Guide to the Sir Joseph Banks Papers

MS 58

compiled by William E. Brown, Jr. and Diane E. Kaplan

February 1985

Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
mssa.assist@yale.edu
http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/

CALL NUMBER: MS 58

CREATOR: Banks, Joseph, 1743-1820

TITLE: Sir Joseph Banks papers

DATES: 1763–1830

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 6 linear feet (15 boxes, 1 folio)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, writings, notes, and other papers documenting the personal life and professional career of Sir Joseph Banks, a British naturalist and explorer. Correspondence with stewards and landowners in Lincolnshire and elsewhere detail Banks’ interest in agriculture and farming. Other papers relate to family estates, to Banks’ scientific investigations and to his interest in the exploration of Africa and other regions. A translation of Frederic Horneman’s “Travels into the interior of Africa performed for the African Society,” (circa 1800) and letters relating to the death of explorer Mungo Park are included.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0058

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0058.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder
Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Conditions Governing Access
The materials are open for research.

The entire collection is available on microfilm. Patrons must use FILM HM 37 instead of the originals.

Conditions Governing Use
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Preferred Citation
Sir Joseph Banks Papers (MS 58). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Existence and Location of Copies
Entire collection also available on microfilm (5,750 frames on 6 reels, 35mm.) from Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University, at cost. Order no. HM37.

Related Materials
The Banks Papers at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, England are also on microfilm in the Microform Room of Sterling Memorial Library. (See FILM MISC 636).

Additional Banks material may be found in other repositories at Yale. Please consult the Union Catalog of Manuscripts in the Department of Manuscripts and Archives.

Biographical / Historical
Sir Joseph Banks was born in London, England on February 13, 1743. He served on a scientific expedition to Newfoundland and Labrador (1766) and with Captain Cook’s expedition to observe the transit of Venus in the Pacific Ocean. Banks also travelled to Iceland (1772). He served as president of the Royal Society from 1778 until his death in 1820.

Scope and Contents
The Joseph Banks papers reflect Banks’ concern with the agricultural development of England rather than his better known botanical studies while accompanying Cook’s expedition around the world on
the Endeavor. Banks had inherited Revesby Abbey and other estates in Lincolnshire and Spring Grove in Heston Parish, Middlesex. The papers include over 1000 letters from his stewards and from landowners in Lincolnshire and elsewhere who, like Banks, were interested in sheep, deer, and cattle raising, the wool trade and industry, fen drainage and enclosures, forestry, fishing and hunting, county elections, and other public affairs.

There are a few papers relating to Banks’ scientific interests such as Lincolnshire archaeology and the founding of the Royal Society of London. Many letters and papers deal with the estate of Banks’ uncle, Robert Banks Hodgkinson, of which Sir Joseph Banks and Sir Henry Hawley were executors. This estate included Hodgkinson’s town house on New Burlington Street, London, his county seat in Heston Parish, Middlesex, and securities in mines and turnpikes.

The core of the papers come to the Yale University Library in 1939 as the gift of Wilmarth S. Lewis. Additional papers were given by J. Marshall Osborn, 1966, and Harold B. Carter, 1978. Papers were also added by purchase in 1950-1955 and 1981. The Lewis gift consisted of twenty-one calf-bound volumes, chiefly containing correspondence (1763 - 1819) and over one hundred loose items. The original volumes were divided as follows:


The condition of the manuscripts necessitated removal of the bindings; specimens of the bindings will be found in folders 268 and 269. All letters are now in chronological order in boxes 1-13. The original volume twelve contained the letters from 1819; these letters are now filed in proper order in box 13.

The several subsequent additions to the papers are now in Series I: Select. These include letters to Lord Macartney on the state of Chinese technology, on the occasion of his departing on a special mission to China in 1792 (folder 257), letters to Lord Sheffield on sheep raising (folders 259-260) and a series of letters to Sir Charles Blagden, secretary of the Royal Society, on scientific matters (folders 253 -255). Also in the section is a bound volume of letters and manuscripts (folder 264) reflecting Banks’ active interest in exploration and his membership in the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa. Included in this volume is a manuscript translation of part 1 of Friedrich Hornemann’s journal of a trip from Cairo to Mourzouk (1797 - 1798). This journey was underwritten by the association, as was the second journey of Mungo Park in his search for the course of the Niger. Park’s disappearance on this expedition in 1806 led Banks to make extensive inquiries and some of the correspondence reporting on the last sighting of Park and his murder are bound into this volume. Also included are letters and narratives by travelers to Abyssinia and other parts of Africa, Brazil, Newfoundland, Java, and Russia, an account of Indians and plants in America (1820), and a letter about a whaling voyage in the Davis Strait (1800).

Arrangement

Arranged in two series: I. Correspondence, 1763-1819. II. Writings and Miscellanea, 1800-1830.
Collection Contents
Series I. Correspondence

This series contains correspondence arranged in two sections: General and Select.

General files are arranged in chronological order.

Select files are arranged alphabetically by the name of the individual.

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<th>General</th>
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<td>b. 1, f. 1-16</td>
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<td>b. 2, f. 17-40</td>
<td>1776–1782 April 1776–1782 April</td>
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<td>b. 3, f. 41-62</td>
<td>1782 May–1785 November 1782 May–1785 November</td>
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<td>b. 4, f. 63-81</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 97-116</td>
<td>1789 January–1791 March 1789 January–1791 March</td>
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<td>b. 7, f. 117-133</td>
<td>1791 April–1793 December 1791 April–1793 December</td>
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<td>b. 8, f. 134-147</td>
<td>1794 January–1796 December 1794 January–1796 December</td>
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<td>b. 9, f. 150-167</td>
<td>1797 January–1798 December 1797 January–1798 December</td>
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<td>b. 10, f. 168-184</td>
<td>1799 January–1801 February 1799 January–1801 February</td>
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<td>b. 11, f. 185-209</td>
<td>1801 March–1816 March 1801 March–1816 March</td>
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<td>b. 12, f. 210-228</td>
<td>1816 April–1817 December 1816 April–1817 December</td>
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<td>b. 13, f. 229-252</td>
<td>1818 January–1819 December 1818 January–1819 December</td>
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<td>b. 14, f. 253-255</td>
<td>Blagden, Sir Charles 1773–1819</td>
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<td>b. 14, f. 256</td>
<td>Cockrell, H. 1792</td>
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<td>b. 14, f. 257</td>
<td>McCartney, Lord 1792</td>
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<td>b. 14, f. 258</td>
<td>Sandwich, Lord 1768</td>
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<td>Container</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>b. 14, f. 259-260</td>
<td>Sheffield, Lord</td>
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<td>b. 14, f. 261</td>
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<td>b. 14, f. 262-263</td>
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<td>b. 14, f. 264</td>
<td>Volume</td>
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</tbody>
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Contains letters and manuscripts reflecting Banks’ active interest in exploration and his membership in the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa. Included is a manuscript translation of part 1 of Friedrich Hornemann’s journal of a trip from Cairo to Mourzouk (1797-1798). Some of the correspondence reporting on the last sighting of Mungo Park and his murder during his search for the course of the Niger are bound into this volume. Also included are letters and narratives by travelers to Abyssinia and other parts of Africa, Brazil, Newfoundland, Java, and Russia, an account of Indians and plants in America (1820), and a letter about a whaling voyage in the Davis Strait (1800).

Oversized correspondence
See: box 16, folder 271
**Series II. Writings and Miscellanea**

This series contains material arranged alphabetically by record type.

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<tbody>
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<td>b. 15, f. 265</td>
<td>Biographies and engravings</td>
<td>1830, undated</td>
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<td>Notes</td>
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<td>b. 15, f. 266</td>
<td>Copper money</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 15, f. 267</td>
<td>&quot;Some collections respecting the office and duties of the King’s Exchequer&quot;</td>
<td>[ca. 1807]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 15, f. 268</td>
<td>Sample binding from Bank’s library</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 15, f. 269</td>
<td>&quot;Some Circumstances Relative to Merino Sheep …&quot;</td>
<td>1809</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. 15, f. 270</td>
<td>Botanical specimen book (blank)</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 16, f. 271</td>
<td>Oversized correspondence, accounts, maps, and other miscellanea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Index to the Microfilm

The Banks Papers are available on microfilm on FILM HM 37. This film shows the papers in the order as they were in 1965.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library’s online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects
Agriculture
Agriculture -- Great Britain
Botany
Cattle -- Breeding
Fens
Horticulture
Merino sheep
Reclamation of land
Science -- Great Britain
Sheep -- Breeding
Wool industry

Geographic Names
Africa -- Discovery and exploration
Brazil -- Description and travel
China -- Foreign relations -- Great Britain
Europe
Great Britain
Java (Indonesia) -- Description and travel
Lincolnshire (England) -- Antiquities
Middle East -- Description and travel
Newfoundland and Labrador -- Description and travel
Soviet Union -- Description and travel

Occupations
Botanists
Explorers
Naturalists

Names
Ali Bey, 1766-1818
Allix, Charles, 1783-1866
Alströmer, Johan, 1742-1786
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Banks, Sarah Sophia, 1744-1818
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Bertie, Pereguine, ca. 1723-1786
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Osbaldeston, George, 1786-1866
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Swainson, William, 1789-1855
Taylor, Herbert, Sir, 1775-1839
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Wells, William Charles, 1757-1817
Whichcote, Thomas, 1763-1828
Wilby, John, 1738-1798
Williams, J. (John), 1817-1899
Winchilsea, George Finch, Earl of, 1752-1826
Windham, William, 1750-1810

Corporate Bodies
Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa
Royal Society (Great Britain)