

Chronicle

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Bobbie Ann Mason Speaks to Friends

The Fourteenth Annual Friends of the Library Dinner Meeting will be held Thursday, November 5, 1987, and the speaker will be Bobbie Ann Mason.

Bobbie Ann Mason was raised on a farm near Mayfield, Kentucky. She received her B.A. from the University of Kentucky, her M.A. from S.U.N.Y. Binghamton, and her Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut. She has been the recipient of a Pennsylvania Arts Council grant, and was a Guggenheim fellow in 1984.

Interested in literature and fiction writing since early childhood, Bobbie Ann Mason taught English and Journalism at Mansfield State College in Pennsylvania. Her writing has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Redbook*, *Vanity Fair*, *North American Review*, and *Virginia Quarterly Review*.

She has also written two works of fiction. *Shiloh and Other Stories* (published by Harper and Row in 1982) won The Ernest Hemingway Award for the most distinguished first-published work of fiction in 1982. *In Country*, a story of a young woman's struggle to understand the Vietnam war, was published in the Fall of 1985, also by Harper and Row.

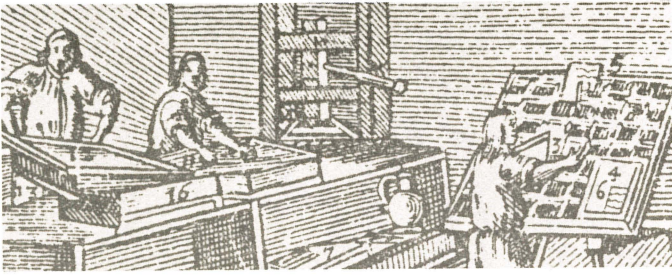
On the occasion of the publication of *In Country*, Ms. Mason spoke with Wendy Smith of *Publisher's Weekly* regarding her life and art. "I think that in fiction," she said "I'm just concerned with portraying the experience; the textures of the experiences are more important than any one-sided vision of things. I don't think fiction should be didactic. Large themes may come out, but I don't want to underline that. I think I'm inherently very shy, modest, and probably shying away from making large statements because I distrust them."



Of her most recent novel about Vietnam, Ms. Smith wrote: "Mason's sensitive, profound understanding of character and place, her clear-sighted yet compassionate examination of the most divisive issue in recent American history, seem to strike a deeply sympathetic chord in almost everyone."

Robert Towers, writing in the *New York Review of Books*, writes: "Bobbie Ann Mason is one of those rare writers who, by concentrating their attention on a few square miles of native turf, are able to open up new and suprisingly wide worlds for the delighted reader."

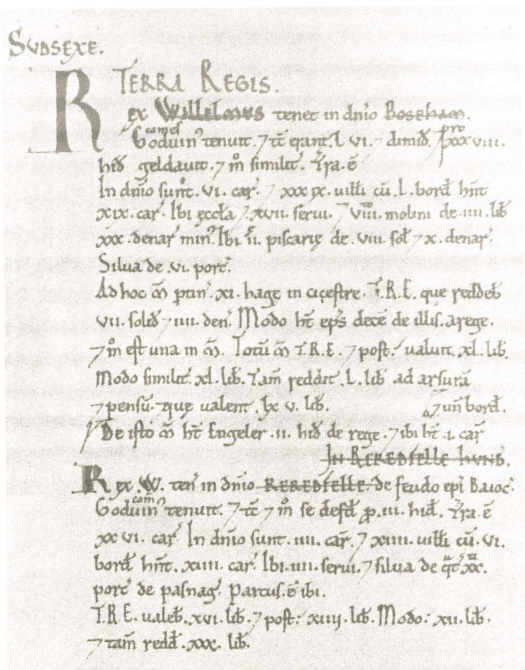
The Dinner Meeting will be held at the University Club of Nashville, with a reception beginning at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:30. Dinner will cost \$25 per person and attendees must be members of the Friends. Invitations have already been mailed to members of the Friends. Those interested in joining the Friends and attending the Dinner Meeting should call Library Administration at 322-7100.



Friends Make Significant Purchases

The Friends of the Library continues its great tradition of purchasing significant and varied materials for the Jean and Alexander Heard Library.

The major acquisition for 1987 was the library edition of the *Great Domesday Book* facsimile. On the occasion of the 900th anniversary of the *Great Domesday Book*, and its unbinding for conservation purposes, a facsimile was produced by Alecto Historical Editions. The exacting, full color reproduction process undertaken resulted in a facsimile in which "every stroke of the scribe's pen is as clear (or indeed as unclear) as in the manuscript." The library edition contains, in addition to the facsimile of the manuscript, complete sets of translations, matched column for column to the original, complete sets of county maps and a map of Domesday, England, and two volumes of the first ever produced indices to Domesday.



Great Domesday Book

The Law Library received funds to purchase reproductions of historical French legal materials. The *Ordonnances des roys de France* (1723-1849) contain the full text of laws and ordinances from the early sixteenth century; *Recueil general des anciennes lois francaises* (1821-1833) is a selective collection of important French laws from 420 A.D. to 1789; and *Collection complete des lois, decrets...* (1834-1838) is a collection of laws during the Revolution, Napoleonic era and the Restoration.

For the Music Library, the Friends purchased a sixty volume set of *The Symphony, 1720-1840*. The set includes symphonies from the entire Classical period, selected to demonstrate the development of the symphonic form, with representative samplings of closely related forms, such as sinfonias and overtures.

To support a growing interest in regional topics, the Friends allocated funds for selective purchases in Southern intellectual history. The purpose of this collection is to document the thoughts of those who, in post-Civil War years, sought to shape the South's future and to render judgment on the shortcomings and virtues of the Old South.

Continuing a long-standing interest, the Friends supported the purchase of several titles representative of works devoted to the structure of language and written communication. Purchased this year were Geoffrey Wakeman's *A Leaf History of British Printing from 1610-1774* (The Plough Press, 1986); and Michael Wilcox's *Twelve Bindings* (Taylor, 1985).

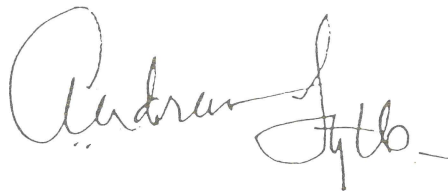
These latest acquisitions sustain the high standard of exceptional quality and research value the Friends desire for the Library's collections.

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Robert Penn Warren

Friends Support Fugitive/Agrarian Collection

A splendid addition to the Fugitive/Agrarian Collection in 1986-87, the 150 page manuscript of Robert Penn Warren's *Now & Then: Poems 1976-1978*, was made possible by the Friends of the Library. According to manuscript seller Glenn Horowitz, "Warren sent this manuscript to the poet William Meredith (Warren has inscribed it to Meredith on an early page), for Meredith's critique. Also present are three interesting Warren letters to Meredith, as is a photocopy of Meredith's lengthy three-page response. On several of the poems Warren has added holographic and typed changes of



text; Meredith's critique of the collection is sympathetic and supportive while, at the same time, being frankly judgemental; he faults Warren, for example, for leaning a bit heavily on John Crowe Ransom in one poem. In one of his letters to Meredith, Warren explains that Meredith's critiques



helped him confirm already existing suspicions concerning pieces which he, ultimately, would eliminate prior to publication."

In earlier seasons we had added the correspondence of William Meredith with John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate, as well as with Warren, and

several volumes with Meredith notes, creating a texture of the creative relationship among the poets.

Among published works, the emphasis this year has been on filling in the early titles of Peter Taylor



and Randall Jarrell, including Jarrell's *The Woman at the Washington Zoo* and *Fly by Night*. Taylor's *A Stand in the Mountains* and *Happy Families are All Alike* were also purchased.

Particularly interesting because of the Tate-Ford Maddox Ford conjunction was the acquisition of Caroline Gordon's *A Good Soldier: A Key to the Novels of Ford Maddox Ford*. Caroline Gordon served as Ford's typist in London when the young Tates first went abroad. In Paris, they stayed in



Ford's apartment. Later the Tates brought Ford to lecture at the Women's College at Greensboro. Ford was an honored guest at Benfoly and presided at the John Crowe Ransom farewell dinner in 1937. Some of these travels are also chronicled in *The Southern Mandarins*, the letters of Caroline Gordon to Sally Wood, a copy of which was presented to the Fugitive/Agrarian Collection last year by William S. Vaughn.



Robinson Collection Catalog Available

The Jean and Alexander Heard Library is pleased to announce the publication of *The Francis Robinson Collection of Theatre, Music, and Dance: A Manuscripts Catalog*. The Robinson Collection also includes a magnificent library which contains over 4,500 books and 800 sound recordings which Robinson used extensively throughout his career. For those who never had the opportunity to hear Francis Robinson's voice and for those who will enjoy hearing it again and remembering, the catalog also includes a recording on which he talks about those who inspired him, and those he loved and served faithfully in the world of theatre, music, and dance.

Even more richly than the published works in the collection, the manuscripts reflect the glory of association in the career of Francis Robinson, before and during his years with the Metropolitan Opera. From his youthful scrapbooks on Tibbett,

through his mature research into the art and life of Caruso, to his last contributions in planning the 100th Anniversary celebration of the Metropolitan Opera, the remarkable breadth and fine detail of his research and communication is astonishing.

It is the privilege of the Jean and Alexander Heard Library to serve as custodians of this splendid resource. Through the catalog, the library hopes to introduce thousands to the on- and off-stage world of the performing arts through Francis Robinson's experience. For others, the catalog will confirm their expectations of the splendor within. Those who contribute \$25 to further support the Robinson collection, and the areas it represents, may obtain a copy of the catalog. Direct inquiries to Special Collections, The Jean and Alexander Heard Library, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee 37240, or call (615) 322-7100.

Friends of the Library

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