

Haverford College Library
Special Collections

Finding Aid for the
PHILIPS, WILLIAM PYLE, COLLECTION, 1795-1921

Collection No. 814
6 document boxes (3 linear feet)
©April, 2007

INFORMATION FOR USERS

All correspondence dates are standardized rather than transcribed, viz: yr mo/day.

Though not all letters are listed individually, those that are highlighted are done so on the basis of content of the letter or historical importance of the letter writer.

RESTRICTIONS

No restrictions

ABSTRACT

Primarily the personal papers of William Pyle Philips (1882-1950), as well as a collection of 12 letters of United States presidents.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Pyle Philips, son of George M and Elizabeth Pyle Philips was born in 1882. He received a B.A. and M.A. from Haverford College in 1902 and 1903 respectively and an LL.B. from Harvard in 1907. While at Haverford, he was editor-in-chief of the monthly magazine, Haverfordian and was Phi Beta Kappa. He was a partner with the law firm Byrne & Cutcheon, later J.S. Seligman and director of a number of corporations. In 1914, he married Harriet Paris. Philips was a generous benefactor of his alma mater, donating books that formed the William Pyle Philips collection of mostly Renaissance-era first editions, as well as funds for such programs as the Distinguished Visitors program. He was a member of the Board of Managers of Haverford College. Today, a wing of the library is named in his honor. William Pyle Philips died in 1950.

SUBJECT HEADINGS

Adams, John
Arthur, Chester
Cleveland, Grover
Grant, Ulysses S.
Harrison, William Henry
Jackson, Andrew
Philips, William Pyle
Pierce, Franklin
Zachary Taylor
Tyler, John
Washington, George

BOX CONTENTS LIST

Box 1: West Chester School Days
Box 2: Haverford College Days
Box 3: Student Days in Germany, 1898-99
Box 4: Harvard Law and Graduate Schools
Box 5: Harvard Law and Graduate Schools, 1902-1907; Essays, Certificates
Box 6: Presidential Autographs

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

Boxes 1-5 present a picture of various times in William Pyle Philips' early life and schooling.

Box 6 contains 12 letters of United States presidents spanning the period 1795-1886, all of them written and signed by a given president. Included here is a letter of Abraham Lincoln, December 1860, replying to charges against him. One of the last letters of William Henry Harrison, dated March 26, 1841, is addressed to the Collector of Customs in New York, and recommends Thomas Tucker for a position in the customs service. George Washington writes to "Mr. Madison" from Philadelphia in 1795 asking his judgment as to the propriety of the president's receiving a call from young Lafayette, traveling in the United States with his tutor. A letter from John Adams to General Washington, dated Philadelphia, February 19, 1799, tells the former of his fateful decision to forestall the Federalist plans for war with France by nominating a minister to the Republic.

Note: A set of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence which was part of this collection was sold by Haverford College.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note: Only box 2 containing some papers from Philips' days at Haverford and box 6 containing autograph letters signed by 12 presidents are detailed below.

Box 2: Haverford College Days

Contents include:

- Several notebooks kept by him in the course of his studies
- The certificate of his election to Phi Beta Kappa and a list of its members
- Program of Class Day Exercises, June 1902
- Draft of an original poem
- Papers written by WPP while a student
- Bulletins of the Haverford Class of 1902 and 1921
- Two medals given for oratory
- Programs on WPP's gymnastic activities at Haverford
- Letters of Isaac Sharpless to WPP's father, Dr. George M. Philips, prior to WPP's attendance at HC
- Letters of WPP to his family from Haverford, Oct. 1899; summer 1900 from MA; from Haverford, Jan 1901-Jan. 1902
- Grades while at Haverford

Box 6: Collection of Presidential Autographs

Note: All letters are A.Ls.S.

Adams, John to General Washington. Philadelphia, 1799 2/19. [has determined to nominate Mr. Murray as Minister Plenipotentiary to the French Republic on the strength of a letter from Talleyrand; "Tom Paine is not a more worthless fellow," having transmitted the infamous threat to his country to intimidate you and your country, "that certain conduct 'will be followed by war' "should be answered by a Mohawk"; against those who cry for peace now, but had wanted war earlier

- Arthur, Chester A. to R.G. Dun. Raritan, N.J, 1884 9/28. [wishes him well on his marriage
- Cleveland, Grover to James F. Gluck and C.C.B. Walker. 1885-1886. 2 letters
- Grant, Ulysses S. to George W. Childs. Washington, [18]76 11/5. [accepts invitation to stay with him while he visits Philadelphia to witness the close of the Exposition]
- Harrison, William Henry to Edward Curtis (Collector of Customs). Washington, 1841 3/26. [highly recommends Thomas Tucker to him for a job] A DS by Curtis indicates that Tucker was appointed Inspector of Customs

- Jackson, Andrew to Henry Tolond? Washington, 1836 11/20. [[is sending a check to pay for his account; he has been ill
- Lincoln, Abraham to H.J. Raymond. Springfield, Ill, 1860 12/18. ["Mr. Lincoln is not pledged to the ultimate extinction of slavery; does not hold the black man to be the equal of the white, unqualifiedly as Mr. S. states it...."; refers to the forgery of the pitcher story] Also: copy of The New York Herald, New York, April 15, 1865, concerning the assassination of Pres. Lincoln.
- Pierce, Franklin to "dear Sir." Washington, 1855 7/11. [requests appointment in the army for the son of a friend]
- Taylor, Z[achary] to I.S. Bangs. Washington City, 1849 7/26. [unable to accept invitation to attend annual exhibition of the G[eorge?] Town School]
- Tyler, John to Secretary of the Navy. 1841 3/15. [recommends Doctor John M. Galt for Naval Store Keeper
- Washington, George to [James] Madison. Philadelphia, Pa., 1795 1/22. [referring to the "young Lafayette" and his tutor]. Also, 3 engravings of Washington, 1 of his house.