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Mirabile Dictu: The Bryn Mawr College Library  
Newsletter

Bryn Mawr College Publications, Special  
Collections, Digitized Books

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2003

# Mirabile Dictu: The Bryn Mawr College Library Newsletter 7 (2003)

Bryn Mawr College Library

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# *Mirabile Dictu*

*The Bryn Mawr College Library Newsletter*

*Mariam Coffin Canaday Library, Bryn Mawr College, 101 N. Merion Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-2899*



*"Cuchulain lutte avec Morrigan, la fée"*  
watercolor by Mary Meigs, ca. 1971  
from her series of watercolors  
illustrating the Cuchulainn stories

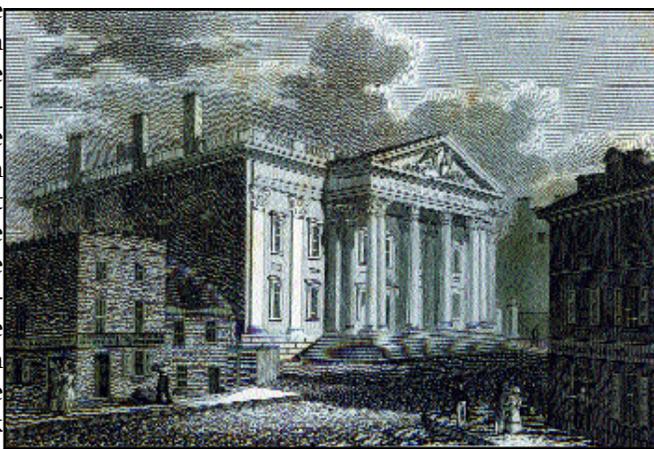
## From the Director

Since coming back to Bryn Mawr almost exactly six years ago, I have been writing to you in this column about the intersection of the traditional artifacts with their electronic counterparts. And how we have been moving towards integrating the best of both of those worlds into the curricular and research needs of our students and faculty. This past year, due to a major shift in the way that the College is organized, the opportunities to move further forward with that integration have dramatically increased. Once separate and autonomous groupings, the libraries, administrative computing, academic computing, multi-media services, instructional technology, visual resources, the language lab and telephone services have all been merged into one administrative unit. In September of 2002, we unveiled the new organizational structure that we are calling Information Services, a structure that is intended to meet the goals of merging the traditional with the electronic in ways that are innovative to underpin the academic excellence which is the hallmark of Bryn Mawr College.

That change has already helped us to implement a number of innovations: a College-wide electronic calendar of events, which you can find on Bryn Mawr's homepage, a campus-wide effort to revise our entire Web site, which we hope will be unveiled at the beginning of the new semester. And, perhaps most important for the future, the beginnings of new conversations among members of the staff who never worked together before, which has unleashed energy and enthusiasm for collaborative work.

That collaboration extends ever more closely to work with our colleagues at Haverford and Swarthmore, with whom we were the recipients of a \$450,000 grant to cooperate on the devel-

opment of our shared collections. All three colleges are now facing or will soon be facing the limits of space for printed materials. The question we asked ourselves was: How can we work together to continue to increase the number of unique titles at the colleges while reducing the growth rate of the overall collection so that we can live productively in our current buildings? The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation found our proposal to explore the possibilities of collaborative collection management exciting and path-breaking and we have just begun to work towards identifying the ways in which we can carry out this mandate. We are hoping to reduce the number – from 300,000 volumes – of duplicate, triplicate and quadru-



The First Bank of the United States, later renamed the Girard Bank, from *Views in Philadelphia and Its Environs : From Original Drawings Taken in 1827-30*. Philadelphia : C. G. Childs, 1830. The building is still standing on Third Street between Walnut and Chestnut.

uplicate copies of works that have not circulated in the last decade and a half while we retain at least one copy of every book now owned by the Tri-College system and purchase many fewer duplicates in the future. By using the benefits of information technology, we hope that we can provide the most powerful searching tools of our joint collections and provide all of our users with the ability to browse the shelves of our joint libraries with ease. This three-year

project holds a key to efficient and effective library service in the 21st century.

Nowhere is the intersection of the traditional and the electronic more apparent than in the classroom. Another collaborative project of the Tri-Colleges is the provision of course management software across our campuses to provide one place where students can find many of the documents they need to do their work. In my seminar in the spring of 2003, on the History of Philadelphia, we have been using Blackboard, as

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## Phyllis Pray Bober



The library is pleased and honored to have received an important set of books from the library of the late Phyllis Pray Bober. The books were donated in her memory by her sons, Jonathan Bober of Austin, Texas, and David Bober of New York City. Most of the books come from her work on the ways in which Renaissance scholars studied the art and architecture of classical antiquity. Included in the donation are such critical works as Leon Battista Alberti's *De architectura* (Rome, 1533), an early German edition of Pollio Vitruvius's *Ten Books on Architecture* (Nurnberg, 1548), and Pompilio Totti's description of Roman buildings and monuments, *Ritratto di Roma Antica* (Rome, 1627).

Professor Bober was the Leslie Clark Professor Emeritus in the Humanities, and was a powerful intellectual presence on campus for nearly 30 years. She held appointments in both the History of Art and the Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology Departments from 1973 to her retirement in 1991, and served as Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences from 1973 to 1980.

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our system is known, for communication between classes – we meet once a week – for discussions of the upcoming class readings, to find the syllabus, to work together on group projects and to follow electronic links to maps and other sources of information on the country's first great city. This has provided a way for those who do not speak up in class – it is a large group for a seminar, 27 students – to make their opinions heard and it has expanded the classroom contact hours by giving us a chance to discuss those readings or issues for which we cannot find enough time. The electronic has been balanced nicely by the traditional, for the most moving moments for many of the students in the class were those in which they themselves examined cultural artifacts produced by such Philadelphia worthies as Ben Franklin, either from our own collections or from their visits to the Library Company, the American Philosophical Society or the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

On our walking tour of early Philadelphia, all of the aspects of the class came together as we approached The First Bank of the United States on Third Street between Walnut and Chestnut, after having examined together in class the glorious print that you see reproduced on the facing page.

Elliott Shore

Chief Information Officer and The Constance A. Jones Director of Libraries and Professor of History

# The 'Picturing' Women Project: Exploring Female Identity as Portrayed in Art and Cultural Artifacts

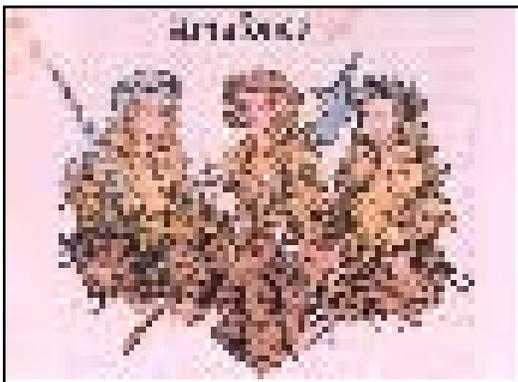
Susan Shifrin

**B**ryn Mawr College is partnering with The Library Company of Philadelphia and The Rosenbach Museum and Library to sponsor a multi-institution exhibition and program series exploring issues of female identity and representation. The project, *'Picturing' Women: Historical Works and Contemporary Responses at Philadelphia-Area Institutions*, will run from January through May 2004.

*'Picturing' Women* will reach across institutional, geographical and disciplinary lines to explore the following crucial questions:

What constitutes female identity?  
How is it and has it been culturally constructed in images, artifacts and texts?  
What roles have these artifacts of material culture played in defining women's places in society?

The project will present, interpret and teach through an exhibition exploring historical and contemporary representations and self-representations of women – how they are figured, fashioned, turned into portraits, and told about in words and pictorial narrative. The exhibition, its programming and publications will juxtapose historical works with 20th- and 21st-century art, presenting photographic, printed and painted portraits along with such diverse cultural artifacts as conduct manuals, historical costumes, literary portrait sketches, trade images, caricatures, silhouettes, and contemporary installation and performance art.



"Amazones" from the Nuremberg Chronicle, 1493



"Les Cinq Demi-Vierges" from Le Panorama Hebdomadaire: Paris que s'amuse. . . (ca.1900)

*'Picturing' Women* will be presented at Bryn Mawr College, with satellite exhibitions at The Library Company and The Rosenbach Museum and Library. All three institutions will sponsor and host interpretive programming, such as artist talks and performances, lectures by scholars in the humanities and arts, film and video screenings, and interdisciplinary round table discussions. A 1 1/2-day, international symposium will round out the public programming associated with the project, further examining the issues explored in the exhibition and contextualizing those issues with broader, scholarly investigations of related topics.

All three venues will also host educational programming developed for and in collaboration with students and teachers from three elementary and secondary schools – Project Learn, Simon Gratz High School and Lower Merion High School. The Bryn Mawr College Libraries and The Library Company of Philadelphia will co-publish a companion book with Pennsylvania State University Press that will both document and supplement the project. Printed and online publications and an interactive Web site will amplify the interpretation and impact of the exhibition.

The portrait image, one of the most accessible and immediately recognizable of art forms, will function in the exhibition and its programming as a window onto other media and forms that "make" identity, serving as the primary tool

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## New Donations to Latino Collection

Dr. Luzma Umpierre, M.A. '76, Ph.D. '78 in Spanish Language and Literature, has made two important donations this year in support of Latino studies at Bryn Mawr. The first is a vibrant print made in 1996 by Santa C. Barraza, one of the country's most important contemporary Chicana artists. The print, titled *Cihuateteo con Coyolxauhqui y la Guadalupeana*, is a limited edition silkscreen in eight colors with rich Hispanic and Aztec-derived motifs.

Santa C. Barraza is an artist from the South Texas borderlands and an Associate Professor at the Art Department of Texas A&M University at Kingsville. In her work, she combines family folklore, mythology and history to tell of women's strengths and sacrifice for their families and society. This print includes the Aztec moon goddess with heart exposed, the Guadalupeana as an image of both humil-

ity and power and the fertile motif of the maguey cactus, which is a source of medicine, food, drink and clothing to early peoples in Mexico. Other works by Barraza can be found on her Web site: [www.santabarraza.com](http://www.santabarraza.com).

The second donation is a collection of 250 books of contemporary Latino poetry and literature. Many of the volumes are limited edition, hard-to-

find works by influential writers, including Sandra Esteves, Marjorie Agosín, and Rosamaría Roffiel. Because of her influential role in the modern Latino literary scene, Dr. Umpierre received many of these books as gifts from the authors, as shown by the author's signatures and dedications found on many of the title pages.

Luzma Umpierre has published seven books and hundreds of articles of poetry, literary criticism and human rights advocacy. *continued on page 9*



"Cihuateteo con Coyolxauhqui y la Guadalupeana,"  
Santa Barraza, Bryn Mawr College  
Gift of Luzma Umpierre. © 1996 Santa C. Barraza.  
Photography by Danielle Kurin '05

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that enables the project's participants and audiences to dig deeply into looking at, thinking about and engaging with art as the material of cultural representation. The project will leverage this innovative approach to portraiture and its robust interaction with artifacts into a resource for teaching and learning about cultural constructions of gender and the roles that material culture and representation play in defining the various attributes of identity.

Major funding for 'Picturing' Women has been provided by the William Penn Foundation. Additional support has come from the Bryn Mawr College Center for Visual Culture and the Friends of the Bryn Mawr College Library, and the other partner institutions.

Susan Shifrin conceived of the project and is serving as its curator. She received her Ph.D. in

History of Art from Bryn Mawr in 1998.



# Castle Foundation Conservation Project

More than a dozen of the Library's most beautiful books are being restored this year as the result of a \$25,000 grant from the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation of Honolulu. The grant is supporting work on the extraordinary collection of books donated to the library in 1971 by Ethelinda Schaefer Castle '08, an accomplished book collector and a long-time member of the Friends of the Library. The Castle Collection contains nearly 1,500 books, reflecting Mrs. Castle's wide range of interests, including natural history, poetry, literature, and early manuscripts and printed books. The most striking books in the collection are the extra large illustrated books on ornithology and botany, works such as Edward Lear's *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidae, or Parrots* (1832) and Prideaux John Selby's *Illustrations of British Ornithology* (1841), the English equivalent of Audubon's *Birds of America*.

Because of the books' age and large size, their bindings have begun to crack and separate from the text, making the books difficult to handle and leaving them vulnerable to further damage. Moreover, it is difficult to appreciate the beauty of the books when their bindings are broken and the pages are stained and dirty. To restore the books to their

With the help of the book conservation staff of the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia, we selected a small number of books, representing the highlights of the collection, for cleaning and binding repairs. The CCAHA has completed work on the most extensive projects, the Lear, the Selby and Robert Thornton's richly illustrated *Temple of Flora* (1799), and is now repairing the bindings on the remaining books. Among these are John Evelyn's *Sylva, or A Discourse of Forest-Trees and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesties Dominion* (1670), two of Pietro Mattioli's works on botany from the 1560s, and the two-volume *Flora Rossica* (1778, 1784), containing delicate, hand-colored engravings of Russian flowering plants. The CCAHA's book conservators are also repairing the bindings on two of our loveliest Books of Hours, both from 15th-century France.

As Bryn Mawr's contribution to the proj-

ect, we arranged to have custom-made archival-quality boxes built for 150 volumes in the collection. They are built to the dimensions of each book, and provide protection against dust, abrasions from other books, and much of the normal wear that comes from handling the volumes.

The Castle Collection project is part of an ongoing effort to restore and protect the College's extraordinarily valuable collection of rare books.



Eric Pumroy, Director of Library Collections, and Alice Goff '04, examine Robert Thornton's *Temple of Flora*, following its restoration by the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts. Alice has just been awarded the first Friends of the Library Undergraduate Internship in Special Collections.

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*Mirabile Dictu* is the newsletter of the Friends of the Bryn Mawr College Library, Mariam Coffin Canaday Library, 101 North Merion Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010, published once a year, edited by Jean Lacovara, Assistant to the Chief Information Officer. To join the Friends of the Library or renew your membership please visit our Web site at: [www.brynmawr.edu/Library/Docs/fol.html](http://www.brynmawr.edu/Library/Docs/fol.html)

*Mirabile Dictu* past and present are also available electronically at: [www.brynmawr.edu/Library/Docs/pubx.html](http://www.brynmawr.edu/Library/Docs/pubx.html)

# Gender and the London Theatre, 1880-1920

Eric Pumroy

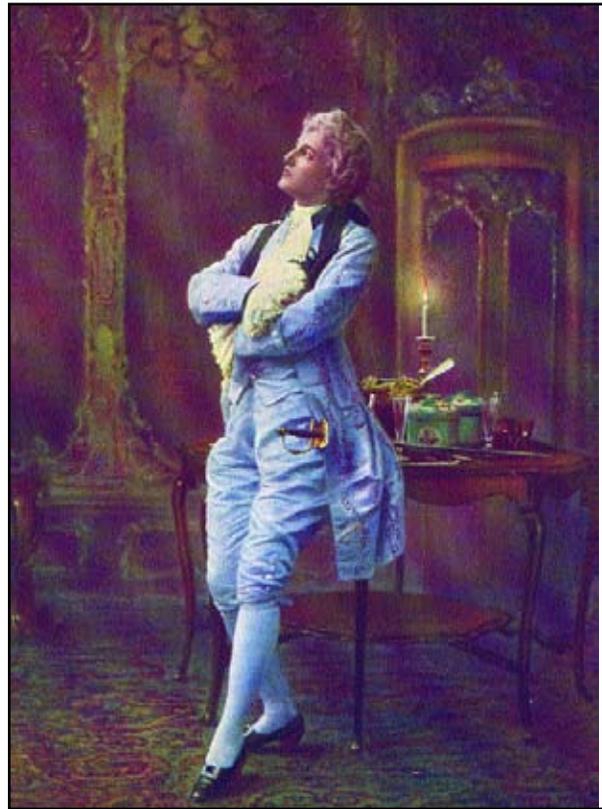
The library's fall exhibition, "Gender and the London Theatre, 1880-1920," will draw on the extraordinary talents of two guest curators, Margaret D. Stetz and Mark Samuels Lasner. Stetz is the Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women's Studies at the University of Delaware. She has lectured and written widely on Victorian and women's literature and is the author of *British Women's Comic Fiction, 1890-1990* and the co-editor, with Bonnie Oh, of *Legacies of the Comfort Women of World War II*. Mark Samuels Lasner, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Delaware Library, is a bibliographer and recognized expert in Victorian literature and art. The two of them have curated exhibitions at Harvard University, The Grolier Club, Georgetown University, the University of Virginia and the University of Delaware. The exhibition will feature pieces from both Bryn Mawr's Special Collections and Samuels Lasner's remarkable collection of late-Victorian books and graphics.

The curators have written this overview of the exhibition:

"'Gender and the London Theatre, 1880-1920' will look at Britain at the turn of the last century and explore the links between changing notions of gender and sexuality and changes in the world of the stage. This show will explore the roles of actors, playwrights, managers and designers in reflecting cultural assumptions about femininity and masculinity, as well as in shaping new ideas. It will also consider the ways in which theatrical spectacle became a political tool in the hands of suffragists, socialists and New Women, even as it assisted the forces of conservative backlash and reaction. Among the items to be displayed will be Aubrey Beardsley's rare poster for the first production of Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire*; the Ellen Terry Souvenir,

with a scroll by William Nicholson depicting Terry in all her roles; the program for Elizabeth Robins's landmark play, *Votes for Women*; and *Celebrities of the Stage*, a series of superb color portraits of leading theatrical figures of the day."

The exhibition will open Sunday afternoon, September 28th, and will feature a lecture by Margaret Stetz.



"Evelyn Millard" from *Celebrities of the Stage*, edited by Boyle Lawrence, 1900

# Socialism and Art in Limp Vellum: The Kelmscott Press *A Dream of John Ball* and *A King's Lesson*

Michelle Strizever '03

The 1892 version of *A Dream of John Ball and A King's Lesson*, published by the Kelmscott Press, is a testament to the social and artistic beliefs of William Morris. Morris was not only the author; he created his own typefaces and oversaw the ink, paper, printing and binding of the volume. He felt the degradation of quality in the books of his time was a result of the capitalist system, and that socialism would create a society that reveled in labor, producing and enjoying good art.

The Kelmscott Press was founded by William Morris in 1891. *A Dream of John Ball and A King's Lesson* was the sixth book printed there. The book is bound in limp vellum on green silk ties. A book with a limp vellum binding has a cover made of animal skin, generally calf or sheep. The cover is light and flexible, similar to the soft cover of a paperback. The silk ties hold the entire book together: each signature, or folded section of pages, is sewn onto the tie where it passes around the spine of the book. After all the pages are stitched onto the silk, the ties are threaded through slits in the cover, connecting the cover and the text.

The typeface, Golden, is the clearest and most modern-looking of the three fonts designed by Morris. *A Dream of John Ball* is printed in black and red ink, the red ink for chapter headings. Three hundred copies on paper and eleven on vellum were printed; the copy in Bryn Mawr's Special Collections is on paper.

*A Dream of John Ball* demonstrates William Morris' principles of good book design. Instead of being ornate, there is only one illustration, by Edward Burne-Jones. The design suggests illuminated manuscripts, with embellished initials beginning each section of the narrative. Morris believed that one should not view each page separately, but that "the two pages making an opening are really the unit of the book." He also believed it was important to use hand-made paper, good ink and clear type. *A Dream of John Ball* follows all of the prescriptions Morris set out in his essay, "The Ideal Book."

The text consists of a short story, "A King's Lesson," and a novella, "A Dream of John Ball." "A King's Lesson" tells the tale of the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus, who learns that his peasants are "over-worked and under-fed" and calls his

noblemen to join the peasants in the field. When they discover that a peasant's work is difficult, they become enlightened about social conditions in the kingdom.

"A Dream of John Ball" describes the dream of a 19th-century English industrial laborer, in which he travels back in time to the Peasants' Revolt. Unhappy with the way King Richard II taxed the peasants, men from Essex and Kent marched to London on June 13, 1381, demanding economic reform. John Ball, an excommunicated priest, was one of the leaders of the rebellion.

"... if we were all Socialists things would be different. We should have a public library at each street corner, where everybody might see and read all the best books, printed in the best and most beautiful type."

— William Morris

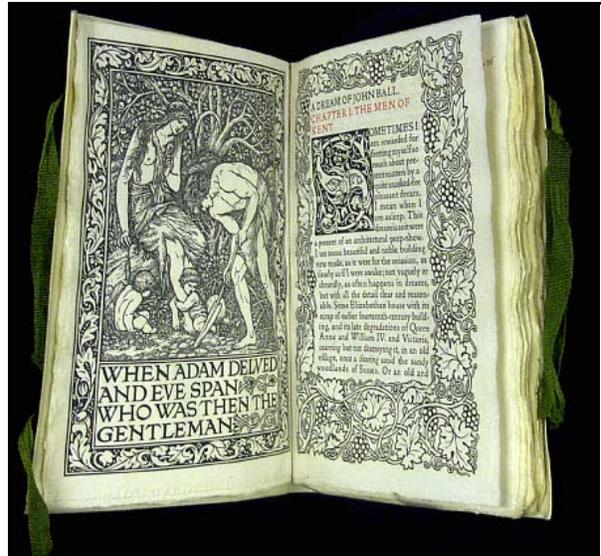
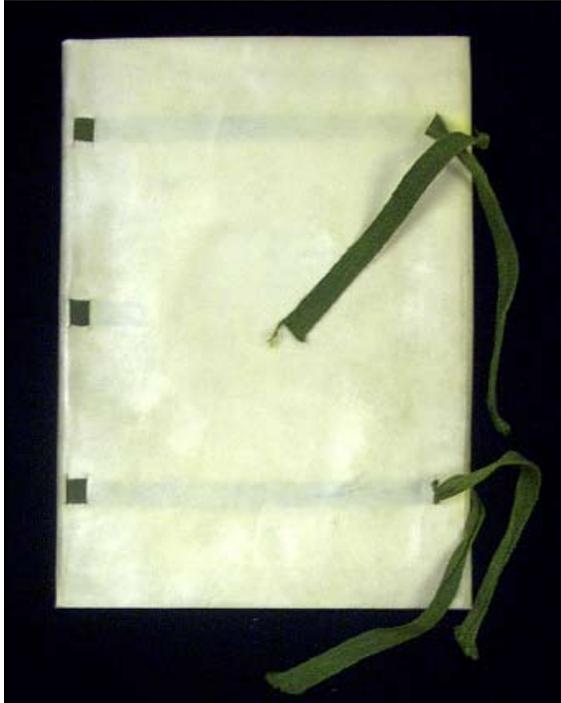
In Morris' retelling, John Ball is envisioned as a proto-Marxist, preaching socialist reform. When the Dreamer begins talking to John Ball, Ball recognizes him as a visitor from the future, and asks how the revolt will turn out. While John Ball is convinced that working conditions must get better, the Dreamer embodies Morris' ideology. He tells Ball that the revolution will fail, and that conditions will only get worse. Then the Dreamer wakes up, finding himself in sooty, Victorian London just as the workday is beginning.

Morris' conception of socialism and art was influenced by the critic, John Ruskin. Ruskin saw art as a result of social conditions, and believed that a new economic system was necessary for happiness. Like Ruskin, Morris felt that "art is man's expression of his joy in labour." The

Dreamer, forced to toil repetitively and with no love of his work, appears much worse off in industrialized London than the farmers of medieval England. They have hope and friendship, while the Dreamer has nothing.

Like John Ball, William Morris called for revolution. In mid-November of 1887, London's unemployed began demonstrating in Trafalgar Square, and were repeatedly driven away by police. Angered by this affront to free speech, William Morris arranged to march with the Socialist League on November 13 (Bloody Sunday), during a day of massive protests. This demonstration was also stopped by the police, who beat many of the protesters. Morris' revolt echoes that of John Ball: both fought for reform in society, and both failed. At the same time, the Bloody Sunday protest highlights one of the paradoxes about William Morris: while he fought for social equality, he was wealthy and influential. The police violence did not extend to Morris, who was recognized and who escaped untouched.

Contradictions like these pervade Morris' life. "We should have a public library at each street corner," Morris said, "where everybody might see and read all the best books, printed in the best and most beautiful type." In fact, his books, printed by the Kelmscott Press, remain in private collections or in the Special Collections of libraries such as Bryn Mawr's. The care required to produce Kelmscott books has translated into monetary value. Kelmscott books are now com-



Above and below left: William Morris. *A Dream of John Ball* and *A King's Lesson*. Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1892. Frontispiece designed by Edward Burne-Jones

modities sought by book collectors, rather than public property, as Morris envisioned. The titles Morris printed at Kelmscott offer a glimpse at the paradoxes of his socialism: beautiful and painstakingly produced, they preach socialism and art for all, while remaining collectors' editions in the hands of a select few.

*Michele Strizever graduates in May. She worked on A Dream of John Ball in Art History 398, the senior conference in which students do hands-on research with objects from College's Collections and the Library Special Collections.*

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cacy, including her widely anthologized book of poems *En el país de las maravillas: Kempis puertorriqueño*, and her innovative collection of essays on Puerto Rican writers, *Nuevas aproximaciones críticas a la literatura puertorriqueña contemporánea*. If you are interested in Dr. Umpierre's work, visit her Web site at [www.luzmaumpierre.com](http://www.luzmaumpierre.com).

# A Century of Expansion at Bryn Mawr College

Lorett Treese

A notice published in October 1903 announced that the Students' Building Committee had just expanded its fundraising efforts with the publication of the Bryn Mawr College Song Book. The notice, preserved in the papers of M. Carey Thomas in the Bryn Mawr College Archives, reported that "The artistic work for the book has been done by Miss Elizabeth Shippen Green, and includes a cover design in colors, embodying class seals and lanterns, in black and white. The songs are well chosen and delightfully arranged." The colorful song book, still treasured by some of the College's senior alumnae and frequently rediscovered by more recent alumnae in antique shops and rare book stores, is one of several artifacts remaining as evidence of a major fundraising effort pursued by the College about a century ago.

Evangeline Walker Andrews of the class of 1893 got the massive project started in 1901 with a letter to John D. Rockefeller, on behalf of the Students' Building Committee, which she chaired. She told him about the May Day fete she had organized and the pretty illustrated calendar she had helped to publish. The Alumnae Association reported in its *Alumnae Bulletin* of 1901-02, "It is needless to repeat how Mr. Rockefeller, whose interest in the College one of our own alumnae had succeeded in arousing, last December offered to give the College \$230,000 on condition that \$250,000 for a Library Building were raised by next June."

Andrews' letter provoked a visit by one of Rockefeller's agents and M. Carey Thomas had spent a day with him going over the College's needs for new facilities. Rockefeller had given generously to Vassar and other women's colleges. Thomas made the most of her reputation as an authority on women's education who had

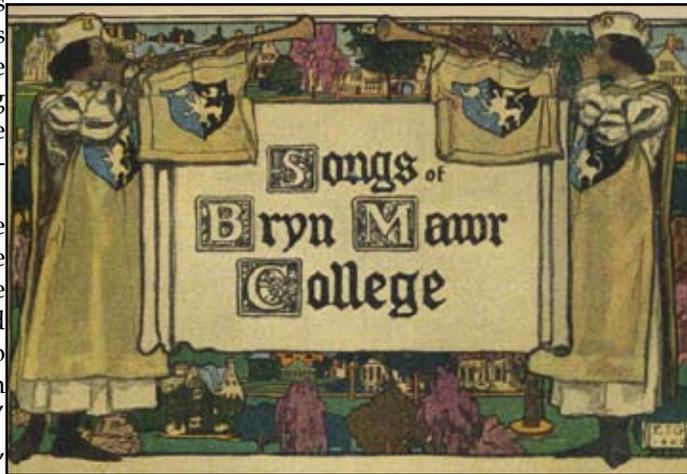
been engaged in soliciting subscriptions totaling \$250,000 since January of 1901. Rockefeller gave her until Commencement of 1902 to complete the task before his check would pay for a new residence hall and modern power plant.

In her biography of M. Carey Thomas, Helen Horowitz explained, "The Rockefeller gift forced Thomas to become a master fundraiser. Bryn Mawr had no development office in 1901, or rather M. Carey Thomas was it." By June of 1902 she had checks for \$256,000 and in-formed Rockefeller of her success.

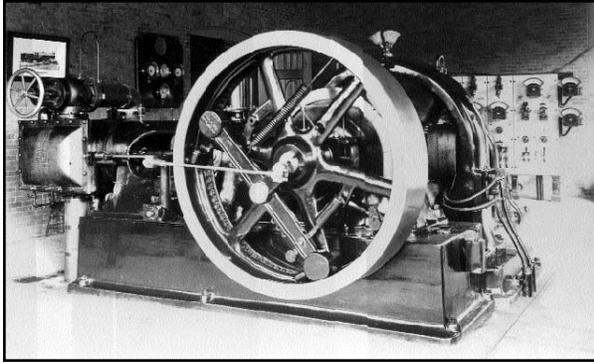
An editorial in the June 1903 issue of the student literary publication *The Lantern* commented on the building effort that immediately got underway: "This spring the familiar aspect of our campus is passing away, and the daily sound of building conjures up before our imaginations the vision of a coming glorious Bryn Mawr... We shall be telling future generations of old days before the new library and dormitory had sprung up by the side of Pembroke West." An essay in the 1904 year-book noted that "Not

only the graduating class, but the college itself was 'on the threshold of a larger life'." An early floor plan for the dorm that still bears the Rockefeller name shows that it had elegant bedroom-sitting room suites as well as single rooms, two public drawing rooms, three pantries off its spacious dining room, and a hair-dressing room in its basement.

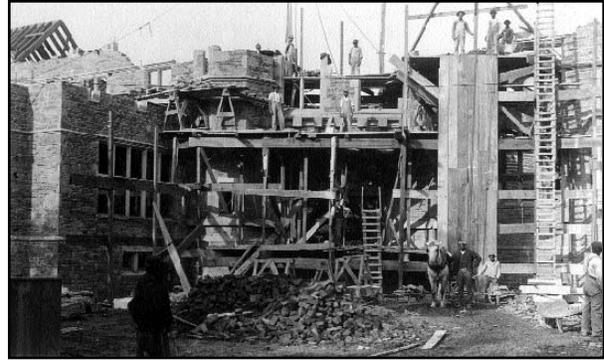
Unfortunately the library went far over budget and Thomas had to turn back to the Rockefeller family. At the urging of his son, who greatly admired M. Carey Thomas, John D. Rockefeller donated enough money to free the dormitory and power plant of debt and allow the College to complete the library. One hundred



Bryn Mawr's 1903 Song Book, published as a fundraising device, celebrates its centennial.



John D. Rockefeller also provided funding for a new powerhouse for the College.



Rockefeller Hall while under construction.

years later the buildings remain, and the Bryn Mawr College Archives preserves copies of the Song Book and other documents that tell the story of Bryn Mawr's growth spurt one century ago.

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## Students in Special Collections



**A**manda Zehnder (left), a graduate student in History of Art, conferring with Visual Collections Specialist Barbara Ward Grubb. As part of her graduate internship last summer, Zehnder worked with Grubb to prepare the exhibition "Dedicated to the Cause: Bryn Mawr Women and the Right to Vote." This is the fourth year that the Friends of the Library have supported a summer internship for graduate students interested in working with art and history collections. This coming summer the Friends will begin sponsorship of an undergraduate intern as well.



**T**he Seymour Adelman Book Collector's Prize recognizes students who are becoming book collectors. This year's first-prize winner, Susan Howson '03, wrote about her collection of the children's classics she has loved for years: "Adults Welcome."

## Library Acquires Papers of Mary Meigs '39

Kristin Masters

A recent donation to the Bryn Mawr College Archives and Special Collections allows an opportunity for a closer examination of the life of prominent lesbian artist, author and activist Mary Meigs '39. Meigs gained renown in the 1980s for her autobiography *Lily Briscoe: A Self Portrait*, a book that revealed the difficulties she faced in her attempts to break free from social constraints and live the life of an artist and lesbian. Shortly before her death this winter, Meigs donated her personal papers, including her personal journals, correspondence, and manuscripts and notes for *Lily Briscoe* and her subsequent books *The Box Closet*, *The Company of Strangers*, *Medusa Head* and *The Time Being*. She also donated three series of watercolor illustrations for the books *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and stories of the legendary Irish hero Cuchulainn, all done during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

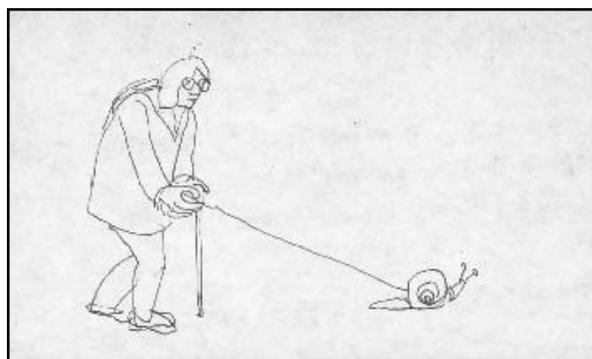
Before she gained renown as a writer, Meigs spent the majority of her life as an artist. Although she modestly refused to call herself a successful artist, she was nevertheless a key figure in both the visual art and literary realms. She was actively involved in the lives of her peers; many letters and gallery opening notifications are included in this donation that reveal the mutual encouragement and support that Meigs shared with artists such as Alex Katz, Karl Knathis and Henry Poor. Her correspondence also shows that she was a key figure in the life of literary critic and social commentator Edmund Wilson, whose lavishly affectionate letters reveal his endearment towards Meigs. He esteemed her highly enough to even mention her in one of his articles in *The New Yorker*. Meigs' correspondence also reveals her close ties to her companions Marie-Claire Blais, an influential Canadian writer with whom Meigs spent an important part of her life, and Barbara Deming, the renowned writer and women's and gay rights activist. Meigs saw herself as a torchbearer of Deming, and spent much of her later life following in the footsteps of her lover, friend and idol.

In her later life, Meigs flourished, seeking to use her eminence as a writer to benefit the world through social activism. Meigs was constantly involved in the literary realm, writing dozens

of reviews and letters to the editor; several even appeared in her alma mater's *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Bulletin*. After Barbara Deming's death in 1984, Meigs voiced more fervently her deceased friend's concerns, and constantly encouraged women in both the literary and visual arts not to be hindered by the prejudices of their field. As she grew older, she also actively voiced her concerns on aging and the state of care for the elderly, pressing the need for all to grow older in a loving environment. Included in her donation are several of her essays and speeches showing this determination to help change the world.

In 1992, Meigs entered into a third artistic medium, making her debut on the silver screen. She appeared in the Canadian movie "In the Company of Strangers," a film concerning a group of elderly ladies stranded in the wilderness and how they interact with one another throughout this ordeal. In her tranquil self-portrayal on screen, Meigs acted as she lived, instilling calmness and tranquility to her companions and encouraging them to persevere.

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Self-portrait pen-and-ink sketch, by Mary Meigs