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**E. Millicent Sowerby Collection,
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*Finding Aid Compiled by
Lenora Robinson*

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Volume: 3 linear feet (16 volumes, 2 document boxes, 1 oversized folder)

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E. Millicent Sowerby Collection

Biographical Sketch

Emily Millicent Sowerby was born in Beverley, East Yorkshire, England on September 7, 1883. She received several degrees through Girton College, Cambridge, focusing on medieval and modern languages. She began her career in the field of rare books in London with Wilfrid Michael Voynich in 1912. For a brief time in 1914, Sowerby was appointed a librarian post at Birbeck College in Chancery Lane. While there she wrote the War Office to offer her services and was sent to Paris to assist with the War effort (some unconfirmed sources indicate she was British counterintelligence, she states in her autobiography that she believes she was sent because of her knowledge of languages).

In 1916 Sowerby returned to London, engaged by Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge as a rare-book cataloguer. She was hired at the firm despite a prejudice against women in the rare-book trade, as Sowerby indicates in her autobiography “Rare People and Rare Books” (1967). She was only employed by them at the time—“owing to the war, they could no longer find male book-cataloguers”—to replace a man who had been called to the front. Leaving Sotheby’s in 1923, she traveled to the United States and continued cataloging with the American Art Association, then the New York Public Library until 1925, at which time she went to Philadelphia to work at the Rosenbach Company as a bibliographer. It was during this time that she compiled *Early American Children’s Books* (1933), credited to Dr. Abraham S. W. Rosenbach.

In 1942, Sowerby left Philadelphia for Washington D. C., to accept her appointment as the bibliographer for the Thomas Jefferson Collection at the Library of Congress. There she prepared a reconstructed catalogue of the books that Thomas Jefferson sold to the United States in 1815 that had largely been lost due to fire and relocation. The collection is five volumes and took from 1942 until 1959 to complete, with the first volume published in 1952.

Sowerby retired to Muncie, Indiana. She died on October 23, 1977 at the age of ninety-four.

History taken from *Rare People and Rare Books*, by E. Millicent Sowerby, 1967

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains published and unpublished books and pamphlets, correspondence, articles and other written materials, speeches, diplomas and photographs pertaining to the life and work of E. Millicent Sowerby. The bulk of the material is from the early 1930s to mid-1950s.

Notes on the volumes:

Volume 1, *Early American Children's Books*, printed c. 1933. This book has interleaved pages, appearing to be a proof copy. There are notes on both interleaved and printed pages that don't seem to have made it into the published edition.

Volume 2, *Early American Children's Books*, by Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, published 1933. Includes book box. First edition. Title page has note by Sowerby after author name ", or, more accurately by E. Millicent Sowerby, who compiled the volume at Dr. Rosenbach's request, and he never saw it until it was published. The books were of course his property. February 3, 1974".

Volume 3, *Early American Children's Books*, by Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, published 1966. This is a reprint of 1933 edition. Title page includes inscription, "Pip Pip! actually by E. M. Sowerby".

Volume 4, *European Children's Books*. Book has the binding for "Early American Children's Books" by A. S. W. Rosenbach (with E. Millicent Sowerby ghost writing). "Early American" is scratched out on the title page, replaced with "European". This book is mostly blank, the first 22 pages with notes indicating a bibliography for European children's books has been started. No date or author is indicated, but all evidence points to Sowerby as the creator.

Volume 5, *Rare Books and Rare People*, by E. Millicent Sowerby, published 1967. With inscription, "For my dear friend Lorraine A. Lloyd hoping she will enjoy reading it from E. Millicent Sowerby".

Volumes 6-10, [Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson](#), two full five-volume sets, plus a third copy of Volume I. Volume I of set 1 is signed by E. M. Sowerby, Volume I of set 2 and the stand-alone Volume I each has a list of signatures from an event celebrating the publication of the Catalogue.

Note on oversized:

Photograph in oversized folder was taken by Edward S. Curtis of Native American portrait fame (signed "Curtis L. A.") and inscribed by Frank J. Hogan "To Miss Millicent Sowerby, who introduced me to the Elizabethans and helped me 'no end' along the best by-ways in English literature, with my dear love - Frank J. Hogan April 18, 1943".

Box and Folder List, including Volumes

Volumes

1. "Early American Children's Books", c. 1933
2. "Early American Children's Books", 1933
3. "Early American Children's Books", 1966
4. "European Children's Books", c. 1933
5. "Rare People and Rare Books", 1967
6. "Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson", Volume I (3 copies), compiled with annotation by E. Millicent Sowerby, 1952
7. "Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson", Volume II (2 copies), compiled with annotation by E. Millicent Sowerby, 1953
8. "Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson", Volume III (2 copies), compiled with annotation by E. Millicent Sowerby, 1953
9. "Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson", Volume IV (2 copies), compiled with annotation by E. Millicent Sowerby, 1955
10. "Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson", Volume V (2 copies), compiled with annotation by E. Millicent Sowerby, 1959

Box 1

Folder

1. Correspondence with Sowerby, new jobs, references, goodbyes, 1923, 1931, 1955
2. Correspondence with Sowerby, personal, 1930, 1936, 1952-1953
3. Five letters to E. M. Sowerby from her Mother, 1933, 1950, 1952
4. Correspondence with Sowerby and Frank J. Hogan, 1934
5. "Travesties and Parodies of Shakespeare's Plays," a play read before the Medici Club at Valley Forge Military Academy, Wayne, PA, by Sowerby, 1934
6. Wilbur Macey Stone to Sowerby, 1934
7. Correspondence with Sowerby, research questions, further projects, 1939-1970
8. Beginning of Jefferson Catalog project, 1942-1943
9. Brief published articles on Thomas Jefferson, 1943-1951
10. "Von Rippentrop and Success" by Sowerby, 1945
11. Correspondence with Sowerby, reprint permissions, 1945
12. Correspondence with Sowerby, Sowerby to Boyd, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, 1950
13. Correspondence with Sowerby, request for appearances or speeches, 1951-1971
14. "The Sowerby Saga: Being a Brief Account of the Origin and Genealogy of the Sowerby Family" by Arthur Decarle Sowerby, 1952
15. Press releases for Jefferson volume I and II from Library of Congress, 1952, 1953
16. Correspondence with Sowerby, L. H. Butterfield to Vincent L. Eaton, 1952-1953
17. Correspondence with Sowerby, about Jefferson Catalog, set, 1952-1968
18. Correspondence with Sowerby, about Jefferson Catalog, volume 1, 1952, 1964
19. "Jefferson and His Book" by Sowerby; published in "Library Notes: A Bulletin Issued for the Friends of Duke University Library", 11/1953
20. Correspondence with Sowerby, about Jefferson Catalog, volume 2, 1953
21. Correspondence with Sowerby, about Jefferson Catalog, volume 3, 1953
22. Correspondence with Sowerby, about Jefferson Catalog, autograph requests, 1953

23. Article of Jefferson project in William and Mary Quarterly, 10/1954
24. Correspondence with Sowerby, reviews of publications, 1954
25. End of Jefferson Catalog project, 1955
26. Correspondence with Sowerby with Verner W. Clapp, 1955, 1966
27. Correspondence with Sowerby, about Jefferson Catalog, volume 4, 1956
28. Library of Congress newsletter, Sowerby back working on Jefferson, final volume, 1956
29. Correspondence with Sowerby, translating Sowerby articles into Spanish, 1956-1958
30. Correspondence with Sowerby, R. R. Sowerby to Henry Sowerby, Esq., 1957
31. "Thomas Jefferson's Use of the Past" by H. Trevor Colburn; reprint from William and Mary Quarterly, 1958
32. Correspondence with Sowerby, about Jefferson Catalog, volume 5, 1959
33. Correspondence with Sowerby, Sowerby to Beatrice Bouchard in Bridgewater, MA, 1961
34. Invitation to the Bibliographical Society of America, Annual Meeting, 1965
35. Write up for Bridgewater State University Alumni News on Sowerby's book "Rare People and Rare Books", 1968
36. Sowerby Materials at Bridgewater (appraisals), 1979, 1990
37. Book reviews for "The Catalog of the Library of Thomas Jefferson" by Sowerby, undated
38. Article by Henry J. Sowerby, undated
39. "La Biblioteca de Thomas Jefferson" by Sowerby, undated
40. "Notes on Some Presentation Copies in the Library of Thomas Jefferson" by Sowerby, undated
41. Sowerby genealogy material, undated
42. Summary of Jefferson and Declaration of Independence by Sowerby, undated
43. "The Second Mrs. Wayland, An Unpublished Jefferson Opinion on a Case in Equity" with notes by John Cook Wyllie, undated
44. "Thomas Jefferson Book Collector", by William Harwood Peden, undated
45. Typed speech by Sowerby, "Jefferson and His Books", undated
46. Typed speech by Sowerby, "With Joachim von Ribbentrop in Grenoble", undated

Box 2

Folder

1. "Newspaper Clippings" Scrapbook, 1913-1917
2. Newspaper clippings, Rosenbach book, 1933-1934
3. Newspaper clippings, Jefferson Catalog, 1953, 1956, undated
4. Photographs: Bryant Baker (sculptor), 1930, 1950, undated
5. Photographs: Luther H. Evans, Librarian of Congress, 1945-1953, c. 1950
6. Galley pages from Jefferson Catalog, portrait of Jefferson, c. 1952
7. Postcards & Christmas cards, 1956, undated
8. Photographs: Beverley Minster (church), booklet, undated
9. Photographs: 1320 Walnut Street, The Rosenbach Co., William Shakespeare Window, Book Room, Philadelphia, PA, undated
10. Photographs: E. Millicent Sowerby (4), with brother (1), with Bryant Baker (sculptor) (1), undated
11. Photographs: Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach with Frank J. Hogan (2), undated
12. Photographs: unidentified, undated

Oversized Folder

(All degrees awarded to Emily Millicent Sowerby)

1. University of Cambridge, Honour Certificate, December 1901
2. Certificate of passing Cambridge University Higher Local Examination, 1904-1907
3. University of Cambridge, Girton College, Medieval and Modern Languages Tripos, English and French, June 20, 1911
4. Girton College, Degree Certificate in Honours, June 20, 1911
5. University of Cambridge, Girton College, Medieval and Modern Languages Tripos, English Literature, June 18, 1912
6. University of Cambridge, Girton College, Bachelor of Arts, Medieval and Modern Languages Tripos, April 17, 1923
7. University of Cambridge, Girton College, Master of Arts, April 17, 1923
8. Photograph: Frank J. Hogan, April 18, 1943
9. "There Was an Old Lady" poem with drawings, undated