



University Libraries Special Collections & University Archives

John Brown-Luther Humphrey Lithograph Facsimile Letter Collection

Collection Summary

Title:	John Brown-Luther Humphrey Lithograph Facsimile Letter Collection
Call Number:	MS 88-22
Size:	0.25 linear feet
Acquisition:	Transferred to University of Wichita Library by Downing O'Harra
Processed by:	LTM, 11-18-1987; JEF, 2-18-1998; MN, 5-29-2013
Restrictions:	None

Literary Rights

Literary rights were not granted to Wichita State University. When permission is granted to examine manuscripts, it is not an authorization to publish them. Manuscripts cannot be used for publication without regard for common law literary rights, copyright laws and the laws of libel. It is the responsibility of the researcher and his/her publisher to obtain permission to publish. Scholars and students who eventually plan to have their work published are urged to make inquiry regarding overall restrictions on publication before initial research.

Content Note

The John Brown-Luther Humphrey Lithograph Facsimile Letter Collection contains a facsimile of John Brown's letter to his cousin, Rev. Luther Humphrey on November 19, 1859, while he was a condemned prisoner and under sentence to death by hanging on December 2, 1859, for his act of treason in raiding Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Brown wrote the letter from Charles Town, Jefferson County, Virginia. The collection also contains correspondence of Boyd B. Stutler, of Charleston, West Virginia, and a collector of John Brown literature, to officials at the University of Wichita. These letters date from 1927 and 1947. They describe the investigation process concerning the original letter and facsimiles.

Administrative History

The letter in this collection was thought at one time to be the original letter from John Brown to Rev. Luther Humphrey. It was found in 1927 among the papers of the late Theodore Morrison, librarian of Fairmount College, in an envelope addressed to Morrison's father, Dr. Nathan J. Morrison, the first president of Fairmount College, now known as Wichita State University. However, this letter was found to be a lithographed facsimile reproduction of the original. At one time seven different people claimed to have the original letter. The correspondence between a collector of John Brown literature,

Boyd B. Stutler, Charleston, West Virginia, and University of Wichita officials Flora Clough and Downing O'Harra date from 1927 and 1947. They describe the investigation process, along with a report by Stutler in the May 1947 issue of the *Colby Library Quarterly*, in determining who had the original letter.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1	FF 1	Contains a facsimile of the letter of John Brown wrote to his cousin Reverend Luther Humphrey on 11-19-1859 while he was a condemned prisoner and under sentence of death by hanging on 12-2-1859 for his act of treason in raiding Harper's Ferry, Virginia. He wrote the letter from Charles Town, Jefferson County, Virginia.
Box 1	FF 2	Contains the envelope addressed to Dr. N. (Nathan) J. Morrison, Olivet, Michigan, postmarked Brooklyn, New York, 3-2-1864, which contained the John Brown facsimile letter.
Box 1	FF 3	Contains a letter and envelope addressed to Dr. Flora C. Clough, Department of English Literature, University of Wichita, from Boyd B. Stutler, at this time chief clerk in the printing department, State of West Virginia, 2-7-1927. Stutler tells Clough that he is a collector of John Brown literature and was interested in the discovery of an original Brown letter. To his knowledge, he thought the original letter belonged to another party.
Box 1	FF 4	Contains a letter and envelope addressed to Flora C. Clough from Stutler, 2-15-1927, stating that he believed that the Wichita letter was the original.
Box 1	FF 5	Contains a letter and envelope addressed to Flora C. Clough from Stutler, 3-14-1927, stating that he thought that the Brown-Humphrey letter is probably worth at least \$200, but perhaps could be worth much more.
Box 1	FF 6	Contains a letter addressed to Downing P. O'Harra,, University of Wichita Librarian, from Boyd B. Stutler. Stutler informs O'Harra that the Brown-Humphrey letter that the University holds is not the original but a lithographed facsimile. The report of the investigation appeared in the <i>Colby Library Quarterly</i> , May 1947.
Box 1	FF 7	Contains a copy of the May 1947 issue of the <i>Colby Library Quarterly</i> where the report of the investigation of the Brown-Humphrey letter appeared stating that the Wichita letter is a lithographed facsimile and the original was owned by the Taylor brothers in Cleveland, Ohio and then given to the Storer College in Harper's Ferry. The article, "John Brown's Letter," was written by Boyd B. Stutler. At this time, Stutler was the managing editor of the <i>American Legion Magazine</i> and his collection of John Browniana was the only sizeable one left in private hands.

Box 1	FF 8	Contains two newspaper articles on John Brown: "A Letter from John Brown: Communication Written Thirteen Days Before His Death Is Found in a Trunk at Wichita University." It appeared in the Wichita Beacon in February 1927. It describes the letter and how it was found. The letter confuses the city "Charleston" for "Charles Town." The other article appeared in the Kansas City Times describing Brown's life, 12-12-1934.
Box 1	FF 9	Contains a letter from Laura Heiswanger of the University Library at the University of Kansas to Downing P. O'Harra, University of Wichita Librarian, 1-25-1960. Neiswanger thanks O'Harra for letting her use the Brown-Humphrey letter for a display of John Brown material.
Box 1	FF 10	Contains a photographic copy of a portrait of John Brown. It was photographed from the portrait by Mrs. Helen Brodt, painted in 1864 at Red Bluff, California.

For information, please contact us at:

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