

Princeton University Library

DEPARTMENT OF RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

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Autograph Book Collection, 1825-1884 (bulk 1848-1882): Finding Aid

Summary Information

Call number:	AC040
Location:	Princeton University Library. Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library. Princeton University Archives. 65 Olden Street Princeton, New Jersey 08540 USA
Size:	16.0 linear feet (39 boxes)
Language(s) of material:	English.
Abstract:	This collection contains 218 autograph books from 191 members of classes between 1825 and 1884. The books were used to collect not only the autographs of classmates, but also good wishes, bits of favorite verse, letters of farewell, or reminiscences of shared events during undergraduate years.

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History of the Autograph Book Collection

Collectively, these autograph books provide a portrait of mid-19th century college life. Most of the books tend to be small, perhaps eight inches tall by five inches wide. Several are two volumes or more. An album may hold over 70 autographs and might include students as well as faculty, women friends, perhaps even the college boot black. In many of the books beautiful lettering and script was used as well as cartoons, portraits, and drawings. Many of the inscriptions, especially in the early years, were done in Latin and Greek.

Students circulated these autograph books amongst their classmates. Whereas a single book may be regarded as a souvenir, the 170 in this collection as a whole offer a range of opinions and ideas that were common on campus in the nineteenth century. A particular student's autograph as read in several books will bring out his temperament, character, and thoughts of the period.

Most of the books' entries concern college life, including the social side such as college pranks, stunts, hangouts, dormitory rooms, card games and chess matches. Also included are accounts of professors and various classes the students may have shared. In their autographs most students noted which literary society they belonged to—either Whig or Clio. A few students mention Greek-letter fraternities. In many, future professions were named and best wishes for a “pretty wife” or “a happy death.” The fire of 1855 in Nassau Hall is briefly mentioned in a couple of the books.

As early as 1851 and 1852 the possibility of civil war and sectionalism was evident in some students' minds as revealed in their autographs to classmates. With fully a third of the students from the South, the conflict was of more than just passing interest. The conflict increasingly is mentioned up until 1862 when most of the Southern men had left for the Confederacy. After this time most autographs were about the usual college incidents and friendships. Doubtless many of the Southern students' books were lost or destroyed during the war, but one student, Frederick Roberts of the Class of 1855, had his found in an abandoned house in North Carolina by Arthur Forbes. It was returned to him by Forbes's daughter in 1896 and found its way back to Princeton in 1930.

The autograph book tradition began to wane in the mid-1800s due to the creation of college yearbooks such as the *Nassau Herald* (started in 1864) and *Bric-a-Brac* (started in 1875). The increase in class size also probably accounts for the decrease in autograph books, though the practice of keeping scrapbooks became popular at this time. The earliest scrapbook in the University Archives dates to 1843, though the practice became widespread during the 1870s, a time when it may have been too difficult to collect all of one's classmates' autographs but easy to document one's own activities. (See Alexander Clark's article on autograph books in the Spring 1986 issue of the *Princeton University Library Chronicle*.)

Description

This collection contains 218 autograph books from 191 members of classes between 1825 and 1884.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged by class year and then students' last name.

Two lists, one chronological by class, the other alphabetical by last name, are found in this finding aid.

Access and Use

Access

Collection is open for research use.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish material from the collection must be requested from the University Archivist. Copyright is held by the Trustees of Princeton University.

Processing and Other Information

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Autograph Book Collection, Box and Folder Number; University Archives, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Carl Esche in the Autumn of 1995. Finding aid written by Carl Esche in the Autumn of 1995.

Encoding

Machine-readable finding aid encoded in EAD 2002 by Techbooks and Cristela García-Spitz on October 20, 2006.

Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Subject Headings

These materials have been indexed in the [Princeton University Library online catalog](#) using the following terms. Those seeking related materials should search under these terms.

- Princeton University -- Autographs.

- Princeton University -- History -- 19th century.
- Princeton University -- Students -- 19th century -- Autographs.
- College Students -- Conduct of life.
- United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Public opinion.
- Libri amicorum -- 19th century. rbgenr
- Princeton University

Alphabetical Listing

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Alexander, Henry C. / 1854

Alexander, James W. / 1860

Andrews, Robert H. / 1855

Armstrong, James S. / 1861

Baldwin, Silas / 1865

Banks, Robert L. / 1848

Bannister, James B. / 1882

Benton, Samuel Hart / 1882

Berghaus, Valentine H. / 1864

Berrien, James Hunter / 1854

Berry, Thomas W. / 1857

Bissell, Artemas / 1873

Blauvelt, Isaac Alstyne / 1857

Bolling, Robert / 1850

Boyd, Samuel M. / 1864

Brearley, Anderson L. / 1859

Brown, John Wilson / 1855

Brown, Walter Scott / 1860

Browning, Warfield T. / 1856

Butler, Walter / 1862

Butler, William M. / 1877

Canfield, William B. / 1877

Cayce, Ellis P. / 1856

*Clymer, George Edward /
1849*

Combs, William S. / 1861

*Condit, Benjamin Smith /
1854*

Condit, Issac Hiram / 1873

Condit, John S. / 1860

Conover, Edwin D. / 1860

Crane, John Joseph / 1873

Crocheron, John J. / 1867

Cross, Eben J.D. / 1860

Cross, Richard Kelson / 1863

Culbertson, Sam / 1870

Davis, Henry Edgar / 1876

Dennis, Samuel King / 1860

Depue, Abe / 1858

DeWitt, Wallace / 1857

Dod, Albert B. / 1854

Dod, Charles H. / 1862

*Dorrance, Benjamin F. /
1868*

Duffield, Henry G. / 1881

Dunning, Charles / 1883

Edwards, William S. / 1853

*Eichelberger, Edward S. /
1875*

Elliott, Robert H. / 1858

Emery, John R. / 1861

Falls, William K. / 1853

Field, Richard Edgar / 1874

Fisher, William A. / 1855

Fithian, Edward M. / 1866

*Flickinger, Jonas Rudy /
1877*

Ford, George W. / 1856

Foreman, William C. / 1859

Foster, Daniel R. / 1863

Foster, William E. / 1862

Gansevort, Henry S. / 1855

Gardner, Samuel / 1864

Garmany, Frances C. / 1879

Gibby, Alexander / 1865

*Glatz, Abraham Hiestand /
1854*

Green, Elmer E. / 1870

Gurnee, John D. / 1853

Haight, John T. / 1862

Haines, Edward W. / 1866

Hall, Caldwell K. / 1857

Hall, Henry Rodney / 1863

Hall, John A. / 1866

Hallock, Gerard B.F. / 1882

Harris, William W. / 1866

Harrison, Charles J. / 1855

Hart, Charles E. / 1858

Hart, James M. / 1860

Hedges, Charles E. / 1855

Hetrick, Andrew J. / 1858

Hewitt, John Dunbar / 1865

Hiester, Joseph M. / 1825

Higgins, Cecil C. / 1871

Hollingsworth, Robert / 1849

Holmes, George D. / 1849

Holt, Bolling H. / 1858

Hood, Edward C. / 1868

Hooper, George H. / 1870

*Howell, William Frederick /
1868*

*Hunt, Gavin Drummond, Jr. /
1863*

Hunt, William B. / 1858

Imbrie, Charles F. / 1870

Jacobus, Samuel H. / 1864

Johnson, Baker / 1877

Johnson, William C. / 1875

Johnston, Tobias W. / 1872

*Joline, Adrian Hoffman /
1870*

Joline, Charles V.D. / 1871

Joline, John Forsyth / 1870

*Kaufman, William Talmage /
1876*

Kerr, John Henry / 1878

Ketcham, George W. / 1859

Ketcham, Kneeland / 1857

*Kinkead, George B., Jr. /
1870*

Knapp, Sanford R. / 1854

Lane, William B. / 1861

Levis, Franklin B. / 1853

Libbey, William, Jr. / 1877

Lippincott, James D. / 1861

Littell, William H. / 1863

Ludlow, James M. / 1861

*Lyon, Augustine Aurelius /
1859*

Magee, George J. / 1860

Magie, David, Jr. / 1859

Magie, David / 1856

Magie, William J. / 1852

Malloy, Randolph / 1855

Marx, William S. / 1848

Matson, Thomas H. / 1864

Mayers, Henry L. / 1871

*McClure, Ewing Graham/
1861*

McGowan, Thomson / 1861

*McKaig, Alpheus Beall /
1868*

McKaig, Thomas J. / 1859

*McMurrin, John T., Jr. /
1855*

Mellier, Kennedy R. / 1869

*Mehaffey, George W. / 1854
[non-grad]*

Mercer, George A. / 1856

Mills, Alfred E. / 1882

Minniece, Walter R. / 1857

*Montgomery, William B. /
1850*

*Moore, John Augustine /
1855*

*Morrison, William J.P. /
1861*

Munn, Joseph L. / 1862

Murray, Logan C. / 1866

*Murray, Stirling [honorary;
Class of 1852 non-grad] /
1855*

Murray, William H. / 1851

Nassau, Robert H. / 1854

Neill, George Hale / 1860

Nichols, Walter Smith / 1863

Nixon, James H. / 1858

Owen, Henry James / 1866

Overton, Edward / 1856

Parker, Charles W. / 1882

Parker, John M. / 1857

Patrick, Thomas C. / 1854

Pennington, Elias M. / 1870

Perrine, Richard V.R. / 1858

Peters, John E. / 1870

Pitney, Henry C. / 1848

Potts, Stacy G., Jr. / 1857

Purnell, George W. / 1862

Purviance, Winfield / 1861

Quitman, Frederick H. / 1851

Reese, James W. / 1859

*Richardson, Charles F. /
1865*

*Richardson, Reuben Henry /
1862*

Roberts, Frederick C. / 1855

Rodgers, Robert C. / 1875

Rodney, John H. / 1859

*Schenck, Harris Rogers /
1876*

*Scudder, Edmund Drake /
1870*

Shelly, William F. / 1865

Shields, William S. / 1858

Stratton, Charles P. / 1848

Stratton, Morris H. / 1858

Stretch, Richard G. / 1867

Stryker, Samuel / 1863

Stryker, William S. / 1858

Sutphen, John C. / 1856

Tabb, Thomas / 1856

Terbell, Edward D. / 1871

Thomas, Claude M. / 1884

Thompson, Sidney / 1854

Toadvin, Edward S. / 1869

Tyler, Robert B. / 1853

Van Cleve, Alex G. / 1871

Van Dyke, John M. / 1872

*Van Rensselaer, Cortlandt,
Jr. / 1858*

Van Syckel, Chester / 1859

Van Voorhis, Isaac S. / 1873

Villalonga, Julius A. / 1854

Waddell, William B. / 1849

Wadhams, Calvin / 1854

Walker, Charles W. / 1858

Webster, William S.C. / 1864

Wetherill, William Delany /

1865

Wilde, Edward S. / 1861

Williams, Joseph John / 1852

Wilson, William T. / 1874

Wood, Frank G. / 1858

Wood, William J. / 1856

*Woodbridge, Sylvester, III /
1859*

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