

GB 1355 Nelson

Nelson Museum and Local History Centre

This catalogue was digitised by The National Archives as part of the National Register of Archives digitisation project

NRA 35173



The National Archives

NELSON MANUSCRIPTS AT MONMOUTH MUSEUM

The Nelson Collection

In 1923 the collection was bequeathed to Monmouth by Lady Llangattock, a prominent collector of Nelsoniana. The original Nelson Museum was opened in Monmouth in 1924. Lady Llangattock was an indiscriminate but comprehensive collector, and the manuscript material she purchased forms one of the most important Nelson archives.

Sources of the MSS collection

Most of the Monmouth collection comes from two of the main sources for Nelson manuscript material: the papers which belonged to Lady Nelson, and those which Lady Hamilton owned and inherited. The third main source, Nelson's brother, Earl Nelson, is not represented in Monmouth.

The best known feature of the Monmouth collection was acquired by Lady Llangattock in 1914, consisting principally of Nelson's letters to his wife from 1785 until 1800. Bound in fine blue leather volumes, one containing Lady Nelson's wedding ring in its cover, these papers form the centrepiece of the collection.

Most of Lady Hamilton's inheritance of papers, including official letter books, log books, official reports, and Nelson's letters to her, were sold to raise much-needed cash in 1813. The rest, in the hands of a Nelson biographer on Lady Hamilton's death in 1815, also found their way into the sale room. Subsequent re-sales split up Lady Hamilton's collection to a large extent. Monmouth has some of her letters from Nelson, other odd letters and papers, a series of letter books for 1796 and 1799 to 1804, and log books for 1798 to 1805.

The remainder of the collected papers have come from various sources, usually through the sale room. Some of these have been bound into volumes, without any inherent unity. The origins of some of these papers have been traced to William Hazelwood, Nelson's solicitor, Sir William Hamilton, and John McArthur, secretary to Lord Hood.

Importance and Use of the Collection

Many of the Monmouth letters have been published in transcript, and the collection has been used by all of the serious biographers, before and after acquisition by Lady Llangattock and Monmouth. The letter books, log books, and unpublished letters in particular represent a valuable and under-used resource for re-assessment and interpretation of Nelson's career and life.

A SHORT LIST OF THE NELSON MSS AT MONMOUTH MUSEUM

1. Papers from Lady Nelson's collection
 - Nelson's letters to his wife, 1785-1800 3 volumes
 - Nelson's letters to members of his family, 1793-1802 1 volume
 - Contemporary pamphlets and documents 1 volume

2. Papers from Lady Hamilton's collection
 - Official Letter Books, 1796, 1799-1800, 1801, 1803, 1803-1804 5 volumes
 - Official Log Books. Boreas 1784-1787
 - Vanguard, Foudroyant, and Sam & Jane 1798-1800
 - Victory 1803-1805
 - Letters to Lady Hamilton, 1799-1805 1 folder
 - Collected Nelson MSS, 1782-1813 1 Brown portfolio
 - This portfolio includes some papers of Sir William Hamilton which are not from Lady Hamilton's collection.

3. Papers from various sources
 - Nelson holograph correspondence and other papers, 1795-1813. This collection includes several letters from Nelson to Lord Hood which passed into the hands of John McArthur, and later his daughter Mrs. Conway. There are also autographs of several naval officers of the period. 1 volume
 - Nelson autograph and signed documents, 1780-1805. 1 volume
 - This mixed collection includes several original Nelson letters which N. H. Nicolas printed from letter book copies only (The Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, with notes by Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, G.C.M.G. Published by Henry Colburn in 1845.). It is an arbitrary collection and the papers have no continuity with each other.
 - Nelson collected documents, 1787-1813. 2 Blue portfolios
 - This includes a number of Haslewood's papers, several letters to him from Nelson which have not been printed, and some from Lady Hamilton. There are some papers from the collection of Sir Richard Bickerton and other original Nelson letters to various correspondents.
 - Papers of the Hoste family, 1794-1829. 1 volume
 - This collection includes Nelson letters to the Rev. Dixon Hoste about the progress of his son William as a naval officer and other papers relating to Sir William Hoste's later career.

3. Papers from various sources cont.
 - Papers relative to Lord Nelson's law suit with Lord St. Vincent, 1802. A copy of the argument in the Court of Common Pleas from Mr. Gurney's shorthand notes and an abstract of evidence of usage prepared by Booth and Haslewood. 1 volume

NRA

**This list has been removed for scanning as part of the
National Register of Archives digitisation project 2009**



The National Archives