

Shakespeariana and Shakespeare

Societies in North America, 1883-1893

Christy Desmet, University of Georgia

Abstract

This essay offers a brief ethnography of North American Shakespeare Societies through the most prominent clearing house for information about such societies in the latter half of the nineteenth century: the journal *Shakespeariana*. Not surprisingly, Shakespeare societies almost always involved a certain degree of ritual and structure. Most of the groups listed in the journal's "Shaksperian Societies" column, like the Philadelphia Shakspere Society, seem to feature predominantly male speakers and participants, although *Shakespeariana* does provide information about women's Shakespeare societies. In terms of their goals, the societies differ according to size and geographical location. The New York Shakespeare Society, the sponsoring organization for *Shakespeariana*, was large and had scholarly ambitions. By contrast, many societies were content to read Shakespeare's plays aloud, often in rotation. One general pattern was to read the play at one meeting, then to address criticism of that play at the next meeting. Some groups read criticism by published critics; some presented papers by the members themselves. Only a few clubs admitted to being purely "social." Through its essays, *Shakespeariana* develops its own literary ideology, recommending Shakespearean study for its power to convey the beauty of the English language and its ability to introduce readers young and old to important moral issues. Educating the masses is part of *Shakespeariana*'s democratic bent, while the assertion that Americans enjoy a particular affinity with Shakespearean drama gives the journal a nationalist orientation. At the same time, however, *Shakespeariana* very clearly sees American Shakespeare societies as enjoying a transatlantic kinship with their British (or perhaps just English) counterparts.

Henry Savage's centennial report on the Shakspere Society of Philadelphia (1852), which claims to be the oldest of its kind, offers an excellent benchmark for defining exactly what constitutes a Shakespeare society in the nineteenth century. The ceremony begins with dinner — "soup, terrapin, salad and cheese, an ice, or meringue" — followed by demitasse and cigars.¹ Then follows the reading of Shakespeare, each member free to jump in with a point or observation, although discussion is often left until the end of a scene, and the Dean sets the terms for analysis. Because discussion and argument can become "warm and protracted" (Savage 1952, 342), various

disciplinary measures maintain order and keep the discussion moving along. As Savage notes, at its best the Society combined a high-brow sense of leisure (the original founders were Law School students with Ivy League pedigrees) with scholarly intensity. When H. Howard Furness was Dean of the Society, for instance, he directed the group toward textual study; Savage claims that many of the society's discussions found their way into the Variorum Editions. The members here, like those of the Melbourne Shakespeare Society (1884-1904), tended to be powerful, often public figures (Stewart 2000, 271), although Ken Stewart, as chronicler for the Melbourne Society, argues that there was significant diversity, particularly in terms of gender, throughout that society's history. This essay offers a brief ethnography of North American Shakespeare societies in relation to the model established by these sources, focusing on the descriptions provided by the most prominent clearing house for information about Shakespeare societies in the latter half of the nineteenth century: the journal *Shakespeareana*.

Shakespeareana, published by the New York Shakespeare Society (1883-1893) and conveniently reprinted by AMS Press, is a treasure trove of information about such institutions on both sides of the Atlantic. I discuss the societies according to categories suggested by Savage's account of the Philadelphia Shakspeare Society, by an article about Shakespeare clubs published in *Shakespeareana*, and by my own reading "between the lines" of *Shakespeareana*'s published summaries and minutes from different Shakespeare societies.²

Food, Ritual, and Organization

After reading Savage's essay, I had high hopes of learning about the relation of Shakespeare to gastronomy, but alas, at least in their published minutes, most clubs seemed pretty sober. Women's clubs were generally serious and studious (Martin 1987, 51, 111 and *passim*), but the more masculine English literary societies, like the notorious Roxburghe Club, were known for excesses of food and drink — hence my disappointment.³ In 1884, *Shakespeareana* reports, the Massachusetts Press Association did offer a Shakespearean dinner involving oysters, fish, leg of mutton, turkey, venison, sweets, fruits, tea and coffee, the menu being adorned with appropriate quotations from Shakespeare (*Shakespeareana* 1.5 [1884], 159). Not surprisingly, there is almost always a certain degree of ritual and structure. Savage, for instance, details nicely the Philadelphia Shakspeare Society's pretty involved ceremonies, describing a delicate balance between discipline and carnival. At worst, such rituals could devolve into endless toasts to the Bard, but at best, there was method in the madness. For instance, the rather sedate Winchester College Shakespeare Society offered rather elaborate academic programs in which the masters read lectures and the students enjoyed musical entertainment and received elocution lessons. Today, we might call

such an event a mini-conference — or something like the Attending to Early Modern Women Conference, whose workshops often combine theory and practice. Almost every Society had a constitution, elected officers, and rules and regulations. In some sense, incorporation is the hallmark of a literary society, what distinguishes this kind of group from a school class or social club. Volume 3 of *Shakespeariana* includes a note concerning a Shakespeare Club for high school students that was founded in La Porte, Indiana: "The senior class in the high school here, consisting of fourteen members — eleven ladies and three gentlemen — has organized itself into a class for the study of Shakespeare. They met last evening . . . and have elected officers, adopted a constitution, and ordered Rolfe's edition of *The Merchant of Venice*" (*Shakespeariana* 3 [1886], 579), presumably for oral readings and study to follow. The officers and constitution clearly make this group a society rather than just another course, rather like contemporary school clubs that are set apart from the "official" school curriculum. Rules and regulations were adopted to maintain order, keep up attendance, and enact discipline among members. Clubs often included punitive measures for various infractions. The Sisters' Shakespeare Society of Elizabeth, New Jersey, to give one example, imposed fines for lateness and absence and required members to memorize and recite a Shakespearean quotation at each of the group's weekly meetings.⁴ Other groups also imposed fines for members who did not live up to their obligations, such as those who failed to present a paper at their designated time.

Membership

Most of the groups listed in the journal's "Shakespeare Societies" column, like the Philadelphia Shakspeare Society, seem to feature male speakers and participants almost exclusively. Despite the recovery work of recent scholars, which shows how prevalent women's groups were, *Shakespeariana*'s editors apparently regarded women's Shakespeare societies as something of an oddity. Interestingly, the New York Shakespeare Society's British cousin, F. J. Furnivall's New Shakspeare Society (founded 1873), included women, many of whom read their own papers to the assembled group (Thompson 1998, 125). Women's contributions are quite evident in the Society's published *Transactions*. Women were also prominent in the Clifton Shakespeare Society, which elected Mrs. C. I. Spencer President in 1887 and featured both female speakers and female-oriented papers — for instance, Miss Louisa Davies's paper entitled "A Ten Minutes Twitter on Two Tender Topics," which was a defense of Katherine in *Taming of the Shrew* that indicts Petruchio on the grounds that "no man ever won his wife's loving submission by treating her like a dangerous wild beast" (*Shakespeariana* 5 [1888], 472). It is possible that some of the records do not reflect accurately the gender balance of particular societies. The Melbourne Shakespeare

Society, for instance, admitted women; however, even at the turn of the century women who played a prominent role in the organization were reticent to take leadership roles, which may mean that the notices in *Shakespeariana* may not give an accurate picture of membership demographics. Gender was, furthermore, a serious issue in some times and places. Heather Murray's book about literary societies in nineteenth-century Ontario reports, for instance, that women faced prejudice in these literary societies even up until the late 1880s in Ontario, but were welcomed in Chatauqua literary circles (Murray 2002, 90). In another society at Chatham, there was a "distinct gender division of performative labor"; women gave vocal and musical performances, while men did the reading, although this division of labor was discontinued in the following year (Murray 2002, 94). It may be possible to catch a glimpse of gender politics at work in the room for those societies whose discussions are reported in some detail. Grace Latham's paper on "Poor Ophelia," for instance, is published in full in the *New Shakspeare Society Transactions* and concludes that Ophelia, having been trained by Polonius, has the passive virtue of obedience, but no active virtues (*New Shakspeare Society Transactions 1880-1886*, 401-30). (This is a somewhat more censorious version of Anna Jameson's estimate of Ophelia, which sees the character as a kind of latter-day Iphigenia, whose sacrifice gives her dignity even in madness [1897, 147-48].) The redaction of the paper and of its reception in *Shakespeariana*, however, reports as well that while the Rev. W. A. Harrison praised the paper, Mr. T. Tyler "thought that Miss Latham had not given Ophelia credit for the feminine gift of *dissimulation*" (*Shakespeariana* 1 [1883]: 180, emphasis in original). Is Mr. Tyler getting in a slight dig at Grace Latham?

Shakespeariana does provide some information about women's Shakespeare societies. The West Philadelphia Shakespeare Society, the journal reports, is perhaps the sole society "composed exclusively of ladies" (*Shakespeariana* 1.2 [1883], 60), although more are revealed in subsequent issues of the journal. The West Philadelphia Society was no populist women's group, however. The President, Mrs. George Kendrick, is probably Minnie Murdoch Kendrick (1849-1903), wife to banker George W. Kendrick, Jr., himself a Grand Master of the Masons; Mrs. Kendrick later founded the Quaker City chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution; she and her husband are memorialized by a stained glass window in the Metropolitan Baptist Church in Philadelphia; Bryn Mawr also offers, in her honor, a scholarship for a graduate from the Philadelphia High School for Girls. Mrs. L. D. Judd, Treasurer, was probably the wife of a prominent physician of that city. Mrs. John McCullough, Secretary, may possibly have been the actor's wife, who lived in Philadelphia after her husband's rare, degenerative mental illness drove him from the stage. Probably the West Philadelphia Shakespeare Society, like many formalized women's clubs, was democratic in spirit and homogeneous and hermetic in practice (Martin 1987, 70-71).

The essay "Shakespeare Societies in America" claims that there is little procedural difference between men and women's societies (*Shakespeariana* 2 [1885], 483). A particularly interesting and vividly described group, much more populist and feminist than its Philadelphia counterpart, is the Lebanon Shakespeare Club of Lebanon, Missouri, which was born when Mrs. J. C. Wallace began reading Shakespeare's works with her daughter and decided that it would be more fun as a group activity: "And now we have an enthusiastic Club of about eighteen ladies, in ages ranging from fifteen to sixty" (*Shakespeariana* 2 [1885], 48). This club, interestingly, has missed only one week's meeting, but has no superstructure other than Mrs. Wallace "who has always been our leader" (49). There are no other officers, except a figure common to some groups, the "Critic," who is appointed weekly and comes "prepared to the best of her ability" (49).⁵

Pedants and Playboys: What Did Shakespeare Societies Do?

The New York Shakespeare Society, the sponsoring organization for *Shakespeariana*, was large and had scholarly ambitions; although not necessarily populated by pedants, the Society took on the project of publishing the Bankside Shakespeare, which consisted of side-by-side reprints of Folio and First Quarto texts (Steeves 1970, 211). By contrast, many societies were content to read Shakespeare's plays aloud, often in rotation. Play reading, whether done aloud in groups or silently by individuals, was a preoccupation for *Shakespeariana*, which regularly reviewed editions and editors, both of Collected Works and individual plays. One general pattern was to read the play at one meeting, then to address criticism of that play at the next meeting. Other groups were limited to reading. Some groups read criticism by published critics; some presented papers by the members themselves. Only a few admitted to being purely "social."

As a frequent contributor to the "Shakespeare Societies" column in *Shakespeariana*, the Clifton Shakespeare Society in England provides some of the most detailed evidence of what went on in this particular society's meetings. In the 1887-1888 session, for instance, the Clifton Shakespeare Society met on a regular basis (twice in October, once in November, once in December, once in January, etc.). It is a little difficult to tell who the authors of these papers were, and whether members of the Society offered their own contributions or selections from other writers to be read aloud for the group's edification. The 1887-1888 session included, in addition to the "Ten Minutes' Twitter" described above, a discussion of the Shakespeare authorship question in the presidential address, deciding in favor of Shakespeare over Bacon, an analysis of humours in Jonson's *Every Man In*; an appeal from the Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon for funds to help with the restoration of Shakespeare's church; a paper on and discussion of historical incidents in *Thomas, Lord Cromwell*; and a review of a reading edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* (*Shakespeariana*

4 [1888], 471-73). *Shakespeariana* often printed programs from the Clifton Society, providing a good sense of the range of topics covered.

Shakespeariana's second issue offers insight into the New York Shakespeare Society's official recommendations about "The Method of Shakespearian Study." To gather both "instruction and inspiration," the student should first gather "every possible kind of information." Critical Method — step one in the reading process — is a labor-intensive study of topics ranging from grammar, Shakespeare's contemporaries, religion, and "facts medical, legal, naval, military, commercial, and even ethical" (*Shakespeariana* 1.2 [1884], 49). Many pages of *Shakespeariana* itself are devoted to such pursuits — for instance, to what information about early modern education can be gleaned from *Taming of the Shrew* or to an account of Shakespeare's flowers. "Aesthetic" study, which is higher than, but subsequent to, the spade-work of Critical Method, is a romantic grasping of Shakespearean sublimity that apparently the free nation of Americans is particularly well-suited to experience (11). Generally, the periodical imitates the emphases of Furnivall's New Shakspeare Society; it combines attention to philology and textual matters with encomia for Shakespeare's artistry — although befitting the journal and the Society's broad educational goals, there is more antiquarian information, fewer authorship debates, and absolutely no metrical tests.

Sometimes the society minutes published in *Shakespeariana* can give us a glimpse of the actual conversation that occurred during meetings. In November, 1883, for instance, the Montreal Shakespeare Club studied *Julius Caesar*. Mr. T. D. King "read a paper declaring Brutus as the hero of the play, pointing out that public duty was the keynote of his character, but that possibility was for him a sufficient ground of action" (*Shakespeariana* 1.2 [1883], 60). Similarities to other Shakespearean heroes were pointed out, "as well as the difficulty the reader felt in accounting for Brutus' yielding to Cassius." In the ensuing discussion, however, other Society members "vindicated the character of Cassius from the aspersions cast upon it by the reader," while the Chair directed attention to the larger question of "the morality of assassination," concluding that human life is more valued in "modern" than in Shakespearean times (60). The familiar rhythms of classroom discussion, even now, are perceptible. While a few of the more elite societies self-consciously perform professional scholarship, for the most part, Shakespeare societies — male as well as female — functioned as Elizabeth Long's studies of reading groups indicate, using textual interpretation to establish social connections and examine cultural values, often through the lens of character analysis (Long 1992, 199). Volume 3 of *Shakespeariana* (1886), for instance, reports on "Essay Night" at the Montreal Shakespeare Club, which on 2 November, 1886, focused on *Hamlet*. After the first paper, which predictably discusses "The Character of Hamlet," comes a slightly more surprising reading of Claudius as "a noble and great nature ruined by his love

for Gertrude, as Lancelot's was by Guinevere." In the midst of a rather conventional reading of Ophelia, which concludes that she welcomes madness as a relief from her romantic woes, Mr. F. T. Short begins Ophelia's biography with a somewhat puzzling glance at her "lonely girlhood at the farm" (emphasis mine; *Shakespeariana* 3 [1886], 578). Can anyone tell me why Ophelia grew up on a farm? Has this critic, perhaps, been reading Saxo-Grammaticus? Or Mary Cowden Clarke?⁶

The ladies of the Lebanon Shakespeare Club, who read from 3:00-5:00 p.m. every Saturday, began by calling roll, then having each member recite her "favorite sentiment culled from the lesson" (*Shakespeariana* 2 [1885], 49). Then they considered the "language and sentiment" of the play under consideration: "Pronunciation is closely criticized, but we devote no time to elocution. Every reference to mythology, science, botany, and historical events is carefully investigated, not neglecting the geography of all places mentioned" (49). The Lebanon readers were well-disciplined, not consulting any notes until they had first interpreted the text for themselves.⁷ Despite their "feminine" reticence about public performance — the avoidance of declamation — N. W. Serl reports proudly that members of the group, having finished reading the plays about English kings, could "pass as creditable examination upon that subject as any Club in America" (49). The Lebanon Shakespeare Club seems to model perfectly the focus and goals that *Shakespeariana* imagines appropriate to a society, savoring the text but harvesting from it the greatest amount of knowledge possible about all kinds of subjects. Perhaps not incidentally, the women confine their efforts to Critical Method, leaving the Romantic frenzy of "appreciation" to more elite groups.

Ideology

The New York Shakespeare Society defines itself as "liberal and catholic and welcomes members of all shades of opinion, who, without committing themselves to any school, can heartily join its members in promoting the knowledge and study of the works of Shakespearean and Elizabethan drama. It lays down no platform, and has no touchstone; its motto is the speech [sic] of Tranio in *The Taming of the Shrew* (Bankside E. 337): "'No profit grows, where there is no pleasure tane.'" Catholicity here probably means not hostile to Baconians, as Furnivall's New Shakspeare Society was. The journal tries very hard to skirt the hostility between these authorial camps. But *Shakespeariana*, as a journal, also has an individualized philosophy and set of goals. The inaugural volume of 1883 leads off with William Taylor Thom's "Introduction to Shakespeare into the Schools," which recommends Shakespearean study for its ability to convey the beauty of the English language and to introduce readers young and old to important moral issues.⁸ Continuing

study of Shakespeare, for Thom, can provide an avenue to what these days would be called "life-long learning," tinged though it might be with Leavisite inclinations:

As an incentive to *self-education* there is nothing better than Shakespeare. No matter what the after life is to be, all pupils need this training which comes from the effort to decide on what they do really think. Here the school training and the life-education are merged; the work is done by the pupil for himself, the teacher only giving to the reproduction of thought, form and correction as to detail. In the world of such a play as *Hamlet*, for instance, there arise innumerable questions of good and bad taste, of frankness and dishonesty of utterance as of thought, of wisdom and unwisdom of speech or deed. For the pupil considering these things, "the question" is not alone "to be or not to be," it is also to think or not to think, to do or not to do. (*Shakespeariana* 1 [1883], 11)

Extensive reviews of reader-friendly editions, a regular feature of *Shakespeariana*, seem to be part of this educational program. So, too, are the reviews and summaries of staged drama, "for the representation of his plays upon the stage is among the many and best methods, and that which he himself mainly selected, of teaching his grand lesson and widening the sphere of his usefulness" (27). Shakespeare performed can ennoble the "intellectual tastes and moral tastes" of the "masses," that class of person who would "never read him in the study."⁹ If the essay by J. V. L. entitled "Shakespeare Societies of America: Their Methods and Work" can be taken as representing the editors' position, *Shakespeariana* places special value on the small Shakespeare Societies and on those from small towns and rural areas. Large societies are too grandiose in their goals; small ones often accomplish more than they set out to. While city societies may generally contribute more to Shakespeare scholarship, they often degenerate into dining societies. "The country societies," by contrast,

notwithstanding their narrow field of work, and insignificant as their place in the Shakespearian history of the country, are a very much more fruitful theme for study than are the city societies. One is impressed by the singular earnestness that pervades all their deliberations. The arguments, it is true, are frequently not profound, but they have the great merit of being thoroughly in earnest. (*Shakespeariana* 2 [1885]: 481)

A sentimental pride in American democratic spirit and eagerness for civic self-improvement can be seen as well in the journal's advice to readers about what editions to purchase and how to select a Shakespearean reader.

Educating the masses is part of *Shakespeariana's* democratic bent, while the assertion that Americans enjoy a particular affinity with Shakespearean drama gives the journal a nationalist orientation. At the same time, however, the journal very clearly sees American Shakespeare Societies as enjoying a transatlantic kinship with their British (or perhaps just English) counterparts.¹⁰ James O. Halliwell-Phillips, for instance, was made the first honorary member of the New York Society. *Shakespeariana* also had regular commerce with the New Shakspeare Society, reprinting articles from that organ, summarizing its meetings, and sometimes quarreling with the substance of papers read there. In Volume 5, the regular column "Open Court" features "The Case of Fleay Versus Furness" (*Shakespeariana* 5 [1888], 466-70). The intertextual traffic went both ways; in 1882, one year before the publication of *Shakespeariana*, *The New Shakspeare Society's Transactions* details Furnivall's reading of Teena Rochfort-Smith's paper on "The Relation of the First Quarto of *Hamlet* to the Second, and on Some of the Textual Difficulties of the Play," which after discussion was followed by the reading of a note about the contested word "chief" at 1.3.74 of that play, written by none other than W. Taylor Thom (*New Shakspeare Society Transactions, 1880-1886*, 50-51).

Conclusion

Savage concludes his essay about the Philadelphia Shakspeare Society by ruminating on two dangers that face any literary society: "that it may become a place where pedantic professors wrangle over textual minutiae" and so drive away less technical Shakespeare lovers; and "that it may become a pleasant dining-club for those with few or no literary interests" (Savage 1952, 350). Repeated toasts to the Bard aside, a scholarly interest in the plays — combined with a liberal faith in Shakespeare's ethical power and a zeal for spreading his gospel beyond barriers of class and gender — generally characterized the project of later nineteenth-century Shakespeare societies and the journal that commemorated their efforts. Scholarly Shakespeare and the People's Shakespeare were, for a time, if not one, at least engaged in a productive dialogue. A report on "Shakespeare Clubs and Study Groups" in the 1952 volume of *Shakespeare Quarterly* notes that the Shakespeare Club of Concord, New Hampshire, which was founded in 1881, had held membership in the Shakespeare Association of America since 1951. It is possible that we will soon see once again a convergence of the amateur and professional Shakespeariana. The British Shakespeare Society, established in 2002, has from the start been committed to linking academe with a broader community.¹¹ The latest iteration of the New York Shakespeare Society, founded in 1997 by Adriana Mnuchin and Nancy Becker, is also designed "for people who share a passion for Shakespeare, and an enduring curiosity to understand and appreciate the greatest playwright of the

English language."¹² The healthy interplay between scholarship and community that characterized Shakespeare societies in the nineteenth century is alive and well today on both sides of the Atlantic.

Notes

1. A Bill of Fare from the Philadelphia Shakspeare Society is reproduced in *Shakespeariana* 1.7 (1884): 197-99.
2. I was introduced to *Shakespeariana* by the work of Ann Thompson, in her essay published here and elsewhere, and most especially by the work of Tricia Lootens See "Shakespeare, King of What? Gender, Nineteenth-Century Patriotism, and the Case of *Poet-lore*," in *Re-placing King Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer, forthcoming.
3. For instance, dinners at The Sheffield Shakespeare Club, founded in 1819 "as a protest against the fulminations of a local cleric upon the immorality of theatre-going" (Steeves 1970, 144n), featured "endless toasts," and on at least one occasion, a member fell down the stairs.
4. Fines and other penalties were exacted by other women's clubs (Martin 1987, 98 and *passim*).
5. That at least some of the clubs also read *Shakespeariana* is also evident from their reports (e.g., the Cooperstown, N.Y. Shakespeare Club (1.7 [1884], 200). The women of Lebanon were apparently fortunate in their experience with the Critic. "Shakespeare Societies of America: Their Method and Work" complains that the position is a difficult one, as the Critic "very often knows no more about the subject he criticizes than the writer of the essay himself" (2 [1885], 483).
6. I do not mean to imply here that the Montreal Shakespeare Society was not elite. At least one member was a professor from Magill University.
7. A detailed course of study for *Julius Caesar* that was undertaken by the Quincy, Illinois Shakespeare society of "thirty-five ladies," distributed over weekly sessions of two hours each, can be found in *Shakespeariana* 2 (1885): 400-401.
8. William Taylor Thom, a professor of Chaucer and Shakespeare at Hollins Institute, Virginia, also followed W. E. B. DuBois's study of Farmville, Virginia with "'The Negroes of Sandy Spring, Maryland,' then 'The Negroes of Litwalton, Virginia,' and finally 'The True Re-formers,' a black self help enterprise" (U.S. Department of Labor, <http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/history/blackstudieslist.htm>). The studies were published by the U.S. Department of Labor.
9. The same issue of *Shakespeariana* contains a review of Thom's own 1881 publication, *Shakespeare Examinations*, which helped several of his women students win the New Shakspeare Society's book prize for "college proficientes" (1 [1883], 29).

10. There is less attention given to European societies, despite the journal's expected genuflection toward German criticism and scholarship.

11. In its working papers, the Society website lists the following goals:

- To promote and support regional productions of Shakespeare's work.
- To encourage and help facilitate workshops and discussion groups to run alongside productions.
- To run its own adult workshops for members and the general public.
- To provide a resource base and contact information of practitioners/academics etc. that are members of the society.
- To contact and set up ongoing liaison with the Open University, Workers Education Association, the University of the Third Age etc.
- To help break down the intellectual and cultural barriers that may disenfranchise people from Shakespeare's work. Adopting a pro-active role in the promotion of Shakespeare so that it is available and accessible to all.

12. While much of the website is limited to "members only," the Society also has a very liberal "Adopt-a-School" Program, placing it in the long tradition of such societies in North America.

Online Resources

Attending to Women Conference Websites. Center for Renaissance & Baroque Studies, University of Maryland [cited 9 May, 2007]. <http://www.crbs.umd.edu/atw/>.

Clifton Shakespeare Society [cited 9 May, 2007]. National Register of Archives. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/searches/sidocs.asp?SIR=O27572>.

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The Philadelphia Shakspeare Society Menu appears in *Shakespeareana*, 1.7 (May 1884): 197.

The image of Mrs. Beerbohm Tree as Ophelia from Anna Jameson's *Shakespeare's Heroines* is reproduced by permission of Christy Desmet.

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