

Guide to the James Barry Papers

LWL MSS 44



by Sandra Markham

November 2023

154 Main Street
P.O. Box 1408
Farmington, CT 06034-1408
860-677-2140
860-677-6369
walpole@yale.edu
<https://walpole.library.yale.edu>

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Lewis Walpole Library
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CALL NUMBER: LWL MSS 44

CREATOR: Barry, James, 1741-1806

TITLE: James Barry Papers

DATES: 1765–1884

BULK DATES: 1785–1810

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.63 linear feet (2 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The James Barry Papers contain correspondence and documents concerning Barry's financial affairs and artistic ventures, and his relationships with the Royal Academy and the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. There are letters from his brothers Redmond and Patrick, and colleagues including the painters Peter Benazech and William Keable. The majority of the collection, however, concerns the Barry family's handling of his estate after his death, in particular his sister Mary Ann Bulkley's efforts to reprint and market his engravings. Also present are inventories of Barry's home in the files of his attorney (and cousin) Daniel Reardon, and correspondence with auctioneer James Christie, including two auction catalogues of the Barry sale annotated with prices realized. Reardon's correspondence contains a letter from Mary Ann Bulkley's daughter Margaret, then a medical student, describing her life once she had transitioned to become known as "James Barry."

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/lwl.mss.044>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/lwl.mss.044>.

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

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

W. S. Lewis purchased the papers from Bland Gallery, Inc., in June 1950; bequest of Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis (Yale 1918), 1979.

Custodial History

W. S. Lewis purchased the papers from Harry MacNeil Bland, of Bland Gallery, Inc., in June 1950. The papers were housed in two albums at some point in the late nineteenth century, where each document was spot-glued to larger sheets of paper (three examples of which are in Box 2). Sometime after their arrival in Farmington, Connecticut, the material was disbound. Each document was numbered consecutively in pencil at the upper left corner, and an inventory was made (a copy is in the library's collection file). In November 2023, the papers were processed and this finding aid was created.

The papers were likely originally compiled by Daniel Reardon, a Barry cousin and attorney in London, who handled James Barry's estate. Sometime in the nineteenth century much of the material, if not all of it, was owned by the collector Robert Cole as many of the items bear his mark: his signature lightly embossed along the top edge of the paper. Barry scholar William L. Pressly discovered that the papers were included in the posthumous sale of Cole's collection at Puttick's (London) July 29 through August 1, 1867 (lots 84-87). The fate of the papers between 1867 and Harry Bland's ownership is unknown, as is the identity of the compiler of the two albums.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The James Barry Papers is the physical property of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the W. S. Lewis Librarian/Executive Director.

Preferred Citation

James Barry Papers. The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

James Barry (1741-1806)

James Barry was a history painter, printmaker, and author. At 22, he exhibited his picture "The Baptism of the King of Cashel by St. Patrick" at the Dublin Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. Edmund Burke and William Burke became his patrons, arranging for him to study in Europe; upon his return, he settled in London and was invited to join The Royal Academy. Barry became his own printmaker, publisher, and distributor by 1776, and was also a writer on the state of the arts in England, as demonstrated by his first book, *An Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England* (1775). In 1782, he became professor of painting at the Royal Academy. However, Barry's last major publication, *A Letter to the Dilettanti Society of 1798*, appealed to the Society to promote the arts to compensate for what he considered to be the Royal Academy's lack of leadership, and in which he inveighed angrily against his colleagues. For these and other remarks in his lectures, he was expelled

from the Royal Academy in 1799, and he died in poverty in 1806. Barry was interred in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral next to the grave of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Dr. James Barry (1799-1865)

Dr. James Barry, a transgender army medical officer, was born in Cork, Ireland, as Margaret Anne Bulkley; she was the daughter of Mary Ann Barry Bulkley, the sister of artist James Barry, and her husband Jeremiah Bulkley. In 1809 Margaret, using the name of her recently deceased uncle, matriculated at the University of Edinburgh. As "James Barry," she studied medicine, graduated in 1812, and lived the rest of her life as a man. After joining the Army and training as a surgeon, Barry was posted to the Cape of Good Hope in 1816, and in 1817 was appointed physician to the household of the governor, Lord Charles Somerset. Barry's career spanned forty years of appointments in various parts of the British Empire, before he retired to London in 1859. He died there and was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery.

Scope and Contents

The James Barry Papers contain correspondence and documents concerning the artist's financial affairs and artistic ventures, and his relationships with both the Royal Academy and the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. There are also letters from his brothers Redmond and Patrick and colleagues including the painters Peter Benazech and William Keable, financial records documenting repairs to his house and art materials he purchased, and examples of his writings. The majority of the collection, however, concerns the Barry family's handling of his estate after his death, as seen through the files of the family's attorney (and cousin) Daniel Reardon in Series II, and his family's papers in Series III. Reardon's files contain various legal papers, inventories of Barry's home and personal effects, and correspondence with the auctioneer James Christie, including two auction catalogues of the Barry sales held in April 1807 which are annotated with prices realized. Reardon's correspondence also contains a letter from Mary Ann Bulkley's daughter Margaret, then a medical student, describing her life once she had transitioned to become "James Barry." Series III contains material related to the artist's sister Mary Ann and efforts reprint and market his engravings, with a folder of responses from print dealers regarding sales. Also present is correspondence among Bulkley family members and from the artist's biographer Edward Fryer.

Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Professional and Personal Papers, 1765-1842. II. Estate Papers, 1806-1824. III. Barry Family Papers, 1808-1884.

Collection Contents

Series I: Professional and Personal Papers, 1765–1842

The series holds correspondence with the two British organizations with which Barry had the strongest relationships, and with friends and family members including his two brothers. A small group of invoices document some of his activities, and a few examples of his writings, ranging from notes on scraps of papers to a published catalogue, complete his lifetime papers.

Series I is organized into five subseries: Professional Correspondence and Ephemera, Personal Correspondence and Ephemera, Family Correspondence, Financial Records, and Writings.

Professional Correspondence and Ephemera

Royal Academy

b. 1, f. 1	Letter from Francis Milner Newton	1786 February 8
b. 1, f. 2	Draft note from Barry about his fourth lecture	undated
b. 1, f. 3	Invitation to Barry to attend a meeting on March 19	1799 March 13

Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce

b. 1, f. 4	Correspondence Includes two drafts of letters (one from Charles Taylor) to Barry, one draft letter, and one draft by Barry to the Society written on the verso of a printed 1792 announcement of his engravings from his paintings for the Society. Also present is a draft of a letter from Barry to Samuel More, responding to a SEAMC meeting notice.	1784-1801, undated
b. 1, f. 5	Draft of a letter to David Stewart Erskine, Earl of Buchan, 1742-1829 Draft letter written on the verso of a printed invitation to a May 1805 meeting of the SEAMC Committee of Polite Arts.	undated
b. 1, f. 6	Letter to unidentified recipient Requesting the return of Barry's "A Letter to the Dilettanti Society of 1798" to the Society.	1800 April 3
b. 1, f. 7	Committee of Polite Arts meeting minutes	1801 April 9

Personal Correspondence and Ephemera

b. 1, f. 8	Benazech, Peter, 1730?-1798 Benazech was an engraver and painter in watercolours.	[no year] August 11
b. 1, f. 9	Brooks, Ann Inscribed on verso by Barry: "Taken up at Mr Towgood, 101.8.2. May 27, 1800."	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Burroughs, Francis Burroughs was the author of <i>A Poetical Epistle to James Barry, Esq.</i> (1805).	1804 October 6
b. 1, f. 11	Crooke, Samuel	1785

Personal Correspondence and Ephemera (continued)

b. 1, f. 12	Fox, J. C. A calligraphic transcription of an October 5, 1800, letter from Barry to J. C. Fox, written on paper watermarked "Ludlow 1842."	approximately 1842
b. 1, f. 13	Keable, William, 1715-1774 Keable was an English painter of portraits and conversation pieces. Sent to Barry in Parma, Italy.	1766?
b. 1, f. 14	Loach, James	1765 October
b. 1, f. 15	Neve, Philip Neve was an author who wrote under the name "One of the Magistrates of the Public Office in Gt. Marlborough Street."	1799 June 20
b. 1, f. 16	Pollock, Joseph Concerning being admitted as a Brother in the Society of Saint Patrick in Dublin.	1780 December 2
b. 1, f. 17	Tennant, George Draft letter to George Tennant written on the verso of an undated dinner invitation to Barry from Sharon Turner (1768-1847).	1805 March 28
b. 1, f. 18	Unidentified Fragment of a letter sent to Barry on Suffolk Street that mentions his "Venus and Adonis."	undated
b. 1, f. 19	Unidentified Letter from an Irish artist in London, sent to Barry on Suffolk Street, about sending pictures from Dublin for exhibition at the Royal Academy.	undated
b. 1, f. 20	Unidentified Incomplete letter to Barry (?) discussing Barry and Lord Bacon.	[no year] January 15
b. 1, f. 21	Unidentified, to Joseph Bonomi The writer, possibly a Count de Schepaux, refers to the recent death of George Bussy Villiers, 4th Earl of Jersey, on August 22, 1805. He also mentions the Lambtons, John Wharton, and Bonomi's son Ignatius.	1805 August 27

Family Correspondence

The subseries holds letters from two of Barry's three living siblings, his brothers Patrick and Redmond.

b. 1, f. 22	Barry, Patrick (Patrick Riordan) Patrick Barry was the brother of James Barry. He also used the name Patrick Riordan, a variant of his mother's maiden name of Reardon. In 1771 he enlisted in the marines but deserted the following year. Afterward, he entered the service of the East India Company. By 1789 he was again in London, and then returned to the East Indies, where he died. Also present is a capsule biography of Patrick, possibly written by Barry, on a scrap of paper.	1772-1789
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Family Correspondence (continued)

b. 1, f. 23	Barry, Redmond Redmond was the oldest of the three brothers. He served in the Royal Navy but ran into legal and financial trouble. He sold his claim to Barry's estate to his sister, and died in poverty in 1824.	1785-1803, undated
Financial Records		
b. 1, f. 24	Rental contracts for Castle Street house, and invoice for repairs	1788-1795
b. 1, f. 25	Invoice for clothing	1805 May 20
b. 1, f. 26	Invoice and receipt for a copper plate bought from Thomas Large	1804 March 19
b. 1, f. 27	Invoice for paper bought from John Booth	1805 April 1
b. 1, f. 28	Receipt for food purchased from Guedon	1806 February
b. 1, f. 29	Receipts for taxes paid	1796, 1805
Writings		
b. 1, f. 30	Essays on painting and etching Pages and fragments of writings.	undated
b. 1, f. 31	Essay for the preface to <i>A Description of the Series of Pictures Painted by James Barry, Esq.</i>	approximately 1803
b. 1, f. 32	<i>A Description of the Series of Pictures Painted by James Barry, Esq.</i> (London: Printed by C. Whittingham, 1803)	1803
b. 1, f. 33	"The Two Books of Francis Bacon on the Advancement &c of Learning, London. 1605"	undated
b. 1, f. 34	Note on tints	undated

Series II: Estate Papers, 1806–1824*16 Folders*

The series contains material collected and generated by Daniel Reardon, who served as the Barry family's lawyer in London and was, as well, a cousin on the family's maternal side. Filed here are the inventories taken of the artist James Barry's personal effects, and correspondence with James Christie, who auctioned the material in two sales in April 1807. Also present are two catalogues, each annotated with prices realized, from the Barry auctions held on April 10 and 11, 1807.

Notable in Reardon's correspondence is a letter to him from Margaret Anne Bulkley, who had enrolled at the University of Edinburgh as a man named "James Barry," in order to study medicine. The letter describes Barry's student life and surroundings.

Series II is organized into two subseries: Documents, and Daniel Reardon Correspondence and Receipts.

Documents

b. 1, f. 35	"Money of the late Mr Barry found in a packet on his person at the time of his Death" Inventory and receipt for money turned over to Mary Ann Bulkley and Redmond Barry, dated August 12, 1806. Annotated on verso: Mary A. Bulkley received Barry's silver snuff box, gold pencil, and small silver coins on July 20, 1807.	1806 February 23
b. 1, f. 36	Inventory of personal effects One full inventory of possessions and books, with a fair copy of some items.	1806 February 28
b. 1, f. 37	Invoices for Barry's final days	1806 February
b. 1, f. 38	Invoices and receipts for estate settlement in the Court of Canterbury	1806–1807
b. 1, f. 39	Declaration of Bulkley family financial status, Court of Canterbury	1806 May 6
b. 1, f. 40	Copy of Deed of Trust between Redmond Barry and Alexander Poulden	1806 June 2
b. 1, f. 41	Narrative report on estate settlement	approximately 1806 June

Daniel Reardon Correspondence and Receipts

Daniel Reardon (or Riordan), a cousin, was the Barry family's attorney in London.

b. 1, f. 42	Barry, James (Margaret Anne Bulkley) "James Barry" was the name taken by Margaret Anne Bulkley, the daughter of Mary Ann Barry Bulkley, in 1809, in order to matriculate at the University of Edinburgh to study medicine. Barry maintained a masculine appearance and lifestyle through death, and was at times identified as the nephew of Mary Ann Bulkley.	1809 December 14
b. 1, f. 43	Barry, Patrick (Patrick Riordan)	1824 June 12
b. 1, f. 44	Barry, Redmond and Mary	1806–1824

Daniel Reardon Correspondence and Receipts (continued)

b. 1, f. 45	<p>Bulkley, Jeremiah</p> <p>Bulkley was the husband of Mary Ann Barry Bulkley, the sister of the artist James Barry.</p> <p>Three letters asking Reardon for the whereabouts of his wife Mary Ann and daughter Margaret, and one letter mailed to Margaret (who was then living under the name James Barry) in care of Reardon.</p>	1809–1810
b. 1, f. 46	<p>Bulkley, Mary Ann Barry</p> <p>Mary Ann Barry Bulkley was the sister of the artist James Barry, and his legatee. She sought to gain income by reprinting and marketing her brother's engravings after his death. Her husband Jeremiah was estranged from the family.</p> <p>Contains letters to and from Bulkley, along with Reardon's financial statements and receipts.</p>	1806–1812
	Christie, James	
b. 1, f. 47	Correspondence, invoices, and receipts	1806–1807
b. 1, f. 48	<p>Auction catalogues</p> <p>Two printed catalogues for paintings, drawings, sketches, prints, casts, copper plates, and books sold in two auctions on April 10 and 11, 1807. Both were annotated with prices realized.</p>	1807 April
b. 1, f. 49	<p>Douce, Francis, 1757-1834</p> <p>Douce, an antiquarian and book collector, was a keeper of the manuscripts at the British Museum from circa 1807 to 1811.</p> <p>A note regarding the sorting of Barry's papers.</p>	after 1806
b. 1, f. 50	<p>Warren, Charles Turner, 1767-1823</p> <p>Warren was an engraver.</p>	1807 May

Series III: Barry Family Papers, 1808–1884*15 Folders*

The series holds correspondence between Bulkley family members, and material regarding the reprinting and marketing of James Barry's engravings by his sister Mary Ann Bulkley. Also present is Mary Ann Bulkley's last will and testament, and the remnants of the bindings from the two albums the collection was once housed in.

Series III is organized into two subseries: Correspondence, and Documents.

Correspondence		
b. 1, f. 51	Anderson, John, to Mary Ann Bulkley	1812 November
b. 1, f. 52	Bulkley, John, to Jeremiah Bulkley and Mary Ann Bulkley John Bulkley was the son of Jeremiah and Mary Ann Bulkley.	1808, undated
b. 1, f. 53	Bulkley, Margaret Anne, to John Bulkley Margaret Anne Bulkley (later to become Dr. James Barry) writing to her brother John.	undated
b. 1, f. 54	Fryer, Edward, to Mary Ann Bulkley Physician Edward Fryer (1761-1826) became a close friend of the artist James Barry, and was his first biographer. Also present is Bulkley's copy of her circa 1807 note to Fryer, and a copy, in Fryer's hand, of Bulkley's undated letter to William Long Wellesley, Earl of Mornington (1788-1857).	undated
b. 1, f. 55	Print dealers and booksellers receipts and letters to Mary Ann Bulkley Regarding the distribution of Barry's reprinted engravings, and their lack of sales.	1808–1809
Documents		
b. 1, f. 56	Subscription announcement for Redmond Barry relief fund The fund was organized by a committee of Society of Arts members; the circular was printed by the Lithographic Press and features a portrait of Barry by William Bewick.	approximately 1822
b. 1, f. 57	Mary Ann Bulkley's draft of dedication page for Barry engravings	1808
b. 1, f. 58	Printed prospectus for the reprint of Barry's engravings	1807
b. 1, f. 59	Mary Ann Bulkley will	1809 August 25
b. 1, f. 60	<i>A Description of the Series of Pictures Painted by the Late James Barry Esq.</i> (London: 1833) Pamphlet formerly laid in the album.	1833
b. 1, f. 61	"A Mystery Still," in <i>All the Year Round</i> 17, no. 421 (May 18, 1867) An article, on pages 492-495 of the issue, about the life, work, and death of Dr. James Barry in Africa, with no mention of his family in England. It is accompanied by an 1884 cover letter to an unknown recipient from Frederick Walker Joy, an assistant minor canon and librarian of Ely Cathedral. The issue and letter had formerly been laid in volume two.	1867, 1884

Documents (continued)

b. 2, f. 1	Album pages (3)
b. 2, f. 2	Spines from albums one and two
b. 2, f. 3	Covers from album one
b. 2, f. 4	Covers from album two

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

Art, British
Art auctions
Authors and publishers -- England -- London
Booksellers and bookselling -- Great Britain
Engravings, British
Finance, Personal -- England
Transgender people

Genres / Formats

Auction catalogs -- 19th century
Invoices
Legal documents

Names

Barry, James, 1741-1806
Barry, James, 1795-1865
Benazech, Peter, 1730?-1798
Christie, James, 1773-1831
Fryer, Edward, 1761-1826
Neve, Philip
Warren, Charles Turner, 1767-1823

Families

Bulkeley family

Corporate Bodies

Cadell & Davies
Royal Academy of Arts (Great Britain)
Society for the Encouragement of Arts,
Manufactures, and Commerce (Great Britain)

Contributors

Barry, James, 1741-1806
Bonomi, Joseph, 1739-1808
Keable, William, 1715-1774

Acquired From

Lewis, W. S. (Wilmarth Sheldon), 1895-1979