The martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket, from the Tarleton Hours c.1430. Purchased with the aid of the Friends 2003.


Manuscript acquisitions have included medieval codices such as the illuminated 13th-century Audley Book of Hours, letters and papers of Archbishops Arundel, Pole, Sancroft, Manners Sutton and Howley, papers relating to the divorce of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, the execution warrant for Mary Queen of Scots, and an important series of documents removed from the study of Archbishop Laud after his arrest and recovered with the help of the Friends more than three hundred years later.

Printed books presented by the Friends have included the famous indulgence of Leo X issued in 1516 on the eve of the Reformation, a presentation copy of Luther's tract against Henry VIII printed in 1522, major early liturgical works such as the 1499 Hildesheim Missal, the very rare first Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer of 1559, and the first edition of Foxe's Book of Martyrs of 1563.