

Collecting Autographs

Autographs provide a hands-on way to learn more about the people and circumstances that especially intrigue a collector. The hobby of autograph collecting consists not only in the acquisition of a famous person's signature but in obtaining documents written by, for, or about them that may or may not contain their signature.

Autographs are available in several forms with variables such as condition, content, author, relative rarity in the marketplace, authenticity and format affecting value.

The Professional Autograph Dealers Association (PADA) offers the following Five Guidelines for Buying Autographs:

1. Buy autographs that capture your interest; avoid fads and autographs presented as "great" investments or sold through pressure tactics.
2. Learn as much as you can about what makes an autograph authentic and important.
3. Use common sense when buying an autograph. If a price seems too good to be true, it probably is.
4. Buy only what you can afford.
5. Buy only from reputable dealers, who will help you avoid risks and problems.

Archives & Special Collections Hours

9:00 pm to 5:00 pm Monday - Friday all year.

To ensure full service, especially during summer and holiday periods, it is recommended that researchers call in advance to schedule an appointment with Special Collections staff.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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<http://fandmarchives.blogspot.com>



*The Herbert H. Rawnsley Collection
Archives and Special Collections*

*Martin Library of the Sciences
Franklin and Marshall College
Lancaster, Pa.*

General Information

The Archives and Special Collections is fortunate to have acquired the autograph collection of Dr. Herbert H. Rawnsley, a 1940 graduate of Franklin and Marshall College. The collection consists of unpublished correspondence and documents dating from the 13th through 20th centuries relating to and/or signed by historically prominent persons. Diverse figures such as Henry VIII, William Pitt, Abraham Lincoln, Florence Nightingale, Charles Dickens, Thomas Edison and Ronald Reagan are represented. Also included are examples of English and American (mostly Pennsylvania) legal papers such as deeds and a few early examples of published material such as newspapers and bible leaves.

The materials were personally collected by Dr. Rawnsley during a period of 20 years and were donated to the College in 2001.



Herbert Rawnsley, 1940

Scope of the Collection

The collection is organized into three broad groups representing Dr. Rawnsley's collecting interests: **Autograph materials**, containing signatures of American Notables, English Rulers, English Notables, Authors, Nazis, and Scientists, Inventors and Physicians; **Legal & Business Documents**, containing deeds, grants, patents, bills of sale, etc.; and **Printed materials**, consisting of newspapers, book leaves and prints. Highlights include documents associated with English Royalty from Henry III (1250) to Elizabeth II (1960), autographs of 19th-century English authors, and 18th, 19th and 20th-century European and American Physicians, Politicians, and Scientists.



Signature of William Penn, 1695

An inventory of the entire collection is available online at:

<http://library.fandm.edu/archives/mscoll/rawnsley.pdf>

Research Possibilities

Many research opportunities exist for the individual interested in history using the Rawnsley collection. Examination may reveal information about the individuals represented, the specific subject or circumstances of correspondence and the context of the document as it relates to the time period in which the person lived. Art historians, antiquarians, and language experts may also be interested in appraising the artistic or artifactual value of a piece or in translating and evaluating the language used in a document.

Using the Collection

To ensure the preservation of collections for the future, there are guidelines that researchers are required to follow.

- Materials must be handled with care and respect in order to prevent tears and other damage. The use of ink pens is prohibited to prevent marking the materials.
- All researchers are required to sign in and show identification as requested.
- No food or beverage is allowed in the reading room. Oversize items such as coats, backpacks and briefcases are to be set aside before requesting materials.
- Researchers are asked to maintain the order in which materials are arranged.