

Museum Textile Services

Issue 1 | Summer 2012

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Cover: Reverse of Abraham Sacrifices Isaac, a tapestry belonging to St. George's School in Middletown, RI. Temporary net has been stitched over vulnerable silk areas.



Handsome Dan: Yale's Mascot Visits MTS

Early in 2012, a curious textile arrived at our new studio. The hooked rug bears the proud image of a bulldog in a Yale sweater and an inscription reading "Handsome Dan II." We were hooked (no pun intended)...who was this Handsome Dan?

Clue to Handsome Dan II's identity are his blue sweater and the football next to him. After some research, Cara Jordan learned that the tradition of Handsome Dan began in 1889 when Yale got its first official mascot, Handsome Dan I. Handsome Dan, a bulldog, was purchased for \$5.00 from a local blacksmith's shop by Yale student Andrew Graves. Handsome Dan attended Yale's football games and was trained to "speak to Harvard," whereupon he would bark ferociously. He remained Yale's mascot until his death in 1898. Handsome Dan's body has been stuffed and can still be seen today in the Payne Whitney Gymnasium.

Handsome Dan's successor, Handsome Dan II, came to Yale in 1933. He was bought with saved pennies by the freshman class and nicknamed "Bad Dan." In 1934 he was kidnapped by Harvard students and photographed with the statue of John Harvard. Handsome Dan II passed away in 1937 due to complications from a broken leg.

Since then there have been a long succession of Handsome Dans at Yale. The likeness of Handsome Dan has even appeared on Christmas cards and is part of the Yale team logo. The newest Handsome Dan, Handsome Dan XVII, known as “Sherman,” has been part of the Yale tradition since 2007. Yale’s adoption of the bulldog as its mascot was the first officially recognized U.S. collegiate mascot. Since then many other colleges have also adopted the bulldog as their own.

Family records tell us that this hooked rug was made by Blanche Paull, the great grandmother of owner’s partner Matthew Carter. Ms Paull was an accomplished artist whose son Tom attended Yale. The rug likely dates to Handsome Dan II’s tenure, between 1933 and 1937.

MTS is looking forward to conserving this historic hooked rug so that the family can display it for future generations.

Harvard Connections

The Harvard Extension School Museum Studies Masters Program is near and dear to our hearts here at MTS. Two staff members are currently part of the program; Conservation Assistant Cara Jordan is working on her thesis, while Technician Courtney Jason is in her second semester of classes. Former intern Kaleigh Paré is also working towards her masters in the program.

The Museum Studies program at Harvard Extension School is a forty-credit program that provides those enrolled with the skills necessary to enter the competitive museum job market. Class topics include an introduction to the world of museums, museum management, museum educational programs, curation and exhibition development. Students begin with Introduction to Museum Studies, and upon completing a second course and enrolling in the pro-seminar Graduate Research Methods and Scholarly Writing in Museum Studies, they apply for acceptance to the program. Upon acceptance, students take five more classes, for a total of eight, followed by a 200-hour internship in a museum and a thesis. Upon completion of these requirements, the new graduate is awarded a Masters of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies from Harvard University.

Cara is currently completing her thesis, *Exhibiting Controversy*, which focuses on Civil War exhibits as the last step in finishing the program and obtaining her masters. Her thesis is timed to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, looking especially at differences in regional portrayals of the North and South based on the exhibit locations.

Right: Courtney Jason conserving a Bicentennial felt banner. Courtesy of Hanover Historical Society.



The Conservation Studio at MTS

Museum Textile Services has a new studio! After an exhaustive three-week effort of painting, cleaning, and moving, the new facility opened for business on January 16, 2012. In its previous life, our new location was Wool Storage Building A of the Ballard Vale Mills. It was constructed in 1878 of brick with a slate roof, and was renovated and restored in 1994.

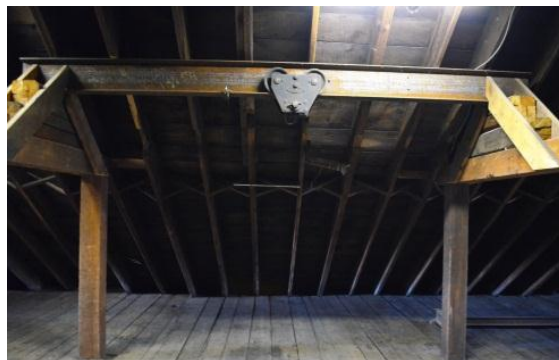
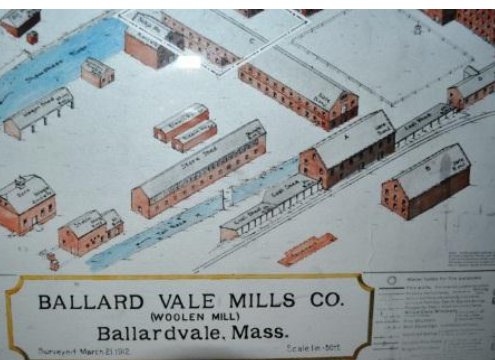
The Ballard Vale Mills produced "white flannels," a term originally given to clothing worn while playing cricket but later generalized to mean casual men's pants of the 1880's.

While moving some of our items to the third-floor attic, we discovered wool fibers still clinging to the wooden beams. It was very exciting for us to find physical evidence of the past function of our new space. Also in the attic, there still exists part of a large pulley system, or "rope hoist" used to lift bales of wool to each floor.

Our new building has all of the modern conveniences while still retaining its historical charm. The studio space has increased by fifty percent, which has allowed us to give a permanent home to our new tapestry tensioner and photographic equipment. The new space has also given us another foot of ceiling height, allowing us to display and work on larger objects. One of the long walls in the studio space showcases the building's original brickwork.

Other improvements include a permanent hookup for our large wash table, and the installation of a new stainless-steel darkroom sink to allow us to wash smaller textiles with greater ease. A larger storage room accommodates a table designated for object intake and examination, as well as a place to meet with clients. Additionally, there is a separate office space furnished with Arts & Crafts pieces provided by *Northwind Antiques*.

Many thanks to all who helped us with our move, especially Elliott Morehardt, Sarah Berlinger, Eric Greenburg, and Conrad Neuthmann.



Social Media Coup

Being a part of the social-media community with tools such as Facebook and Twitter is not only a fun way for MTS to connect to you, it can also be a great way to build our resumes.

Last year we became friends with Marcia Young, Editor and Publisher of *Fiber Art Now*, a new fiber arts and textiles magazine. Over the past several months, the Fiber Art Now online community has grown exponentially, bringing us in contact with textile arts people around the world. In the Winter 2012 issue of the print magazine, Camille Myers Breeze was one of six fiber specialists to comment on the topic of “meaning vs. materiality” for the Viewpoints column.

We’re excited about the publication of the Spring 2012 issue, which contains a feature article about our recent work called “A Woman on a Mission: Preserving Textiles Before it’s Too Late.” The piece was written by our marketing consultant, Erica Holthausen of *Honest Marketing Revolution*.

Looking for Facebook Friends?

Why not “Like” the Museum Textile Services *Facebook page*. You can read all about historic clothing and textiles not just here but all over the world. You are always welcome to post questions there for us to answer or to start an interesting conversation thread.

Pinterest

Are you part of the newest trend in Social Media outreach? Then follow our boards on *Pinterest!* Click through using the icon on our *homepage*, or search for “Camille Breeze.” There you’ll see boards about all types of historic clothing and textile conservation projects, museum exhibitions, textile and museum-related blogs, and a few other subjects near and dear to Camille’s heart.

Have you read the MTS Blog?

Twice a month, the staff at MTS posts a new blog about projects, research, and hot topics around the studio. You can find a link to our blog on the home page of the *website*, or you can bookmark the *direct link*. Like what you read? Leave us a comment!



Be Resourceful

Did you know that the MTS website is chock full of resources for collections specialists, students, and textile collectors? On our *Resources* page you can read and download digital publications, read writings by Camille Myers Breeze, view MTS videos and slide shows, and print out more than a dozen MTS Handouts. MTS Handouts cover clothing and textile storage and display topics, as well as general conservation guidelines.

In 2011 we added four new MTS Handouts to our library. *Vacuuming Textiles* takes you through the supply list and steps needed to surface clean historic textiles with a vacuum cleaner. Think you can't surface clean your collection without spending a bundle on a museum vacuum? Think again!

Following the devastation wrought by Hurricane Irene on our New England region in August, 2011, we developed two new disaster response handouts: *Salvage Chart for Wet Textiles* and *Salvage Chart for Previously Wet Textiles*. Both handouts walk the user through the decision-making process for dealing with textile collections exposed to water. They are designed to be used with the new *Disaster Response* page on our website, which provides additional instructions and resources on dealing with a water emergency.

For more accomplished stitchers, there is a new MTS Handout on *Conservation Netting*. Stabilization of weak fabrics with an overlay of net is one of the most widespread techniques used in textile conservation. When done correctly, netting is an efficient, cost-effective, and completely reversible way to protect textile and clothing damaged by handling, strain, light-exposure, pests, chemical breakdown, and the damage of time.

Conservation Technician, Sarah Berlinger, struts her stuff with the vacuum . . . and a power tool!



The Latest Resource: Bugs, Bugs, Bugs

It's not usually a favorite topic of conversation, but conservators can always bend your ear about bugs. As spring and summer approach, dormant eggs hatch, larvae grow and then pupate, and mature adults emerge days or weeks later capable of mating and creating more eggs. And this is when some of our most important work is done.

Most insect infestations occur in dark and moist areas where plentiful food is available and there is little disturbance. Ideal places include closets, trunks, boxes, plastic bags, suitcases, cupboards, and beneath carpets. You may know you have an infestation because you see the insects or their larvae, but just as often you see only piles of fiber, droppings (frass), webbing, and holes in your textiles.

Insects choose which textiles to infest based on what the material is. Most textiles fall into one of three categories. Protein fibers are made from animal products and include wool, silk, feather, fur, and leather. Cellulosic fibers come from plants and include cotton, linen, hemp, jute, and paper. Synthetic fibers are mostly man-made polymers, including rayon, a man-made cellulosic fiber.

The most common insect pest that causes damage to cellulosic textile fibers is the silverfish. Resembling a ½-inch-long shark, silverfish are attracted to starch found in food, building materials, paper, and textiles, as well as mold or fungi. They are often found in damp places, such as bathroom linen closets, and are mostly nocturnal.

Most structures are home to the carpet beetle, which subsists on protein (keratin). Varied carpet beetles, measuring as little as ⅛-inch long, are the species most common to the US north east.



Carpet beetles, like this one, thrive around dead insects, human and pet food, natural history and taxidermy specimens, carpets, furnishings, and wool or silk clothing and can be very harmful to your textile collections.

They are oval with a brown and tan striped pattern on their scales. Both the carpet beetle larvae and its casing are fluffy and brown. Carpet beetles thrive around dead insects, human and pet food, natural history and taxidermy specimens, carpets, furnishings, and wool or silk clothing. They can be found near warm windows and light fixtures, especially in spring.

The two most common moths that infest household and museum collections are the webbing clothes moth and casemaking clothes moth. Both are frequent pests on wool and silk clothing, carpets, tapestries, upholstery, and craft supplies. Webbing clothes moths grow up to $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch long and are pale tan in color. They tend to avoid light, however they can be seen flying around, especially in spring and summer.

Casemaking clothes moths are smaller, measuring only $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch long, and may be browner and faintly speckled. The larvae create a silky case and carry it around with them, depositing fiber and frass on it as they graze. The larvae cannot live outside their case. Casemaking clothes moth larvae are just as voracious as webbing clothes moths and will leave holes and large areas of denuded threads.

Despite their similarities, webbing clothes moths and casemaking clothes moths have key differences. The larvae of the webbing clothes moth will eat for 68–87 days, however the casemaking clothes moth larvae can survive as long as 2.5 years before pupating. The adult case-making clothes moth lives a mere 4–6 days, however the webbing clothes moth has up to one month to mate and lay eggs before dying.

If you believe you have an insect infestation, contact a conservator immediately. Do not use pesticides, such as bug spray, moth balls, or boric acid because they are potentially harmful to pets, people, and your textiles. You may carefully vacuum the effected textiles and surrounding areas to remove insects, their larvae, and eggs only if you are certain you can do so without damaging fragile fabrics. Quarantine effected items in zip-top or garbage bags and bring to a conservator.

For a more detailed discussion of insect pests that affect textiles, download the latest MTS Handout, *Identifying and Mitigating Insect Infestations*, from our website.

Tips for Handling Your Textile Treasures

- Avoid displaying your items in high-traffic areas where they can be accidentally harmed.
- Choose low-light display areas with stable temperature and humidity.
- Store items in a spare room, closet, or drawer, rather than the attic, basement, or garage.
- Out of sight, out of mind. Check your stored items every spring and fall for signs of pests, mildew, or moisture damage.
- Protect your items with archival storage materials such as acid-free boxes or polypropylene bins. Wrap them carefully in acid-free, unbuffered tissue or clean white sheets.



Samplers

Conserving samplers is a great pleasure for us here at Museum Textile Services. They often contain information that can be used to find out more about the person or family who made the sampler. The name and age of the maker and year it was made are commonly included in the embroidery, as well as the town in which the maker resided. At MTS we enjoy everything from documenting to mounting and framing samplers for individuals and institutions alike. Here are some of the sampler highlights from the last few months.

Thanks to a *Tru-View Optium Conservation Grant* through the American Institute for Conservation, we were able to conserve seven samplers for the *Fairbanks House* in Dedham, Massachusetts. In 2008, MTS conducted our initial survey of samplers in the Fairbanks House, which were created by members of the extended family between 1763 and 1830.

Embroideries of Colonial Boston was a spectacular exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which ran from November 20, 2010 - March 13, 2011. Its opening coincided with the launch of the museum's new American Wing, which contains countless priceless samplers and other textiles. We are lucky to be so close to such a world-class collection of needlework.

In 2011, the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded a grant to aid in the archiving and documentation of samplers. The University of Delaware, University of Oregon, and the Sampler Consortium are all working together to document and create a *Database of American Samplers*. The archive will carefully record the who, what, when, how, and why of a sampler into a database along with color, hi-resolution photographs. MTS will be paying close attention to this database project, as well as other sampler documentation projects, so that we can help our clients be a part of sampler history.

On January 22, 2012, Sothebys held a landmark auction of the collection of *American Schoolgirl Embroideries* belonging to Betty Ring. Ring is the author of the invaluable two-volume book *Girlhood Embroidery: American Samplers & Pictorial Needlework, 1650-1850*. Total sales from the auction surpassed \$4 million, exceeding the pre-sale estimate by nearly one million dollars. The sampler *Mary Antrim, Burlington Country, New Jersey, Dated 1807* set a new record for a sampler, achieving a sale price of \$1,070,500. Adding to its value were the sampler's stunning appearance, excellent condition, and the presence of its original frame.

Above, from left: Courtney Jason hanging the Julia Walker Mourning embroidery. Eliza Woodward Sampler before and after conservation. Courtesy of the Fairbanks Family in America.



Tapestry Conservation

The last three years have seen a steady stream of European tapestries come to MTS for conservation. These large and prestigious works of art are among our favorite types of textiles to work on. Their scale and subject matter are impressive, and the length of time it takes to conserve most tapestries provides a calm oasis amid the all of the deadlines that need to be met in the studio (The Burgos Tapestry now on display at the Cloisters in Manhattan took colleagues over 30 years to conserve!)

There are many steps involved in tapestry conservation. First, any old lining, patches, rings, or hooks are removed and saved for return to the client. The tapestry is then surface cleaned to remove dust, dirt and fiber. Tapestries can be extremely dusty, as they tend to hang for decades between treatments. Before wetcleaning, any areas of weakness are temporarily stabilized with net and hand stitching.

A temporary wash tank is built to accommodate the full size of the tapestry. Deionized water and surfactant are used to safely wash away deterioration products and water-soluble soils. The tapestry is toweled to remove as much water as possible and then laid out flat to air dry. The freshly cleaned tapestry is supple and shiny and reveals details obscured by grime.

The repair phase of tapestry conservation requires a special piece of equipment called a tensioner. It is composed of two parallel rolling pipes with a locking and turning mechanism raised up on two supports. The tapestry is rolled onto one pipe and stretched across to the other to create a flat, tensioned surface.

Conservators start at one end and meticulously replace missing weft, broken warps, and weak slit-stitches as they roll through the tapestry. Even a quick tapestry repair will often require weeks of hand stitching. Once repairs are complete, the lining process begins.

Lining a tapestry is most successful when the tapestry can be hung without touching the floor. To accomplish this, Museum Textile Services uses our Tapestry Annex, a 20-foot-tall space on

Facing page: Cara Jordan passes a needle to a colleague standing behind a tapestry hanging in the MTS Tapestry Annex. Right: Tapestry tensioner built by Elliott Morehardt.



the top floor of Camille Breeze's finished barn. A hoist system is installed there to allow the tapestry to be raised and lowered as needed.

Vertical straps of fabric tape or cloth are spaced one foot apart and pinned to the reverse top edge of the tapestry. Straps act like support struts to distribute the weight. The tapestry is hung and the straps attached using hand stitching. One conservator stands in front of the tapestry and another behind, and the needles are passed back and forth.

A tapestry lining is assembled from panels of fabric and hand stitched to the reverse top edge along a pre-determined horizontal axis. A strip of Velcro is also hand sewn along the horizontal axis, as close to the top as possible. The sides of the tapestry lining are sewn up with blind stitching. Finally, the bottom of the lining is hemmed and left to hang free so that the tapestry can expand and contract with environmental fluctuations.

Camille Myers Breeze has been conserving tapestries since 1989 when she was an undergraduate intern. In 1992 she began working as a textile conservator at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, which has an impressive tapestry collection. Camille quickly developed a passion for tapestries under the mentorship first of the late R. Bruce Hutchison and then Marlene Eidelheit. Camille's article *The History of Tapestry Conservation and Exhibition at the Cathedral of St. John* appeared in the *International Tapestry Journal* in 1996.

In 1998, Camille Myers Breeze accepted an Advanced Mellon Fellowship at the Textile Conservation Center at the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts, which was known for tapestry conservation before its closure in 2006. There she conserved tapestries for both private collectors and institutions such as the Gardner Museum in Boston.

After completing her fellowship in 1999, Camille's book *A Survey of American Tapestry Conservation Techniques* was published, followed shortly by two other tapestry publications that grew out of her Mellon Fellowship research.

Six of Camille's tapestry publications can be downloaded from the *Resources* section of the MTS website.



Left: Kaleigh Paré removes a tapestry lining while wearing a respirator to protect against mold spores and fiber.

Olympic History Comes to MTS

"The most important thing is not to win but to take part!" Coined by International Olympic Committee founder Pierre de Coubertin, this phrase has served as a motto of the Olympics since 1908. We at Museum Textile Services were excited to receive several items of Olympic memorabilia for conservation from the *Middlesex School* in Concord, Massachusetts. An alumnus of the prep school, one Gordon Smith, donated his jacket, cap, and hockey pants from the 1932 Olympic Games to the school's collection, and they have elected to have it conserved as an important piece of American Olympic history.

Gordon Smith was a member of the 1932 and 1936 United States Olympic ice hockey teams. The 1932 games, where these objects were used, took place in Lake Placid, New York. That year, the team won the silver medal. In the only game Smith played in that year, he scored a goal. In the 1936 games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, the team earned the bronze medal. Smith played in all eight games, and also scored one goal that year. Undoubtedly, Gordon and his team believed in de Coubertin's maxim.

The objects submitted to MTS for conservation include the jacket and cap used during the Opening Ceremony and worn by athletes throughout the games, as well as a pair of hockey pants that were most likely worn during competition. The objects have piqued interest in the studio, as several of us are avid hockey fans. It has been wonderful to learn the history behind such unique and meaningful items in the Olympic History of the United States.



Right, from top: Gordon Smith's hat, coat and accessories from the 1932 Olympics. Newspaper articles and above images from 1932 and 1936 Olympic Games.



William "Cannonball"
Jackman

MTS was delighted to receive a collection of baseball memorabilia from the *Museum of African American History* in Boston—and the experience was captured in the *Boston Globe*. The twenty items, including shoes, socks, rosin bags, and a uniform, all belonged to Will "Cannonball" Jackman. A professional pitcher for over 25 years, he has been called “the best baseball player you’ve never heard of.”

Throughout Jackman’s career, he played in Texas, Oklahoma, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts. He came to play for the Boston Colored Giants in 1924, and proved his dominance in the Greater Boston Colored League. Jackman played baseball into his sixties; a truly amazing feat. According to Negro League superstar Bill Yancey, who later became a scout for the Yankees, Jackman was the greatest all-around ballplayer he ever saw.

The Jackman collection arrived at MTS for assessment to determine the feasibility of display in the upcoming MAAH exhibit, *The Color of Baseball in Boston*. The first course of action was to send the items to be fumigated to mitigate an insect infestation. Some items, Such as Cannonball's cap, showed damage from past insect activity.



After fumigation, the collection was surface-cleaned with a HEPA vacuum to remove particulate matter. Then all but four of the clothing items were gently washed to reduce deterioration products without removing signs of past use.

Stitched repairs were kept to a minimum but crucial restorations were undertaken to camouflage insect damage. A custom-built Ethafoam mannequin was constructed. The neck-to-toe figure allows the uniform to be exhibited safely and will echo the humble stance seen in later photos of Jackman.

“Cannonball” Jackman chose to make Massachusetts his home because of how well he was treated here, and he stayed in the area until his death in 1972. While playing, he also held a job as chauffeur. He drove during the day, pitched nights and weekends, and then kept his chauffeuring job after retiring from the sport.

We are very excited to have a role in the preservation of these artifacts belonging to such an important member of sports history.



Facing page: A historic photograph of Jackman, possibly taken in 1971 when he was honored by the City of Boston with Will Jackman Day. Right, from top: Will “Cannonball” Jackman, pictured wearing a uniform identical to that conserved by MTS (Photo courtesy of The Cannonball Foundation). Cannonball Jackman’s cap and uniform jersey, before conservation (Photos courtesy of the Museum of African American History, Boston and Nantucket, Massachusetts).

Women in Baseball

Ever wonder what it would have been like to play baseball in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League? We have imagined this very thing since adding a 1930s Boston Olympets uniform to the MTS study collection.

The following were the League Rules of Conduct put in place for players in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League courtesy of the AAGPBL website.

1. ALWAYS appear in feminine attire when not actively engaged in practice or playing ball. This regulation continues through the playoffs for all, even though your team is not participating. AT NO TIME MAY A PLAYER APPEAR IN THE STANDS IN HER UNIFORM, OR WEAR SLACKS OR SHORTS IN PUBLIC.
2. Boyish bobs are not permissible and in general your hair should be well groomed at all times with longer hair preferable to short haircuts. Lipstick should always be on.
3. Smoking or drinking is not permissible in public places. Liquor drinking will not be permissible under any circumstances. Other intoxicating drinks in limited portions with after-game meal only, will be allowed. Obscene language will not be allowed at any time.
4. All social engagements must be approved by chaperone. Legitimate requests for dates can be allowed by chaperones.
5. Jewelry must not be worn during game or practice, regardless of type.
6. All living quarters and eating places must be approved by the chaperones. No player shall change her residence without the permission of the chaperone.
7. For emergency purposes, it is necessary that you leave notice of your whereabouts and your home phone.



Items from a 1930s Boston Olympets uniform in the MTS study collection



8. Each club will establish a satisfactory place to eat, and a time when all members must be in their individual rooms. In general, the lapse of time will be two hours after the finish of the last game, but in no case later than 12:30 a.m. Players must respect hotel regulations as to other guests after this hour, maintaining conduct in accordance with high standards set by the league.
9. Always carry your employee's pass as a means of identification for entering the various parks. This pass is NOT transferable.
10. Relatives, friends, and visitors are not allowed on the bench at any time.
11. Due to shortage of equipment, baseballs must not be given as souvenirs without permission from the Management.
12. Baseball uniform skirts shall not be shorter than six inches above the knee-cap.
13. In order to sustain the complete spirit of rivalry between clubs, the members of different clubs must not fraternize at any time during the season. After the opening day of the season, fraternizing will be subject to heavy penalties. This also means in particular, room parties, auto trips to out of the way eating places, etc. However, friendly discussions in lobbies with opposing players are permissible. Players should never approach the opposing manager or chaperone about being transferred.
14. When traveling, the members of the clubs must be at the station thirty minutes before departure time. Anyone missing her arranged transportation will have to pay her own fare.
15. Players will not be allowed to drive their cars past their city's limits without the special permission of their manager. Each team will travel as a unit via method of travel provided for the league.

FINES OF FIVE DOLLARS FOR FIRST OFFENSE, TEN DOLLARS FOR SECOND, AND SUSPENSION FOR THIRD, WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE IMPOSED FOR BREAKING ANY OF THE ABOVE RULES.

Players were also required to attend Charm School where they were taught proper etiquette, beauty routines, and appropriate dress. Not only did the girls have to be well put together on the field, but their appearance and actions off the field were also scrutinized. In addition to being a part of the baseball elite these girls were also presented as model women of their time.

To learn more about what it was like to play in the AAGPBL, visit the [AAGPBL website](#). Read more about our uniform in the [MTS Blog](#).

Boston Olympets outfield brigade at the Boston Garden. Courtesy of the Boston Public Library.





Tibetan Thangkas

Last year we wrapped up the two-year long thangka conservation project with the Mead Art Museum in Amherst, Massachusetts, and we want to tell everyone about one of the later parts of the project: the construction of new mounts for unmounted thangkas. While most of the thangkas we conserved from the Mead came in their existing silk and cotton mounts, four paintings arrived sans surrounds. They are a folksier style of painting, possibly made by itinerant painters. The decision to remount was made by Elizabeth Barker, Director and Chief Curator of the Mead, in order to return the paintings to their full glory.

The first step of the remounting project was to find the appropriate fabrics. After thorough online and in-store research, we found a blue cotton that we liked, but didn't think was a rich enough hue. After dyeing the fabric with navy dye, the color was perfect. We also found a loose-weave linen that was ideal as the backing fabric. Following the procurement of the desired fabrics, the next step was to determine the proper sizes of the new mounts. To do this, we measured completed thangkas of similar types and used the same proportions to figure out the right size. We haven't done that much math in years! Next, the blue fabric pieces were attached to the thangka using the painting's previously existing stitch holes.

After attaching the new blue fabric to the front of the paintings, we installed the linen backing fabric. Following that, we attached Veltex headers and footers to the backing fabric, to enable safe hanging of the thangkas in the museum. Once the four new mounts were completed, the thangkas were returned to the Mead Art Museum. Currently, the smallest remounted thangka is on exhibit in *"Picturing Enlightenment: Thangka in the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College."* The first group of 9 thangkas were exhibited for fall semester, 2011. The second group of 9 thangkas are on display until July 2012 and include the remaining three remounted pieces.

Facing page: Kate Smith conserving thangka painting of Guru Ugyen Dorje Chang, First Manifestation. This page, from top right: Cara installing a dust cover prior to exhibition; Cara Jordan and Leah Wolf Whitehead conserving thangkas: surface cleaning results on a thangka veil; Sarah Berlinger conserving a thangka.



Upcoming Publication

An essay written by Camille Meyers Breeze entitled “Opening Doors: Conservation of the Mead Art Museum’s Thangka Collection” will appear in the forthcoming book, “Thangka in the Mead Art Museum, Amherst College,” which will be published this summer. The 125-page softbound, full-color catalogue will feature complete catalogue entries for all of the Mead’s eighteen thangkas, written by Professor Marylin Rhie of Smith College. Two additional essays will be written by Dr. Robert Thurman, and one jointly written by Professors Maria Heim and Paola Zamperini of Amherst College. Camille’s essay, detailing the painstaking work that MTS did to conserve the thangkas and thereby return them to the public eye, will provide valuable documentation of this project and enhance readers’ appreciation of the art works.



*A Kalachakra thangka from the Mead Art Museum,
shown with the veil down and with the veil lifted.*

Calendar

June 2, 2012: MTS participated in *Our Old House Festival* at the Moffatt-Ladd House in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Workshops, demonstrations, and presentations covered a wide range of subjects including conservation and restoration of historic materials. The program ran from 1 to 4:30 PM, with a concert at 4:45 PM.

September 17–19, 2012: Camille Myers Breeze will teach a hands-on class on Textile Stabilization Using Sheer Overlays at the *Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies* in Mount Carroll, Illinois. Participants will learn how to use three sheer overlay materials and, more importantly, how to determine which overlay is best for a given situation. The Campbell Center provides mid-career training for those in the museum, library, archives, and historic preservation fields. This is Camille's first time teaching there.

Conservator News

Camille Myers Breeze and Kate Smith reunited in May at the 40th Annual Meeting of the *American Institute for Conservation* in Albuquerque, NM, to present a poster entitled, Crossing the Boundaries between Conservation Disciplines in the Treatment of Asian Thangkas. In this presentation they shared with colleagues some of the technical aspects of our recent thangka conservation project for the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College. An excerpt of Camille's recent talk at the Mead Art Museum, including a short video, is [online](#).

Camille Myers Breeze was recently named a Fellow of the *American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works*. A member since 1991, Camille was given this honor after review of her publications and professional accomplishments over her nearly 25 year career in textile conservation. Applicants must also show evidence of sustained high-quality professional skills and ethical behavior that adheres to the AIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice.



MTS Staff

Camille Meyers Breeze, Founder & Director

Camille began her textile conservation career in 1989 at the Textile Conservation Workshop in South Salem, New York. After earning a BA in Art History from Oberlin College, she received an MA in Museum Studies: Costume and Textiles Conservation from the Fashion Institute of Technology. She spent five years in the Textile Conservation Laboratory at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City before moving to the Textile Conservation Center at the American Textile History Museum, in Lowell, Massachusetts. Camille is the author of numerous articles, a book on American tapestry conservation techniques, and has taught in the United States, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. She founded Museum Textile Services in 1999. Camille is also an organic gardener, avid motorcyclist, a fiber artist, and can be heard on the Boston singer/songwriter scene.



Cara Jordan, Conservation Assistant



Cara joined Museum Textile Services in 2007 as a volunteer. Since becoming Conservation Assistant, she has been involved in intern training and project management, and developed specialties in flags, quilts, samplers, and conservation framing. Cara is a 2007 graduate of Tufts University in affiliation with School of the Museum of Fine Arts. She has worked on several art exhibitions and her art focuses mainly on painting, alternative process photography, and fiber arts. Cara is currently completing her MLA in Museum Studies at Harvard Extension School.

Courtney Jason, Technician



Courtney was born in Beverly, MA, and grew up in Newton, NH, where she is now a member of the Newton Historical Society and Newton town historian. Courtney graduated from the University of New Hampshire in May 2010 with a Bachelor's in History, and is currently pursuing her MLA in Museum Studies at Harvard Extension School. Courtney began as a Knowledge Management Intern and completed the MTS Intern Certification Program before coming on staff in 2011. Her interests include history, reading, and cooking, and she has been a lifelong fan of the Boston Bruins.

Michelle Drummey, Intern



Michelle is a graduating senior from the class of 2012 at Wheaton College where she majored in Studio Art and minored in History and Art History. She grew up in Attleboro, MA with her mother, brother and cat, Oliver. In her spare time she dabbles in crocheting, reading, and playing video games. Her interests include animals, history, and learning new things. She first became interested in museum related work after interning at a living history museum as a costumed interpreter.

Gabrielle Ferreira, Intern



Gabby has lived in the coastal town of Fairhaven, Massachusetts her entire life. She majored in Art History and minored in Anthropology at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, where she worked extensively with the museum collection. She graduated in May 2012.

Katey Corrigan, Intern



Katey received a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree from Montserrat College of Art in 2003. She is a board member and archivist at the Museum of Printing in North Andover, MA. She is preparing to persue a graduate degree, and hopes to work in textile or book conservation. She lives in Amesbury, MA, with two spoiled cats and an ever-growing collection of early-mid 20th century magazines.

Sarah Berliner, Contractor



Sarah is a 2011 graduate of James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History with a concentration in Public History. In her years at college, Sarah focused on American History and specifically the Civil War era; for her honors thesis, Sarah wrote a paper entitled “‘The Devil is no Match for a Clever Woman’: Analyzing the Actions, Impact, and Commemoration of Confederate Female Spies.” She enjoys reading, being outside, traveling, sewing, and Civil War reenacting.



In the Next Issue . . .

*Digital Reproduction of Henry Adams' Bed Hangings for
the Adams National Historical Park*

John Quincy Adams' Christening Gown is Baptized Again

*Conserving the "Classroom Charts" of Orra White Hitchcock
for the Amherst College Archive*

Before and After Photographs



Museum Textile Services