

PIRATE TREASURES

AN EXHIBITION OF MAPS & BOOKS FROM THE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
OF BC'S JOHN J. BURNS LIBRARY, THROUGH NOVEMBER 2008

CHESTNUT HILL, MA (October 1, 2008) -- An exhibition of historical and fictional works related to pirates and piracy will be on view at Boston College's Burns Library of Rare Books and Special Collections through November 2008.

"Pirate Treasures" will include rare maps and books published between 1695 and 2007, many of them on public display for the first time.



"Pirates were - and are - brutal, violent plunderers, but pirates also exist in public imagination as bold and daring adventurers whose exploits as often entertain as horrify," said Burns Library exhibit curator Shelley Barber. "The popularity of the recent movie trilogy 'Pirates of the Caribbean' exemplifies the present-day appeal of pirates, but this appeal is nothing new."

AT LEFT: CAPTAIN KIDD BURYING HIS BIBLE, AN ILLUSTRATION FROM *THE PIRATES OWN BOOK*. BELOW, AN ILLUSTRATION BY GEORGE ILLIAN FROM *KIDD: A MORAL OPUSCULE*, 1922.

The earliest book on display includes an epigram on the subject of the miraculous rescue from pirates of the ship carrying the relic of Saint Francis Xavier's arm to Rome, written by Italian Jesuit Antonio Barone, SJ, and printed in 1695. Also included are navigator and pirate William Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World*, published in London in 1698, and buccaneer surgeon Alexandre Olivier Exquemelin's *Histoire des Adventuriers Filibustiers, qui se sont Signalez dans les Indies*, published in Paris in 1699.

"Historical works by Dampier, Exquemelin and others in this exhibition continue to influence our perception of piracy," said Barber.

The exhibit presents pirates from the imaginations of Daniel Defoe, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rafael Sabatini and others. Burns Library collections include the personal libraries of Irish author Flann O'Brien, and British Catholic authors Graham Greene and Hilaire Belloc. Included among the "pirate treasures" are editions of Daniel



Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* owned by O'Brien and Greene, and Belloc's copy of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

Also on display are costumes and photographs related to the 2007 BC Theater Dept.'s production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance*

Many of the "Pirate Treasures" in the exhibit are drawn from the Nicholas M. Williams Collection at Burns Library. Assembled by anthropologist Rev. Joseph J. Williams, SJ, (1875-1940) and named for his father, the collection consists of more than 16,000 books and manuscripts reflecting his interest in the history, customs, beliefs and folklore of the people of the Caribbean. Piracy is the primary subject of nearly 100 books in the Williams Collection.

Rev. Joseph J. Williams, SJ, entered the Society of Jesus in 1893, thirty years after the religious order founded Boston College. Ordained to the priesthood in 1907, he was the author of several books on religion and anthropology, and lived for a number of years as a missionary in Jamaica. At one time a BC student, he returned to campus lecture in 1932, and helped establish what was at the time the department of anthropology.

The **John J. Burns Library of Rare Books and Special Collections** at Boston College is named in memory of the Honorable John J. Burns, a 1921 BC alumnus who was one of its principal benefactors. It houses more than 200,000 volumes, 15 million manuscripts and impressive holdings of artifacts, maps, paintings, photographs, ephemera and architectural records -- including Boston College's Irish Collection, considered to be the premier, most comprehensive collection of Irish research material in the United States. The Irish Collection documents the history, life and culture of the Irish people, and maintains strong holdings in Irish history, religion and politics, as well as significant collections related to some of Ireland's greatest writers.

Through November 26, 2008: "Pirate Treasures" - An exhibition of maps and books related to the theme of piracy published between 1695 and 2004, most from the Nicholas M. Williams Collection, many on exhibit are on public display for the first time. Includes works by navigator and pirate William Dampier and buccaneer surgeon Alexandre Olivier Exquemelin, from the 1600s, and pirates from the imaginations of Daniel Defoe, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rafael Sabatini and others. Thompson Room, Burns Library, 140 Commonwealth Avenue, Chestnut Hill, Mass. The exhibit is free and open to the public. Hours: Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (except holidays) or by appointment. Venue is handicapped accessible. For information call: 617-552-3282 or visit <http://www.bc.edu/libraries/about/exhibits/burns/pirates.html>

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