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Retrospect

News from the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections at Winthrop University

October, 2008

Volume 4, Number 3

South Carolina Archives Month



October is South Carolina Archives Month. To celebrate we have put items from the Eleanor Burts Children's Book Collection on display on the main floor of Dacus Library. Eleanor Burts was a Winthrop alumna, Class of 1937 who grew up in Rock Hill. Born in 1916, Miss Burts attended kindergarten at Winthrop's Macfeat Nursery School and then went on to the Rock Hill public school system where her father was superintendant. Miss Burts had always loved books but became a lover and collector of children's literature as an undergraduate at Winthrop under the tutelage of Professor Maude M. Hall. After college, Burts became a teacher and taught in the Parker School District of Greenville, S.C. In 1941, she earned a master's degree in education from Columbia Teachers College in New York. She took a teaching job in Hawaii and was an eye-witness to the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. She remained in Hawaii throughout the war. After the war, Burts began teaching first and second grades in the Bronxville, New York school district. Over her thirty year tenure there, she traveled and she



collected books and other material relating to children's literature. Many of the books in her collection were lovingly read to her students over the years. The collection dates from the 18th century through the 1990s. The exhibit includes books dating from 1803 to 1971. There are picture books, novels, old favorites, books in languages other than English, a hornbook, and miniature books, some measuring no more than 1 ½ inches by 1 ½ inches. There is also a portion of Burts' collection of figurines representing Beatrix Potter's well known characters including Peter Rabbit, Benjamin Bunny, the Tailor of Gloucester, and Jeremy Fisher. Come by and take a look at the wonderful world of Eleanor Burts. For more information on South Carolina Archives Month, go to www.scarchivesmonth.palmettohistory.org.



Through the Casement—Window on Winthrop's Past

“Interesting Description by a Bright Lady Visitor” part 2



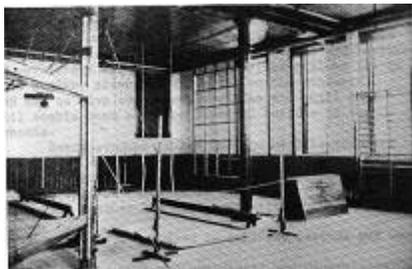
In our last [Retrospect](#) we featured the first part of an article that was in the June 5, 1896 issue of *The Yorkville Enquirer*. It is a description of a visit to Winthrop by a lady with the initials M.A.G. Following is the second installment.

“We were especially delighted with our visit to the cooking department, presided over by Miss Hutchison, of Drexel Institute, Philadelphia. If we had examined the room and its contents, we would not, I believe, have found a particle of dust. There, as everywhere else, the motto is, ‘Learn to do by doing.’ Each pupil has her own oil stove (though there is also a range) with all necessary appurtenances needed in her work. They have, each one, a receipt book, weigh the materials, mix and bake each dish themselves. They are also taught, practically, a knowledge of the

constituents of food, are shown just how much water there is in a pound of beef, how much starch there is in a given quantity of beans, etc. How grateful in the future will these girls be for their knowledge of cooking when obliged, perhaps to cook themselves, or to direct a servant to do so. No more tough steaks, watery coffee, and undone, heavy or yellow soda biscuits, when the students from Winthrop are abroad in the land.

In the sewing room a beautiful dress, made by the girls, was being folded up. They are paid for all such work done by them.

Towards the luncheon hour, bright-faced girls, wearing pretty white aprons, were seen tripping to the dining hall, (which they help to keep in order,) to assist in serving the midday meal. One of the girls told us, 'Our food is well cooked, we have all the variety possible and we have plenty of it. Her appearance bore witness to the truth of the statement.



In the afternoon we visited the gymnasium, and there we were most highly entertained and delighted. I think there the motto must be, 'a strong mind in a strong body.' Miss Wolfe, (of the Normal School of Gymnastics and Technology, Boston,) teacher of Physical Culture, is a perfect embodiment of what she teaches. The gymnasium is furnished with every necessary appliance. The young ladies in bloomers and rubber soled slippers appeared perfect young Amazons in health and strength. They marched, countermarched, and performed the most graceful and difficult gymnastic evolutions. They wound in and out of a ladder like so many squirrels, walked a plank not an inch in width, (these young women will not be afraid to walk a log over a creek); they climbed a rope to a height of at least 30 or 40 feet with the agility of a cat. After the exercises are over, they bring light mattresses, upon which they throw themselves to rest. One young lady told me her chest had expanded three inches since taking these exercises. They have not waited for fashion's dictates, but have already adopted the Grecian waist, i.e., a waist proportionate in size to their God-given bodies.

We listened later, to a bright, instructive lecture from Prof. Moses (in charge of the Normal department.) He impressed us, as did those of whom I have already spoken, as an enthusiast and expert in his work. He is much interested in teaching, reading entirely by the phonic method, i.e., by sounds. He claims that the mastery of phonics is the key that unlocks the language, and by that method a child can learn not less than 4,000 words the first year at school.

One thing more I must say. Never before have I seen such a perfectly decorous polite set of young ladies. We met them everywhere. In the long corridors, going to and from the classrooms, sitting on the benches studying here and there, but there was no noise, no loud talking or laughing, no curious looks at strangers; but at all times they comported themselves as perfect ladies. In the classrooms they were earnest and unflagging in attention. This is, in a great measure due to the wise system of government. The pupils are trusted and treated with such respect and confidence that their best qualities are developed and brought into action. This I gleaned from the unconscious conversation of the girls themselves. They are being taught the best of all lessons—self government.

A remark of the president, also gave me light along this line. 'We try,' he said, 'to give our students an ideal. That, we find, to be the greatest incentive and hardest taskmaster. A person with that ideal is never content; but it is a noble discontent, spurring her on to higher attainments.'

Many things I have been obliged to omit in this already too long account. I advise every one who is skeptical as to Winthrop's mission and its accomplishment, to visit the college, and they will come away convinced that the half has not yet been told."



For information on the Archives' collections and holdings, how to donate historical material, or how you can help, contact:

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