Mary will be able to generate those documents and make them available through the library catalog and the Archives website. Researchers around the world will be able to access information about the collection and determine its relevance to their research needs.

The Wellesley College Library sees this as the first major venture into seeking external funding for special projects such as this. As the library has many other projects that lie beyond our current funding, a small group of librarians, archivists, and others has been formed to identify those collections and corresponding grant opportunities that might best match our needs. We hope that in so doing we can increase both conservation of and access to our materials.

# From the Archives.....Wellesley Sportswomen

*Wilma Slaight*

When the College opened many believed that higher education would physically harm women. To counter this fear Durant insisted that all students exercise at least half an hour a day, preferably outside.



A gymnasium was fitted up in College Hall. Early calisthenics consisted of exercises and marching—eventually dumbbells, wands and rings were added.



Rowing initially featured crews in special costumes with good singing voices in “safe” double-wide boats. With the arrival of true shells with sliding seats in 1892, crew became a serious sport.

In addition to the exercise and training required by the College, students organized tennis tournaments, and established a bicycle



club. When the student Athletic Association was established in 1896, golf, baseball and basketball also were popular.

The argument against intense competition and other perceived drawbacks of men’s athletics was a rallying cry for women physical educators for much of the first half of the 20th century. Women



physical educators, especially those at the women’s colleges, had the philosophy of “a sport for every girl and every girl in a sport,” focusing on fostering participation by lots of students rather than concentrating on the talented few. This was why Wellesley inaugurated intramural sports – class and dorm teams who competed on field days.



As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, Wellesley modified its policy on competition. To the basic intramural and recreational activities were added multiple school play days. Play days involved teams that might be composed of players from different schools, and games could be modified to suit the occasion (shortened playing periods, round robin competitions, and novelty events). By the early 1950s the policy against intercollegiate competition was eased, allowing students to participate in national competitions as long as the students applied for permission, missed no classes, and it was clear that they were competing as individuals, not representing Wellesley College.



Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 jolted athletic programs in women's colleges like Wellesley. During much of



the 1970s there was considerable tension at Wellesley as the College worked out the parameters of its new intercollegiate sports program. Students used their Sports Association to press for increased participation in intercollegiate competition. Faculty tried to preserve some balance between the instructional program and intercollegiate activities.



Physical education has been a requirement for graduation throughout Wellesley College's history. A wide variety of classes and activities satisfied that requirement.



Today, club sports (such as riding, rugby, ultimate frisbee) provide opportunities for students not on college teams to participate.



## Spotlight on Colleen McGhee-French, Collections Analyst

*Diane Speare Triant '68*

One of the outgrowths of the digital age was the birth of the electronic journal; the library now subscribes to 88,000 of them! With subscriptions consuming 80% (and growing) of the acquisitions budget, it seemed important to hire an analyst to study the use of the library's collections – both print and electronic. “Determining how [various collections] are being used, and identifying those that are not being used, will provide the library with the data it needs to successfully manage holdings going forward,” explains Ian Graham, Director of Library Collections. Last September, Colleen McGhee-French '93 began work as Collections Analyst to accomplish the task. She traveled an unusual route to the position.

After majoring in physics and astronomy at Wellesley and earning a PhD in astronomy at Cornell, McGhee-French returned to campus as a research associate in the Astronomy Department. There, she was charged with presenting the history of Whittier Observatory on its 100th anniversary. “I headed over to the college archives, and from then on I was hooked!” she says. “I really enjoyed digging up information that nobody knew about.”

Although she continued as an astronomer at Wellesley for ten more years analyzing observations of Saturn's rings for NASA's Cassini Mission, her continued fascination with the archives and reference work prompted her to enter the library and information science program at Simmons College. There, she participated in internships at the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Massachusetts State Library. In preparation for the duties of Collections Analyst, her MLS degree dovetailed nicely with her scientific background and its requisite skills in quantitative analysis.

We asked McGhee-French about her work: “My job is to evaluate the library's current collection practices in an era of rapid change,” she says. “One of my early projects was to reevaluate the library's automatic purchase plan of print books. Based on this review, we [will] involve faculty and academic departments more closely in the selection of books... and in devising optimal collection strategies.”



McGhee-French is also utilizing a “cost per use metric” regarding the library's thousands of e-journals. “A good example is that two journals published by the Royal Society of Chemistry were increasing their price by more than five percent,” she explains. “In order to decide whether to re-subscribe or to cancel, I – in concert with the science librarian – looked at whether faculty members published in or cited from those journals. Upon learning that

Wellesley faculty did not think the journals important enough to keep, I canceled them.”

Conversely, McGhee-French recommends retaining journals and databases used heavily by Wellesley students and faculty such as Nature (8,000 hits) and the PsychoINFO database (accessed over 25,000 times); as well as those with rare archival value, such as the Vogue Archive (accessed 300 times), and the Boston Globe historical archive from 1872-1981 (372 downloads). Other “keepers” include packages such as Elsevier's ScienceDirect Journals. “The package includes over 1200 individual journals,” McGhee-French says. “At least half of them have little use, but the other half are so frequently used – nearly 30,000 hits in 2014 – that we're paying much less per use than if we were to try to access each journal through interlibrary loan.” Her next project? Gathering data on e-book acquisitions.

For the first phase of the project, we set up a temporary photography studio for taking pictures of the Greek and Roman coins held by the Classical Studies department. A professional photographer was hired to help with the technical setup, and then two of Burns' students were trained to handle and photograph the coins. Next, library staff and students worked to add the images and the descriptive information about them into Shared Shelf, the College's digital image platform.



Silver hemi-obol from 527-430 BC or later with head of Athena

When this project is complete, students will be able to complement their study of the original objects in the Classical Studies department, Special Collections, and the Davis Museum with unrestricted access to high-quality digital images. They will be able to use these images in their studies and to create their own digital exhibits using other software platforms supported by LTS.

## Is it time to renew your membership?

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**Tuesday, May 5, Wellesley College Club**

Featured Authors

**Mary Norris**, *Between You and Me: Confessions of a Comma Queen*

**Angela Flournoy**, *The Turner House*

**Belinda Rathbone**, *The Boston Raphael*

\$27

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