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Mirabile Dictu: The Bryn Mawr College Library
Newsletter

Bryn Mawr College Publications, Special
Collections, Digitized Books


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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



*Engraving of the Sassa plant from Bruce James's
Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, 1790.*

From the Director

Welcome to the third issue of *Mirabile Dictu*. I trust you will continue to be as impressed and astonished by the riches of our various Special Collections as I have been in the two years since coming back to Bryn Mawr. In September we will mount an exhibition that will illustrate, through our African collections, the books, manuscripts, objects, and art that make up our unique and special holdings. We hope it will be as successful as "It's the Ticket," the bookbinding exhibition that has graced the Class of 1912 Rare Book Room in the 1998-1999 academic year. In March, we heard from the wonderful book designer Sue Allen as she spoke to a packed crowd on the decorated cloth bindings of the nineteenth century. Her talk, and the panel discussion that preceded it, which featured a valuable contribution from Todd Pattison of the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, Massachusetts, drew favorable reactions from both old and new Friends of the Bryn Mawr College Libraries. The final event of this year's Friends' program features a talk by the noted



Andrew Patterson, Florence Goff, and Mark Colvson of Canaday's Reference Department display the new Bryn Mawr College Libraries' travel mugs, "spill-proof" containers approved for use in the Libraries.



Students and staff check out the new student lounge located on the A Floor of Canaday.

expert in book preservation Mirjam Foote of the British Library, and coincides with the publication of the catalog for "It's the Ticket."

This year at the Libraries has been spent successfully blending the traditional and new, combining a year-long celebration of nineteenth-century bookbinding with new steps forward in the realm of technology. Nothing exemplified that blend as well as the Information Fair held for students during the first week of this semester. Visiting all the major sites for libraries, collections, and computing, as well as the Language Learning Center and the Digital Media and Visual Resource Center, many students got a fresh sense of the richness of the world of information that Bryn Mawr College offers. Many visited the Ella Riegel archaeological collection on the third floor of the Thomas Library—some did not even know there was a third floor of Thomas!—for the first time and marveled at what they saw; everyone ended up in the newly reconfigured space of the old reserve book room and witnessed its transformation into a student lounge and night study space. The neighboring Canaday Computer and Data Lab and Campus Gallery also demonstrate the Libraries' ongoing commitment to both traditional and new types of information and learning.

We look forward to another year of making the connections between the rare and the everyday, the electronic and the print. And, on behalf of Susan Klaus, Chair of the Friends of the Library, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Libraries' friends for their continuing support.

Elliott Shore
The Constance A. Jones Director of Libraries

Dürer Print Honors Dr. Richard Bernheimer

by Carolyn Frisa '99

Introduction by Carol Campbell

The late Dr. Charles Bernheimer, noted scholar of Comparative Literature and Multicultural Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, has given the College a very fine Albrecht Dürer engraving in a magnanimous gesture to honor the memory of his distinguished father, Dr. Richard Bernheimer. *Coat of Arms with a Skull* was printed during the artist's lifetime, in 1503, and is known in the Adam von Bartsch print corpus as B. 101. It has been mounted and displayed in the Rhys Carpenter Library in proximity to Dr. Richard Bernheimer's name on the Library atrium's "Wall of Honor," as the donor requested.

The Dürer engraving was pivotal to the scholarly interests of Dr. Richard Bernheimer, who was on the faculty of the College's History of Art Department from 1933 to 1958. Bernheimer studied at the University of Berlin, received his doctorate from the University of Munich, and came to Bryn Mawr as a refugee scholar in 1933, specializing in Renaissance and Baroque art, fields which were supplemented by interests in mathematics, music, and theology. It was in his landmark study, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: a Study in Art, Sentiment, and Demonology* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952, pp. 177-185), that he published an interpretation of this puzzling print that contrasted with the earlier view of Dr. Erwin Panofsky in *Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton, 1948, vol. 1, pp. 80 and 90). Carolyn Frisa '99, History of Art major, has contributed a summary of the scholarly issues:

Coat of Arms with a Skull is an important work from Dürer's early oeuvre, demonstrating the artist's development as a master engraver in terms of both technique and subject matter. Dated 1503, this intaglio print typifies the stylistic change that occurred during the period of 1500 to 1505, specifically in the influence of Renaissance art theory upon Dürer. This is evident in the careful attention to human

proportions in both the figure of the young maiden and the wild man standing behind her. Dürer's delicate and precise handling of the burin during this period was, in the opinion of Erwin Panofsky, never again to be equaled in his lifetime. Although *Coat of Arms with a Skull* is smaller in size than the majority of work from this period, it provides a wonderful example of the mastery of line that combines the firm and acute handling from Dürer's early development as a graphic artist with a more advanced style based in Renaissance art theory. The artist's scrutinizing attention to detail is clearly demonstrated in the variety of textures present in this engraving, which range from



Coat of Arms with a Skull, by Albrecht Dürer.

the smooth, polished metal of the helmet to the incredibly precise treatment of the wild man's fur and curly hair.

Coat of Arms with a Skull also marks an important point in Dürer's career in terms of his own attempt to define his reputation as an established artist. From 1503, the majority of his works were signed with the now immediately recognizable monogram of a D incised underneath a large-

er A. This signature was most often incorporated into the overall composition of the design, and in this case is found carved into what appears to be some sort of tag attached to the bottom of the shield. Similarly, the 1503 date of the engraving appears to have been cut into the wood block that supports the shield and winged helmet.

Obviously, the works from Dürer's oeuvre are not as readable to a twentieth-century viewer as they would have been to their original early sixteenth-century audience, and *Coat of Arms with a Skull* is no exception to such ambiguity. The engraving depicts a heraldic shield with a large human skull, surmounted by a winged helmet that is held by a savage man, who is also engaged in an amorous embrace with a young maiden in ceremonial costume. It has most commonly been interpreted as an allegorical treatment of the *vanitas* theme of Beauty and Death, which Dürer also incorporated into several other engravings from this period, including *Young Woman Attacked by Death* from 1495 (Bartsch B.92) and *Young Couple Threatened by Death* from 1497 (Bartsch B.95). Karl-Adolf Knappe, in *Dürer: The Complete Engravings, Etchings, and Woodcuts* (New York, 1965), describes the development of this theme in *Coat of Arms with a Skull* as having been "crystallized into pure metaphor."

Walter Strauss, editor of *The Illustrated Bartsch* (New York, 1978, vol. 10), advocates a similar interpretation of the print and offers the possibility that it may be connected with the War of the Bavarian Succession of 1503, in which Dürer's native city of Nuremberg benefited from the unsuccessful attempt of the daughter of Duke George the Rich to claim her father's properties. Panofsky, who also interprets the print as a "heraldic version of Love and Death," suggests that several other events in the city's history are reflected in this rather morbid subject matter. During 1503, in addition to the outbreak of several epidemic diseases, the inhabitants of Nuremberg witnessed both a comet and a phenomenon referred to as "blood rain" (later discovered to have been caused by a dark reddish-brown species of algae), events that most likely filled them with a fear of God and a heightened awareness of their own mortality.

Bernheimer offers a different interpretation of *Coat of Arms with a Skull* in *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: a Study in Art, Sentiment, and Demonology*. Here, a detailed consideration has been given to the historical use of the wild man in heraldries and the various qualities that he

had come to denote by the end of the fifteenth century. Bernheimer considers this print to be the "most succinct, powerful, and profound version" of the wild man as both the shield-bearer (protector of land) and the harbinger of fertility. He further defines the print as a marriage scene based upon the maiden's festive costume, which includes the traditional broad and ornate bridal crown from this period. This argument is supported by the fact that *Coat of Arms with a Skull* was the basis of a later sixteenth-century Italian print commissioned to celebrate the marriage of a nobleman in which the only alteration was the replacement of the skull with the impressa *Meliora lapsis* (*Better things than in the past*).

Bernheimer also reinterprets the wild man's relationship to the maiden, thus providing a more comprehensive interpretation of this somewhat mysterious print. He reasonably concludes that the wild man must not be the groom, as a skull would not be an appropriate choice for a coat of arms, but instead serves as an apparition about to issue the kiss of death upon the young bride, demonstrating the uncertainty of life even on such joyful occasions as marriage. By using the figure of the wild man, who represented the assurance of fertility, to portend the death of the bride in the wedding ceremony, Dürer has created an "allegory of the eternal polarity of love and death, creation and destruction, being and nonbeing" that goes beyond a simple allusion to the popular theme of Beauty and Death.

Bryn Mawr College has been enriched by a work of both mystery and technical virtuosity, and in its placement, in proximity to the carrels where students work on their own research, the Dürer print should inspire for years to come.

Did you know that *Mirabile Dictu* is available on the World Wide Web? The Web version contains full color images of all the illustrations featured in this printed edition! Please visit the *Mirabile Dictu* Web page at <http://www.brynmawr.edu/Library/Docs/mirabile3.html>.

And, in case you missed previous issues of *Mirabile Dictu*, you can read them on the Library's Web pages as well. Point your browser to <http://www.brynmawr.edu/Library/Docs/pubx.html> and look for *Mirabile Dictu* Numbers 1 and 2.

Picturing Bryn Mawr: The Archives Photograph Collection Cataloging Project

by Kathleen Whalen

The student's voice grew animated as she described why she wanted to look through the photographs in the College Archives. She was working, she explained, on a semester-long printmaking project that was going to focus on architecture on campus. Did we have any photographs that would show architectural details of the buildings around campus? Over the next two days she searched through hundreds of photos, setting aside any that showed the unusual stonework and interesting patterns present in so many of Bryn Mawr's buildings. After hours of patient searching she finally selected fifteen images that she could use.

The photograph collection gets many such requests: "What do you have on past presidential inaugurations?" "I'd like to see some photos of students from the '50s and '60s." "Do you have any pictures of students protesting?" In a collection of over 10,000 images, finding an answer often requires hours of patient research.

Over the next year much of this arduous searching will become a thing of the past. Using database software and a brand-new Pentium computer, the staff of the Special Collections Department has

begun to compile a searchable catalog of the photographs in the collection. When completed, the database will include names, places, dates, and digital reproductions of these images, and

will allow patrons to look through a CD-ROM "virtual-catalog" of every image in the collection. Besides making subject-specific searches like the ones described above fast and accurate, this catalog will enable librarians to track more accurately which images have been used, how often and by whom. Photo-graphs used for lectures or presentations will be able to be marked so that



con-

Julia Pratt Smith '03. Photo by the Broadbent Company, 1415 Chestnut St., Philadelphia.

someone giving a similar lecture will easily be able to retrieve a listing of suitable photos. Equally important, this database will save the photographs themselves from the wear and tear of frequent handling and will allow

serva-tion needs to be carefully monitored. This collection is a trea-

sure-trove of images vividly documenting life on campus. From the stiffly-posed grouping of students and faculty that made up the first class in 1886 to last year's snapshots of Student Service Day, over one hundred years of college life are

recorded in as many boxes. Photographs include early *carte-de-visite* cards showing portraits of serious young women, often in cap and gown. Many of these popular cards were made by the Broadbent Company,



The Lantern Man on his rounds.

a prominent Philadelphia firm, so that a student might have a visual record of her college experience for her family and friends. Early scenes of the campus are also preserved, including a series of easily recognizable blue-toned cyanotypes of the “great snowstorm of 1905” and a more tranquil albumen print of a snowy winter’s day. In the latter photo, on page 5, “the Lantern Man” on his evening rounds provides a compelling glimpse of days gone by as he walks down a path now replaced by Rockefeller Arch.

Campus events—plays, basketball games, May Days, and commencements—are captured in these boxes, as are important occasions in the history of the College. A shovel-wielding Katharine McBride at the ground-breaking ceremony for the Park Science Building is only one of hundreds of photos which visually recall the McBride era. Photography also documents the construction of many of the buildings on campus. Pictures of Rhodes Hall immediately following its construction have been consulted extensively by the architects working on the current renovation project. The collection also includes candid shots of distinguished visitors; Robert Frost, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Marianne Moore not only all visited the campus, but are preserved as part of the visual record in the Archives. Queen Elizabeth of Belgium, on a 1914 visit to campus, rests beside the contemporary musician Shawn Colvin here just a few years ago for a concert.

But perhaps most compelling of all are the photograph albums. Glued to the often fragile, thick black leaves of each album are photographs that offer a personalized record of a single young woman’s college experience. These albums, which range from the earliest years of the College’s existence up to the ‘40s, reveal a

narrative of what campus life was like. They are set apart from the rest of the collection not only by the number of candid photos of friends and teachers caught at work and play, but, in many of the albums, by the addition of captions, carefully written in white ink against the black page.

One especially delightful album, the gift of L. Linn Killough Buss ‘47, vividly depicts the life of a Bryn Mawr Geology major. In one snapshot, two young women, dressed in the skirts and sweaters so popular in the late forties, stand outdoors, examining an open rock face. Below the photo, with a bright yellow pen, Linn has identified her classmates and then written, “The nicest way to spend a lab period.” Photographs of step sings and May Days are intermingled with laughing young women fording creeks, exploring caves, and posing dramatically on rock faces, reminding us of Bryn Mawr’s long-standing reputation for training first-



Katharine McBride at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Park Science Building. Photo by Peter Dechert.

rate geologists.

With literally thousands of images as fascinating as the ones described above, Special Collections librarians have long desired greater accessibility for the collection. In the course of this cataloging project, each photograph in the collection will be given an identification number, cataloged, scanned, and then placed in an acid-free envelope. At the same time, photographs that need preservation, due to either age or over-use, will be identified and set aside for further attention. When the project is complete, the Library will have a more accurate assessment of its photographic holdings, and patrons will have a valuable new resource.

Another History, Another Context: Traveling through Bryn Mawr's African Art Collections

by Tamara Johnston

Bryn Mawr College's Collections have been an asset to researchers, teachers, and students for many years, but the African collection in particular has grown rapidly over the past decade and has become one of the true highlights of the College's Art and Ethnographic Collections.

Alumna Margaret Feurer Plass '17 initiated this period of development in 1990, when she left the College select pieces from her extensive collection. Recognized as a world-renowned Africanist, she and her engineer husband, Webster, traveled and collected for forty years. During her lifetime, Mrs. Plass made donations to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and in 1956 she gave a major portion of her collection to the British Museum as a memorial gift in her husband's name. In 1967 Mrs. Plass was conferred the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for her work in the field. Bryn Mawr's Plass collection exemplifies the depth of her collecting, which ranged from ancient Ethiopian terracottas to twentieth-century ceremonial accoutrements.

Later in 1990 Helen Katz Neufeld '53 and her husband Mace Neufeld presented over one hundred objects from the Neufeld Family Foundation Collection of African and Pacific Art. The Neufelds gave many more objects from their personal collection in 1996 and 1997. The Neufeld collection is currently the largest assemblage of African art at the College.

Over a twenty-five year period, the Neufelds collected in an academic and appreciative manner, learning a great deal about the objects of their interest and developing an aes-

thetic for their collection. Although their acquisitions ranged geographically across the continent and Oceania, most of the pieces are from West and West Central Africa and date predominantly from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

When the Neufelds' pursuit of African art ended, they wanted their collection to go where it would continue to inspire and educate

as it had while in their possession. Bryn Mawr has amply fulfilled this desire; in 1991, a monumental Slit Gong from New Hebrides Island was put on long-term exhibit in Canaday Library's foyer. In the 1993-1994 academic year, the first gift of the Neufelds was exhibited throughout Canaday, and this year, under the direction of Collections staff, Catherine Foster '99 developed a small exhibit in the Rhys Carpenter Library on the Mende people's Sande Society helmet-masks, one of which is pictured here. Many of the objects from the Plass and Neufeld Collections have also been used for instruction in Africana Studies courses.



The most recent addition to the African collections is a loan by Dr. Philip Kilbride, Professor of Anthropology at Bryn Mawr College. Dr. Kilbride's collection consists of contemporary ethnographic and artistic items he acquired while working in Africa over the last thirty years; most are from East Africa, particularly Kenya. With his loan, the number of African art and ethnographic objects at the College is approximately 300.

A selection from Dr. Kilbride's and the Neufelds' collections can be seen on display in the corridors of the Anthropology Department in Dalton Hall through the end of May 1999.

The African collections are accessible to students, faculty, staff, alumnae of Bryn Mawr College, and outside researchers, Monday through Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM or by appointment (610.526.5022).

In September, College's Collections and Special Collections will jointly produce an exhibition on Africa that will be shown throughout the academic year in the Class of 1912 Rare Book Room, with ancillary exhibits in Carpenter Library, Dalton Hall, and the Park Science Building. The entire exhibition will include examples from the rocks and minerals collection, African art and ethnography, correspondence and travel notes from Archives and Manuscripts, rare books, and materials from the fine arts collection. Rare books will include volumes from the fine set *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, a gift of Katharine McBride.



Toma Male Figure, Sierra Leone.

At the time of the Library's last comprehensive exhibition on Africa, in 1975, the College did not have many significant African objects or a well-developed collection of rare books. Consequently, rare books and manuscripts from Bryn Mawr were supplemented by loans of objects, rare books, and maps from Margaret Plass, the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, W. Graham Arader III, and Mr. and Mrs. E.C. Kip Finch. Twenty years later, Bryn Mawr College

will be able to draw solely from its own collections to tell a story about African life and people, the Diaspora, and the influences of Africans in America. The extensive body of material that we have at hand promises to result in an exciting and engaging exhibit. We hope to see you this fall as the College celebrates the riches of history, art, and culture of the peoples of Africa.

All objects pictured are part of the Mace and Helen Katz Neufeld '53 Collection of African and Pacific Art and were photographed by Molly Greenfield '01.



Bwake Female Figure, Zaire.

Exhibitions on campus

Canaday Library

"It's the Ticket: Nineteenth-Century Bookbindings in the British Isles and the United States" through 31 May 1999, Class of 1912 Rare Book Room.

"A Woman Working in Wood: Engravings and Woodcuts of Clare Leighton" through 23 April 1999, Lobby and Floor 3 landing.

Carpenter Library Kaiser Reading Room

Selections from Bryn Mawr's Reproduction Cast Collection of Victoria and Albert Museum ivories, developed by graduate student Rebecca Hable, through 31 May 1999.

Dalton Hall

"The Collections of Frederica de Laguna," developed by Amy Spangler '99, through 31 May 1999.

"Art and Ethnography of Africa," developed by Molly Greenfield '01, through 31 May 1999.



The illustrated catalog *Ticketed Bookbindings in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, published by the Bryn Mawr Library and Oak Knoll Press, will be available this month. Based on the current Rare Book Room exhibition, "It's the Ticket", the catalog describes a collection of 219 signed bindings acquired by Canaday Library in 1997. The text includes an informative introduction by Bernard C. Middleton, noted authority on English bookbinding history, as well as 485 additional entries for bookbinders' tickets identified in the Bryn Mawr collections by Willman Spawn, Honorary Curator of Bookbinding and curator of the exhibition. The catalog is priced at \$65 hardbound, \$45 paperback, and \$35 for gathered sheets that may be hand bound. It may be purchased through Oak Knoll Press, 310 Delaware Street, New Castle, DE 19720, (302) 328-7232, or toll-free 1-800-996-2556.

An Uneasy Cuckoo in the Nest: Laurence Housman, 1865-1959

by Kim Pelkey

The title of this article, “An Uneasy Cuckoo in the Nest,” is taken from Laurence Housman’s obituary in the *London Times*, which says of him: “A born radical under a conservative skin (a family inheritance), clothed in the formidable traditions of the Victorian era, he proceeded by degrees and at intervals to shed the clothing.... Whether as idealist or iconoclast, it was hard for him to be moderate. An uneasy cuckoo in the nest, he nevertheless regarded himself, as indeed he was, a ‘Victorian.’”

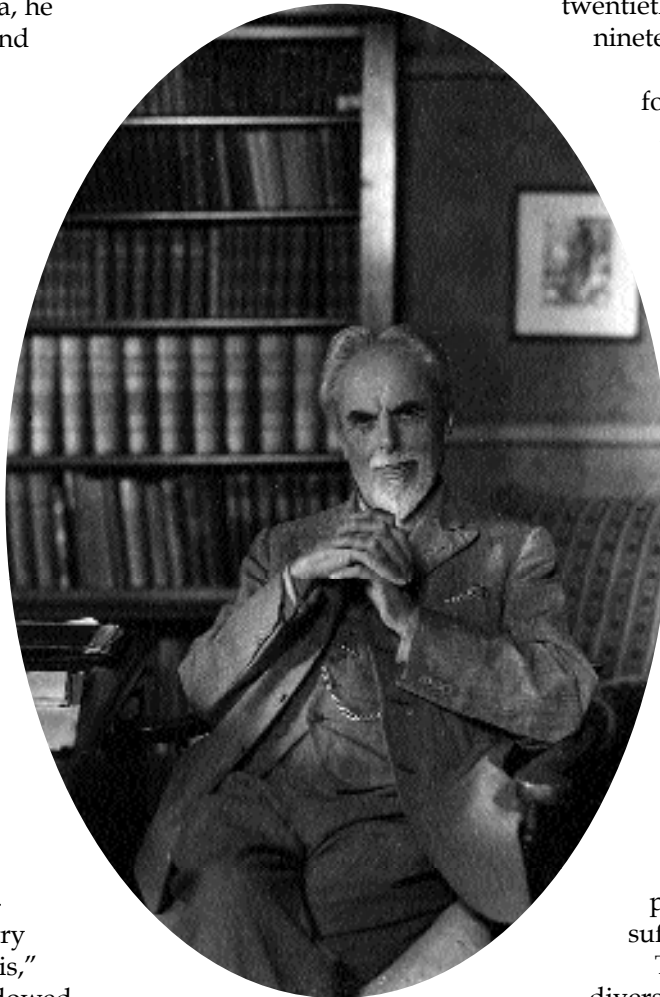
At the time of his death at the age of 94, in 1959, Laurence Housman left behind a legacy of over eighty books that spanned a working and creative life of more than fifty years. Although he has been described as “perhaps the most variously accomplished artist that has written poetry since Rossetti and Morris,” Housman was overshadowed by his brother, the scholar-poet A. E. Housman, and remains little known today.

While the literary and artistic merits of Housman’s work alone warrant attention, the hundreds of items of Laurence Housmaniana in the Adelman Collection at Bryn Mawr College provide rich material for a fascinating look at turn-of-the-century England. As Housman’s entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* notes:

“He lived so long, was friendly with so many of the leaders of thought in the critical decades of his middle life, and was connected with such a diversity of ‘progressive’ causes that his writings will always remain a valuable reflection of opinion and feeling when the twentieth century banished the nineteenth.”

A researcher digging for Housman gold will find items that include or make reference to several “firsts” in Housman’s career—his first book of criticism, his first book of poetry, and his first play—as well as material that traces his creative development from art student and critic, to book illustrator and designer, to poet and playwright. Other veins to be tapped chronicle Housman’s involvement in the social and political causes of his time, focusing specifically on issues of censorship, pacifism, and women’s suffrage.

The breadth and diversity of the Adelman Collection’s Housman material, which includes books, letters, manuscripts, original art, and photographs, evoke the artistic, literary, and social vitality and ferment of the late Victorian era, while highlighting the accomplishments of Laurence Housman, an important artist, writer, and activist who has fallen into obscurity.



Laurence Housman.

Bryn Mawr College Handbooks

by Loretta Treese

"Your choice of what is most worthwhile in college life will be the test of your success," wrote Kathleen Gallwey to the freshmen in the Class of 1927. Her message appeared in the introduction to the student handbook published in 1923, a copy of which can now be found in the Student Handbook Collection of the College Archives.

The student handbooks gave incoming freshmen an idea of what to expect when they arrived, and were often retained and annotated by students as an index of College organizations and a guide to Bryn Mawr traditions. As Gallwey put it, "We hope that by reading this handbook carefully you may be able to understand your environment better and to realize Bryn Mawr's ideals of co-operation, scholarship and service." Today the handbooks provide a snapshot of College life in any given year and could be a possible source for the study of women's social history.

The earliest example in the collection was published in 1901. It has a gray paper cover and measures 3 1/2 by 5 1/4 inches, a size that would fit easily in a student's pocket or purse. Earlier handbooks were published by a College organization called the Christian Union, and later were published by the "Committee for the Freshmen" and the Undergraduate Association. Today they are prepared by the Office of the Undergraduate Dean. (Illustrations here are from the 1969, 1971, and 1974 handbooks.)

By listing all the College's extracurricular organizations, student handbooks allowed a freshman to choose easily one or more that might interest her. The 1904 handbook mentions the "De Rebus Club," which brought well-known lecturers to the College. The handbook for the academic year 1953-1954 mentions "The Octangle," which it defined as "a group of eight students who sing at the drop of a hat; at college

dances, after concerts ... any excuse will do." It noted that The Octangle was a "sort of antidote" to the College's more formal chorus.

The 1953 handbook also reveals that the College once had its own radio station, WBMC, which broadcast music and news from the basement of Pembroke East. The station cooperated with WHRC at Haverford College and offered practical experience in radio production.

Handbooks often listed the names of officers of organizations, so they are also a reference for scholars doing biographical research on Bryn Mawr alumnae. For example, the handbook published in 1923 indicates that the president of a political organization called the Liberal Club was Priscilla Fansler of the Class of 1924, who would be better known today by her married name, Mrs. Alger Hiss.

The student handbooks are also proof that an interest in community service is nothing new for the students at Bryn Mawr. The handbook published in 1937 shows that students might choose to join the Bryn Mawr League, which, among other activities, provided an opportunity to teach evening classes in "Americanization" for adults born in Italy or Germany.

The "Rules and Regulations" itemized in the handbooks are an indication of how much times have changed. The 1923 handbook states, "Men may not come to a Freshman Show." The 1937 handbook says that upon hearing a fire alarm students were supposed to "Put on shoes, heavy wrapper, or long coat," and "bring a wet towel." Once out of doors a student was required to "stand quietly





at the drill and answer to her name when called," and then "have her clothing and towel inspected before returning to her room."

The handbooks also provide an idea of what the typical college student was

wearing and include suggestions on what sort of clothing to bring to Bryn Mawr. The handbook published in 1944 advises, "Blue jeans, although

they may not be worn to dinner or classes, are most comfortable for labs or the lib." It mentioned that teas were "stocking affairs, but don't require hats." The 1964 handbook noted that "Sunbathing is allowed, in one piece suits."

The advertising pages at the back of the earlier handbooks list businesses in the town of Bryn Mawr, making them a possible source for local history. The 1904 edition states that Bryn Mawr had five livery stables where horses could be hired for riding or driving at reasonable rates. One sponsor was Ellen A. McCurdy's Dry Goods Store on Lancaster Avenue which offered a "handsome assortment of ribbons, laces, handkerchiefs, gloves, embroideries, hosiery, and light underwear."

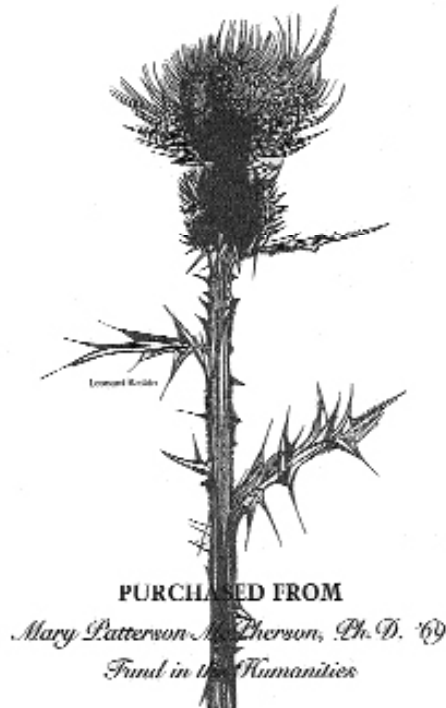
Finally, the handbooks show how life in the ivory tower could be affected and altered by events in the world at large. In her message to the freshmen entering Bryn Mawr College in 1944, Katharine E. McBride wrote, "It will not be easy for [the college student] to study surrounded

Book Fund Honors Mary Patterson McPherson by Abigail Pile

Upon her retirement from the College Presidency in 1997, Mary Patterson McPherson was honored by the establishment of a fund for the purchasing of books in all branches of the humanities. Appropriately named the McPherson Fund in the Humanities, it now has its own bookplate, designed with McPherson's Scottish heritage in mind and displaying a thistle engraved by Leonard Baskin.

The use of the Baskin engraving brings together several important figures associated with the Rare Book Collection in Canaday Library. It was originally created as an illustration for one of Robert Frost's famous Christmas cards, many of which were given

**BRYN MAWR
COLLEGE LIBRARY**



to Bryn Mawr by Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant '12. Sergeant was a literary critic and friend of Frost who left the Library many of her own inscribed and annotated copies of Frost's works, thereby providing the College with a body of research material unavailable through any other source. Frost's 1957 card is the source for the thistle and features the poem "My Objection to Being Stepped On," as well as additional wood engravings by Baskin.

Leonard Baskin's friendship with the Library began as a result of his correspondence with the late Seymour Adelman, benefactor to the Library and its Special Collections. The two shared a passion for the artist Thomas Eakins, as well as an interest in collecting rare books. Baskin became a *de facto* friend of the

New Faces in the Libraries by Jean Miller

In the year since our last *Mirabile Dictu*, several new faces have joined the Library staff. These individuals come to the College from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, contributing to a well-rounded team of librarians at Bryn Mawr. We would like to extend a warm welcome to the latest members of our staff and introduce the friendly faces that you will find at the Libraries.

Our most recent colleague, Eric Pumroy, Head of Special Collections and Seymour Adelman Rare Book Librarian, has just joined us in March from the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies. There he served first as Director of Library and Archives and then as Director of Programs and Information Services.



During his tenure at the Balch he directed an outreach program for new immigrant communities, formed a research fellowship program, and established a monthly seminar on issues of immigration and ethnic life in America. Eric's recent exhibition, "Live Like the Banyan Tree," which focuses on the Indian-American immigrant experience in Philadelphia, can be seen at www.libertynet.org/balch/.

For the past year Eric has also served as President of the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL). He led their effort to develop Web-based catalogs for consortium members, and is coordinating training sessions for archivists to use the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) format for the conversion of finding aids into searchable electronic Web resources. We are very happy that Eric has decided to lead Special Collections here at Bryn Mawr.

Mark Colvson, Electronic Information Resources Coordinator/Reference Librarian, joined the Library staff in February of 1998. Mark is Library liaison to the Sociology Department, and has been the force behind the Library's new Website design (www.brynmawr.edu/Library/). He was also instrumental in the coordination of our recent Information Fair for students and alumnae. You can read more



about the Libraries' Information Fair in "From the Director" on page 2. Mark's undergraduate degree is from Haverford College.

Krista Ivy, Reference Librarian at the Rhys Carpenter Library, came to us this past August, just after completing her M.L.S. degree at the University at Buffalo. Krista also holds the M.A. degree in History of Art from Binghamton University. In addition to her reference responsibilities, she works very closely with the History of Art Department representing their interests in Library purchasing decisions.



Abigail Pile, Cataloging Librarian, started last September. She received her M.L.S. from Drexel University in December 1998 and is coming back to Bryn Mawr, where she earned an A.B. in Russian and also served as an intern in the Special Collections Department. Abigail, in addition to her duties as Cataloging Librarian, assists in collection development for the Department of Russian and works very closely with Special Collections. She is the editor of *Mirabile Dictu*.



Jean Miller, Assistant to the Director of Libraries, arrived in the Director's Office just before receiving her M.L.S. from Drexel University in December. Jean had been Reserve Book Room Supervisor at the W.W. Hagerty Library at Drexel University and now works on special projects that originate in the Director's Office. She often coordinates Friends of the Library events and publications.



Finally, Julie Diana, Assistant Systems Librarian for the Tri-College Consortium, came to us from Syracuse University where she recently earned her M.L.S. Julie spends most of her time at Bryn Mawr, but is often at Haverford and Swarthmore working on the many projects that the consortium office supports.

