

THE RAWLE COLLECTION

"The Rawle Collection of the Temple University School of Law Library is a magnificent resource for the study of the Philadelphia bar and the first century of American legal development. The collection is unique in its survival as a unit, in the high quality of its contents, and in the continuity of intellectual vigor it reflects."

– Morris L. Cohen, professor of law and law librarian (retired), Yale University; former professor of law and law librarian, Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania

"Many of these volumes will be of significant interest to legal historians. We are fortunate to have this invaluable resource available for use by our faculty, students and visiting scholars."

– John M. Lindsey, professor of law and law librarian, Temple University

The Rawle Collection includes more than 4,000 books from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Several hundred volumes of particular historical and scholarly interest are displayed in the Rawle Reading Room, with the remainder housed nearby.

The collection includes books printed in the colonies and on English law, books by William Rawle, the elder, by other members of the renowned Rawle family and a "Miscellany of the Law."

Handwritten comments by William Rawle, set down in a precise script, still readable, in faded brown ink, add to the value and historical interest of a number of the books.

One such book is *A View of the Constitution of the United States of America*, authored by William Rawle, an early work in the field of American constitutional law which was adopted as a textbook at West Point and other institutions. The author's copy of the second edition contains his marginal notes towards a never-completed third edition.

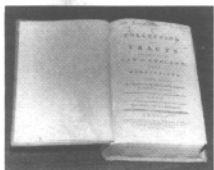
The manuscript, in Rawle's hand, of *A Legal Common Place Book* is one of the jewels of the collection, described as an "invaluable and a priceless historical document," by former Temple Professor and Law Librarian Erwin C. Surrency, who was instrumental in bringing the collection to the Law School. Within its pages, Rawle collected "commonplaces" or passages important for reference, as a means of legal study.

Also of historical interest are *English liberties*, printed in Boston in 1721 by James Franklin, the elder brother of Benjamin Franklin, and *The Charters of The Province of Pennsylvania and The City of Philadelphia*, printed and sold in 1742 by Benjamin Franklin.

Among the other colonial imprints, compiled by Lawrence J. Reilly, reference law librarian, are *The Laws of the Province of Pennsylvania*, printed and sold by Andrew Bradford, 1728; *The Charters and Acts of the Assembly of The Province of Pennsylvania*, printed by Peter Miller in 1762 and *The Acts of Assembly of The Province of Pennsylvania*, printed by Hall and Sellers in 1775.



These books and many other historically interesting books in the Rawle Collection were the working tools of members of the Rawle family and firm and of their peers and colleagues. Still intact after two centuries, this collection is a significant addition to the Law Library and a remarkable resource for students, scholars and legal historians. ◆◆



William Rawle was the founder of Rawle and Henderson, the law office with the longest continuous practice in the United States.

Rawle was born in Philadelphia in 1759. His father died in a hunting accident in 1761 and his mother remarried Samuel Shoemaker, a Tory who served as mayor of Philadelphia during the British occupation.

When the British troops withdrew, Shoemaker and his family left with them for New York and eventually London. During those years, young Rawle began his study of law, becoming a member of the Middle Temple Inn of Court in England.

In 1782, thanks to a handwritten passport from Benjamin Franklin, then in France, Rawle returned to Philadelphia. In 1783 he passed the bar and opened a law office in his home on Spruce Street in Philadelphia.

In 1789 he was elected to the state legislative assembly, and two years later was appointed as a United States Attorney for Pennsylvania by President George Washington, a post he held for more than eight years.

He was the first chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association, first president of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and president of the Maryland Society for the abolition of slavery, a post he held from 1818 to 1836.

Prominent in legal, civil and intellectual affairs, William Rawle wrote, annotated, collected and used many of the legal books now on display in the Rawle Reading Room at Temple Law School.



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THE RAWLE READING ROOM AT THE LAW LIBRARY
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
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William Rawle, 1759-1836

**THE RAWLE READING ROOM
AT THE LAW LIBRARY
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW**

The Rawle Reading Room houses a law library created by William Rawle and his descendants from 1783 through 1860, representing the collections of four generations of outstanding Philadelphia lawyers. This library was created at a time when there were no institutional law libraries in the country.

This unique collection provides a view of the working tools and methods used by lawyers in the early years of our democracy and valuable insights into the origins of the Constitution and the common law system. ♦