

**NJS Presents****Museums, Archives, Artifacts, and Documents News****In this Issue:*****Unmapped New Jersey Treasure: A Research Library Hiding in Plain Sight*****By Sarah Minegar****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v3i1.70>**

*Instituted in 1933 as the first historical park in the Park Service, Morristown National Historical Park (MNHP) marks a watershed moment in Park history and its involvement in the preservation movement of the early twentieth century. We at NJ Studies invited MNHP to submit the Museums, Archives, Artifacts, and Documents News entry for the Winter 2017 edition of the Journal given this issue's focus on National Parks and the environment. We were surprised and delighted by their very unexpected and interesting submission, and- without giving too much away- hope you will be as well!*

There's a running joke that repositories keep their collections tucked away in dark basements and that librarians, like bookish vampires, only emerge occasionally to shriek at the light and retrieve materials. While there is a certain air of mystery surrounding just what goes on in special collections storage rooms and the established practices deep within the nerd lair, there is generally less mystery surrounding the exact holdings within said repository. Some research libraries may have private holdings that are "off limits" to the general inquirer, but it isn't common for an entire collection to fall off the radar. Enter Morristown National Historical Park (MNHP).

If you have visited MNHP, it was likely to hike the trails at Jockey Hollow, tour the Ford Mansion where General George Washington made his headquarters during the winter encampment of 1779-1780, or visit the replica soldier huts that outline the Pennsylvania Brigade line. What

most patrons don't know and what even most interns don't discover until *after* they begin their practicum, is MNHP houses one of the more significant and diverse collections of American and European rare books and manuscripts in the National Park Service. These materials span seven centuries and cover a wide swath of topic areas.

One of the biggest obstacles the park faces is one of awareness. Researchers simply do not expect a National Park that commemorates a six-month period of the American Revolution to have a diverse library and archival collection. Morristown gets a lot of requests for muster roles and Hessian manuscripts while its Susan B. Anthony, Darwin, Louis XVI, Mark Twain, Louisa May Alcott, Booker T. Washington, and Alessandro Scarlatti materials wait unnoticed. Conversely, some military historians assume the library is a more traditional repository with large holdings of materials falling under consecutive series. While it does house small series of family and business papers, it does not actively accession or manage large record groups. Morristown's most unique collection, the Lloyd W. Smith Collection, was the lifetime pursuit of a personal collector and it is sometimes difficult to explain to patrons that as such there are "gaps" in the topics it covers.

### **So how did all of these materials end up at a Revolutionary War site?**

Instituted in 1933 as the first *historical* park in the Park Service, Morristown NHP marks a watershed moment in Park history and its involvement in the preservation movement of the early twentieth century. Morristown represents a "coming of age" of sorts for the Park Service- when the agency joined an effort to expand its capacity as a protector of natural and cultural resources of national significance. In the process of acquiring public lands and structures of historical importance, Park Service director Horace Albright stumbled upon a fortuitous preservation project in development in Morristown, New Jersey. Together with Albright, wealthy investment banker Lloyd W. Smith, Morristown Mayor Clyde Potts, and the Washington Association of New Jersey

helped secure the sites of George Washington's 1779-1780 winter encampment, establishing the first historical park.<sup>1</sup> Smith's affinity for the site and his involvement in the Washington Association led to the eventual establishment of a museum, library, and archives featuring Smith's personal collections as the foundational research materials.

MNHP is not the only place that owes a great debt of gratitude to Lloyd Smith. This civic minded antiquarian and philanthropist was the benefactor of many Morris County religious and health care organizations, donating land and funds to many causes. A founding member of the Forbes Investment Bank, Smith used his wealth to act as a proto-preservationist, acquiring land for public use,<sup>2</sup> amassing a significant collection of rare books and historical manuscripts that were inclusive of marginalized and underrepresented social groups, and commissioning a six volume history of New Jersey.<sup>3</sup> Based on his holdings alone, park historians know Smith was an avid collector of New Jersey and New York history, but very little is actually known about this co-Florham Park/Manhattan resident as a scholar or historian. In fact, his personal papers, which are not housed with his rare book and manuscript collection, are waiting to be scoured at the New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

### **The Park Honors Its Promise to Smith**

In 1957, construction for the MNHP library wing began. This would provide a location for scholars to utilize the materials Smith had bequeathed upon his death (in 1955), and fulfill the Park's mission to use museum and library materials "in developing a pleasurable educational and scenic program for the visitor, as well as courses of study for the student."<sup>4</sup> For the next twenty

---

<sup>1</sup> Jude M. Pfister, *The Jacob Ford Jr. Mansion: The Storied History of a New Jersey Home* (Charleston: History Press, 2009); Morristown NHP, *Washington's Headquarters Museum* (Eastern National, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> In 1931, Smith purchased the land that would become the Morristown NHP Jockey Hollow site from the Jockey Hollow Club, which included Redman Cross and his associates.

<sup>3</sup> Lloyd W. Smith's personal papers, housed at the New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, NJ, have documentation that indicates such a work was commissioned and paid for by Smith.

<sup>4</sup> MNHP "Cultural Landscape Report," 32.

years the fully staffed library functioned much like any non-lending, public research institution at the time. But by the 1970s, amid economic downturn and the approaching bicentennial, an administrative decision was made to “de-emphasize” the library collection and focus solely on the Washington story. Smith’s collections remained cared for but the plethora of non-Washington materials played second fiddle and gradually fell off the scholarly radar, so to speak. While in-house inventories and reports were maintained, it was clear that its time in deep storage also meant a lapse in thirty years of library science advancement and the (lack of) inclusion in important research catalogs and archival databases. Morristown National Historical Park Library and Archives was hiding in plain sight!

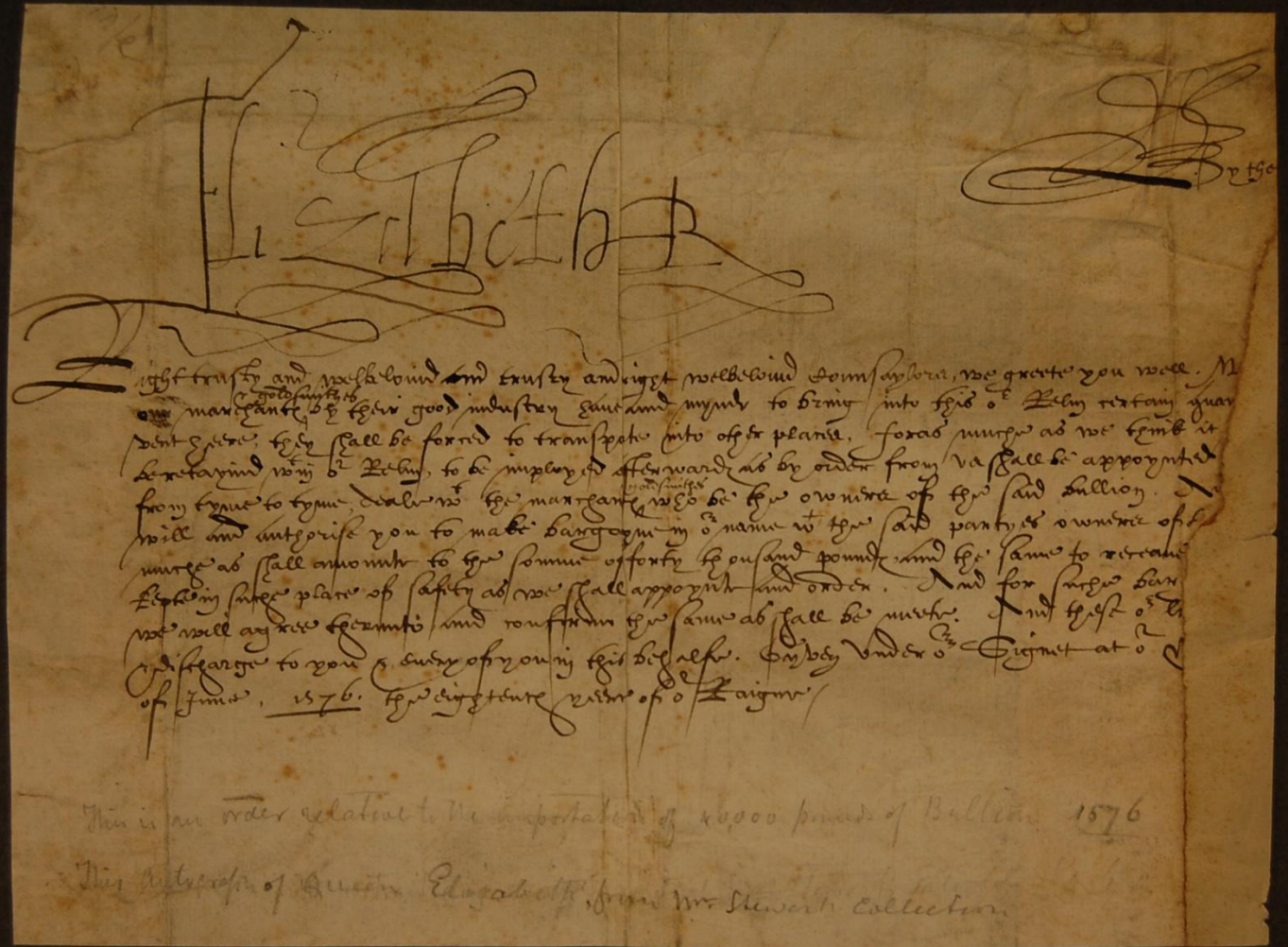
### **Unpublished Manuscripts; Dissertations Just Waiting to be Discovered...**

For the past twelve years, it has been a special Park project to “re-emphasize” and reintroduce the community to Lloyd Smith’s masterful collection. The Park’s Division of Cultural Resources maintains a special collections blog featuring unique artifacts and researcher and intern projects. This has not only helped the library clarify its holdings but has also provided a space for Morristown to celebrate and share aspects of the collection that are beyond the scope of its traditional gallery exhibit narrative.

This year marks the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of perhaps the most celebrated English bard, William Shakespeare. In honor of that milestone, the Folger Shakespeare Library brought the First Folio to museums, universities, public libraries, and historical societies around the country. One such lucky repository was Morristown’s academic partner, Drew University. This was a huge honor for the university and a great compliment to the dedication of Drew Library and Archives staff, teaching faculty, and the resident Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. In honor of this celebration, the Park wanted to “tip its hat” to its Drew colleagues and share a little known

Morristown treasure. While Morristown NHP doesn't have an original Shakespearean work, they do have a manuscript signed by Shakespeare's monarch, Queen Elizabeth I, dated 1576!

*(Scroll for image and transcript.)*



1. Elizabeth R
2. Eight trusty and wel[??]lovid and trusty and right welbelovid counsyloure[?], we greete you well. ["W"? truncated]
3. our marchantes<sup>goldsmithes</sup> by their good industry [??]ncame my[??] to bring into this o<sup>ur</sup> [P??] certa[??] guar[truncated]
4. denchee[?] they shall be forced to transpote into other places, foras muche as we think it
5. be retaynid w<sup>t</sup> [with] in o<sup>ur</sup> [P??] to be employed afterward as by order from u[?] maybe "s" shall be appointed
6. from tyme to tyme, d[?]e[?]alr w<sup>t</sup> the marchantes<sup>goldsmithes</sup> who be the ownerses of the said bullion. [truncated letter]
7. will and authorise you to make bargoy[n or m] in o<sup>ur</sup> name w<sup>t</sup> the said [?]ansy & ownerses of [truncated letter]
8. muche as shall amounte to th<sup>e</sup> somme of forty thousand pounds and the same to rem[?]ain
9. [?]e[?]teing such<sup>e</sup> places of safety as we shall appoynt and order. And for suche b[?]r
10. we will agre[e?] [t or f]ye[????] and confirm the same as shall be m[????]. And these o<sup>ur</sup> [truncated letter]
11. [?]es[?]a[r?]ge to you [?] e[????] of [?]o[??] this be[?]a[?]fe. Enbey under o<sup>ur</sup> Sign[?] at o<sup>ur</sup> [truncated letter]
12. of June 1576. the Eightenth yeer of o<sup>ur</sup> Raigne

This fall, Morristown NHP featured a special online tribute entitled, *Decoding Shakespeare's Monarch*. This interactive web series included:

- Paleography for Everyone! Cracking the Old Hand Writing Code
- The Art of Transcription: A Practical Guide
- Quills, Paper, and Ink
- Understanding Regnal Years
- Preservation 101: How Light and Humidity Impact Paper
- The Cursive Learning Curve & Future Historians' Dilemma

➔ See more at <http://morristownnhpmuseum.blogspot.com>

Morristown NHP Library and Archives is a small operation and its staff realizes what incredible learning opportunities Smith's collection provides the public beyond the scope of the MNHP's Revolutionary story. This exceptional teaching collection gives new relevance to the Park site, not only as a commemorative site where an historical event took place but as a location where new learning takes place.

*Sarah Minegar is the Archivist and Museum Educator at Morristown National Historical Park. She earned her doctorate in Modern History and Literature from Drew University.*