Princeton University Library Collection of
Patrick Henry Materials, 1743-1796: Finding Aid

The majority of materials in this collection were purchased with support from The Barksdale-Dabney-Henry Fund for Research and Teaching on Patrick Henry and Early Americana

Summary Information

Call number: C1165
Repository: Princeton University Library. Special Collections. Manuscripts Division
One Washington Road Princeton, New Jersey 08544 USA
Size: 0.2 linear feet
1 half-size archival box
Language(s) of Material: English
Abstract: Consists of selected manuscript material by and about American attorney, politician, and planter Patrick Henry (1736-1799).
Location: This collection is stored onsite at Firestone Library.
## Table of Contents

**Summary Information** .......................................................................................................................... 1

**Biography/History** ................................................................................................................................. 3

**Description** ............................................................................................................................................ 3

**Arrangement** ......................................................................................................................................... 3

**Access and Use** .................................................................................................................................... 3

**Acquisition and Appraisal** ..................................................................................................................... 3

**Processing and Other Information** ......................................................................................................... 4

**Subject Headings** .................................................................................................................................. 4

**Contents List** ....................................................................................................................................... 4

**Contents List** ....................................................................................................................................... 4
Patrick Henry, born in Hanover County, Virginia, was an American lawyer, patriot, orator, and participant in almost every aspect of the founding of America, as well as a plantation owner. He studied law on his own, and in 1760, he appeared in Williamsburg to take his attorney's examination before Robert Carter Nicholas and others. Henry served in the Virginia House of Burgesses, was a member of the Virginia Committee of Correspondence, a delegate to the Virginia Convention, and a delegate to the Virginia Constitution Ratification Convention. He played a prominent role in the May 6, 1776, convention and became the first governor of the commonwealth under its new constitution. He served three terms as governor of Virginia. Henry is perhaps best known for the speech he made in the House of Burgesses on March 23, 1775, urging the legislature to take military action against the encroaching British military force, which ended with the phrase "Give me liberty or give me death!" Henry also acquired extensive land holdings in the 1780s and 1790s, including a 10,000-acre plantation in Henry County, Virginia, known as Leatherwood, where he lived from 1779 to 1784, cultivated tobacco, and owned 75 enslaved persons. In 1794, he retired to Red Hill Plantation in Charlotte County, Virginia, a tobacco plantation comprising 520 acres.

The collection consists of selected manuscript material by and about Patrick Henry (1736-1799), including signed autograph letters to family and associates; documents and notes regarding legal, property, and financial matters; and engraved portraits of Henry.

Items are arranged by accession.

Access

The collection is open for research use.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. No further photoduplication of copies of material in the collection can be made when Princeton University Library does not own the original. Inquiries regarding publishing material from the collection should be directed to RBSC Public Services staff at rbsc@princeton.edu. The library has no information on the status of literary rights in the collection and researchers are responsible for determining any questions of copyright.
Custodial History

The collection was formed as a result of a Departmental practice of combining into one collection material of various accessions relating to a particular person, family, or subject.

Provenance and Acquisition

Promissory Note in the Hand of Patrick Henry, Signed by Jacob Puckett was a gift of Pierre F. Cook (1892) in 1931. (AM 9875).

Letter to Thomas Madison and receipt dated June 8, 1765, were a gift of Cyrus H. McCormick in April 1947. (AM 13366)

Letter to Robert Carter and receipts for October 1764 and May 1765 were a gift of David S. Elkind (1973), in October 2006. (AM 2007-37)


Appraisal

No material was separated during 2013-2019 processing.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Princeton University Library Collection of Patrick Henry Materials, Box and Folder Number; Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Encoding

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2013-06-12T14:45-0400

Descriptive Rules Used

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

Subject Headings

- Henry, Patrick, 1736-1799 -- Sources.
- Revolutionaries -- United States -- 18th century .
- Slaveholders -- Virginia -- 18th century .
- Slavery -- Virginia -- 18th century -- Sources.
- Virginia -- History -- 1775-1865 -- Sources.
- Correspondence -- 18th century.
- Documents -- 18th century.
· American history/Revolution
Contents List

Promissory Note, 1793 February 22  Box: 1 Folder: 1
   accessionnumber: AM 9875
   Description: In the hand of Patrick Henry, signed by Jacob Puckett
Letter to His Brother-in-Law, Thomas Madison (1746–1798), 1789 September 28  Box: 1 Folder: 2
   accessionnumber: AM 13366
   Description: Regards a bond of Henry's brother.
Receipt and Letter to Robert Carter, 1765, 1789  Box: 1 Folder: 3
   accessionnumber: AM 2007-37
   Description: Letter, dated July 24, 1789, regards a legal matter.
Letter to His Daughter, Elizabeth (Betsey) Aylett, and Steel Engraving of Henry, 1794 May 3  Box: 1 Folder: 4
   accessionnumber: AM 2007-66
Letter Concerning Will of Israel Christian, 1788 June 19  Box: 1 Folder: 5
   accessionnumber: AM 2008-43
Receipt for Shoes and Saddle Cloth for Henry's Nephew, John H. Christian, 1795, 1889  Box: 1 Folder: 6
   accessionnumber: AM 2008-86
   Description: Signed by cobbler Ephraim Potts
   Includes an accompanying explanatory letter (1889)
Letter to Spencer Roane (Son-in-Law) , 1786 November 14  Box: 1 Folder: 7
   accessionnumber: AM 2009-34
One-Page "Opinion" Regarding a Land Survey, circa 1831  Box: 1 Folder: 8
   accessionnumber: AM 2009-40
Letter to "Sir" (Henry Lee?), 1795 February 14  Box: 1 Folder: 9
   accessionnumber: AM 2009-115
   Description: Declining to take a law case involving an influential Fairfax family.
Letter to Philip Payne Concerning Supplies for Persons Enslaved by Henry, 1794 July 30  Box: 1 Folder: 10
   accessionnumber: AM 2010-26
Letter to Colonel Joseph Martin Regarding Policy toward American Indians, 1784 December 13  Box: 1 Folder: 11
Letter to Unidentified Correspondent Regarding the Sale of His Plantation, Red Hill, 1796 March 14

Letter to Benjamin Harrison, approximately 1726-1791, 1779 May 25

Outgoing Letter Concerning the Selling of Enslaved Persons to Purchase Yazoo Land, and Engraving of Henry, 1790 January 12

Documents Regarding Henry's Purchase of Lands on Leatherwood Creek, Henry County, 1743-1783, bulk 1778

Letter to Henry Lee (1756-1818), 1795 April 7
Engraved Portrait of Patrick Henry, undated  
accessionnumber: AM 2018-44  
Description: Consists of an engraved portrait of Patrick Henry, engraved by E. Wellmore from a painting by J.B. Longacre after an original miniature in possession of John S. Fleming of Virginia. The engraving is signed by Patrick Henry.

Patrick Henry Letter to the County Lieutenant of Berkeley, 1777 November 12  
accessionnumber: AM 2019-129  
Description: One letter, written in Williamsburg, from Patrick Henry as Governor of Virginia, in which he arranges for salt provisions for the Virginia militia "that have joined Genl Washington."