
“Like some rare flower entombed in its beauty, shedding everlasting.”

—Inscription on tomb of Annmary Brown
Annmary Brown Memorial: A History

Part art gallery, part mausoleum, the Annmary Brown Memorial is a testament to the enduring love between General Rush Hawkins and his wife, for whom the Memorial is named. Opened to scholars as a private collection in 1907 and transferred to Brown University in 1948, the Memorial’s collections are an invaluable resource for scholars of Renaissance learning and for art dating from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century. Behind the bronze doors of the distinctive granite structure are exquisite paintings by well-known European and American artists and a selection of military and decorative objects drawn from the Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection. The militaria replaces General Hawkins’ significant collection of early printed books which were relocated to the John Hay Library in 1990. General Hawkins’ papers and manuscripts relating to the American Revolutionary and Civil Wars and the 17th-century New England witchcraft trials are also available at the Hay, where they complement many of the University’s signature collections.

In their lifetimes, Rush and Annmary Brown Hawkins moved in rarefied social circles and were intimate acquaintances of famous artists on both sides of the Atlantic. Annmary was born into social prominence as a member of one of Rhode Island’s and Brown University’s founding families. Indeed, the University acquired its name in 1804 when her grandfather, Nicholas, donated $5,000 at a critical moment in the College’s history. Annmary met Rush Hawkins in 1858 while vacationing at her family’s summer home; a formal engagement soon followed and the two were married the next year. Hawkins was a dashing romantic figure at the time of the marriage and remained a prominent, if rather eccentric, personage in public life until 1920, when he was run down by a taxi in New York City. He ran away from home to fight in the Mexican War at fifteen, led his own private regiment during the Civil War, and rose to the rank of Brigadier General. As an art collector later in life, he was dismissive of “modern” art and publicly feuded with James MacNeill Whistler on the eve of the Paris Exposition of 1889. On a more private note he wrote Better than Men, a sentimental reflection on the many pets he had owned throughout his life.
Annmary’s death in 1903 left her devoted husband grief-stricken. As Hawkins wrote, “No words at my command are equal to the expression of my desolation and loneliness. Existence now is tolerable only because linked with sweet memories of the past.” Hawkins had long planned to build a library to house his impressive collection of art and rare books. The death of his beloved led him to reconsider his original conception, reconceiving it as both a repository for his treasures and an elegantly appointed crypt. Describing it, Hawkins wrote, “It is first of all a memorial to a woman of noble character. It is secondarily a collection of art treasures.” The cornerstone was laid in 1905 and the building opened to the public in 1907. Originally independent, the financially troubled Memorial and its holdings were deeded to Brown some 40 years later. Strains of love and loss resound throughout the Memorial and the imprint of Annmary and General Hawkins lingers to this day. The ultimate tribute to Annmary is the building itself, in which both are interred. In deference to General Hawkins’ wishes, each year on Annmary’s birthday the Memorial’s curators decorate the tomb with fresh flowers. Love letters written by the couple while Hawkins was on the front lines of the Civil War are kept at the Hay; their contents remain private, as Hawkins stipulated that the casket in which they are contained was never to be opened.

In his day, Rush Hawkins was celebrated for his discerning eye for fine art. His personal collection of drawings, watercolors, and oil paintings are on display at the Memorial. Believing it his patriotic duty to import the finest examples of European art to America, Hawkins began to acquire pieces that he believed were representative of the more refined schools of academic and representational painting. As Hawkins described his unique approach to collecting, “[my] preference has often been for the surely beautiful and impressive in composition, form and colour. The question of a name of a famous artist has not been considered.” While Hawkins may not have set about trying to amass works by prominent painters, the Collection nonetheless boasts works by many influential artists. Among the many notable artists represented are Angelika Kauffmann, Francesco Solimena, Benjamin West, Thomas Couture, Giuseppe Barbaglia, Jacob D. Blondel, John Wesley Jarvis, Frederik Kaemmerer, Gari Melchers, Eastman Johnson, and Edwin Lord Weeks.
Hawkins Collection of Incunabula

An avid collector of rare printed materials, Hawkins was determined to acquire a publication issued by each press operating in Europe prior to 1501. At the time of his death, Hawkins's personal collection boasted some 526 volumes, many of which rank among the first printed books in their respective countries. Today, these works are housed at the John Hay Library.

The earliest example of the book arts in the collection is a copy of *Tractatus Rationis et Conscientiae* (1460) by theologian Matthias de Cracovia, printed by Johann Gutenberg at Mainz, Germany. Gutenberg, famed as the originator of printing from movable type, serves as the chronological beginning for Hawkins' collection and testifies to the dizzying speed with which printing spread across Europe. Notable examples of the global reach of the printing press include books from Italy, Switzerland, France, Portugal, the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Spain, England.

This extraordinary geographic diversity is coupled with a wide range of learned thought represented in the Collection. Works by Petrarch and Thomas Aquinas vie for space with classical literature from the likes of Ovid, Catullus and Aristotle. There are philosophical treatises and works of theology, literature, and history. Holdings in the sciences and math are also very strong, boasting Latin translations of Arabic titles and works that trace the development of medicine, astronomy, and astrology.

Cyril and Harriet Mazansky British Sword Collection

Over 100 British swords are on display as part of the Cyril and Harriet Mazansky British Sword Collection, a component of the Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection. Ranging from an early 17th century English rapier to World War I dress swords, the collection features broadswords, small swords, regimental issues and Mameluke swords. Complementing the Mazansky Collection are other items from the Military Collection, including miniature military figures, military themed porcelains, and watercolors by the Scottish-South African artist Andy May.

Examples of incunabula held by the Library. Below, from St. Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* (Italy, 1470); opposite, woodcut from Palladinus’ *Consolatio peccatorum*, seu *Processus Belial* (Germany, 1489).
I believe in unconditional honesty / The power and practice of truth / The influence of noble aspirations / And love of the beautiful.

— Inscription on tomb of Rush Hawkins