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Maureen E. Mulvihill

What should all smart collectors have at the ready? "Training, good judgment, reliable contacts, and a fat purse," said Maureen E. Mulvihill, whose published research has raised the profile and market value of some of the pre-1800 English and Irish women writers she collects. "Collect what you know and love," she advises, "and use those books. Let them be seen and appreciated, let them 'live' - be an active steward."

Early Women Writers

THE MULVIHILL COLLECTION BEGAN DECADES AGO, really, with nourishing roots in family culture, remarkable teachers, and large urban libraries. A small, dedicated collection, its focus is pre-1800 women writers (English, Irish, Dutch); these were figures I had studied at Wisconsin (PhD '82), and then at Yale, Columbia's Rare Book School, and Johns Hopkins. The collection began to form in 1982, with my move to New York City. For thirty years, I enjoyed enviable access to specific training in rare books, as well as a network of trade contacts and wise direction from specialists (Leona Rostenberg, John F. Fleming, Stephen Weissman, James Cummins, Robert J. Barry, Jr., Chris Coover, Clifford Scheiner).

Complementing my scholarly background are many years as a Wall Street writer, a combination which serves me well in negotiations and market assessments; e.g., my auction reports on the Brett-Smith Library (*Restoration*, Fall 2004) and the Peyraud Collection (*Eighteenth-Century Stds.*, Fall 2009).

The best of my rarities includes first (or very early) editions, most in original boards, of Aphra Behn, Maria Edgeworth, 'Ephelia', Ann Fanshawe, Anne Finch, Lucy Hutchinson, Mary Shackleton Leadbeater, Mary de la Rivière Manley, Mary Wortley Montagu, Katherine Philips, Hester Thrale, Mary Tighe (Lytton Strachey copy), Anna Maria Van Schurman; and later figures, Sarah Hale, Anna Jameson, Vita Sackville-West, and Virginia Woolf (a Hogarth first; jacket art, Vanessa Bell).

My collection's "special" books include deluxe facsimiles of Besler's *Hortus Eystettensis* (his florilegium), Moffet's *Insectorum*, Merian's *Blumenbuch*, and Johnson's *Dictionary*; and then handcrafted Irish books by Malachi McCormick (Stone Street Press, NY) and four editions of the *Rubaiyat* (FitzGerald's to Richardson's); also some modern classics (Nancy Drews, *Portrait of Jennie*, *Odd Man Out*, *Lady Cottington's Pressed Fairy Book*). My letterpress broadsheets include Shakespeare's *Sonnet XI* (The Old School Press, UK) and the iconic *Irish Proclamation* (1916), a gift from Maureen (Máirín) Cech (Delaware). The conservator of the Mulvihill Collection is David H. Barry (Griffin Bookbinding, St. Petersburg, FL), trained in Wales: a valued associate. I might add that I was V.P., Florida Bibliophile Society, 2012-2015. 📖

RESIDENCES: Sarasota, FL (2012-) / Brooklyn, NY (1982-2012). Originally, Detroit.

OCCUPATION: Scholar & writer, Princeton Research Forum, NJ. Formerly, Associate Fellow, Institute for Research in History, NYC.

NUMBER OF RARE VOLUMES IN YOUR COLLECTION: About 50, to date, each valuing, say, \$8,000+. (The Mulvihill-Harris home library is considerable.)

FIRST BOOK YOU BOUGHT FOR YOUR COLLECTION: *Female Poems... by Ephelia* (London, 1679); 10 recorded copies (ESTC); 2 in private collections (mine; Chawton House UK)."

MOST RECENT BOOK YOU BOUGHT FOR YOUR COLLECTION: *Memoirs of Mary Shackleton Leadbeater*.

MOST EVER SPENT ON A SINGLE ITEM: \$8,000, a duplicate with special provenance, of my Anna Maria Van Schurman *Opuscula*.

HOW DO YOU FIND BOOKS FOR YOUR COLLECTION? Sale catalogues, book fairs, contacts in the trade.

FAVORITE BOOK(S) IN YOUR COLLECTION: *'Ephelia'* (1679); the Van Schurman (1653); Katherine Philips (1667); Mary Tighe (1812; Strachey copy, with book label).

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY: Paula Peyraud copy of Mary Shackleton Leadbeater's *Poems* (1808), Bloomsbury Auctions, NY, 2009. Presently at Penn.