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Nelson Poynter Memorial Library. Special Collections and University Archives.

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Presidential Signatures and Ephemera Collection of Parker and Joane Miller



A Collection Guide by

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Introduction to the Collection

Joane Miller, a resident of Redington Beach and widow of Parker E. Miller, donated the materials in this collection in two separate accessions. In early 1999, the library received a single bound notebook with individual documents signed by the first thirty-two Presidents of the United States (George Washington through Harry S. Truman). A subsequent accession in August 2000 included a collection of commemorative coins from the Franklin Mint that celebrates notable events in American history.

Parker Everard Miller's family maintained homes in Ohio and Florida. During the 1920s, members of the family often spent their winter months in St. Petersburg. By 1930, they had moved into a large home in the Jungle Shores subdivision along the waterfront side of Park Street, about ½ mile north of H. Walter Fuller's Jungle Country Club Hotel (now Admiral Farragut Academy). Parker's mother, Mrs. Helen Miller, had started to collect presidential signatures during the mid-1920s and continued to acquire documents that were placed in this scrapbook as her son completed his studies at the Florida Military Academy and Clemson University.

Parker served in the military during the Second World War. He received two purple hearts for wounds acquired during the Battle of the Bulge. Parker married Joane in the early 1950s and he took possession of his mother's scrapbook and maintained it as a family heirloom. With his interests in numismatics and American history, he began to collect commemorative coins. Parker Miller passed away on 30 March 1997.

Preservation Note

The unique and irreplaceable nature of the materials in this collection requires that patrons exercise special care when examining materials. While preservation measures may slow the physical deterioration of such items, these steps cannot prevent damage from occurring. Please report any tears, excessive wear, or other damage noticed in the scrapbook so that library staff may take appropriate preservation or conservation measures. Protective gloves must be worn when handling the scrapbook and all coins. Staff must directly supervise and monitor all patrons who examine materials in this collection. Patrons using this collection must adhere to copyright and fair-use guidelines and provide proper citation of sources appearing in their research.

Provenance of the Papers of Miller Signatures and Ephemera Collection

This collection falls under the Humanities provenance of the Special Collections and Archives department, Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, USF St. Petersburg.

Scope and Contents

The contents occupy one large archival box (approximately 1.25 linear ft.). All signatures and documents date from 1790 to 1956. Many signatures appear on documents created either prior to or after the official term(s) of office of the President. For example, Thomas Jefferson led the nation from 1801 through 1809, yet the document Jefferson signed came from his earlier tenure as secretary of state in August 1790.

Related Collections

Other manuscript collections at the Poynter Library include presidential signatures. The library also owns framed letters written by George Washington (1786) and his Revolutionary era colleague, Benjamin Franklin (1782). For more information about other collections, please consult with staff in Special Collections and Archives.

List of Signatures Contained within the Notebook

1. George Washington (1732-1799)

Term of Office: 1789 to 1797

Also: Secretary of State and Collector John Lamb

Date: October 30, 1795

Description:

Permission for William Pollard to sail "The Fair America" with 266 1/4 tons from New York to Cork, loaded with barrel staves, turpentine, Volashes [?] and Vearl Ashes [?].

2. John Adams (1735-1826)

Term of Office: 1797 to 1801

Party: Federalist

Also: Secretary of State Timothy Pickering; Attorney General Charles Lee

Date: March 22, 1798

Description:

Patent issued to Samuel Blydenburg, who invented "a machine for dipping candles": "an oblong square, about four feet high and of such a length as may suit the extent of the Manufactory, the width to be for the express purpose of dipping the Candles, which when filled with the rods and the wicks is lowered down by means of a lever, upon one end of which it is suspended, upon the other is hung a weight. [...]"

3. Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)

Term of Office: 1801 to 1809

Party: Democrat-Republican

Date: August 28, 1790 (as Secretary of State)

Description:

"An Act Making Provision for the Reduction of the Public Debt" Second Session of the US Congress, "Begun and held at the City of New-York, on Monday the Fourth of January" 1790. The Act "will be beneficial to the creditors of the United States."

4. James Madison (1751-1836)

Term of Office: 1809 to 1817

Party: Democrat-Republican

Also: Secretary of State [Smith?]; Collector David [Selilon?]

Undated

Description:

Authorizing voyage for [Brio Decatur of New York George Poulson] 141 1/2 tons; [no?] guns; [seven?] men.

5. James Monroe (1767-1848)

Term of Office: 1817 to 1825

Party: Democrat-Republican

Also: Commissioner of General Land Office

Date: March 2, 1818

Description:

"in pursuance of the Acts of Congress appropriating and granting land to the late Army of the United States passed on and since the sixth day of May, 1812," [Levi?] Riker, a "private in Barton's company of the Fifteenth Regiment of Infantry [...] 160 acres granted, North East Section One of Township Thirteen North in Range Two East in the Tract appropriated [...] for Military Bounties in the Territory of Illinois."

6. John Quincy Adams (1767-1848)

Term of Office: 1825 to 1829

Party: Democrat-Republican

Also: Henry Clay, Secretary of State; Attorney General

Date: April 6, 1826

Description:

Patent issued to Oliver Goddard for "Goddard's Improved Shingle Machine"

7. Andrew Jackson (1767-1845)

Term of Office: 1829 to 1837

Party: Democrat

Also: Secretary of War

Date: June 11, 1823

Description:

Letter of Recommendation: "an application in behalf of young Mr. Grayson [...] a youth of good promise [...] who wishes the appointment of cadet [...] no doubt will [acquit?] himself well, if appointed."

8. Martin Van Buren (1782-1862)

Term of Office: 1837 to 1841

Party: Democrat

Date: 1837

Description:

Letter written to an individual. Handwriting is difficult to transcribe.

9. William Henry Harrison (1773-1841)

Term of Office: 1841 to 1841

Party: Whig

Date: October 8, 1798

Description:

Pay agreement:

"For services as [...] Master at Fort Washington from the first day of July, 1798 to the 30th day of September 1798 [...] at forty dollars a month. 3 months. 120: Dolls"

"For subsistence for ninety two days at three rations/day commencing the 1st July and ending the 30 day of September 1798 Inclusive 276 Rations at 13 1/9 [...] Ration ----30-18 2/3 Dolls. 156-18 2/3"

"Received at Fort Washington October the 8th 1798 of John Wilkins [First] Quarter Master General one hundred + fifty six dollars. Eighteen two third cents in full of the above Account. [...] Dolls 156—18 2/3"

("why should this man have 40 dollars a month when others have only 30 dollars—"?)

10. John Tyler (1790-1862)

Term of Office: 1841 to 1845

Party: Whig

Undated

Description:

"The [...] of this represents himself as named Wm [...] Buchanan and to be 96 years old — He claims to have served from 1776 to 81 and for much of the time in Col [...] Washington's [...]. He says he was a Major—but [...] doubt [...] write you ascertain whether his name is on the military lists of that [...] from Virginia or elsewhere."

11. James Knox Polk (1795-1849)

Term of Office: 1845 to 1849

Party: Democrat

Also: Sec of War

Date: November 25, 1848

Description:

Army Certificate of Merit:

"Private Hugh Riley of Company (K.) Of the 5th Regiment of Infantry, having DISTINGUISHED himself in the service of the [US] on the eight day of September, 1847, in the battle of Molino Del Ray, on the recommendation of Capt Wm Chapman"; "entitles him to additional pay at the rate of two dollars per month"

12. Zachary Taylor (1784-1850)

Term of Office: 1849 to 1850

Party: Whig

Date: May 14, 1848

Description:

"Baton Rouge La
May 14. 1848

(Private)

Dear Sir:

I take much pleasure in acknowledging the weight of your favor of the 21 [...].

Your friendly sentiments towards myself and your suggestions are received and reciprocated with equal kindness and courtesy—and for them I must express my best thanks.

Truly hoping that your friendly regard towards me may continue, whatever may be my future position in life. I remain

with sentiments of cordial respect and regard,
your mo: obedient servant.

Z Taylor

Thompsin Reynolds Esq.
Philadelphia Pa."

13. Millard Fillmore (1800-1874)

Term of Office: 1850 to 1853

Party: Whig

Date: December 25, 1839

Description:

"Washington Dec. 25, 1839

Dear Sir

[...] enclosing a petition for an improvement of the Harbor at New Buffalo and \$5 for the Intelligence came to hand this morning [...]

Millard Fillmore

J.A. Banker, Esq."

14. Franklin Pierce (1804-1869)

Term of Office: 1853 to 1857

Party: Democrat

Undated

Description:

“My Dear Sir
 Will you do me the favor to call at My Office a moment this morning.
 Yr. friend,
 Fr. Pierce [...]”

15. James Buchanan (1791-1868)

Term of Office: 1857 to 1861

Party: Democrat

Date: January 26, 1838

Description:

“Washington, 26 January 1838

Dear Sir.

Allow me to introduce to you my friend Dr Adam Hays of Pittsburg. He is a gentleman of [...] eminence + high character, and I regret that it is not in my power to introduce him to you personally. I need not request you to give prompt attention to his [...]; for that you bestow upon all.

Yours very respectfully
 James Buchanan

J.L. Edwards Esq.”

16. Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

Term of Office: 1861 to 1865

Party: Republican

Date: June 18, 1863

Description:

“I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of State affix the Seal of the United States to a Warrant for the pardon of Charles Poland [...]

Abraham Lincoln
 Washington, 18th June, 1863”

17. Andrew Johnson (1808-1875)

Term of Office: 1865 to 1869

Party: Democrat

Also: Secretary of State

Date: April 20, 1865

Description:

“[...] I do hereby confer on George A. Mursick [...] the rank of Captain by Brevet [...] for faithful and meritorious service.”

18. Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885)

Term of Office: 1869 to 1877

Party: Republican

Also: Secretary of War

Date: April 3, 1871

Description:

Nomination and appointment of Stanistans Remak to First Lieutenant in the Fifth Regiment of Artillery.

19. Rutherford B. Hayes (1822-1893)*Term of Office: 1877 to 1881**Party: Republican*

Date: December 8, 1890

Description:

"Shiezel Grove, 8 Dec. [18]90

My Dear Sir:

I congratulate you on the completion of your wonderful work: 'The Genesis of the United States.'" "I cannot speak of the contents of the volumes except from a very hasty and cursory examination. I am confident that your work will be regarded as of great permanent value."

20. James Garfield (1831-1881)*Term of Office: 1881 to 1881**Party: Republican*

Date: June 30, 1863

Description:

"Manchester, June 30th, 1863 [1030am?]

General

The General commanding directs you to see that your men have in hand all their axes, picks + shovels whenever they advance clear out the obstructions, and open roads for the passage of artillery, both to the front and rear----

Very Respectfully [...]

J. A. Garfield

Brig Grl + Chf of Staff

Maj ___ M. Cook"

21. Chester A. Arthur (1830-1886)*Term of Office: 1881 to 1885**Party: Republican*

Date: June 11, 1875

Description: (Response to a letter written on same paper.)

"Custom House, NYC
Surveyors Office, June 10th, 1875

Dear General Babcock,

I write hurriedly, as W [Sessins?] will try to catch the 5'oclock boat, to ___ that I know little or nothing of [W] Davis —I have had a prejudice against him which it would be difficult for me to account for
If there is a change made I hope it will be used so as to strengthen us. [...]

Yours faithfully

[?]"

Reply: "Dear General,

We would all like to have done this for Mr. Sessions and cordially endorse all that Gen. Sharpe and Col. [?] have said.

C.A. Arthur
June 11, 1875"

22. Grover Cleveland (1837-1908)*Terms of Office: 1885 to 1889; 1893 to 1897**Party: Democrat*

Date: December 12, 1899

Description:

"Westland, Princeton, New Jersey
Dec. 12, 1899

John P. St ___ Esq.

Dear Sir.

Has the ___ station with which you are connected ___ publication suggesting the ___ of ___ sails in this vicinity? I have a little farm located about 3 miles N.W. of this place which I think would stand [...]

Yours Truly
Grover Cleveland"

23. Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901)

Term of Office: 1889 to 1893

Party: Republican

Date: April 3, 1886

Description:

"Senate Chamber, Washington
April 3, 1886

Gnrl ___ B. Wright,
Indianapolis, Indiana

My Dear Sir

Your telegram in relation to Col [Poll?] was received yesterday. I do not know of anything against him and suppose he will ___ without objection.

Yours Truly
Ben Harrison"

24. William McKinley (1843-1901)

Term of Office: 1897 to 1901

Party: Republican

Date: August 11, 1898

Description: [General Corbin?]

"If we need more troops [...] after the foree now at S.A has gone. I direct that you will order ___ 12th N.J. Col Leonard C ___.

WMK
Aug 11, 1898"

25. Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)

Term of Office: 1901 to 1909

Party: Republican

Date: May 27, 1917

Description:

"Metropolitan
432 Fourth Ave, NY
May 27th, 1917

My dear Mr. Seligman:

I thank you for letting me see your song, but it is absolutely impossible for me to express an opinion on it or any other of [...]

Sincerely yours
T Roosevelt

Mr. J. Guy Seligman
622-23 Healey Bldg.,
Atlanta, Ga."

26. William Howard Taft (1857-1930)

Term of Office: 1909 to 1913

Party: Republican

Date: March 13, 1909

Description:

“The White House, March 13, 1909

My Dear Mr. Skinner [Charles R. Skinner, Office Appraiser of Customs, NY.]

[...] With reference of the [note] about the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, I think it would be wise for you to place a formal application [...] and send it to the Secretary of the Interior. M. Leupp’s resignation has been formally tendered, but my impression is that he is willing to serve, and if he is I shall probably continue him [...]. Should a vacancy come, I shall be glad to give to your name full consideration.

Your assurances concerning Mr. Loeb’s appointment I am gratified to have.

Wm Taft”

27. Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924)

Term of Office: 1913 to 1921

Party: Democrat

Date: November 15, 1912

Description:

“38 W. State St., Trenton, N.J.

November 15, 1912

[To James H. Manning, Albany N.Y]

I want to give myself the pleasure not only of acknowledging your kind telegram of congratulation but of expressing in turn my appreciation of the active and intelligent work you have done. As the leader of the party, I feel that I owe you a direct personal expression of sincere thanks.”

28. Warren G. Harding (1865-1923)

Term of Office: 1921 to 1923

Party: Republican

Date: September 14, 1922

Description:

“The White House, Sept. 14, 1922

[To Mr. Charles P. Kling
c/o the Racket Club.
Wash. D.C.]

My dear Cousin:

[...] Mrs. Harding is not yet in condition to receive any communications. [...] She will be very greatly pleased to know of your interest, and your rejoicing at her progress toward recovery.

Harding”

29. Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933)

Term of Office: 1923 to 1929

Party: Republican

Date: April 4, 1924

Description:

James A. [Toomey?] appointed to Notary Public for the District of Columbia.

30. Herbert Hoover (1874-1964)

Term of Office: 1929- 1933

Party: Republican

Date: November 18, 1928

Description:

"Stanford University
California
Nov. 18, 1928

Mr. George B. Stewart
600 W. 122nd St.,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Stewart:

I have received your kind letter of November 11th. I wish to thank you for the information and suggestions which you send me, and I greatly appreciate your good wishes.

Yours faithfully
Herbert Hoover

HH/B"

31. Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945)

Term of Office: 1933 to 1945

Party: Democrat

Date: April 25, 1918

Description:

"Navy Department
Assistant Secretary's Office, Wash.
April 25, 1918

302-119

Mr. A.C. Jockmus
401 Gibson Ave,
Pacific Grove, Cal.

Dear Sir:—

Your prompt and patriotic response to the NAVY's call for glasses is greatly appreciated

It is with regret that at the present time your Binocular cannot be used and is therefore being returned to you by registered mail.

FD Roosevelt"

32. Harry Truman (1884-1972)

Term of Office: 1945 to 1953,

Party: Democrat

Date: February 9, 1956

Description:

Signed photograph,

"To M.J. Cox, with kindest regards from Feb. 9, 1956

Harry Truman"