

Holden Furber papers

Ms. Coll. 1238

Finding aid prepared by Jill Golub.

Last updated on February 27, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2016 October 31

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Furber, Holden, 1903-
Title	Holden Furber papers
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1238
Date [inclusive]	1898-1992
Extent	1.75 linear feet (5 boxes and oversized folder)
Language	English
Language Note	The bulk of the material in this collection is in English, however, some of the reprographic copies of primary sources are in Dutch.
Abstract	Holden Furber (1903-1993) was a professor of South Asian studies at the University of Pennsylvania from 1948 to 1973. His papers include his correspondence to his family while traveling; records relating to his education from grammar school to graduate school; his writings; his research; and his professional papers, largely as a professor.

Cite as:

Holden Furber papers, 1898-1992, Ms. Coll. 1238, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Holden Furber (1903-1993) was a professor of South Asian studies at Penn and an American historian. His lifelong work focused on Asian trade, the history of India during the time of the British Raj and the history of the Indian sub-continent. He served as the 21st president of the Association for Asian Studies. His first book, *Henry Dundas, First Viscount Melville*, was published in 1931.

Born in Boston, the son of William F. and Mabel Furber, Furber received his doctorate from Harvard in 1929 and at the same time attended Queen's College at Oxford University, where he was completed a bachelor's degree in 1925 and a master's degree in 1930. Furber lectured at Harvard University for nine years and then at the University of Texas from 1940 to 1943. While in Texas, Furber received an assignment from the Office of Strategic Services (later the CIA) to work as a social science analyst while the United States was involved in WWII. He did so from 1943 to 1945 and, afterwards, returned to the University of Texas, where he remained until 1948. In 1948, he published *John Company at Work*, a book discussing British trading interests in India and the formation of the British Raj. Furber then taught at the University of Madras in 1948, before moving to the University of Pennsylvania, where he served as Professor of History until 1973.

Furber married Elizabeth Chapin in 1936 and the two traveled throughout Europe, India and Africa together. After Chapin died in 1972, Furber married Lucy Richardson, who, like Furber, also died in 1993.

Scope and Contents

Holden Furber's papers document both his personal and professional life from 1909 to just before his death in 1993. The collection is arranged in five series: I. Personal papers, II. Education, III. Writings, IV. Research, and V. Professional papers. The personal papers contain many handwritten and typed letters to Furber's father, aunt and parents-in-law. Most of these letters were written when Furber was overseas, whether as a student at Queen's College at Oxford University or when traveling with his first wife, Elizabeth Chapin (whose full name may have been Mary Elizabeth). Many of the letters are weekly updates about Furber's life attending political debates, class and playing sports with friends. After he married Chapin, his letters describe their travels in depth and many of his perceptions of places vastly different than America.

Records relating to his education include his report cards and diploma from grammar school; his certificates and diplomas from Brookline High School; photographs, report cards, clippings, official correspondence, and diploma from Harvard University; and his entrance letter, exam schedule, and diploma from Oxford.

Furber's writings have been divided into published articles and book reviews. These writings date from his college time to after his retirement from the University of Pennsylvania.

Furber's research relates largely to his studies of 18th century British India. Materials include copies of

contemporary handwritten documents and letters concerning, among others, Sir John MacPherson, Governor General, 1784-1786; Governor of Bombay Jonathan Duncan, 1795-1802; Major F. R. MacDonald, 1791-1799; and General Stuart, Commander-in-Chief, 1796-1800. There are reprographic copies of correspondence to Henry Dundas relating to British parliamentary matters; correspondence to and from Robert Dundas relating to India and British parliamentary matters; a Catalogue of Lord Melville's Miscellaneous East India Papers consisting largely of correspondence; a Record of Testimony Related to Lord Melville's Impeachment (1805); and Sir R. Woodford Philippine Company correspondence. The collection also includes several pages from the *Bombay Courier* and *India Gazette*; lists of claimants for pensions; printed accounts, bills and correspondence of the East India Company; framed item with two letters from Simeon Cary; and a bound typed manuscript of Furber's *John Company at Work* (1946).

The bulk of Furber's professional papers relate to his work at the University of Pennsylvania, however there are a few files relating to his early teaching career at Harvard and the University of Texas and very limited material relating to his work with the Office of Strategic Services during World War II. The majority of the files in this series include correspondence from his time at the University of Pennsylvania, with W. Norman Brown as a regular correspondent, and document his work as a mentor to students, a member of the University of Pennsylvania's faculty, and as a lecturer. There are files on his trips as visiting professors to the University of Madras and the University of Bombay. His correspondence dating from 1974 to 1992 indicates that he was active in the community and the field of South Asian studies even after retiring from the University of Pennsylvania.

Administrative Information

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Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use, however, the microfilm contained in box 3, folder 5 are restricted. The Kislak Center will provide access to the information on these materials from duplicate master files. If the original does not already have a copy, it will be sent to an outside vendor for copying. Patrons are financially responsible for the cost. The turnaround time from request to delivery of digital items is about two weeks for up to five items and three to seven weeks for more than five items. Please contact Reprographic Services (reprogr@upenn.edu) for cost estimates and ordering. Once digital items are received, researchers will have access to the files on a dedicated computer in the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center. Researchers should be aware of specifics of copyright law and act accordingly.

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and Manuscripts.

Source of Acquisition

Gift of the Furber estate, 1993

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- University of Pennsylvania.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Correspondence
- Photographs
- Reprographic copies
- Research notes
- Reviews (document genre)
- School records
- Writings (document genre)

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- India--History--British occupation, 1765-1947
- India--Politics and government--1765-1947

SUBJECT(S)

- College teachers
- Education
- Education, Higher

Collection Inventory

SERIES I. PERSONAL PAPERS.

	Box	Folder
Letters to William H. Furber (father), Jane M. Furber (aunt) and family, circa 1920s-1930s.	1	1
Letters to William H. Furber (father) and Jane M. Furber (aunt), circa 1920s-1930s.	1	2-3
Letters to the Chapin family (parents-in-law), circa 1920s-1930s.	1	4-5
	Box	Folder
Elizabeth Chapin, diploma for the Ecole Pratique Des Hautes Etudes, 1934.	98	1
	Box	Folder
Passports, marriage certificates, efficiency rating, pictures and mementos, circa 1898-1955.	1	6

SERIES II. EDUCATION.

	Box	Folder
John D. Runkle School (grammar school): report cards, 1909-1913.	2	1
	Box	Folder
John D. Runkle School: diploma, 1916.	98	1

	Box	Folder
Brookline High School: Triangular League Debate program and athletic certificate, 1920.	2	2
	Box	Folder
Brookline High School: diploma, 1920.	98	1
Brookline High School: 20th reunion photograph, 1940.	106	1
	Box	Folder
Harvard University: report cards, 1921-1922.	2	3
Harvard University: Phi Beta Kappa Union, photographs, clippings and correspondence, 1922.	2	4
Harvard University: dissertation, "Influence of the South on the Peaceful Settlement of the Oregon Question, 1821-1846", 1923.	2	5
Harvard University: letter regarding summa cum laude honor and the <i>Crimson</i> , 1923, 1933 .	2	6
	Box	Folder
Harvard University: diplomas, 1923.	98	1
	Box	Folder
Harvard University: class album, 1924.	5	1
Harvard University: photograph and Lowell House brochures, 1924-1936.	5	2
Oxford University: entrance letter, exam schedule and diploma, 1923-1925.	2	7

SERIES III. WRITINGS.

	Box	Folder
Published articles, 1921-1980.	2	8-9
Book reviews, 1933-1979.	2	10-11

SERIES IV. RESEARCH.

	Box	Folder
"Gijsbert Karel Van Hogendorf in America 1783-1784: His Letters and Papers", 1939, 1978.	2	12
John Company at Work, reprographics of and notes on primary source documents, circa 1948.	2	13-14
John Company at Work, reprographics of and notes on primary source documents, circa 1948.	3	1-3
Dutch East India Company primary sources, reprographics, circa 1948-1959.	5	3
Dutch East India Company primary sources: correspondence and list of microfilms for research, 1952-1959.	3	4
Dutch East India Company primary sources: 2 microfilms [RESTRICTED], circa 1948-1959.	3	5

SERIES V. PROFESSIONAL PAPERS.

	Box	Folder
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Early career correspondence, 1924-1940.	3	6
Tutorial system notes and writings, circa 1930 .	3	7
Office of Strategic Services (OSS)/State Department correspondence, 1942-1944.	4	1
	Box	Folder
Office of Strategic Services (OSS): certificate of merit, 1945.	106	2
	Box	Folder
University of Pennsylvania correspondence: letters and documents relating to Maureen Patterson's education, research and employment (includes letters from W. Norman Brown), 1948-1958.	4	2
Trip to India as visiting professor to University of Madras: correspondence, lecture notice and tickets to legislative assemblies, 1951 February-September .	4	3
University of Pennsylvania correspondence, 1951-1973.	4	4
University of Pennsylvania correspondence: letters and documents relating to Richard J. Kozicki's education, research and employment (includes letters from W. Norman Brown), 1952-1967.	4	5
Visiting professor at the University of Bombay: correspondence, lectures, lecture announcements, syllabi and reports, 1962-1963.	4	6
	Box	Folder
University of Bombay Department of Civics & Politics: photographs, 1962-1963.	106	1
	Box	Folder
"List of publications since 1950", circa 1975.	4	7
Interview about Indian history with Father John Correia-Afonso, 1980.	4	8

Correspondence regarding awards and honors, 1950-1981.	4	9
Post-retirement correspondence, 1974-1992.	4	10