

Some Spinoffs from the Bishop Collection and Website of Thomas Bird Mosher & the Mosher Press

Sometimes it's good to take stock of what one has been doing and the influences one's projects have had. During one such reflective moment at the beginning of the new year, I thought I'd compile a brief listing of how the Mosher Collection and Mosher Press Website have supported the research of a number of scholars worldwide. The following list is an attempt to pull together a few of these about which I've known.

It's also a good time to remind myself and others that these efforts have never been about me or self-praises. It has always been, and continues to be, about introducing and providing information and impressions surrounding the remarkable publishing career of Thomas Bird Mosher and his influences during the early American printing revival during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including his efforts to promote Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite literature. In that spirit, the following events have taken place over the last few years:

- Australian scholar Dr. Eugene D. LeMire accessed the Mosher Collection for his *A Bibliography of William Morris* (2006)...
- University of Michigan scholar Dr. Adela Pinch received some research assistance for her article "Transatlantic Modern Love" in *The Traffic in Poems* (2008)...
- University of London's Dr. Laurel Brake received some research assistance for conference talks and for articles such as her "Censorship, Puffing, 'Piracy,' Reprinting: British Decadence and Transatlantic Re-Mediations of Walter Pater, 1893-1910" in *Modernism/modernity* (2012)...
- University of Tulsa College of Law's Dr. Robert Spoo in his *Without Copyrights—Piracy, Publishing, and the Public Domain* (2013), research assistance through the Mosher bibliography and in emails, particularly for Chapter 2 devoted to Mosher (including supplying a picture of Mosher for publication)...
- Newcastle University's Dr. Kirsten Macleod included her use of the Mosher bibliography and extensive research assistance for her *American Little Magazines of the 1890s—A Revolution in Print* (exhibition & catalogue) and for another book she's currently writing on the Little Magazines...
- University of British Columbia's Dr. William E. Fredeman (now deceased) particularly for his "Thomas Bird Mosher and the Literature of Rapture..." in *Thomas Bird Mosher—Pirate Prince of Publishers* (1998)...
- Assisted independent scholar Ben Mazer in "Hearing the Mermaids: An Unremarked Source for T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*" in *Fulcrum: An Annual of Poetry and Aesthetics* (2003)...
- University of Hull's Professor Katharine Cockin in her *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry* (supplied copies of letters in the Mosher Collection for the volume containing Terry's letters to Mosher yet to be published)...
- Brown University's Dr. Alice Beckwith in her *Illustrating the Good Life: The Pissarros' Eragny Press* (2007). Assistance and provided material for exhibition and catalogue)...
- Christopher Newport University (Newport News, VA) - Dr. Roark Mulligan in his upcoming scholarly/annotated edition of Theodore Dreiser's *The Titan* (to be published by Winchester University Press), including information on Emilie Grigsby, and photo of the Jan van Beers painting of Emily Grigsby...
- Permission also asked by Bruce Allan Ware for the Grigsby portrait on his 'History Blog' entry "Emilie Busbey Grigsby, 1879-1974: How to Not Marry a Millionaire"
- Consulted with author of the crime novel, *Fair Play's a Jewel* by Robert Bruce Stewart, author of the

- Street Car Mysteries, to be published in spring or summer of 2015. Mosher's name appears 179 times. In Stewart's book, Mosher is the fulcrum point around which the plot pivots...
- Interview for profile to be included in Rebecca Rego Barry's up-coming book *Rare Books Uncovered: True Stories of Fantastic Finds in Unlikely Places* to be published by Quarto's Voyageur Press in late 2015. It featuring rare book & manuscript "finds" alongside book collecting techniques and terminology...
 - Guest poster on the Paul van Capelleveen's "Charles Ricketts & Charles Shannon" blog site. PvC is the curator of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of the Netherlands...
 - The library housing the Mosher Press Collection appears in a feature article on Acorn Cottage and Oak Acre Gardens in *American Bungalow* magazine (spring 2015)...
 - A lengthy interview of Philip R. Bishop by Shawn Purcell and the article "Extra-Binding and The Mosher Books: an Overview from the Bishop Collection" for the *IOBA Standard—The On-line Journal of the Independent Online Booksellers Association* (Fall, 2008)...
 - Assistance to Dr. William S. Peterson on Mosher's copy of the Daniel Press *Garland of Rachael* with numerous letters inserted (Newberry Library).
 - Small addition to the Kelmscott blog of Dr. William S. Peterson by providing an image of the newspaper clipping on Yeats being presented a Kelmscott Chaucer...
 - Website provided the introduction of Bishop with Dr. Maureen E. Mulvihill, fellow of the Princeton Research Forum, and a broadly published specialist. She continues to be a valuable resource.
 - Wikipedia's entry on Thomas Bird Mosher. Provided some changes and additions to the description...
 - The website brought about a first contact with a party who had what I'd consider one of the finest collections of fine bindings which I was then asked to appraise, and it turns out that it had some significance to the Mosher Press as well...
 - Supplied Robert Mileveski, former preservation librarian at Princeton University Library, with an image of L. Averill Cole's binding in the Mosher collection for his PowerPoint presentation during the 2007 seminar on the History of American Bookbinding at Bryn Mawr College...
 - Supplied image of Mosher's edition of *Hand & Soul* to Bruce Willen for his co-authored book on *Lettering & Type: Creating Letters and Designing Typefaces* (Maryland Institute College of Art and Princeton Architectural Press, 2009, p. 89)...
 - Assisted Sam Ellenport on his article on the "Early Harcourt Leather Bindings" in which he pictures and discusses *Child Christopher and Goldilind the Fair* (Mosher, 1900) and points out that the copy in the Bishop collection is "one of the earliest bindings produced by the shop, possibly done within the first two years of business." (*Guild of Book Workers Journal*, 2013)...
 - Assisted Jeff Stikeman in his well illustrated work on "The Anatomy of a Stikeman & Co. Binding." Jeff Stikeman has been a long-time reader of the essays posted on the Mosher Press website which he credits as being part of the inspiration behind his own website on the Stikeman Bindery...
 - The website often puts me in contact with important people who then further Mosher research. In one such case a fellow in England saw the website, contacted me about a letter in a Mosher book for sale, and this contact eventually blossomed into employing his superb research ability to find and record Mosher letters in England for my next book on Mosher—the collected letters.
 - Assisted Mary Burns of the Department of Special Collections at the Kelvin Smith Library of Case Western Reserve University in her write-up on the Mosher Press...
 - Supplied an unrecorded letter from Robert Frost to Mosher. The letter will be published in an upcoming volume of *The Letters of Robert Frost* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press) edited by Donald Sheehy, et. al...
 - Updating the Mosher Press website forces this writer to produce more essays involving new additions to the collection. The Delaware bibliophiles' newsletter, *Endpapers*, nicely promotes this ongoing effort and in doing so helps the book collecting memoirs grow to where they presently stands at 748 pages.

- Assisted Washington D.C. area researcher in her research on Ellen Gates Starr which also resulted in the professor visiting the Mosher Collection...
- As an independent scholar, my own most recent contributions include “From My Hands to Yours: Uncovering the Tynan-Wyndham Connection” in *Other People’s Books— Association Copies and the Stories They Tell* (2001) and “ ‘My Dear Miss Brachvogel...’ A Ms Version of a Yeats Quatrain” in a special issue of *Yeats Mask: Yeats Annual No 19* (2013)...
- Previous publications include the bio-bibliography *Thomas Bird Mosher—Pirate Prince of Publishers* (1998) and the co-curated exhibition and attending co-written catalogue *Thomas Bird Mosher and the Art of the Book* along with Jean-François Villain (1994)...
- There are the over eighty essays and articles published in the Delaware Bibliophiles’s *Endpapers* edited by Gordon Pfeiffer.
- Several PowerPoint talks before groups including the Baxter Society (a book club of Portland, ME), and the Typophiles at the National Arts Club in New York, members and guests of the Grolier Club’s Little Magazines exhibition, and to a session of the “Useful & Beautiful: The Transatlantic Arts of William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites” conference at the University of Delaware in October 2010...
- Blog posts including extracts from, pages from, and/or photos from the Mosher Press website include numerous separate postings on Pinterest; the Omariana blog-posting by Jos Coumans; blog postings by Paul van Capelleveen’s ‘Charles Ricketts & Charles Shannon’ blog site on which he researched and wrote an insightful piece on Mosher’s use of *Silverpoints* and two postings on TBM’s Vale Press collection; the ABAA website on Mosher Books; the Kelmscott Chaucer blog by William Peterson which displays a clipping from Mosher’s scrapbook; remarks on Stephanie Piña’s “Pre-Raphaelite sisterhood; comments on the ISU Library Conservation Lab’s blog with regard to Richard Jefferies’s *Nature Thoughts*;
- One of the things I’ve begun to see is the changing attitude or perception with regard to Mosher’s piracies. Prior to the Mosher bibliography and Mosher Press website, book descriptions summarily pronounced that some book was yet another Mosher piracy which angered the British authors and publishers against his practices. But now a number of booksellers, most notably several from England, have begun to say that many of Mosher’s books either weren’t outright piracies, or at least that Mosher did make connection with the author and made arrangements to have the book brought out in America. Of course in other instances they were piracies, but totally legal here in America...
- On-line exchanges with collectors and scholars over the Mosher Press or “the book” have sometimes grown into on-line friendships, but most of those have fallen by the wayside—usually due to neglect. I abhor being ignored. A few continue to this day, but none can compare with my friendship with William E. (Dick) Fredeman which only ended due to his death. That is one I’ll never get over.
- Something I’ve begun to witness are booksellers contacting me through the Mosher Press website to get further information for their listings. One example is Warren Berry’s first edition copy of Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* which had a partial bookplate on the pastedown. After connecting with me he wrote in his description:

From the library of Thomas Bird Mosher, with part of his bookplate still on the front endpaper and his name in pencil ("Thomas B. Mosher/ November 1886") at the top of the half-title page. (I shared photo images with the bibliographer of the Mosher Press, Philip R. Bishop, and he affirmed that the remnant of the bookplate is that of Thomas Bird Mosher and that the signature is most likely Mosher's. Mr. Bishop's records also show that Mosher had a copy of this book in his library. Google the Mosher Press Website for more information on this small but influential press.)...
- The Mosher Press website is cross-referenced by numerous websites including the Victorian Web and S.H.A.R.P. (The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing); and there have been numerous inquiries from institutions, family historians, and from Mosher Press or Private

Press collectors both here and in England...

- Visitations from collector and scholars such as Mark Samuels Lasner, David Lowden, Jean-François Vilain, J. Anthony Haverstick (Lancaster, PA binder), George Look, and others.
- Freemantle, James “Vellum—its manufacture and uses” in *The Private Library* (Sixth Series, Vol 6, No. 4) Winter 2013, references the Mosher Press Website, the list of books printed on vellum in the United States mounted on the site, and discusses Mosher’s use of vellum on p. 175...
- The Omariana blog links to two recent essays on the Mosher Press website: “*The Rubáiyát* in a Hans Asper Binding” and the Bayntun binding discussed in “Acquisitions since last *Endpapers*.”

I can only imagine what others there may be that I haven’t yet found out. Some of the stats associated with the Mosher Press website show the annual number of new visits to the website increased from 34,643 in 2013 to 37,670 in 2014 That’s an increase of 3,027 new visitors to the Mosher Press Website over the past year’s performance. The number of pages requested of the website roughly hovers around 70,000 give or take a few. Statistical results like these are gratifying because they show that the site is being accessed and used. How, and in what way, remains the question. Stumbled upon? Casual? Information gathering? Used for citing in a paper? Pirating pages? (that’s happened, e.g., see the Mosher entry in *Dominant’s Encyclopedia of Movers & Shakers—Social & Cultural Celebrities*. Vo. 2, New Delhi, India: Dominant Publisher and Distributors, 2004). Collectors certainly reference the site. Some follow the postings of essays, and I get calls from authors who were first guided from the site to the bibliography and then had questions needing answers from a book in the Mosher collection. Still, one can only conjecture how importantly the site is to its various users. Certainly some of the comments I’ve received over the past two years give testimony to its instrumentality, but those remain in the more narrow realm of the anecdotal.

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