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2007

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Eric Pumroy  
*Bryn Mawr College*

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## Custom Citation

Eric Pumroy, "Bryn Mawr," in *Founded by Friends: The Quaker Heritage of Fifteen American Colleges and Universities*, edited by John W. Oliver Jr., Charles L. Cherry, and Caroline L. Cherry, Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2007, pp. 147-162.

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# Bryn Mawr College

Eric Pumroy

**B**ryn Mawr's early years were marked by a struggle between those who wanted it to be a sectarian Friends school and those who believed that sectarianism was incompatible with the goal of creating a first-rate academic institution for women. In the end, it was the latter position that prevailed, even though nearly all the players in the contest were Orthodox Quakers. How Bryn Mawr chose that course and whether anything of Quakerism remained is the subject of this chapter.

## FOUNDING OF THE COLLEGE

Bryn Mawr College was established by Joseph Taylor (1810–1880), a Quaker born and educated in the Philadelphia area. Taylor made his fortune in his family's tannery business in Cincinnati, then retired in 1851 and settled on a farm in Burlington County, New Jersey, not far from Philadelphia, where he lived as a bachelor with his sister. Here he took an active part in social and educational causes, including serving as a member of the Haverford College Board of Managers from 1854 to the end of his life. In the mid-1870s, Taylor began discussing the possibility of using his wealth to underwrite a Quaker college for women, modeled on the all-male Haverford, and devoted his remaining years to planning this college. He purchased land for it in the town of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, near enough to Haverford so that the two schools could share some resources but not so close that his new women's college would become an appendage to it. At the time of his death in 1880, plans for the first group

of buildings had been completed and the foundations laid for the central academic building, Taylor Hall.

Taylor's planning of Bryn Mawr came at a time when two important movements in American higher education were gathering strength: the opening of higher education to women and the establishment of American institutions modeled after European research universities. The first women's college, Mount Holyoke, was started as a seminary for the training of teachers in 1837, but it was not until after the Civil War that serious efforts were made to create educational institutions for women that aspired to the same standards as men's colleges. The best of these new schools were Vassar, opened in 1865, and Wellesley and Smith, both of which opened in 1875. Unlike the earlier teacher seminaries, each of these colleges offered a broad, classically based curriculum taught by strong faculties and had the goals of becoming the female equivalents to Harvard and Yale. A small number of schools were also opening their doors to both men and women. Cornell and Michigan, for example, began admitting women in 1870. Nonetheless, opportunities for advanced education for women were still very limited. Most of the leading institutions remained all-male, and many prominent educators publicly doubted the intellectual capacity of women. Taylor did not share those doubts. Influenced by his experiences in the Society of Friends where women played leadership roles, Taylor had no interest in offering women a second-rate education. To ensure that his college could stand with the best, he made careful studies of Vassar, Wellesley, and Smith and consulted with some of the country's leading male educators, most notably Daniel Coit Gilman, president of the newly created Johns Hopkins University.

Johns Hopkins University opened a year after Wellesley and Smith and would come to have an enormous influence on the early history of Bryn Mawr. Hopkins was a wealthy Quaker businessman in Baltimore who established a trust to support the establishment of a university and hospital on his death. While still alive, he appointed the trustees, and on his death in 1873, they hired Daniel Coit Gilman as the university's first president. Gilman, previously the president of the University of California, was one of the leaders of the movement to reform American higher education to bring it into line with the best European universities. In the new Johns Hopkins University, he saw a unique opportunity to build a model institution from scratch, one devoted to research and the advancement of learning. The trustees were excited by his ambitions and supported his efforts to recruit a faculty from among the best scholars of the day and a student body heavily weighted with graduate students who were to be trained as professional scholars.

Among the first board members at Johns Hopkins were two Baltimore Quakers, Francis T. King and James Carey Thomas, both of whom also

served on the board of managers at Haverford with Joseph Taylor. Both later became members of the board at Bryn Mawr, with King serving as the board's first chairman. At the same time that Taylor was making his plans for Bryn Mawr, King and Thomas were pushing Friends to think more seriously about modern education. In December 1877, they convened a conference on education in the Society of Friends, held at the Baltimore Friends meetinghouse. They invited only a small number of men, including Taylor and many of those who would eventually serve on the board of trustees at Bryn Mawr. King outlined the reasons for the meeting in his opening address, noting the limited educational opportunities for Quakers and concluding that the lack of well-educated men prevented the Friends from having an influence on society, politics, and modern thought. The conference's featured speaker was Daniel Coit Gilman, who spoke at length about his ambitions for Johns Hopkins. As he concluded, Gilman observed with approval that although Hopkins and a majority of the members of the board of trustees were Quaker, "neither he (Hopkins) nor they endeavored to make the University a religious or ecclesiastical body. The Trustees have indeed expressed the desire to see it pervaded by the spirit of enlightened Christianity, for on that they believe the highest progress of the world depends; but they have not desired to see it the arena of sectarian dogmatism, or of ecclesiastical despotism." By the time Bryn Mawr College opened eight years later, most of its trustees would subscribe to the same philosophy.

Taylor sought advice from a wide range of people in planning Bryn Mawr and in the end wanted to find a way to combine the educational ambitions of Johns Hopkins University with the Quaker religious purpose of Haverford. This ambivalence was reflected in his will, where Taylor outlined his wishes for the college and established the college's board of trustees. The will called for a college that had for its object the "advanced education and care of Young Women or girls of the higher and more refined classes of society." The college was not to be exclusively for Quaker young women, although preference in admissions was to be given to members of the Society of Friends, "other things being equal," and students who were not Friends "must conform to the customs and rules of the institution, and be willing to be educated as Friends." To ensure that the right sort of Quaker principles ruled the college, he appointed a group of his friends and advisers to the board of trustees, most of whom were already serving on the Haverford College Board of Managers, and he stipulated that all board members in the future must belong to the Orthodox branch of the Society of Friends. In spite of the religious requirement for serving on the board, Taylor did not assign responsibility for appointing board members to any Quaker meetings but instead made appointments the responsibility of the board itself. Over time, the effect of

having a self-perpetuating board was to greatly simplify Bryn Mawr's movement away from the Society of Friends.

The future of Taylor's Quaker college for women occupied a major part of the discussion at the Conference on Education in the Society of Friends held at Haverford College in the summer of 1880, six months after Taylor's death. The Haverford conference was attended by many more delegates than the 1877 meeting and, unlike the first conference, included a substantial number of women delegates, including Mary Whitall Thomas, wife of James Carey Thomas and mother of the future president of Bryn Mawr. The discussion focused on the role of the college within the Society of Friends, but underneath this open debate was a more fundamental discussion of the role of women in society and the type of education best suited for them. The strongest proponent of Bryn Mawr as a Quaker sectarian college was Henry Hartshorne, a past editor of the *Friends Review* and headmaster of the Howland School, a Quaker high school for girls in New York. His paper "How May Bryn Mawr College Best Serve the Interests of the Society of Friends" called for the college to follow the motto "Consecration to God: For Christ and the Church." He argued that all the officers and faculty should be Friends by conviction, that Bible classes form a basic part of the curriculum, and that all the students be instructed in the history of Quakerism. Intellectual development should still be valued, he assured the group, and literature, philosophy, and science should be taught, but religion must come first. He warned against following the Johns Hopkins model, in which faculty are hired for their intellectual standing, without regard to their religious beliefs, and students vigorously pursue cultural and scientific studies to the neglect of religion. Quaker graduates of such a school, he warned, would lead the Society of Friends away from its Christian roots. Mary Haines, a delegate from Philadelphia, took Hartshorne's argument a step further with her paper on "home feeling," in which she argued that Bryn Mawr must provide both religious training and instruction in a woman's duties to the family and home.

Among those opposing the sectarian vision for the college was Francis T. King's daughter, Elizabeth King, who sent a paper encouraging education that prepares women for an active professional life. During the discussion period, James Carey Thomas outlined a position that indicated how influential the Johns Hopkins example had become for many of Bryn Mawr's trustees. Bryn Mawr should "become a *centre* of higher education, which will extend its usefulness and that of our Society throughout the country, providing a more universal knowledge of the great truths of Christian philosophy, and the exemplification of them in purer and nobler lives." In short, Bryn Mawr can best extend Quaker influence by becom-

ing not a Quaker college but a nonsectarian educational leader run by Quakers.

### THE ARRIVAL OF M. CAREY THOMAS

Bryn Mawr's trustees would undoubtedly have worked to maintain a balance between religion and intellectual rigor had it not been for the arrival on the scene of James Carey Thomas's daughter, M. Carey Thomas. Thomas had followed an ambitious educational program from the time she was sixteen. After graduating from Cornell University in 1877, she attempted to pursue graduate work at Johns Hopkins under the highly restricted circumstances required of women. Allowed only to meet privately with faculty and barred from attending seminars and other classes, she soon realized that she was receiving a second-rate education. Learning that European universities were more open to women, she moved to Leipzig in 1879 and attended lectures at the university there for two years. When Leipzig refused to consider her for a degree, she transferred to the University of Zurich, where she received her PhD *summa cum laude* in 1882.

With both a father and an uncle on the Bryn Mawr Board of Trustees and having personal connections with many other trustees in the small world of East Coast Orthodox Friends, Thomas was very much aware of the plans being made for Bryn Mawr College and saw herself as having an important role to play in its future. In the summer of 1883, she wrote to James Rhoads, by then appointed by the trustees to serve as the college's paid executive, proposing herself as the school's first president. As qualifications, she cited her background as an Orthodox Friend, her stellar academic record and experience in Europe's most advanced universities, and her status as a woman, for "it is best," she wrote, "for the president of a woman's college to be a woman." The rest of her letter outlined her vision for the college: that it have high standards, entrance requirements advertised in advance and enforced through rigorous entrance examinations, a first-rate faculty that should not be limited to Friends, and graduate students who would be educated to fill the need for women scholars to teach at women's colleges. The trustees were not yet prepared to turn over the running of the college to a twenty-six-year-old woman, but her lobbying eventually paid off, and she was appointed professor of English and dean of the faculty under President Rhoads early the following year. In this role, she managed the hiring of the faculty, established the entrance requirements for students, and wrote most of the early literature for the school.

Although raised in a prominent Quaker family in which both of her parents and an aunt were influential leaders in Quaker meetings, Thomas had moved away from religion during her years in college and in Europe and followed instead the call of science and aesthetics. Bryn Mawr, for her, represented an opportunity not to educate Quaker women but to create a model college for women that would be as rigorous, demanding, and advanced as the best men's universities. The change in tone that she brought to the college is most striking in the text of the two circulars issued before the opening of Bryn Mawr. The first, written by the trustees in 1883, lays out the college's high educational ambitions and invites students from all denominations, but it is also patronizing toward women and clearly states that Quaker beliefs will form the foundation of the school's program. The second circular, written by Thomas in 1884 to attract students to apply to the first class at Bryn Mawr the following fall, sets a very different tone, one of seriousness of academic purpose. Instead of phrases about developing "womanly character," Thomas's circular sets out the high standards that the new college will expect of its students, emphasizing the necessity of "persistence of application" and warning of the "severity of examinations." The circular makes no mention of the Society of Friends.

During the year before the opening of Bryn Mawr, Thomas recruited some of the best young scholars available, almost all of them men and non-Quaker. Johns Hopkins University was both an important influence in setting up the academic program and the source of a number of the young professors. Bryn Mawr adopted the system of majors pioneered at Johns Hopkins and established fellowships for graduate students. When the first college catalog was published in the spring of 1885, it discussed at length the entrance requirements and examinations, the system of academic organization, and the contents of the courses. In the opening section, it recognized Joseph Taylor for his role in founding the school and Johns Hopkins University for serving as an academic model, but at no point does the catalog refer to the role of the Society of Friends, nor does it discuss the religious expectations for the students.

The change that M. Carey Thomas brought to the philosophy of Bryn Mawr was dramatic, although there were many conflicts still to come between her and the Quakers on the board of trustees. But why did the trustees, all Orthodox Friends, consent to being led so far in the direction of academic achievement that they were willing to downplay the religious foundations of the college? In part, Thomas's strong personality, her family connections, and her conviction that her vision for the college was the right one were extremely important for winning support on the board. But, in addition, she found a receptive audience among those board members who were familiar with Johns Hopkins and saw that following its

lead was the only path to success for Bryn Mawr. Early in 1885, President James Rhoads discussed the trustees' thinking in a letter to Henry Hartshorne in response to his protests over the hiring of non-Quaker faculty. The trustees had seen only two options, Rhoads explained. Either they would hire a faculty of Friends, or they would hire the best faculty available and trust to themselves to give the college as Friendly an influence as possible. If they had followed the former course, Bryn Mawr would have to settle for a second-rate faculty because the Society of Friends had produced few strong scholars and Haverford already employed nearly all of them. Moreover, Rhoads wrote, Haverford was seriously below the standard of the best New England colleges, so Bryn Mawr would necessarily be inferior to Vassar, Wellesley, and Smith, a situation that Joseph Taylor would not have found acceptable. Finally, Haverford was founded expressly for the Society of Friends, whereas Bryn Mawr was "founded as an Institute for the Higher Education of Women." M. Carey Thomas certainly pushed the trustees away from becoming a denominational college, but it was a direction in which many of them were prepared to go.

Rhodes's underlining of the phrase "higher education for women" suggests another consideration pushing the trustees in Thomas's direction, although it is one that was rarely written about. Quite simply, there were not enough Quakers who believed in women's higher education to populate a college. There were slightly more than 100,000 American Quakers in 1890, but even this small number was divided among a number of factions. Many of the Quakers in the Philadelphia region were Hicksites who had broken away from the main group in 1827 and were barely on speaking terms with Orthodox Quakers through the rest of the century. If they wanted their children to receive a Quaker education, they sent them to Swarthmore, the Hicksite-founded college. Among Philadelphia's Orthodox Quakers, the largest number belonged to the conservative branch, one that practiced a quietist form of religion and saw little purpose in higher education, either for men or for women. The supporters of Bryn Mawr, as well as Haverford, were mostly to be found among the prosperous group of modernizers belonging to the Twelfth Street Meeting, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting, and a few other congregations on the East Coast, and even this small group was divided on the value of higher education for women. With the likelihood that few Quakers would send their daughters to college under any circumstances, the Bryn Mawr trustees must have found the John Hopkins model even more compelling. Bryn Mawr's success would have to depend on its ability to attract non-Quaker women, which meant that it would have to offer an education equal to that offered by the best colleges in the country. As James Carey Thomas said at the 1880 conference on Friends education, Bryn Mawr



would be a means of expanding the influence of Quakers throughout the country by becoming a center of higher education for everyone, not just for Quakers.

### PRESIDENCY OF M. CAREY THOMAS

The trustees were by no means unanimous on this point. As long as the reliable James Rhoads was president, though, the trustees were satisfied that the college would continue to have an appropriately Friendly atmosphere. The crisis came in 1893 when Rhoads announced his decision to step down as president. As the person who had been running the academic side of the college since before its founding, Thomas saw herself as the only appropriate choice to succeed him, and in this Rhoads agreed. Many other trustees did not. In part, many of them were uncomfortable with entrusting the college to a woman, and a relatively young one at that.



Figure 9.1. Bryn Mawr Students in the Science Laboratory in the 1890s. Courtesy Bryn Mawr College Library.

But the greater fear was that she was no longer a Quaker at heart and that once in control she would lead the college away from its religious roots. Their fears were well founded. Her strong influence had already set Bryn Mawr on a course to being not the women's Haverford but the women's Johns Hopkins, and the results were disturbing to those members of the board who wanted to see a strong Quaker presence. Indeed, Rhoads warned her in a letter written shortly after his decision to retire that there were a number of members of the board who wanted to make Bryn Mawr more Friendly than it was and were concerned that she would make it less Friendly and ignore the intentions of the school's founder. In the end, though, the lack of any other acceptable candidates, Rhoads's declining health, and the presence of a significant number of Thomas supporters on the board led to a decision in her favor. She took office in mid-1894 and served as Bryn Mawr's president for the next twenty-eight years.

Thomas's first years as president were ones of struggle with the trustees over the future of the college. The trustees' first act was to add language to the college catalog acknowledging the Quaker origins of Bryn Mawr, something that had not been deemed necessary under Rhoads's presidency. Three years later, they added stronger wording to the introductory statement of the college, noting that while the college was nonsectarian, it was Joseph Taylor's desire "that the college should be pervaded by the principles of Christianity held by the Friends, which he believed to be the same in substance as those taught by the early Christians." Thomas, in turn, won a more substantive victory with her successful effort to expand the size of the school and to do so in an architectural direction that was very much in opposition to the simplicity of design that had been the original plan for the campus. Working with Philadelphia architects Walter Cope and John Stewardson, both Quakers, she built a campus modeled on those of Oxford and Cambridge, complete with turrets, arches, and gargoyles. Campus architecture mattered to her as a way to create a visual representation of the seriousness of the college's academic purpose. Her building program brought her into conflict with the more conservative trustees, but her success in fund-raising to support the construction ultimately silenced them.

Thomas was able to raise the money she needed to build Bryn Mawr because of the growing international reputation of both her and the college as leaders in women's education. Her campaigns depended heavily on the energies and support of an active and influential group of alumnae, most of whom were not Quakers, and she also attracted major non-Quaker donors, most notably John D. Rockefeller and her wealthy Baltimore friend Mary Garrett. In 1905, the trustees formally recognized the important role of non-Quakers in the college's life by creating a new body, a board of directors, that would be parallel to the board of trustees established by Joseph Taylor's will.



*Figure 9.2. Bryn Mawr College Graduation, ca. 1909, With the Neo-Gothic Thomas Library in the Background. Courtesy Bryn Mawr College Library.*

Unlike the board of trustees, the board of directors could include people who were not Orthodox Friends. The board of directors included all the trustees but also Mary Garrett and two members elected by the alumnae. Over the course of Thomas's presidency, the number of non-Quaker directors increased to where they constituted nearly half of the board of directors by the time she left office. Thomas's victory in bringing non-Quakers into the governing structure of the college was soon followed by changes in the college catalog's description of the college. By 1909, all references to Joseph Taylor's Quakerism and the Quaker principles underlying Bryn Mawr had been removed from the college catalog and did not reappear until the early 1950s. Any lingering questions about Bryn Mawr's status as a Quaker college were laid to rest in 1920 when the college asked to take part in the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's retirement program for faculty, the forerunner of TIAA-CREF. The foundation at first denied the application on the grounds of Bryn Mawr's sectarian status but reversed its decision when M. Carey Thomas and the college's board successfully argued that the Quaker board of trustees was only a holding company and that the real power resided in the nondenominational board of directors.

One of the important reasons for the failure of the more conservative members of the board to strengthen the Quaker atmosphere of the college was that the college had grown too big and non-Quaker for it to turn into a female Haverford. In 1898, Bryn Mawr had an enrollment of 354 students, with an entering class of eighty-one, roughly three times the number of students at Haverford. Few of them were Friends. Of the 354 students, only twenty-two were Quakers (about 6 percent), compared with 105 Episcopalians, seventy-seven Presbyterians, twenty-nine Unitarians, twenty-two Congregationalists, and smaller numbers of Methodists, Baptists, Jews, and Catholics. In 1906, the number of students had grown to 437, but only twenty were Quakers, and just two in a freshman class that had ninety-four young women. During the rest of M. Carey Thomas's presidency, the number of Quaker students fluctuated between 3 and 5 percent of the student body and never again reached twenty students.

Thomas addressed the lack of Quaker students at Bryn Mawr in a lecture, "Our Uneducated Quaker Women and Their Effect on the Quaker Church," given at the 1915 Educational Conference of the Committee on Education of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Thomas said that the small number of Quaker students had been a profound disappointment but, to her mind, reflected the small number of Quakers interested in advanced education for women. She noted that she and James Rhoads had received abuse because of their insistence on maintaining the highest educational standards rather than offering a specifically Quaker education with Quaker faculty. "The simple fact is," she charged, "that as a church we have until now been afraid of the best education." She concluded her talk on a hopeful note, observing that Swarthmore and Haverford had followed Bryn Mawr's lead in hiring faculty on the basis of qualifications, not religion, and thus freeing them "from the fetish of a guarded education for *Friends only* given by *Friends only*." With most of the Quaker secondary schools by then providing appropriate preparation for admission to Bryn Mawr, she expressed hope that many more Quakers would be sending their daughters. Nonetheless, the number of Quaker students remained small.

In spite of the trustees' suspicions of M. Carey Thomas's commitment to religion, the religious life at Bryn Mawr remained much the same under her as it had been under Rhoads. The college offered a short prayer service at the beginning of each day and a longer service one evening of the week. There was no chapel or meetinghouse on campus for Sunday worship, but students were encouraged to attend services at the churches in the neighborhood, and the college provided transportation to make this easier. Students were not required to attend any of these services, however. So much religious freedom for students was unusual for colleges at that time, including Quaker ones, but it reflected the

Quaker belief in individual conscience, coupled with the trustees' efforts to run a college in which women of all denominations would feel welcome. Under Rhoads, the longtime editor of the *Friends Review* and a Quaker minister, the daily services undoubtedly included more of Quakerism in them than would be true under Thomas. Even so, he seems to have used a light touch. At his memorial service, Thomas talked about his religious teaching as being "so simple and all-embracing that our Roman Catholic and Jewish students have felt they could unite in them." After Rhoads's death in 1895, the religious leadership role on campus was taken over by George Barton, professor of biblical literature with a PhD from Harvard but also a Quaker and a graduate of Haverford. Barton frequently attended the once-a-week evening worship services and offered the prayers during the morning sessions. Under Thomas, though, the daily morning services became less religious in tone and more an occasion for announcements and commentaries about issues of the day, while the evening services became increasingly interdenominational with visits from ministers from many Protestant churches.

By the time Thomas retired as president in 1922, membership in the Society of Friends was no longer considered a requirement for leading Bryn Mawr. The *Bryn Mawr Alumnae Bulletin* ran several articles on the search for a new president and discussed the issues to be considered in selecting a new president, most importantly whether the new leader should be a graduate of the college and whether preference should be given to women candidates. None of the articles or announcements made any mention of religious affiliation as a qualification. In the end, the person chosen was Marian Edwards Park, a woman who had earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Bryn Mawr but whose background was thoroughly New England and Congregational. During Park's eighteen years as president, Bryn Mawr rarely took public notice of its Quaker origins. Instead, its literature emphasized the college's role in providing women with a rigorous education and preparing them for careers in the academy and other professions. The literature reflected the reality that Quaker affiliations played no role in the recruitment of either students or faculty and that Quaker religious beliefs and practices had no special place on the campus.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF QUAKER ORIGINS

A change in attitude toward Bryn Mawr's Quaker origins started to occur in the late 1930s as the college began conversations with Haverford and Swarthmore over ways of cooperating to make their schools more effi-

cient and enable them to offer stronger educational programs at a time when money was in short supply. Cooperation among these three colleges was attractive because they were relatively close to each other, similar in size, and similar in setting high academic standards, and, of course, all had Quaker origins and boards dominated by Quakers. During World War II, when many professors from all three campuses were called away for war work, the three colleges shared faculty to ensure that students continued to receive a strong education. Over the past half century, the connections among the colleges have grown stronger and particularly so between Haverford and Bryn Mawr. The two colleges began allowing students to take courses on each other's campuses in the late 1940s, and each created dormitory space for the other's students in the late 1960s. The cooperation among the three institutions has expanded to where students now can freely register for courses on the other campuses, search for books in a unified library catalog, and travel among campuses on a reliable and frequent tricollage bus service.

The growing sense of common purpose with Haverford and Swarthmore was reflected in the college's willingness to acknowledge its Quaker origins. After almost forty years in which the Bryn Mawr College catalogs made no mention of the Society of Friends, the 1952–1953 catalog opens with a celebration of its Quaker heritage. The focus, though, is on the academic ambitions of its early leaders, not the religious ones: "Bryn Mawr has preserved the purpose and much of the tradition of its founders. It believes that intellectual endeavor and discipline provide a sound foundation for living. It believes in the rights of the individual and in freedom to think and act as intelligent and responsible members of a democratic society." Although the language has changed periodically over the fifty years since this was written, the college has continued to cite intellectual discipline, individual freedom, and mutual respect as the qualities of college life that are the products of its Quaker heritage.

### **BRYN MAWR AND SOCIAL REFORM**

During the course of her presidency, M. Carey Thomas firmly established that Bryn Mawr College would follow a separate path from the Society of Friends. Nonetheless, the Quaker values of the trustees and Thomas's own upbringing as a member of a prominent and socially conscious Quaker family played a role in setting the tone for life on campus and led the college to take an active interest in social reform. The Quaker trust in individual conscience created a climate in which independent thinking and the principled life were celebrated. In practical terms, this trust led to a remarkable degree of personal freedom for students and not only on the

issue of attending religious services. Whereas most colleges had strict behavior codes that were written and enforced by college administrators, Bryn Mawr's trustees in 1891 allowed the students to establish their own system for regulating personal behavior, the Self-Governing Association, which is still in place.

Bryn Mawr's emphasis on independence and self-regulation was balanced by a Quaker social consciousness. James Rhoads was a leader of the Indian Rights Association, and a number of early trustees had been active in helping freed slaves and in the temperance movement. Rhoads brought this sense of engagement into his classes and religious services, leading his students into discussions on social and political issues as much as on theological ones. Thomas was less engaged in broader issues of social reform than Rhoads had been, focusing her energies instead on promoting women's education and suffrage, her two principal causes. Nonetheless, during her presidency, she set up three innovative programs that engaged the college in the business of educating women for social action. The first, the Phebe Anna Thorne Model School, opened in 1913, was an experimental children's school run by Bryn Mawr's education department and was designed to train teachers while testing new approaches in progressive education. During the 1910s and 1920s, the school was one of the country's leading sites for putting into practice the ideas of John Dewey and the European educational reformers. The second, the Carola Woerishoffer Graduate Department of Social Economy and Social Research, opened in 1915 as the first graduate social work program in the country connected with a college or university. Now much larger and renamed the Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research, the program continues the original aim of providing advanced education for professionals working in social welfare issues. The third was the Summer School for Women Workers in Industry, which opened in 1921 as an eight-week program to bring higher education to women industrial workers. The school operated until 1938 and during those seventeen years played a leading role in the workers' education movement.

This early commitment to social engagement and individual conscience has continued throughout Bryn Mawr's history. During the 1930s, Bryn Mawr was one of the colleges that found places for German refugee scholars, including the celebrated mathematician Emmy Noether. During the Cold War years, Bryn Mawr was a leader in resisting government efforts to enlist colleges in suppressing student dissent. In 1958, President Katharine McBride won board approval to withdraw Bryn Mawr from the National Defense Education Act student loan program when new regulations required a loyalty oath. The move brought national attention to the college and may have helped gather the support needed to rescind the

regulations in 1962. In 1969, President McBride again withdrew Bryn Mawr from a government student aid program when new regulations required colleges to report student protesters of the war in Vietnam. McBride led a faculty and alumnae group that raised the funds needed to replace the lost financial aid.

When Harris Wofford took office as Katharine McBride's successor in 1970, Bryn Mawr was still governed by the two-board, Quaker-dominated structure created during M. Carey Thomas's time. The Quaker trustees themselves thought that this level of control was no longer justified since the college had long since ceased to be a Quaker institution. In 1976, the board approved a change in the governance structure by eliminating the old board of trustees established by Joseph Taylor, all of whose members were required to be Orthodox Friends, and creating a single board of trustees. The board nominating committee is encouraged to find qualified Friends willing to serve, but from this point forward, Quakers no longer had a significant presence on the board.

At the ceremonies opening Bryn Mawr College in 1885, Daniel Coit Gilman had observed that the Society of Friends does not build institutions but plants them and allows them to grow. Bryn Mawr did indeed grow and prosper as an academic institution, as its founders wished, but not as a religious one, which they had also wished. The tension between academics and religion was settled in favor of the former by M. Carey Thomas, a dynamic leader who saw that Bryn Mawr's great mission was to prove that women were capable of the same intellectual achievements as men. If accomplishing this mission for women meant sacrificing a Quaker-based education, it was a sacrifice she was willing to make. To the credit of the board members, all Quaker and all men, they too were willing to make the sacrifice in order to advance opportunities for women. Bryn Mawr has not been a Quaker college in a religious sense, but perhaps by growing into a college that helped advance justice and equality for women, Bryn Mawr nonetheless fulfilled the ambitions of its Quaker founders.

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