

December 2021 | Vol. 3

Object Lessons

A History of Wartburg in Objects

As 2021 drew to a close, we celebrated the end of our class on “Objects and Memory” with residents of Lohman Village and students at Sarah Lawrence College. We were joined by residents and staff at Wartburg as well as representatives from Sarah Lawrence for a final exhibition of the student’s work. The exhibition included posters, 3D art, and podcasts that the Sarah Lawrence students made based on interviews with our five Lohman students: Robert Byrnes, Helen Byrnes, Mary Alice O’Brien, Gloria McGalagly, and Catherine Behrend. It was a lovely end of the semester. Meanwhile, at Meadowview, we celebrated the holiday season with a series of poems about bells. The theme was suggested by Pastor Kim and we brought in bells and music to get in the spirit.

Happy holidays to all and I’m looking forward to a new year together.

Best wishes,
Emily Bloom, Public Humanities Fellow



Over twelve weeks in the fall of 2021, nine Sarah Lawrence students and five residents of the Wartburg Adult Care Community met to discuss the topic of “Objects and Memory.” Our discussions ranged from the science of memory to the politics of monuments. We looked at how objects like tape recordings and photographs aim to preserve accurate memories, but often leave out much of the story, while artisanal objects like quilts can preserve more than a single story and can become a way of crafting community. In their final projects for this course, Sarah Lawrence undergraduates interviewed Wartburg residents about objects of personal significance to them. In the stories they recorded, we hear about yearbooks, photo albums, sewing machines, and records. These are things that have been preserved and things that are lost; things that connect us to our past and that are stowed away for the future; and, perhaps most importantly, things that help connect us to others and to the world around us. Our final exhibition was a welcome chance to gather and share the wonderful work our students created together. Special thanks to Maria Provenzano and Michaela Byrnes for their help with the exhibition and throughout the semester.



Left: Lee Brown, Robert Byrnes, and Brendan Byrnes

Right: Lee Brown's 3D printed keychain and luggage tag representing Robert Byrnes's alma mater.



Clockwise from left: Poster of Catherine Behrend's sewing machine; group photo; Catherine Behrend talking with Emily Bloom in foreground with Mary Alice O'Brien, Zacharie Ledoux and Adam Stockman in background; Gloria McGalagly and daughter; Melissa Frazier and Mara Gross from Sarah Lawrence.

Our poetry discussions at Meadowview started with the sound of poetry and its connections to music. Which comes first, we asked, the sound or the words? Then, we found ourselves thinking about how the sound of bells make us feel – how do we respond when we hear the sound of sleigh bells, church bells, or alarm bells? We ended with a long discussion of a section of Alfred Lord Tennyson’s “In Memoriam A.H.H.” which takes place on New Year’s Day with a ringing out of the old and a ringing in of the new. Meadowview residents were especially struck with the relevance of this passage for readers today:

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.
Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

May we finally ring out “foul disease” and “civic spite” this year and find more peace in 2022.

