

**MORGAN COLLECTIONS CORRESPONDENCE**  
*Archives of The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York*

© The Pierpont Morgan Library, 2006

---

**BRIEF COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**Collection title and dates**

Morgan Collections Correspondence, 1887–1948

**Creator**

J. Pierpont Morgan, 1837-1913

J.P. Morgan, 1867-1943

The Pierpont Morgan Library

**Accession number**

ARC 1310

**Quantity/extent**

Ca. 8000 items (28 flip-top boxes)

**Collection overview**

A brief overview of this collection is available in the Morgan's online catalog, CORSAIR. The collection-level record includes hyperlinks to names and subjects represented in the collection; descriptions of related material may be found by following these links.

---

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Processing information**

Introductory information by Christine Nelson, 2004; item level descriptions by an unidentified Library staff member. This collection has been described on the item level, and records exist in CORSAIR for each item. The item-level records derive from a typed list created some time after 1950 in which the correspondent, date, and brief description of contents of each item were recorded. This typed list was the basis for the creation of the CORSAIR records. No further systematic processing or editing of records has been undertaken, though errors are corrected as encountered and individual item descriptions augmented from time to time. Available upon request is an exact transcription of the original typed list of the collection, which does not include any corrections added after records were loaded into CORSAIR. The title of the collection, which was previously known informally as the "Dealer files," "Vendor files," or "Early Acquisitions Correspondence," was supplied in 2003 to account for the broad range of items included in the collection, which are not limited to a single creator (Belle Greene, Pierpont Morgan, J.P. Morgan Jr., or The Morgan Library), which include more than just dealer correspondence, and which are not limited to library-related business (there is a great deal of art-related correspondence).

**Provenance**

These files were generated at the Library during the normal course of business.

---

**Accessibility**

The collection is open for research by appointment. The following page provides information on conducting research in the Morgan's Reading Room:

<http://www.themorgan.org/research/reading.asp>

**Preferred citation**

Morgan Collections Correspondence: File name. Archives of The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

**Repository**

The Pierpont Morgan Library  
225 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10016-3405  
(212) 685-0008

---

**DETAILED COLLECTION INFORMATION****Scope and content**

The files document in detail the purchases made by Pierpont Morgan and his successors both for the library and the art collections. They consist primarily of correspondence between Belle Greene (Morgan's librarian and later Director of the Library), and various art and book dealers, scholars, colleagues, and private collectors, along with invoices for items purchased. Correspondence for the early years (ca. 1887-1905) is with Pierpont Morgan himself, though researchers will not find letters from Morgan explaining why he made specific purchases. From 1905 until 1913, the year of Morgan's death, the bulk of the correspondence is with Belle Greene, Morgan's librarian, acting as his agent. From 1913-1924, Greene acts as private librarian to Morgan's son, J.P. Morgan Jr. From 1924-1948, Greene acts as Director of the Morgan Library. With a very few exceptions, the collection does not include photographs of the items being purchased or considered for acquisition. Because Morgan collected so widely in so many areas, these records are invaluable to art historians doing research on provenance of objects once owned by Morgan, to Library staff documenting the entry of items into the collection, and to cultural historians studying the American art and book market.

**Arrangement note**

The collection is maintained in original order. The file arrangement, which is alphabetical by name of individual or firm (and chronological within each file), was created by Belle Greene during the normal course of Library business. When she was hired in 1905(?), she apparently added to the collection files already begun by Morgan and maintained a single alphabetical filing sequence through several periods: her time as private librarian to Morgan (1905-1913), librarian to his son J. P. Morgan Jr. (1913-1924), and her tenure as Director of the Morgan Library (1924-1948). The items dated 1924-1948 are technically records of The Pierpont Morgan Library, but they have not been separated out in order to respect the collection's provenance and original order.

**Preservation note**

The collection includes retained copies of many of the letters sent by Belle Greene to individuals and firms. The retained copies were made on extremely brittle paper which had reached a point by the 1990s that it had browned significantly and could not be handled without crumbling. All retained copies have therefore been photocopied onto acid-free paper and the originals discarded. The photocopies retain all the information that was present on the originals. In many cases newspaper clippings have been photocopied onto acid-free paper. Metal fasteners have been removed.

### **Related material**

The Archives of the Morgan Library holds additional primary sources for provenance research. For more information, contact the Archives.

### **Note on searching**

To limit CORSAIR searches to this collection, include the keyword ARVEBC in search phrase. Example: **arvebc and duveen** will bring up records for all correspondence with the dealer Duveen. Depending on the level of detail in the records, it is possible to try searching for a work by a specific artist; example: **arvebc and Vermeer** will bring up a record for a receipt for a Vermeer painting purchased by Morgan. However, most CORSAIR records do not describe invoice items in enough detail to allow searching for specific objects. In general, researchers must select a likely dealer from whom Morgan might have bought a specific object and search the original file folder for documentation of the art object in question.

---

## **INVENTORY**

Contact the Archives for an inventory, or search for individual records in CORSAIR