admiration for an institution that linked social activism to student learning, but he does less to illuminate the consequences of placing politics at the center of the curriculum. What price, if any, did Oberlin's students pay for an administrative decision to design an education with a particular political orientation? Do politics have a place inside the classroom? Should the liberal arts, instead, remain true to a classical curriculum, striving to train students to see issues from all sides and to ask and answer big questions?

Oberlin, the idea and the institution, raises a host of foundational questions about the historical relationship between higher education and social activism. Readers will have to find answers at the book's analytical margins. Perhaps because Oberlin's founders espoused the right ideals—emancipation and equal rights—Morris finds nothing troubling about pairing political activism and higher education. But those who most vociferously challenge and defend the liberal arts today do take issue with this premise. Historians of education may wish he had done more to query these assumptions, despite his desire to focus on Oberlin's involvement with abolition. By engaging more deeply with the purpose and meaning of a liberal arts education, he might have helped readers better understand how a college once defined by its willingness to admit black students now stands as a symbol for a national crisis in higher education, and how it happened that, according to some of its critics, Oberlin drifted so far from its radical ideals that it has ceased to be a safe place for all of its students.

Amherst College Hilary Moss

David B. Potts. *Wesleyan University, 1910–1970: Academic Ambition and Middle-Class America*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2015. 677 pp. Hardcover $45.00.

When David Potts's first volume on the history of Wesleyan—*Wesleyan University, 1831–1910: Collegiate Enterprise in New England*—appeared in 1992, it offered a gold standard for institutional history by connecting its nuanced, detailed story of one institution to the historical context of American higher education. Coming twenty-three years after its predecessor, this second volume does not disappoint. Here Potts takes Wesleyan into the twentieth century, and when the story ends in 1970, Wesleyan has become a modern, sturdy institution entering its new phase as a "little university." In tracing this history, Potts gives

historians a trove of information and perspective on the modernization of American higher education, along with a model for crafting significant institutional history.

This work stands out for both depth and organization. The story of these seven decades takes more than four hundred pages, with another two hundred for notes and charts to buttress the findings. However, Potts fully intends such a thorough roadmap. Recognizing that few are likely again to comb the mile-long shelf of Wesleyan's well-tended archives, he lays a path for subsequent historians to find, study, and reinterpret data on Wesleyan and its history. Happily, a reader rarely feels lost in the "high pixel count" (p. xxii), as Potts organizes the story through both chronology and theme.

Chronology makes sense for such a sweeping history. Here, each chapter represents a decade, and some chapters are longer than others, depending on developments. Within chapters, Potts highlights recurrent themes, again letting significance determine his scholarly attention. Arguing that colleges are themselves "organisms," he presents a story "researched and written as the biography of an organism … [with] a steady eye on all its vital organs" (p. xix). Those "organs" consist of *actors*, including faculty, students, administrators, trustees, and alumni; *methods*, especially curriculum, admission decisions, and campus investment; and *means*, most notably, money, whether from tuition, foundations, donors, or other enterprises. With such a wide scope, Potts appeals to Wesleyan-based readers looking for specific material, such as the growth of fraternities or how campus facilities grew, as well as to scholars exploring curriculum change or faculty growth at a representative New England college.

Scholars will find here many threads that follow signature twentieth-century developments: growth and change in administrative functions; shifts in collegiate enrollments and student demography, including race, class, gender, and religion; curricular debates; the impact of two world wars, both on the campus and on the faculty and students (and in Wesleyan's case, presidents) who chose military service; the impact of the Great Depression; the lengthy, nuanced shift from denominational identification (Methodist) to secular status following acceptance into the Carnegie Foundation pension plan; ongoing efforts to match and supersede a comparison group (here, the "Little Three" prestigious liberal arts colleges: Williams, Amherst, and Wesleyan); the role of philanthropy; and shifts in faculty focus.

In this abundant book, three emblematic stories highlight different intersections of Wesleyan's importance and larger significance. The first opens Potts's book: the 1913 resignation of Professor Willard Fisher. Fisher's case is prominent in studies of academic freedom and the creation of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

At a time before contract rights, tenure, and academic freedom were well established on American campuses, Fisher provided a test case for faculty seemingly ousted for expressing unpopular or unwelcome opinions. Having taught economics and social science at Wesleyan since 1892, Fisher had increasingly distanced himself from colleagues and the campus environment. A challenging "independent" personality, Fisher freely expressed radical, even socialist, viewpoints. He taught Marxism, endorsed trade unions, and supported boycotts. Eventually, Fisher entered local politics and twice served as mayor of Middletown, Connecticut, all while teaching at Wesleyan.

The incident that precipitated the college's pressure and his decision to resign came when Fisher publicly questioned the value of churchgoing, an unwelcome opinion on a campus still working to dislodge its Methodist roots. Such a public statement provided the spark the college—especially the trustees—needed to agitate for Fisher's dismissal. Potts traces efforts whereby certain trustees and the president effected Fisher's resignation. He also demonstrates that, except for some mild remonstrances when Fisher left, Wesleyan's faculty and students showed little upset over a case that subsequently gained national recognition. Enlarging the case from local anomaly to national exemplar, Potts shows how members of the American Economic Association took up Fisher's case as an early test of academic freedom, and how those leaders used Fisher to establish the AAUP's approach to academic freedom, job security, and tenure.

A second notable Wesleyan story also exemplifies historical developments: the thirty-two-year career of Victor L. Butterfield, who joined Wesleyan as its first formal director of admissions. After eight years of increasingly central administrative roles, Butterfield became the college's president in 1943, serving until 1967. His career typifies the mid-twentieth century growth of collegiate administration as well as an individual's impact on a campus.

Before Butterfield's arrival in 1935, Wesleyan's admissions work—like that of most campuses—was handled by a faculty member given teaching relief to manage the workload. But as the Depression challenged enrollments, colleges increasingly strategized recruitment efforts. Butterfield brought energy and new ideas to student recruitment: he developed an impressive publication showcasing Wesleyan and its views on liberal education (precursor to later "view books"), began requiring the Scholastic Aptitude Test to measure intellectual depth in the applicant pool, and traveled to high schools around and beyond New England to cast a wider net.

Butterfield soon moved beyond admissions. He held a PhD in philosophy from Harvard, was well connected to faculty and administrators at prestigious institutions, and was devoted to ideals of liberal

education. With this intellectual heft, Butterfield made strong connections with Wesleyan's faculty, soon becoming associate dean, and eventually the number three person in Wesleyan's administrative hierarchy. He was a suitably strong presence when long-serving president James McConaughy joined the war effort by heading United China Relief in New York City. When McConaughy's strong political ambitions—leading to the governorship of Connecticut in 1946—prompted his departure, Butterfield was tapped as the new Wesleyan leader.

Butterfield's story addresses challenges to liberal education during mid-century; he argued passionately for the importance of character and service, even while pressure grew for practicality and specialization. He also exemplifies strong presidential influence over faculty growth, shaping Wesleyan's future by personally recruiting and nurturing dozens of new faculty. Before departmental specialization and authority were clearly established, this energetic president handpicked teachers who supported his view of interdisciplinarity as the foundation of liberal arts. And when some changed perspective over time, especially as Wesleyan developed university ambitions, Butterfield exemplifies tensions between faculty strength and administrative influence.

A third notable story, while quite specific to Wesleyan, demonstrates both the impact of financial good fortune and the ongoing significance of auxiliary enterprises in collegiate history. In 1948, trustee Stuart Hedden led Wesleyan's purchase of American Education Press, publisher of the school-based *My Weekly Reader*. Combining careful management with the largesse of burgeoning postwar school enrollments, Wesleyan's seventeen-year ownership of the press would net revenue of $125 million. In this history, Potts finds a gold mine of information about how colleges approached financial challenges after World War II (seeking more students and new ventures), how they stretched investments beyond obvious educational connections (one college bought a macaroni manufacturer, another an auto parts business), how such moves caught the sharp attention of the Internal Revenue Service (both Congress and the IRS challenged such questionable applications of tax-exempt status), and how Wesleyan—carefully managing its investment and the tax implications—reaped financial rewards that assured its fiscal stability and reputational growth.

Scholars will readily find in Potts's history similar cases and stories that illustrate or complicate historical questions. Some quibbles result naturally from the book's encyclopedic nature. For instance, the Fisher case, which opens chapter one with an engaging narrative style, demonstrates the authorial challenge of sustaining such narration when the material inevitably becomes a careful chronicle of less-dynamic aspects of Wesleyan life. Also, although Potts excels at bringing a wider historical lens to Wesleyan's story, the continued comparisons to Amherst and

Williams feel limiting. Readers gain a good sense of how prestigious New England men's colleges navigated the mid-twentieth century, but hunger for discussion placing Wesleyan beyond that context. Finally, the last chapter on the 1960s pales in comparison to its predecessors. The material is covered more quickly and in a year-by-year approach lacking deep attention to matters such as the radical student movement or changes in the federal role. Although Potts acknowledges that the start of Wesleyan's "little university" period in the 1960s "is left to others to pursue" (p. 383), a reader nevertheless wishes for deeper coverage of that important decade. Overall, this history is clearly a labor of love by an alumnus with impeccable historical skills and keen appreciation for the value of institutional history. If every American college somehow commanded similar attention, our work as historical analysts would be immensely invigorated.

Wheaton College Linda Eisenmann

Jack Schneider. *From the Ivory Tower to the Schoolhouse: How Scholarship Becomes Common Knowledge in Education*. Boston: Harvard Education Press, 2014. 272 pp. Hardcover $65.00. Paper $29.95.

What is the relationship between research and practice in K–12 classrooms and what does it tell us about American education? Jack Schneider considers this critical question in his 2014 book, *From the Ivory Tower to the Schoolhouse: How Scholarship Becomes Common Knowledge in Education*. Schneider argues that the bulk of educational research with practical implications, of which he claims there is plenty, rarely informs its intended audience—classroom teachers. He surmises this is due to the lack of time K–12 teachers have to consume it in any given workday, a structural problem over which they have little control. Schneider also contends that local control is a formidable obstacle to getting educational research to inform practice. On this point, Schneider laments the fact that the real benefits of educational research are lost because of decisions on "how things are taught" at the local level or, as he states, "when teachers close their classroom doors, they are the ultimate arbiters of teaching method" (p. 6). Schneider argues that we have a structural and cultural problem, but also that teachers are at the root of this predicament, since, as he claims, they have "the least capacity to consume research" yet "have the greatest power to implement it" (p. 6).

Schneider suggests that it would take a large coordinated effort to solve the research-practice gap, but offers historical cases where that