

BETWEEN THE COVERS RARE BOOKS

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Henry Kerr Williams

Westminster Choir College letters

Princeton, New York: 1936-1940

\$750



A collection of 109 letters sent to Delaware Valley Philharmonic Orchestra founder, Henry Kerr Williams from his family while he was attending Westminster Choir College from 1934-1940. Very good or better with age toning and tears from opening. An interesting accumulation from the early days of that institution.

Henry Williams began Westminster Choir College in 1934 after completing his teaching certification at Philadelphia normal school. While there he studied conducting and composing. He would go on to write “three symphonies, one string quartet, one woodwind quartet, a brass octet, chamber music, and three operas based on the Bible. He also composed music for more than 40 psalms. Fifteen were published as Musical Meditations on the Psalms.” During his training and student teaching his family wrote him regularly to discuss his progress and remind him how proud they were of his successes. After visiting the campus his mother writes, “We were well impressed with it up there. It is so neat and clean and comfortable.”

The college, originally established in Ithaca, New York in 1920, relocated to Princeton in 1932 and was a fully functioning independent music institution by the time Williams attended in 1934, the year it moved to its present campus. Westminster had gained prestige and was looked at highly by Williams’ family. In a letter from 1938 his brother Tom, who was attending Blair Academy wrote, “Keep up the good work in writing music. You ought to make a lot of money out of that some day.”

Williams went on to teach at Temple University and Cheltenham High School and became assistant conductor with the Kansas City Philharmonic Orchestra. When he returned to Philadelphia in 1954 he founded the Delaware Valley Philharmonic Orchestra. An extensive assemblage looking at the early college days of Williams and the early decades of this institution of higher musical learning. [\[BTC#389889\]](#)