

# **John Honnold United Nations Correspondence**

**MSS.014**

**Finding aid prepared by Megan Good.**

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Last updated on April 28, 2011.

University of Pennsylvania, Biddle Law Library, Manuscripts Collection

2010

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Biddle Law Library: Manuscripts Collection
<b>Creator</b>	Honnold, John
<b>Title</b>	John Honnold United Nations Correspondence
<b>Call number</b>	MSS.014
<b>Date</b>	circa 1983-1993
<b>Extent</b>	0.25 linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Text [Box]</b>	1
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>John Honnold (1915-2011) graduated from Harvard University Law School in 1936 and became Chief of the Court Review Branch of the Office of Price Administration during World War II. Honnold served as a Professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School from 1946 to 1969, when he became Chief of Legal Staff to the Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). He resumed teaching at the Penn Law School in 1974 while working on the UNCITRAL draft that was ratified at the Vienna Convention. The collection, circa 1983-1993, includes copies of letters Honnold sent and received as the co-chairman of the U.S. Delegation to the Vienna Conference and Chief of Staff of UNCITRAL. The collection also contains a reference file that spans from 1986 to 1993.</p>

**Cite as:**

[Identification of item], in the John Honnold Papers, Biddle Law Library Manuscript Collections, MSS.014, Biddle Law Library, University of Pennsylvania Law School, Philadelphia, PA.

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## Biography/History

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John Otis Honnold was born in central Illinois in 1915, the youngest child of a rural, farming family. Disliking agricultural work, he joined the debating team in his school and enjoyed poetry. The economic crisis of the Great Depression led him to concentrate on government and economics in school. In 1932, Honnold entered University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to study government and philosophy. Finishing a semester early, he was able to devote the last half year to graduate work and graduate in 1936 with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Receiving a fellowship, Honnold studied law at Harvard University. He credits Professor Zechariah Chafee in awakening his interest in human rights. While attending Harvard, he was the Editor of the Harvard Law Review. After graduating cum laude in 1939, Honnold entered into the private practice of Wright, Gordon, Zachry and Parlin on Wall Street in New York City. However, he found corporate work uninteresting, left Wall Street and was soon employed by a holding company division of the Securities and Exchange Commission. At the outbreak of World War II, the SEC moved to Philadelphia while Honnold decided to remain in Washington, D.C.

Honnold then became the Chief of the Court Review Branch in the Chief Counsel's Office of the Office of the Price Administration. His main priority was to defend the actions of the Office of the Price Administration against businesses that were inflating prices due to the world war. In 1946, with the wartime agencies abandoned, Honnold took the position of Visiting Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Pennsylvania. He taught sales, equity and commercial law courses.

In the early 1950s, Honnold helped to prepare the Sales Article of the Uniform Commercial Code (U.C.C.). He also defended the new Code against other professionals that did not understand the importance of an updated sales law. During 1958, he became a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar at the University of Paris Faculty of law after taking a leave of absence from Penn. Honnold also worked at the International Chamber of Commerce as a Senior Research Scholar while in France. In 1964, he represented the United States delegation at the International Conference on the Unification of Commercial Law at The Hague.

Honnold was also involved in the civil rights movement and fought against race discrimination. In 1965, he traveled to Jackson, Mississippi to volunteer as Chief Counsel in the Mississippi Office of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law. From this experience, he became a Director of the American Friends Service Committee and a member of its Executive Board.

In 1969, the Secretary General of the United Nations asked Honnold to serve as Chief of Legal Staff to the Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). He resigned from the Penn Law school to take this position in 1969. Honnold resumed teaching at Penn Law school in 1974.

Honnold continued working on the draft of UNCITRAL until 1978, when it was completed. After completion of the draft, a world conference was held in Vienna, Austria in 1980 in order to be approved

and adopted by member nations. Honnold became known as the father of the Vienna Convention since he helped to author the draft.

From 1982-1983, Honnold held the Arthur Goodhart Professorship visiting appointment at Cambridge University in the Science of Law. A year later, he retired from Penn Law School to become the Schnader Professor Emeritus, which was celebrated greatly by the University of Penn Law Review.

In 1986, the United States and China approved the ratification at the United Nations in the presence of Honnold. The United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG) went into effect on January 1, 1988. For his work towards the Vienna Convention and international law of sales, Honnold received the American Bar Association Theberge Award.

John Honnold died in 2011.

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## Scope and Contents

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The John Honnold United Nations Correspondence, circa 1983-1993, includes copies of letters Honnold sent and received as the co-chairman of the U.S. Delegation to the Vienna Conference and Chief of Staff of UNCITRAL. The collection also contains a reference file that spans from 1986 to 1993.

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## Administrative Information

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Finding aid prepared by Megan Good.

### Access Restrictions

The archives reserves the right to restrict access to materials of sensitive nature. Please contact the department for further information.

### Use Restrictions

Copyright is retained by the authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law.

### Custodial History note

Before transfer to the Archives, these letters were maintained by Marta Tarnawsky, former Foreign & International Law librarian at Biddle Law Library, as part of a research project with which she was assisting Professor Honnold.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition note**

Received from John O. Honnold in March 2010.

### **Processing Information note**

Processed by Megan Good, February 2010.

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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

- United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

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

- Faculty papers

### **SUBJECT(S)**

- Commercial law

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## **Other Finding Aids note**

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A item-level container list is available offline in spreadsheet form. Please contact the Archives for more information.

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## **Bibliography**

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Bressler, Steffen. "Father of the Vienna Convention- Prof. John Otis Honnold." Oral Legal History Project. March 25, 2000.

Bruton, Paul W. "John Honnold – A Personal Tribute." 132 U. Pa. L. Rev. 937-38 (1984).

## Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Letter to Marta Tarnawsky regarding Translation of Book Review, circa 1983.	1	14
Letter to Professor John N. Hazard, 1984 May 9.	1	1
	1	1
Letter to Peter H. Pfund, 1986 November 3.	1	2
Letter to Director, Treaty Division, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations, NY, 1986 November 5.	1	3
Letter to Colleagues concerned with Procedure, Evidence and related fields, 1988 November 21.	1	4
Letter to Richard Eckert, 1989 February 7.	1	5



Letter from Aron Broches, 1992 February 18.	1	6
Letter to John O. Honnold and James H. Carter, 1992 August 3.	1	7
Letter to Colleagues (Memorandum), 1992 August 18.	1	8
Letter to Daniel Kolkey and James Carter, 1992 August 24.	1	9
Letter to AAA Committee Colleagues Daniel Kolkey and James Carter, 1992 September 1.	1	10
Letter to Mr. Vazquez-Lepinette, 1993 May 3.	1	11
Letter to Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Senator Claiborne Pell, Chairman, 1993 October 20.	1	12

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**Reference File, 1986 August 8-1993 May 13.**

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**Scope and Contents note**

The contents of this reference file include Honnold's personal copy of the Journal of Maritime Law and Commerce (published in January 1993), a UNCITRAL bibliography, and a part of a General Report of the 12th Congress of the International Academy of Comparative Law. The items range in date from 1986 to 1993.

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**Memorial Service Materials, 2011 February 5.**

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**Scope and Contents note**

Funeral program and other materials distributed during the memorial service for the late John Honnold on February 5, 2011.