

# **Robert Adrain papers**

**Ms. Coll. 1066**

**Finding aid prepared by Molly B. Hutt.**

---

Last updated on July 29, 2015.

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

2015 April 16

---

## Table of Contents

---

Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	4
Scope and Contents.....	4
Administrative Information.....	4
Related Materials .....	5
Controlled Access Headings.....	5
Collection Inventory.....	7
I. Books from Adrain's library.....	7
II. Card file of books from Adrain's library and one letter from Adrain to John Vaughn.....	7

---

## Summary Information

---

<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
<b>Creator</b>	Adrain, Robert, 1775-1843
<b>Title</b>	Robert Adrain papers
<b>Call number</b>	Ms. Coll. 1066
<b>Date</b>	1786-1826, undated
<b>Extent</b>	1 linear feet (1 box)
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Language Note</b>	Materials in this collection are in English, French, and Latin.
<b>Abstract</b>	Robert Adrain (1775-1843), a prominent Irish scientist and mathematician, is best known for his formulation of the method of least squares. The collection includes mathematical and scientific texts from Adrain's library written in English, French, and Latin, and cards containing a list of books from Adrain's library, as well as a letter concerning Adrain's potential appointment to a faculty position at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Cite as:**

Robert Adrain papers, 1786-1826 and undated, Ms. Coll. 1066, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

## Biography/History

---

Robert Adrain (1775-1843), a prominent scientist and mathematician, was born in Carrickfergus, Ireland but fled to Princeton, New Jersey as a result of a wound sustained in the Rebellion of 1798. Adrain taught at the Academies at Princeton, York, and Reading as well as Rutgers University, Columbia University, and the University of Pennsylvania, but he is best known for his formulation of the method of least squares. Adrain was also an editor of the *Mathematical Correspondent*, the United States' first mathematical journal, and attempted to found his own journal, *The Analyst, or, Mathematical Museum* in 1808 and 1814, but he did so with little success. He then founded *The Mathematical Diary* in 1825 which, presumably due to its wider audience appeal, remained in publication through 1832.

---

## Scope and Contents

---

This collection consists of two series. The first includes mathematical and scientific texts from Adrain's library written in English, French, and Latin, and the second holds cards containing a list of books from Adrain's library as well as a letter concerning Adrain's potential appointment to a faculty position at the University of Pennsylvania.

---

## Administrative Information

---

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

2015 April 16

Finding aid prepared by Molly B. Hutt.

### Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

### Use Restrictions

Copyright restrictions may exist. For most library holdings, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania do not hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the requester to seek permission from the

holder of the copyright to reproduce material from the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

### **Source of Acquisition**

Gift of the great-grandchildren of Robert Adrain, through the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick S. Duncan, 1926.

---

## **Related Materials**

---

### **Related Archival Materials note**

University of Pennsylvania: The Mathematical correspondent, 1804.  
Miscellaneous manuscripts, 1828.  
Research concerning the mean diameter of the earth [microform], 1818.

---

## **Controlled Access Headings**

---

### **CORPORATE NAME(S)**

- Académie royale des sciences (France).

### **FORM/GENRE(S)**

- Books
- Manuscripts (document genre)

### **SUBJECT(S)**

- Astronomy--history
- Mathematics

- Mythology
- Science

## Collection Inventory

---

### I. BOOKS FROM ADRAIN'S LIBRARY.

	Box	Folder
<i>A Mathematical Dissertation on the Figure of the Earth</i> , [by Thomas Simpson], including a letter prior to the preface from Thomas Simpson to Martin Folkes, Esquire, President of the Royal-Society, undated.	1	1
<i>Trigonométrie. Rectiligne et Sphérique</i> , par Antoine Cagnoli, traduite de L'Italien par N.M. Chompré, seconde édition considérablement augmentée, 1808.	1	2-3
<i>Théorie des Fonctions Analytiques</i> , 1813.	1	4
<i>Mémoire Explicatif du Zodiaque Chronologique et Mythologique</i> , by J. L. Lagrange, 1806.	1	5
<i>Introductio in Analysin Infinitorum</i> , auctore Leonhardo Eulero, Professore Regio Berolinensi, & Academiae Imperialis Scientiarum Petropolitanae Socio, Editio Nova, Tomus Secundus, Continens Theoriam Linearum curvarum, una cum appendice de Superficiebus, by Dupuis, 1797.	1	6
<i>Exercices de Calcul Intégral. Méthodes Diverses pour la Construction des Tables Elliptiques, Suivies de la Table générale des Fonctions complètes, de la Table particulière pour le module sin 45°, etc.</i> , by Leonhardo Eulero, 1816.	1	7
<i>Mémoires de L'Académie Royale des Sciences Années MDCCLXXXIV-LXXXV</i> , second partie, 1786.	1	8

---

---

**II. CARD FILE OF BOOKS FROM ADRAIN'S LIBRARY AND ONE LETTER FROM ADRAIN TO JOHN VAUGHN.**

	Box	Folder
"Books from the Robert Adrain Library," card file, undated.	1	9
Letter from Adrain to John Vaughn concerning a teaching position at the University of Pennsylvania, 1826 September 9.	1	10