

new jersey artist series

wendel a. white **MANIFEST**



new jersey state museum, trenton

This publication accompanies the *New Jersey Artist Series* exhibition:

wendel a. white **MANIFEST**

on view at the New Jersey State Museum, Trenton  
from January 24 through May 10, 2015

The *New Jersey Artist Series* highlights the work of artists born, living or working in New Jersey.

**exhibition curator** Margaret M. O'Reilly

**catalogue design** Julianne Domm

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# artist's **STATEMENT**

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*Manifest* project is an effort to seek out objects in public/private collections that represent the material remains of slavery, abolition, segregation, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Albion Tourgee, Zora Neale Hurston, Harlem, the U.S. Civil War, and the Civil Rights Era to name a few of the narratives that inspired these photographs.

These photographs are representations of objects, documents, photographs, and books stored in cases and file cabinets as treasured historical artifacts. The outcome of this effort is to transform the usually small and often fragile remnants of the struggle for freedom and equality into images larger in scale than the original subjects. The various collections include vernacular documents such as a payment receipt for a bank loan, long held objects of special importance in the history of places such as Atlantic City, NJ, Eatonville, Fl or Omaha, NE and various official materials that recall the transformations of communities over time.

I am increasingly interested in the residual power of the material remains of the past. The ability of objects to transcend lives, centuries and millennia, offers a remarkable mechanism for folding time, bringing the past and the present into a shared space that is uniquely suited to artistic exploration. While the artifacts are remarkable as visual evidence of lives and events, I also intend the viewer to consider this informal catalog as a survey of the impulse and motivation to preserve history and memory.

The various projects that have occupied my attention during the past two decades are, in retrospect, part of a singular effort to seek out the ghosts and resonant memories expressed in various aspects of the material world. I am drawn to the stories “dwelling within” a spoon, a cowbell, a book, a photograph or a partially burned document. All are potential agents of vision.

The photographs in this portfolio are made with a large format, film-based camera, placed very close to the subject, and printed on paper with an inkjet printer.

Wendel A. White



# INTERVIEW

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Photographer Wendel White interviewed by Curator of Fine Art Margaret O'Reilly on Monday, December 1, 2014  
at Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Galloway, NJ

**MOR: How did you get your start in photography?**

**WW:** *I really started photography in high school. I went to Montclair HS and in one of my art classes, I had a teacher, Vernon Maxim, who was a ceramicist but had a love of photography. Part of the class was ceramics and part of it looked at photographs. I remember him showing a 16mm documentary about Dorothea Lange, and then getting to work in the darkroom. We were being taught with a 35mm camera, but also with a 4x5 view camera. In high school. It was kind of remarkable.*

**MOR: Were you thinking of career at this point in high school? Or were you on another path?**

**WW:** *No, no, I was pathless. You know, there were various things I was interested in. I was good at science, but, you know, flaky and bohemian as a student; I wasn't really, at that age, thinking about what are my career steps going to be, what college am I going to go to that will lead to what career, etc. Maybe sometimes to a disadvantage, but that's where I was. And I think the time lent itself to that. And I also was in a family that didn't have much background or experience in the arts, so they really were not discouraging, but, but..*

**MOR: ...they couldn't lead you. There was no example there. Like for a lot of us.**

**WW:** *Yes, yes. So, it started that way and took hold of me. Throughout high school, I continued to... and I think that experience was early in high school. We had moved from Philadelphia and I had switched over to Montclair part way into the 9th grade, and so, somewhere around 9th or 10th grade is when that happened. I guess I got kind of good at it, and at one point, I got commissioned to create a photo mural for the high school office, so during the summer I got the camera and access to the darkroom and film and materials, and I went around and photographed the building, in what I recall – unfortunately I have no documentation – but I created this piece that was kind of abstract, modernist imagery of bits and pieces of the building that we put together into a kind of collage montage piece of the fragments of the different parts of the school. It was put up in the office and stayed there for some while.*

**MOR: That must have given you some confidence?**

**WW:** *Absolutely, I think I even got one hundred dollars!*

**MOR: Big money for many of us back then!**

**WW:** *Yes, exactly.*

**MOR: Clearly, history is in your work. Did you have a love of history at that time?**

**WW:** *Well, I don't think I specifically had a love of history. Certainly not in the context of the classroom and school. I did okay, but I think it really came from*

family conversations. I loved the sort of family meals that were typically holidays, but sometimes they were more frequently than specific holidays. When people came to visit. My parents separated when I was very young and my mother and I moved in with my grandmother in Philadelphia. And she was sharing a house with my uncle, the two of them had purchased a house together. My other uncle purchased a house a couple of blocks away. So there was a family community nearby. And so, at holiday meals, people came to her house and we were always there and they always had these great stories about growing up.

**MOR: So this was a living history.**

**WW:** Yes. They told these great stories about all the characters in the family, different experiences, even the stories about the experiences with segregation because they had, and we still have in our family, the family farm that my great-grandfather purchased after the Civil War. All of them (ancestors) are buried there. And they would tell stories about going there. My mother and her brothers, not all of them but several of them, would often go and spend their summer down at the farm. They lived in New Jersey, but would go to their grandparents' farm.

**MOR: And where was the farm?**

**WW:** Outside Ahoskie, North Carolina. Bertie County. I think it's one of the poorest counties in North Carolina. Interesting sort of place. Still very rural, doesn't look much different than it did then. And, so all of that, the whole notion of how segregation affected their lives, because they had lives that spanned the north and the south. It was the idea that you'd move train cars as the train got to Philadelphia and then you would have to switch to the colored car going south. Or even driving, their father, my grandfather, had a car and would drive them down, once you passed into Delaware it was knowing or finding the places you could stop along the road to eat or use a bathroom or anything like that. So all of that was fascinating to me.

And the way they told those stories. My uncles' stories of World War II also talked about segregation during the war and in the military, and their experiences in Europe. Interesting stories about white people that didn't treat them the same as white people here. Even though they had some good relations with whites here. A good number of stories about those kinds of things and different memories of the family's activities. My mother was the youngest of all of them, so some of the stories stretched back to before she was born. Especially the 1930s, 1940s and into the 1950s, is where the bulk of their stories came from, the key times they talked about.

I remember a wonderful story about my uncle taking my grandmother to Cuba for vacation because it was the place to go. Hipper than even Atlantic City at the time. There were casinos and the beaches were beautiful, music and fun. It's fascinating to think of it, in that time before Castro. And I have a picture in my mind of them. A photograph of my uncle and my grandmother in Cuba on vacation.

**MOR: So when did this interest in photography that you developed in high school, and this love of your family history come together? Or did they take a long time to come together?**

**WW:** Well, yes, consciously. My mother, I think recognized... my mother was good at encouraging almost anything I did. Even though, like I said, she didn't necessarily have a background in arts.

**MOR: She wasn't going to stifle you.**

**WW:** And, she was the one who also had a tremendous interest in family and family history. She maintained that her whole life. In the early 1970s, she and her brothers, and maybe some other members of the family, decided they were going to start family reunions. And so they started doing these family reunions in North Carolina. And, with that... I have a hard time recalling how it came about because there were a couple of different times, but by then, I'm photographing and whatnot, so I'm at a point where I'm really bringing my camera a lot of places and taking pictures of things.



MOR: **Did you think of yourself as a professional?**

**WW:** *No, I'm still in high school. I start photographing those first reunions, and I have photographs of those. Later on, I remember, just my mother and I, we specifically took a trip to visit family members for the purpose that I could photograph them. And so there was this beginning, but I think I was at a point with photography and art where it was all just opportunities to make pictures. I wasn't thinking about 'how would I use this. What would that be like?' And I hadn't yet been exposed to a kind of academic environment that would lead me to thinking about the photographic image in that way. As solid as the teachers were that I had at Montclair, and I was only there for a short time, but I continued to get a lot of support at my second high school in New Jersey, but they were all still teachers of a type that were happy that students were doing good work and were interested. Some of them, there were a couple of teachers that were active as artists at the time and remained active.*

MOR: **Were they exposing you to the work of other photographers?**

**WW:** *A little bit. But I think that the problem was that none of them was really... It was right at that moment, I was going with my friends into New York and visiting the one or two galleries that covered photography. And I very distinctly remember Lee Witkin's gallery that was in his apartment uptown in the 60s before opening the gallery downtown. I remember going up and walking through these little rooms, looking at photography on the walls, and having that experience. There just wasn't quite enough to get much exposure through the world that I was coming through. They were these artists (teachers) but they didn't have all that much to offer, to say 'This is what is going on in photography.' But I got books from my uncle, and a couple of different people saw that I had this interest. I was being encouraged. Somebody gave me a copy, and I still have it, of Bruce Davidson's East 100th Street. And, of course, Gordon Parks was the other model. My mother was kinda of, 'I know Gordon Parks,' but the problem for her was 'but, there's only Gordon Parks,' there's nobody else.*

MOR: **There's only one, so why do we need another one.**

**WW:** *Right, right! What are the chances of filling in another spot? So, that was the beginning. Then I went on to (the School of) Visual Arts, and I had some great teachers and people I've kept in contact with over the years, but when I went through, there were no artists of color teaching photography.*

MOR: **What year was this?**

**WW:** *Seventy-four, seventy-five to eighty.*

*There were a couple of staff people, and some teaching in other areas, but not in photography. Although the academic advisor, who was the academic advisor for everybody, was African American. Of course, the student body was diverse, but I cannot recall anyone of color. My senior advisor was Julio Mitchell, a Latino artist, and that was the closest I came to anybody, other than a predominately white, predominately male, there were just a handful of women. The chair of the department was a woman. I don't think I actually had any photography classes with any of the female faculty. But, I knew that Alice Beck-Odetta taught photography and a couple of other women were teaching photography. And certainly I had female teachers in areas like art history and other classes, but photography was still this white, male bastion, more so than the other disciplines.*

*I learned a lot, but there were no discussions that I recall, dealing with culture and the idea of the historical framework for imagery.*

MOR: **Was it more technical or focused on aesthetics? The foundations that many of us have early in our art making careers?**

**WW:** *Exactly, exactly.*

MOR: **The idea of what you were photographing was not discussed?**

**WW:** *Right.*



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**MOR:** **So, where did that come from? When did that notion enter into your consciousness?**

**WW:** *I think in graduate school. I had a good mentor. Again, I was in another program, a smaller program, that was dominated by white artists for the most part. There were one or two Asian artists teaching, no African American teaching. I was at the University of Texas (UT) in Austin in 1980. But, my primary mentor, Mark Goodman, was fantastic. It was a good coincidence. He and his wife had just arrived in Austin to begin teaching. Garry Winogrand had left. He (Goodman) arrived. I arrived at the same time. He was coming from the northeast. His basic training in college was as an anthropologist, but he became a photographer by spending years at Apeiron (Apeiron Workshop Centers in Photography), doing stuff at the Workshop, and gradually being mentored by various photographers. He'd gotten grants and fellowships and things like that, but he came from this anthropology background. This was the first time that I was talking to somebody a lot about photography who was concerned with content as well as the formal qualities, but very much concerned with constructing something with this, in this way. Even though my senior thesis in undergraduate school was project oriented, it was really not until then that I really had lengthy conversations about the idea of working on larger bodies of work in a different way. And, I think that that probably molded a lot of how I still work today. That influence was very strong. I was at their house eating all the time, I'd go out with Mark photographing together, all these conversations, lunches together, because I was his TA (teaching assistant).*

**MOR:** **So, this begins to inform your work and your worldview.**

**WW:** *Yes, my worldview, exactly.*

**MOR:** **What was your work like then?**

**WW:** *Actually, my work was absolutely nothing like what he was doing. I was doing these landscapes with camera movement so they were very impressionistic views of the landscape, very experimental. I was also making these other pictures at the same time; I was doing 35mm black and white images, not looking through the viewfinder and then editing and finding bits and pieces that I thought were interesting in this very experimental way.*

*So, I had a year after I finished undergraduate that I got a job at Visual Arts for a whole year. They had a fascinating concept, at least under Alice (Beck-Odette), not sure if they still do it. You have a one year job and they kicked you out after a year. They picked a student who would work in the equipment cage for one year. They picked somebody good, and said 'here's a full-time job for a year but then you're outta here.' You had to figure out where to go, because they didn't want you to become just another staff person at the college. And so, during that time, I met a painter who was visiting New York from UT, and that's how I ended up going to UT. I didn't know Mark or his work.*

**MOR:** **How did you feel about going to Texas, leaving the Northeast?**

**WW:** *It was an adventure. I was like, this is great. I was still not any different than I'd been in high school, 'I'm not sure what I'm going to do.'*

**MOR:** **So, you didn't feel like 'I'm leaving the New York art scene?'**

**WW:** *No.*

**MOR:** **You may not have felt like part of that yet?**

**WW:** *Right, I didn't feel like part of it. Exactly.*

*I'd tried to do a little commercial work and it was not something I was happy with. It never worked out financially, for me as somebody starting out. It was difficult. So, I went because I thought it would be a great adventure and it seemed interesting. As someone who was born in Newark, lived in New Jersey, New York and Philly, Texas seemed exotic. There was a sense that I was going someplace that was kind of unique.*

*And, Mark's wife Sybil, also a photographer, was doing a lot of work with color at the time. She was investigating and ended up writing a book about photographs in the UT collection by an itinerant photographer. She had started in the American Studies program. She was a good friend and convinced me to take classes, because I could elect classes in my MFA program. So, I took a couple of classes in American Studies with folks that were dealing with photography. And so at the same time I was making these impressionistic images, I was making these cultural images, taking the 8x10 view camera out, photographing with large color negatives. I still have all that. But, I wasn't doing anything with it at the time. So, that took me through graduate school.*

**MOR:** **So, you finish graduate school, and the world is waiting for you. What did you decide to do?**

**WW:** *There were no jobs there, so I came back to New York. Got a job in a camera store so I could make some money. And, by then I was married. My wife's family had an apartment in Brooklyn that they could give us really cheap, so we were kind of set. We could go back to a cheap apartment. And we did that for five or six years, no, four years. It seemed longer.*

**MOR:** **And you're taking photographs the whole time?**

**WW:** *Yes, taking photographs the whole time, meeting people, exhibiting at the now defunct Third Eye Gallery and at Midtown Y Photography Gallery. Michael Spano was director and he was real supportive. And, I was in a camera store where all these really interesting photographers came in. Timothy Greenfield-Sanders was coming in, and these guys that were printing for exhibitions at the Met, you know, printing James Van Der Zee prints. They came in because we specialized in photographic paper and things like that more so than some other places.*

**MOR:** **You're meeting interesting people in the field.**

**WW:** *Yes, interesting people, some I knew, and meeting some others. Rosalind (Fox) Solomon, still have some autographed things. All of that, and I'm starting to exhibit. I met Deb(orah) Willis (artist, curator, author, educator) because interestingly, one of the faculty at UT also came from the Northeast, came from New York, and she went to school with Deb at Pratt. And when I was coming back, Ellen Wallenstein said to me, 'Oh, you're going back to New York. My friend Deb Willis who I was in the graduate program with is at the Schomburg (Center for Research in Black Culture). You should show her your work.' And so, I called her and she said, 'Sure, come on up.' From then we became friends and she became supportive of my work and has included me in a number of books and shows and things like that. There's still a piece that's out there, in the "Posing Beauty" show that's been traveling around forever. And I was one of only two or three contemporary photographers got included in the book that she and Barbara Krauthamer did called "Envisioning Emancipation (Black Americans and the End of Slavery)." That's been a great, productive relationship. She also introduced me to other people. So, through Deb, I went off to meet people like Danny Dawson (photographer) who I'm still in touch with; I met Janet Borden (gallerist), Marvin Hiefferman (photographer) and Peter MacGill (gallerist).*

*And, there's kind of a gap right there. When I was in graduate school, I suddenly realized that the life... so, undergraduate school, everybody was an adjunct faculty member at Visual Arts. I don't think there were any full time faculty. So, that didn't seem so attractive.*

**MOR:** **Right, piecing together 5 or 6 jobs.**

**WW:** *But, that's how they were able to run that school. But in Texas, here's Mark and he's got this full time job, and he's got time to do his work and that's kind of desirable. So, I came back really with that in mind. I didn't go to Texas and I didn't go into a graduate program thinking that I would come out to teach. I didn't even sort of conceptualize that that would be an outcome, as so many students do today. So many students think, 'if I get my MFA, I'll be able to teach.' I was like, 'that sounds good, I'll do that.'*

MOR: **You didn't have a five-year plan?**

**WW:** *I didn't. I didn't know there were five-year plans!*

*So, Deb was really great at making those introductions. Oh, Jules Allen, was another person she introduced me to. And all of them were really helpful. Weston Naef, he was at the Met. I didn't know what to do with all those contacts. I didn't understand networking.*

MOR: **Yea, how to apply networking to your life.**

**WW:** *I went and they were really sweet to me and they talked to me. But I sort of didn't understand how to keep going back to them and how that might lead to something. Because I didn't quite envision, 'Well, where would that take me?' So, there was sort of a failing of mine and also, I would say, not that I blame it, of the whole art education that I had was not really built around that. Because, even by the time of graduate school, Mark was sort of anti art world. He had this idea that you just made pure work, the rest of it was just nonsense. So, he was never one to say 'here's how you have to do it.'*

MOR: **Or, join this artist's group or meet these people and have them mentor you. I think that was true for a lot of us though.**

**WW:** *Yea, it was.*

*So, Janet (Borden) was really sweet and she actually took some work on consignment. A number of people were nice, but didn't say to me at the time, 'I want to do something with you.' But, I didn't recognize... Janet didn't have a gallery at the time. I met her actually in her apartment. I showed her work, and she was nice. I talked to her recently; she still has that work!*

MOR: **That consignment contract's got to be up by now Wendel!**

**WW:** *I didn't understand that I needed to keep that connection alive in a sense. And what it meant to keep it alive, and how to go about it, and that sort of stuff. So, I had this first introduction from Deborah to all these different people, but I didn't know what to do with it. And a lot of them were not doing anything. Peter MacGill didn't have a gallery at the time; he had left Light Gallery and he hadn't opened his new gallery yet. Janet Borden hadn't opened her gallery yet. I didn't really know who... the only person who was at an institution was Weston Naef and I didn't get the chance to sit down with him face to face. He was willing to take a portfolio to look at and he gave me a handwritten note back, I think because I had come with this recommendation (from Deb Willis). Danny Dawson was at the Studio Museum of Harlem and he was very supportive, but again I didn't know what to do.*

MOR: **Sounds like you didn't know to say, 'you don't have a gallery, but do you know who else I should talk to?' Or how to make those next steps.**

**WW:** *So, I didn't know what to there, but I did have this idea that I'd like to teach. And that had come from seeing what Mark Goodman was doing and what his life was like. So, I started working on that. I got an opportunity and I started teaching as an adjunct faculty member at the School of Visual Arts. Not really knowing better, I started... someone came in the (camera) store one time and said, 'Would you be interested in volunteering? I'm part of a group called Volunteer Photographers...' I can't remember the name of the group. But they were a group of photographers that volunteered their services to teach at various around the city. And I said, 'sure,' and I wound up going. I got assigned to teach, and it was great because it was nearby because I was working on 43rd Street, I got assigned to teach at the high school inside Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital, Bellevue had this ward, the students lived there and were being treated. They weren't coming and going, they stayed there. And they had a New York City school that was inside the building. It was really a hallway. The students that were doing well and had earned the privilege of taking this photography class were part of my class. And, I always had a teacher with me. We would go out and photograph a little bit in the neighborhood, and then I'd show them a little bit in the darkroom. And eventually, we would put together work and we had an exhibition up on*



6th Avenue someplace wherever the volunteer photographers' group had gotten a big space on the ground floor of a corporate building. And they displayed this work the kids had done from all over the city. You know, it was really nice.

I did that for a year. And I was applying for full time teaching jobs at various places around the country and got an interview for here (Stockton College). After the fact, I found out that one of the things they were most interested in was the fact that I had been teaching at Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital. So, that stood out to them as an interesting thing, Maybe it made me seem more battle worn. Kind of like, if he's able to work with those kinds of kids in photography, then he's not going to be flustered in the classroom. I don't really know what the perception was. I do know that is something they found compelling. So, that was great. And I started teaching here. In 1986, I came to Stockton. My wife (Carmela Colon-White) didn't want to give up her job, so we split the difference and we moved to Freehold. She was commuting into New York, working at CitiBank at the time. I was commuting down here. That lasted for a little while. Then she was pregnant and decided not to return to the job in New York after my daughter was born. I'm having trouble remembering the sequence, but she did go back to work at some point and we moved down here when my daughter was about four years old, so we stayed in Freehold about five years.

**MOR: So, how did you adapt to teaching?**

**WW:** I felt like I adapted pretty well. I felt I started easy because I had taught classes at Visual Arts, I taught workshops at ICP. That was a person who continued to have an impact on my life was Charlie Stainback (former Director of Exhibition, International Center of Photography). Charlie invited me to teach workshops at ICP.

**MOR: So, teaching wasn't foreign to you anymore?**

**WW:** No, it wasn't. Although doing it in this context was a little different. When I came, I was given a class in the history of photography. I still was sort of new and it took me a while, other than in a studio class, to figure out what I needed to do to prepare for lecture classes.

**MOR: Sure, the skill set is different.**

**WW:** Exactly. I think I got better at that. But, my strength is still in the studio. That's where I think I can interact more fluidly with people on an individual, one-on-one basis. I have my lectures and presentations and demos, but then my strength is that individual going from student to student, 'Here's what you might want to do. Here's an idea. Here's a possibility.' And holding all of that in my head so that when I come back to them a half hour later, I still remember what their problem was. The direct contact and the ability to hold all of these details in my head during class time is something that has always come naturally to me.

**MOR: What was your own work like at this time? Did it change drastically?**

**WW:** During the time we were living in Brooklyn and I was working in New York before I got this job, I made a switch from that more experimental work to suddenly doing more formal black and white images of the landscape. And I became very interested in the industrial landscape, in the Gowanus Canal, Red Hook area, and that eventually spread to the Jersey side. I was photographing Rahway, Linden, that area, and eventually a friend of mine that had gone to Bloomsburg, out in Pennsylvania, and knew some of the industrial areas there, took me on a drive out and showed me all the industrial areas. He was also a photographer, so we photographed together. But it was that Brooklyn, Red Hook, Gowanus area that I was just fascinated with and I would just walk around those areas and photograph. Third Avenue, the bridge that comes over. And that was the work I was doing when I first came here. In fact that was the work that Michael (Bzdak) and Charlie (Stainback) included in "Stated as Fact" ("Photographic Documents of New Jersey," a 1989 group photography exhibition at the New Jersey State Museum).

*I had one other job before I came here. I left the store. Deb called me and said that her friend Fo Wilson, the art director at Essence Magazine, needed someone to help them organize a picture collection. And did I think I would be able to do it? At the University of Texas, one of the things they had us do was cataloging cartes-de-visite and things like that, so I said, 'I have a little experience with this kind of organization.' One thing led to another and I left the store and worked at Essence, occasionally filling in at the store from time to time when they needed me. At Essence, I was working three or four days a week, helping them organize stuff that was just thrown in trunks on the floor after a shoot was over. Then somebody would come and say, 'Hey, we need a picture of Bill Cosby.' 'Well, we shot him; it's somewhere over there.' My job was to put some order to this. So, I organized it, since they essentially had an index with all the issues, I ordered it by issue, so they could search that way.*

*When I left to come to Stockton, Deb and I had lunch together. Sort of congratulations, good luck out in Jersey. She told me the story about this small town that she used to go to. She grew up in the Philadelphia area, and had cousins in Whitesboro, New Jersey, which is right by Wildwood, and used to go out there in the summertime when she was a kid. She said 'it's this very interesting little black town; you might be interested in taking some photographs of it.' So, after I was here for a couple of years, one day I decided to go. I started to walk around there and talked to a couple of people, and started photographing. Then I kept photographing those towns, and one town led to another town, led to another town, led to another town.*

**MOR: And when you were doing this, did you have a series in mind? Were you just doing it for yourself?**

**WW:** *I was doing it mainly for myself. My friend had told me she thought it would be interesting, so I thought I would give it a try. I had no idea that I would incorporate text. I had no idea that the history piece would be incorporated. That was just something that emerged because I then started having conversations with people in these towns that were like the conversations that I remembered in my childhood, with my family, about their experience, the history of their community, what had happened, all of these things that had gone on inside their community. And that's the first time it came back around for me.*

**MOR: But no concept that "Small Towns" ("Small Towns, Black Lives: African American Communities in Southern New Jersey" a book by Wendel White and Deborah Willis), the book, was going to come out of this?**

**WW:** *The second year I was doing it, Deb was putting a show together called "Convergence: Eight Photographers," another traveling show. It was organized by the Visual Studies Workshop, and opened at PRC in Boston, and traveled to a dozen locations around the country. And that was the first time I exhibited the work and it was the cemetery work with the narrative and photographs. Even when I went to Whitesboro, I was recording the conversations and taking notes, but I didn't know why. It was just something to do while I was talking to people. I didn't know that I was actually going to use it. It was not until I started to photograph the cemeteries where there were no people that I kind of conceptualized the idea that a narrative would make sense here because there is no town. These would just be pictures of headstones, that would be meaningless in a way to most people, without the narrative of these remarkable communities.*

**MOR: So, whether consciously or unconsciously, you were becoming a cultural historian. Maybe in spite of yourself.**

**WW:** *Right, although I always hold back just a little bit from saying historian. I'm always honored by that notion that people feel like I'm doing this, but I'm really not trained.*

**MOR: I think that's why we say 'cultural' historian, because you are taking particular aspects. A lot of us in curatorial fields who know and respect your work, I think we've come to think of you that way. They are beautiful fine art photographs, but they are documentary, too. They are falling somewhere in between. They stand on their own, but the narrative adds to them but they are in no way diminished without the narrative. You are a cultural historian. You can accept that term. You should.**

**WW:** *In doing "Small Towns, Black Lives," I didn't always put the time and weight into Community A that might be more historically important, than I did in Community B, which might not be as important, but to me, visually was really interesting.*



MOR: **So, the visual still comes first?**

**WW:** *Yes, there were these wonderful structures that I could photograph, or people invited me into their homes and those home seemed to lend themselves really well to the photographs that I was making. There were a variety of factors that had an impact. If you go through that book, a perfect example is a town like Gouldtown. There are only one or two pictures that I did in Gouldtown. In reality, that's much more important historically than the cemetery in Port Republic, but I got more caught up in the narrative in Port Republic than I did in Gouldtown.*

MOR: **But, that goes back to the notion of personalizing it. Brings you back to narratives and the family stories you heard as a child.**

MOR: **So how did "Schools for the Colored" grow out of "Small Towns?" It did grow out of it directly, didn't it? You had great success with "Small Towns." It was accepted, it traveled. If we didn't know you before, we all knew you and your work then.**

**WW:** *That was a bit of luck, but also a bit of conscious wanting to do something, and I wasn't sure what. In fact, I had a conversation with Lillian Levy about this, and I said 'I've got this body of work and I'm not sure.' She was encouraging, She said I had to keep with it.*

*I had an exhibition at Hopkins House in Haddon Township. Somehow, the person at there at that time was in touch with the people in Whitesboro and with Stedman Graham, and they all said to her, 'there's this guy who's been coming down and photographing.' This was now 1999 or 2000. So, I got the Hopkins House exhibition. Jaio Ming, the curator from The Noyes Museum (Oceanville, NJ), saw that exhibition and came to me and asked if I had more, and learned more about the project. Because the pictures at Hopkins were only of Whitesboro. So, I told her I had images of other south Jersey communities. She said 'let's do an exhibition.' It was also fortunate that Larry Schmidt was there (former Noyes Executive Director) and he had a history background, and it was the 20th anniversary of the Museum, so all those things came together. And she (Jaio) came from a publication background at the Met, and we started thinking about who we'd put in it. So, Deb Willis was selected. And Stedman Graham still had interest so he wrote, and we asked Clem (the late historian Clement A. Price) to write the substantial historical piece. When Jaio Ming left the Museum, we were in an odd place, and I knew it would take a while to get someone, so I suggested that they hire a guest curator and so Charlie Stainback came back into it. And he also contributed an essay. So, it all worked together.*

*Years before, I had applied for support from the Guggenheim Foundation. I had tried it for a couple of years and then I gave up, I got tired of it. But because I was putting all this stuff together for the Noyes exhibition, I put a small portfolio together and went to three people who all wrote for me, and it was remarkable that it came through in the springtime. All of that really came together in a way that is hard to imagine. The publication came out. Matt Maripaul (NY Times) came across my website and wanted to do an article, and that came out the Monday after the show opened. And I was getting this feedback from all around the place, including administrators at the University of Texas. So, I sat down with the President (of Stockton College) and we worked out an option for me to have a slightly reduced workload for the following year because of the (Guggenheim) fellowship, because I wasn't eligible for a sabbatical at the time. With that in mind, I set out thinking what I really want to do is continue "Small Towns" outside of New Jersey. And I read this book (America's First Black Town: Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830-1915, 2002) by Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua about a town called Brooklyn, Illinois which was one of the first incorporated African American communities in America. So, I thought I'll go out. Actually it wasn't too far from where my brother-in-law lived, so I thought I'd have a place to stay and I can start on this project out there. When I got there, I met somebody, just on the street, who turned out to be a teacher and a former student and a former principal in the school in the town. I had read the story in Cha-Jua's book, where he said there had been, at one point in time, a section of the town that contained a white population and even though the Board of Education was made up entirely of African Americans, they were maintaining a separate school for white students. It didn't last*



for very long, but I was fascinated by this idea that there was a white school in a black town. I had this conversation about the school and the nature of it with this gentleman in the community, just standing on the street actually. And that sort of clicked for me and I thought schools are really the place where we work out these ideas of race in a way that, even today, remains unresolved. So I began working out that idea and for a time I started making pictures of the schools and doing the same thing I had done with "Small Towns, Black Lives" which was I had a text panel, a narrative, with the image. And gradually I grew tired of that, and eventually I started isolating the building against the landscape because I wanted to make that connection to (W.E.B.) DuBois and the veil.

**MOR:** So that brings us here to "Manifest," a clear thread directly from "Small Towns, Black Lives" and "Schools for the Colored." These are individual stories that tell the broader story of the African American cultural landscape and the history of the community.

**WW:** This was a direct connection to "Schools." I had a sabbatical and was invited to be a visiting faculty member at RIT, so I went up for a quarter. I decided to stay in the landscape and wanted to explore the Niagara Movement and the establishment of the NAACP. I planned to go over to Buffalo, and go over to the Canadian side. In researching that, I got fascinated with the fact that Frederick Douglass had all these roots in Rochester. One thing led to another, and I find out that they have a lock of his hair at the University of Rochester Library. And that just blew up for me and I started gradually looking all over western New York in all of these collections that had objects related to African American history. In fact, the people at the University of Rochester Library were so kind. The first time I went there and photograph, I didn't really know what I was doing in the sense that I hadn't formulated what this would look like. So, I really just photographed things on the table.

**MOR:** How much research do you do before you pick up the camera? Do you allow for the serendipity of the moment with the camera or do you want to have some kind of idea before you go in?

**WW:** I would say it's a little of both. I typically go in with only a hint of an idea that I think is interesting.

**MOR:** It sounds like you're open to possibilities.

**WW:** Yes, I'm open to possibilities, and then I'm looking to see what will capture my imagination once I get there.

**MOR:** Early in your career, it was certainly the visual that captured you. Is it the narrative now that draws you in? Or are they in tandem?

**WW:** They are in tandem. It can't be only visual. And in particular, I am interested in the archival object. The object that had been held, that have been in the lives of people.

**MOR:** Mostly these are ephemeral objects, not originally meant to be kept forever.

**WW:** Many of my favorites are those, although many were meant to be treasured as in the case of Frederick Douglass's hair. That was something that was given and received and held onto.

And, my photograph of these things has not much to do with the content of the thing. Even though that story is important to me as to why I photograph it. I make the photograph because the object is compelling to me to look at or there is a quality that evokes a kind of ghostly spirit.

**MOR:** First of all there is an idea of landscape in all of these, which is really interesting in these singular objects. And there is this mystery. You haven't shot a documentary photograph. I can't read every word on something, or the color may not be true because of the way you've shot it or the way it's lit. But yet, there is a sense of it, and a sense of wanting to know what is behind this object. I love that you've let the mystery be as important as the documentary portion of it.

**WW:** *I realized I don't always want to show all that much about the object. Some objects are more difficult than others to do that with, so I don't hold myself to a rule about it. So, some are more readable than others. Sometimes the more readable objects are actually more ambiguous in terms of what it is to begin with.*

**MOR:** **And the lack of scale creates ambiguity as well.**

**WW:** *And the idea that the landscape is very important. I gradually realized what I wanted to do was tie all these objects into the same space. So, they all sit in the same visual space even though they all physically sit in places all around the country.*

**MOR:** **You've made these objects into jewels. For someone like me, curator, archivists, there is a seduction of objects. I think that is what drew me to these photographs to begin with. What are they and why am I being compelled to look at these photographs? For us who are keepers of objects and keepers of stories, I think you've captured that feeling in the "Manifest" images.**

**Do you take a lot more photographs than you show? Or do you sort of have a method or formula so you really just get the shots you want?**

**WW:** *I do, but it varies a little bit. I think that at this point the ratio of images has come down a little bit because not only do I have a sense of what I want, but they have to fit into the motif that I've established for all of this. So, for better or worse, right now, I haven't been trying to see if there is anything else to do with the object yet. But, I'm likely to.*

*I hadn't thought of it until I had the "Schools for the Colored" up at the Woodrow Wilson School (Princeton University) and Michael Bzdak (art historian, curator and Director of Corporate Contributions at Johnson & Johnson) came by and said, "There is something very Ed Ruscha (conceptual artist) about this." I hadn't thought about that. There is a quality that I've always liked about his work, that repetition and creating a lot of something that has a sort of weight to it that I want to surround people with. The same idea repeated over and over, with variations all around, all the way through.*

**MOR:** **I know some of our visitors will want to know about the technical part of your work, so can you tell me what cameras you are using, how are you lighting, how are you printing?**

**WW:** *All of them are done with a view camera. The vast majority are done with film, but I have been experimenting with a special back that allows me to slide my digital camera along the back of the image and produce a resolution comparable to what I get with the 4x5 negative. And I haven't been able to perceive the detail differences that are there. So, primarily it's large format and the reason for the large format is that I want to control the plane of focus in a way that that camera works very well. I like the idea that the camera will allow me to control how the plane of focus intersects the object. That's the camera. The lighting... there actually isn't any lighting. From early on I settled on the idea that the light would be the light in the collection. Even though the object exists on this black velvet, the objects are all lit by whatever the extant light is inside the collection.*

**MOR:** **Yet, it seems so planned.**

**WW:** *Right. And it's on whatever table they allow me to set up on. And then, all of the negatives are scanned and digitally printed.*

**MOR:** **Is there some manipulation?**

**WW:** *Yes, there is some manipulation, The manipulation that occurs is that I might change the orientation of an object and in a couple of cases, I have combined two images into one as in the souvenir photograph from the Cotton Club. The inside of the souvenir and the outside are two separate photographs that I married.*

MOR: **So here's perhaps the hardest question of the interview. What responsibility does an artist have, if any?**

**WW:** *My short answer is none. There is a responsibility to authenticity, but that authenticity is different than say the responsibility of, going back to our earlier conversation, the historian. I feel a real historian is responsible for at least attempting, because there's bias – cultural bias, bias built into almost everything – but there is an effort to say, 'I'm trying to provide you with the factual information. I'm trying to put it in balance. I'm trying to give you the whole story.'*

*I don't feel any of that. I feel like I do move from place to place and object to object. Captivated by certain things. And in some cases, I'm sure I have actually moved the meaning of the object from unimportant or trivial to important because it's this big (gestures a small object) and I've made it this big (gestures a larger object). Nobody ever cared about it and it didn't have any impact on anything but suddenly it seems significant in a context of the black world without it necessarily ever having any more significance than it had to maybe one person. And maybe even to that person it was insignificant, but maybe somebody else thought 'this is cool,' 'maybe we should put this in the drawer to go to the historical society' or to the library or wherever it wound up.*

MOR: **But, you that's not informing your ideas. You're serving the photograph and whatever works best for the image.**

**WW:** *Absolutely. And, I also don't have a responsibility to have a designated path. With "Schools," the designated path was imposed afterwards. I didn't know when I started "Schools" that it would cover a specific geography and that that specific geography would be meaningful to the project. But, it did become that. As I worked, it emerged. I realized, 'I'm working in the southern portion of the northern states where there is a kind of terrain and landscape in many places where it's ambiguous whether it's north or south. These aren't big industrial centers. I have a wonderful photograph of South Street School in Newark, but I don't use it because the colonnades are in the background...*

MOR: **It's so 'other.'**

**WW:** *Yes, so other. And so I gradually realized that "Schools" was going to be about those kinds of places. The most I have is a building in Trenton. But in a way, Trenton in some ways has a quality that could be a southern city with its scale. It doesn't have all the grand stuff. Even the Capitol, the scale is different.*

*With "Schools" I was really following a quality, but with "Manifest" it opens up that a little bit because I can go wherever because I create the landscape in a sense, which is the black space for the object to sit in. So, it's New York State, it's Iowa, Nebraska, Florida, New Jersey, and wherever else comes next. And, to answer that question, I haven't felt like, 'Oh, I have to get here or it won't be right.' There are places I want to go to photograph, but only because I'm kind of interested in them not because I feel like the project won't be right if I don't do this.*

MOR: **Sounds like you don't have a beginning, middle and end, so you are not always striving to move the story forward.**

**Do you feel that the other two series are finished?**

**WW:** *I think so. I'm not sure about "Schools." It's very hard for me to know when it's finished. That's a tough one for me as an artist. I should be better at that. But the boundaries are so porous and they overlap and the next project starts while I'm still working on the previous one.*

MOR: **This goes back to what I said about you before; you are open to possibilities. So, it can be an open ended project.**

**WW:** *Yes, I've started two new projects.*

MOR: **So, you are looking beyond "Manifest."**

**WW:** *At some point, those projects may push "Manifest" out. The time and energy I devote to it will change because I'll be spending more time and energy on the other projects.*



## about the **ARTIST**

**W**

endel A. White was born in 1956 Newark, New Jersey and grew up in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. He was awarded a BFA in photography from the School of Visual Arts in New York and an MFA in photography from the University of Texas at Austin.

White taught photography at the School of Visual Arts, NY; The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, NY; the International Center for Photography, NY; Rochester Institute of Technology; and is currently Distinguished Professor of Art at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

He has received various awards and fellowships including a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in Photography, two artist fellowships from the New Jersey State Council for the Arts, a photography grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and a New Works Photography Fellowship from En Foco Inc.

His work is represented in museum and corporate collections including: En Foco, New York, NY; Rochester Institute of Technology, NY; the Museum of Fine Art, Houston, TX; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, IL; Haverford College, PA; Johnson and Johnson, New Brunswick, NJ; Chase Manhattan Bank; the Paul R. Jones Collection of African American Art at University of Delaware; Haggerty Museum of Art at Marquette University, WI; and the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, NY.

His work is included in various publications: *Posing Beauty* by Deborah Willis, *exposure magazine*, *Neuva Luz* and *Photo Review*, among many others. Images from "Village of Peace: An African American Community in Israel" were published in *Transition* magazine (Vol. 97), by the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research at Harvard University.

White has served on the board of directors for the Society for Photographic Education, Kodak Educational Advisory Council, NJ Save Outdoor Sculpture, New Jersey Black Culture and Heritage Foundation, the New Jersey Council for the Humanities and the New Jersey Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission.

*[Faint, illegible handwriting]*

*Rouvenet ten Gylde*





# curriculum **VITAE**

[www.wendelwhite.com](http://www.wendelwhite.com)

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2015 *Wendel A. White: Manifest*, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ
- 2013 Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, NE  
Aljira, A Center for Contemporary Art, Newark, NJ  
Drumthwacket Foundation, Official Residence of the  
Governor of New Jersey, Princeton, NJ
- 2012 *Eatonville Embodied: John Pinderhughes and Wendel White*,  
Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Art, Eatonville, FL  
Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts and Humanities, Cape May, NJ
- 2011 Bernstein Gallery, Princeton University, NJ  
California Institute for Integrative Study, San Francisco, CA
- 2009 New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, NJ
- 2007 Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts, Cape May, NJ
- 2006 Stockton College, Pomona, NJ  
Newark Public Library, Newark, NJ
- 2005 Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ  
Atwater Kent Museum, Philadelphia, PA
- 2003 The Morris Museum, Morristown, NJ  
Johnson and Johnson, New Brunswick, NJ  
The Noyes Museum of Art, Oceanville, NJ
- 2002 Stedman Gallery, Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts, Camden, NJ  
Atlantic City Arts Center, Atlantic City, NJ
- 2001 Manchester Craftsman Guild, Pittsburgh  
Hopkins House Gallery, Haddon, NJ
- 2001 Monmouth University, NJ
- 1988 The Photography Gallery, Florida International University, Miami, FL
- 1987-9 Johnson and Johnson, New Brunswick, NJ
- 1986 Gallery Polynero II, Belgium  
Rose Gallery, St. Edwards University, Austin, TX
- 1984 Midtown Y Gallery, New York, NY

## Group Exhibitions (selected)

- 2015 *Forget Me Not: Photography Between Poetry and Politics*, Mechanical Hall  
Gallery, University Museums, University of Delaware, Newark, DE
- 2014 *Observing Connections: Photographs from the Teaching Collection and  
Invited Photographers*, CVA Gallery, Brookdale Community College,  
Lincroft, NJ  
*Landscape: Social, Political, Traditional*, Rider University Art Gallery,  
Lawrenceville, NJ  
*Posing Beauty*, Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, VA
- 2013 *On Photography: Culture, History, and the Narrative*, Mason Gross  
Galleries, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ  
*En Foco/In Focus: Selected Works from the Permanent Collection*,  
The Arts at CIIS, San Francisco, CA  
The Fogel Collection: A Collection Within a Collection, Marshall Fine Arts  
Center Atrium Gallery, Haverford College, Haverford, PA  
*Posing Beauty*, College of Wooster Art Museum, Wooster, OH  
*En Foco: New Works/Crossing Boundaries*, BRIC Arts,  
Rotunda Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
- 2012 *Visualizing Emancipation*, Schomburg Center for Research in  
Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY  
*Posing Beauty*, Figge Museum of Art, Davenport, IA  
*En Foco/In Focus: Selected Works from the Permanent Collection*,  
Aljira, A Center for Contemporary Art, Newark, NJ  
New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowship Exhibition,  
The Noyes Museum of Art, Oceanville, NJ  
*Posing Beauty*, Everhart Museum, Scranton, PA  
*En Foco/In Focus: Selected Works from the Permanent Collection*,  
Art Museum of the Americas, Washington, DC
- 2011 *Posing Beauty*, USC Fisher Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA  
*Posing Beauty*, The Newark Museum, Newark, NJ  
*En Foco/In Focus: Selected Works from the Permanent Collection*,  
Lightwork, Syracuse, NY

- 2010 *New Works #13 Fellowships*, Curated by Marisol Diaz. HP Gallery, Calumet Photographic, New York, NY
- Art Chicago 2010*, Dean Jensen Gallery (Milwaukee, WI), Chicago, IL
- Endurance*, Hopkins House Gallery of Contemporary Art, NJ
- 2009 *Dean Jensen Gallery*, Milwaukee, WI
- Posing Beauty*, New York University Tisch School of the Arts, New York, NY
- Arbor*, Michael Mazzeo Gallery (curated online exhibition), New York, NY
- Green?* Contemporary Landscape, Stedman Art Gallery, Rutgers-Camden University, Camden, NJ
- 6th Photographic Image Biennial Exhibition*, Wellington B. Gray Gallery, East Carolina University, NC
- 2008 *Prospect: Art that Renegotiates Standardized Locations in Our Environment*, CRL Gallery, Austin, TX
- Online and Print Portfolio*, Center for Fine Art Photograph, CO
- 2007 *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning*, Delta Blues Museum, Clarksdale, MS
- 2006 *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning*, 40 Acres Gallery, Sacramento, CA
- 2005 *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning*, City Gallery East, Atlanta, GA
- Saturday Night, Sunday Morning*, African American Museum of Philadelphia, PA
- 2004 *Looking South*, 70NW Gallery, Milford, PA
- Love Now*, Nordstrom Department Stores (15 stores nationwide)
- 2003 *20 Years of Graduate Photography*, Creative Research Laboratory, University of Texas at Austin, TX
- 2001 *Take Five: The American Landscape* (James Abbott, Rita Bernstein, David Graham, Jerry Lodriguss, Wendel White), Center for the Photographic Image at Nexus Foundation for Today's Art, Philadelphia, PA
- 2000 *Reflections in Black*, Smithsonian Institution Arts and Industries, Washington DC
- Center for the Arts (three-artists), Marlton, NJ
- 1999 *Millennium Salon Exhibition*, Mary Gearhart Gallery, New York, NY
- Distinguished Artists of Southern New Jersey*, Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts and Sciences, Loveladies, NJ
- Salon Exhibition*, Mary Gearhart Gallery, New York, NY
- Camden County Cultural and Heritage Center, Haddon Township, NJ
- 1998 Atlantic City Art Center, Atlantic City, NJ
- 1996 Afro-American Museum, Philadelphia, PA
- Trenton City Museum at Ellarslie, Trenton, NJ
- 1995 *Southern New Jersey Artist's IX*, Stedman Art Gallery, Rutgers University, Camden, NJ
- 1990-5 *Convergence: 8 Photographers*, Clarkson Gallery Potsdam, NY; University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO; Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, FL; Olin Gallery Kenyon College, Gambier, OH; Georgia Museum of Art, Atlanta GA; Penn. School of Art and Design, Lancaster PA; University of Albany, NY; Hammonds House Gallery, Atlanta GA; University of California at Irvine; Houston Center for Photography; Film in the Cities, St. Paul; Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester NY; Photographic Resource Center at Boston University, MA
- 1993 *1993 NJ Arts Council Fellowships*, Stedman Art Gallery, Rutgers University, Camden, NJ
- 1991 *Hands Off*, New School for Social Research, New York, NY
- Park and Ride, Raritan Valley Community College, North Branch, NJ
- 1989 *Stated as Fact: Photographic Documents of New Jersey*, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ
- New Expressions*, The Noyes Museum of Art, Oceanville, NJ
- 1988 *US Biennial III*, Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK
- Infinity Gallery, Governors State University, University Park, IL
- New Jersey State College Board, NJ
- 1987 *Contemporary Black Art*, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA
- Ben Shahn Galleries, William Paterson University, Wayne, NJ
- 1986 The Light Factory, Charlotte, NC
- 24 Exposures*, Union Square Gallery, New York, NY
- 1985 Atlanta Life Insurance Co., Atlanta, GA
- 1984 *1984: Social Commentary and the Photograph*, Moody Atrium Gallery, Austin, TX
- Mental Block*, Danceteria, New York, NY
- Atlanta Life Insurance Co., Atlanta, GA
- 1983 *14 Photographers: Contemporary Photographers in the Schomburg Collection*, Schomburg Center for Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York, NY
- The Light Factory, Charlotte, NC
- Photoworks II*, A.U.A., NM
- 1982 Patrick Gallery, Austin, TX
- Gallery 104, Austin, TX

## Grants and Fellowships

- 2011 Artist-in-Residence, Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, NE
- 2010 New Works Fellowship, En Foco, NY
- 2009 Artist Fellowship, New Jersey State Council on the Arts
- 2005 Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts Grant, IL
- 2003 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Photography Fellowship
- 1993 Artist Fellowship, New Jersey State Council on the Arts

## Web Projects

*Small Towns, Black Lives; African American communities in Southern New Jersey,*  
<http://blacktowns.org>

## Public Collections

- The Paul R. Jones Collection of African American Art, University of Alabama
- The Arts at CIIS, San Francisco, CA
- Austin History Center, Austin, TX
- Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, NE
- Chase Manhattan Bank NA, New York, NY
- The Paul R. Jones Collection of African American Art, University of Delaware
- University Museums, University of Delaware, Newark, DE
- En Foco Inc., Bronx, NY
- Erie Art Museum, Erie, PA
- George Washington Carver Museum, Austin, TX
- Graham Foundation for the Advancement of Fine Arts, Chicago, IL
- Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, WI
- Haverford College, Haverford, PA
- Johnson & Johnson, NJ
- Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, IL
- The Museum of Fine Art, Houston, TX
- Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY
- Salem County Cultural and Heritage Commission, Salem, NJ
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
New York Public Library, New York, NY
- Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Galloway, NJ

## Related Professional Activities

- Panel Discussion, *Landscape: Social, Political, Traditional*,  
Rider University, Lawrenceville, NJ, Oct 2, 2014
- Digital Photography Workshop Leader, Artist/Teacher Institute, Galloway, NJ, July 2014
- Honored Educator Lecture, Society for Photographic Education,  
Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference, Oct. 19, 2013
- Digital Photography Workshop Leader, Artist/Teacher Institute, Galloway, NJ, July 2013
- Photography Workshop Leader, Stanley Holmes Village, Atlantic City, NJ, August 2013
- Lecture / Panelist, Panel Presentation, Aljira Center of Contemporary Art,  
Newark, NJ, Sept 7, 2013
- Panelist Reviewer, Artist in Residency Program, Bemis Center for Contemporary Art,  
Omaha, NE, April 19, 2013
- External Reviewer, Department of Art and Art History, Providence College,  
Providence, RI, April 2013
- Lecture, Young Audiences Teacher Workshops, Grounds for Sculpture,  
Hamilton Twp, NJ, 2012
- Visiting Artist, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University,  
New Brunswick, NJ, April 2012
- Artist Conversation Alan Cohen and Wendel White, moderated by Christine Carr,  
*The Photograph and the Power of Place*, Taubman Museum,  
Roanoke, VA, Feb 11, 2012
- Lecture, "Schools for the Colored: The Landscape and Architecture of Segregation,"  
The Princeton Prize Symposium on Race, Princeton University, NJ, May 6, 2011
- Artist Conversation: Wendel White and Leigh Raiford, Museum of the African Diaspora,  
San Francisco, CA, Jan 21, 2011
- Artist Gallery Presentation. En Foco New Works #13 Exhibition, HP Gallery,  
Calumet Photographic, New York, NY, July 2010
- New Jersey Council for the Humanities, Chair. Trenton, NJ, 2010 to 2014
- New Jersey Council for the Humanities. Vice-Chair, Trenton, NJ, 2008-2010
- New Jersey Black Culture and Heritage Foundation. Board Director, 2007-present
- Wendel A. White. Juror, "Photo-Ex" Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts,  
Millville, NJ, August 2010
- Wendel A. White. "Schools for the Colored" En Foco Inc. HP Gallery,  
Calumet Photographic, New York, NY, July 6, 2010
- Wendel A. White, "Schools for the Colored," Society for Photographic Education,  
Philadelphia, PA, March 7, 2010
- Wendel A. White, "6th Annual John Rock Lecture in Black History,"  
Salem County Historical Society, Salem, NJ, Oct. 2009
- Visiting Professor, School of Imaging Arts and Sciences, Rochester Institute  
of Technology, Fall 2008



Joseph Campbell  
and his  
slavery

Portfolio Review and Panel Presentation, South Jersey Cultural Alliance, October 2007  
 Lecture, Recent Works, Jersey City Afro-American Historical Museum, 2007  
 Lecture, Recent Works, Hopkins House Gallery, NJ, 2007  
 Panel Presentation, *Small Towns Black Lives*, Mid Atlantic Center for the Arts, NJ, 2007  
 Lecture, *Small Towns, Black Lives; Schools for the Colored; and Pictures from the New World*, College of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, NJ, February 2006  
 Secretary, Board of Directors, NJ Council for the Humanities, 2000-05  
 Lecture, Seton Hall University, S. Orange, NJ, September 15, 2005  
 Lecture/Discussion, *Working as an Artist and with a Job*, The Noyes Museum of Art, Oceanville, NJ, September 14, 2005  
 Walt Whitman Preservation Award for Community Partnership, Heritage Collaborative, Camden, NJ, May 3, 2005  
 Workshop, *The Photo Essay*, The African American Museum of Philadelphia, May 14, 2005  
 Presentation, *The African American Experience in Photography*, Discussion with Deborah Willis, Pennsylvania Black History Conference, Philadelphia, PA, April 24, 2005  
 Lecture, Distinguished Visitor Program, Haverford College, Haverford, PA, March 2, 2005  
 Presentation, *Schools for the Colored*, Southern Region, Dept. of Education, New Jersey, May 11, 2004  
 Panel Moderator, *Screenings: Public and Private*, The Noyes Museum of Art, Oceanville, NJ, March 6, 2004  
 Lecture, *Schools for the Colored*, Parsons, New School University, New York, NY, March 1, 2004  
 Panel Presentation, *Small Towns, Black Lives*, Morris Museum, Morristown, NJ, Oct 19, 2003  
 Imagemaker Presentation, *Small Towns, Black Lives*, Society for Photographic Education, national conference, Austin, TX, March 2003  
 Lecture Presentation, *Small Towns, Black Lives*, The Noyes Museum of Art, Oceanville, NJ, Feb 6, 2003  
 Panel Presentation, *Small Towns, Black Lives*, Artist Conversation Series. Amistad Foundation, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, October, 2002  
 Lecture/presentation, *Small Towns, Black Lives*, PhotoSession 2001, The Print Center, Philadelphia, PA, 2001  
 Panelist, "The Problematics of Teaching Photography in a Digital Context," with Blaise Tobia and Jeannie Pearce, Society for Photographic Education, regional conference, Baltimore MD, 2001

Lecture Presentation, *Small Towns, Black Lives*, Cape May County Library, NJ, 2001  
 Lecture Presentation, *Small Towns, Black Lives*, Manchester Craftsman Guild, Pittsburgh, PA, 2001  
 Lecture Presentation, *Small Towns, Black Lives*, Lawnside Historical Society and Camden County Cultural and Heritage Commission, Lawnside, NJ, 2001  
 Consultant, Photography lab Renovation and Redesign, Monmouth University, NJ, 2000  
 Panelist, *Technology in Photography*, James A Porter Colloquium on African American Art, Smithsonian Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture, and Howard University, April 2000  
 Society for Photographic Education, Chair, 1996-99  
 Society for Photographic Education, Board Director, 1993-99  
 Society for Photographic Education, Chair - National Conference, Atlanta, 1995  
 Panelist, "Education and Technology," College Arts Association, National Conference, 1995  
 Kodak Educational Advisory Council, 1991-94  
 Co-Chair, Society for Photographic Education, Multicultural Caucus, 1992-93  
 Board of Directors, Atlantic City Historical Museum, 1989 to present  
 Co-Curated and fabricated – "Charles K. Doble's Atlantic City Photographs 1930 – 1953" and "Images of African Americans in Atlantic City: 1900 to 1965," as part of the opening exhibition "Playground of the Nation"  
 Reviewer, "Exploring Black and White Photography," second edition, Review and recommendations for the publisher, Wm. C Brown Publishers, 1990  
 Panelist, "Photography – New Forms" College Art Association National Conference, NY, 1990  
 Panelist, "Autobiographical Issues and Concerns: The Contemporary Black Photographer," Society of Photographic Educators National Conference, 1988  
 Guest Curator, "Survey of Photographic Expressions," School of Visual Arts, 1984

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White, Wendel A. *Small Towns, Black Lives: African American Communities in Southern New Jersey*. Oceanville, NJ. The Noyes Museum of Art, 2003  
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RG 539

FBI Files on  
Malcolm X  
100-399321  
Sections 1-9

Roll No.  
1

RG 539

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all

works are pigment inkjet on paper, mounted and laminated, edition 1/10.  
All are 33 1/8" h. x 41 1/8" w., and have been lent by the Artist.

\* Indicates work illustrated in this catalogue.

Alice Connie Vanderzee Hair.  
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AME Church Journal.  
*Paul W. Schopp Collection, Riverton, NJ 2014*

Apex Hair Straightener.  
*Vicki Gold Collection, New York, NY 2014*

Button, Cleaver for President.  
*Douglass County Historical Society, Omaha, NE 2014*

Clarkson's Abolition of the Slave Trade 1808.  
*Salem County Historical Society, Salem, NJ 2014*

Club Harlem Atlantic City Souvenir Mallet.\*  
*Vicki Gold Collection, New York, NY 2014*

Confederate Shell Fort Sumter 1861.\*  
*Alexander Library, Special Collections, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 2014*

Dan Desdunes Band.  
*Douglass County Historical Society, Omaha, NE 2014*

Day is Dawn.  
*Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE 2014*

Diary.\*  
*Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY 2014*

Door Knob, Maye St. Julien.  
*Eatonville Historic Preservation, Eatonville, FL 2014*

Drum, Dan Desdunes Band.  
*Great Plains Black History Museum, Omaha, NE 2014*

Father Flanagan and President Coolidge at Boys Town.\*  
*Douglass County Historical Society, Omaha, NE 2014*

FBI Files on Malcolm X.\*  
*Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE 2014*

Fire Damaged Photograph by Ernie Tyner of Zora Neale Hurston.  
*Smathers Library Special Collections, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 2014*

Graduation Ring.  
*Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, Grand Island, NE 2014*

Hair, Frederick Douglass.\*  
*Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester, NY 2014*

Hand Drawn Map of Eatonville.  
*Olin Library Archives, Rollins College, Winter Park, FL 2014*

Larry Steele Review.

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Letter.

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Little Black Sambo.

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Lunch Box, Larkin Franklin, Sr.\*

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Meharry Commencement 1912.

*Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE 2014*

Porgy and Bess.

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Postcard from Liberty Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ.

*Paul W. Schopp Collection, Riverton, NJ 2014*

Program Cover, Cotton Club.

*Vicki Gold Levi Collection, New York, NY 2014*

Quilt (W. Black).

*Great Plains Black History Museum, Omaha, NE 2014*

Slave Bill of Sale.\*

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Slave Collar.\*

*Alexander Library, Special Collections, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 2014*

Souvenir, Cotton Club.

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Tintype #2.

*Dolph Schnieber Studio, Asbury Park, NJ.*

*Alexander Library, Special Collections, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 2014*

Tintype.\*

*Fenton History Center, Jamestown, NY 2014*

Tintype, Dolph Schnieber Studio, Asbury Park, NJ.

*Alexander Library, Special Collections, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 2014*

Tornado Postcard.

*Douglass County Historical Society, Omaha, NE 2014*

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Hearing, Memphis, TN, June 1962.

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Will Brown Lynching.

*Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE 2014*



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