

Resources relating to Africa in Special Collections

September 2021

QG HCOL049

The Wolfson Reading Room

Special Collections Centre

The Sir Duncan Rice Library
University of Aberdeen
Bedford Road
Aberdeen
AB24 3AA

Introduction

Many individuals and institutions have deposited their papers with the University; as a result it has acquired an unrivalled collection of material not solely relating to the history and culture of the north-east of Scotland but also of national and international importance.

A significant number of alumni have been explorers, missionaries, migrants, traders or officers of state. Many of them have left manuscripts and material objects reflecting travel and adventure. This is in addition to much rich topographical printed material accumulated over many centuries.

Archival collections

Family and estate papers

Fraser, Major-General Alexander Mackenzie, commanding officer of the 78th Highlanders Regiment (Castle Fraser papers), Egypt: 1801 - 1807 (MS 3470/6).

Kintore, Lady Hilda Keith Falconer, journals of various trips around the world including Egypt and South Africa: 1902 and 1912 (MS 3064).

Business papers

Chaba Land Company, Egypt papers: 1898 – 1906 (MS 3422).

George Washington Wilson & Co., photographers: 1850 – 1905. Photographer Charles Wilson visited South Africa in the late 1890s. He embarked on a tour around the Cape Colony (Province of the Cape of Good Hope), Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Bechuanaland (Botswana). The collection holds images from Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Kimberley and Port Elizabeth. This collection of over 250 photos documents the social history of South Africa at this time, capturing views from the De Beers diamond mines to indigenous South Africans. The company also commissioned photographs from North Africa which include over

100 pictures from Tangier and Tetuan. These include magnificent shots of Islamic architecture and are complemented by a series of 64 views from the Alhambra fortress in Granada, Spain (MS 3792).

Taylor Woodrow Group, papers of Alexander Connon, administrator, relating to Africa: 1950s (MS 3417).

Organisation papers

British Association: essays on human geography of different localities in Northern Rhodesia: 1931 – 1935 (MS 3111).

Personal papers

Adam, Dr Adrian, anthropologist, Kounghani, Senegal: 1976 – 2005 (MS 3767).

Baird, John, 1st Viscount Stonehaven, diplomat and politician. Diaries of Baird from 1897 when he was in Sudan, from 1899 in Abyssinia, from 1900 as private secretary to Sir William Garstin, under-secretary for public works in Egypt and from 1902 – 1903 acting agent and consul-general in Abyssinia and political officer with the British East Africa and Abyssinia Frontier Survey (MS 3064).

Beattie, David: lantern slides of an expedition to Somaliland: 1903 (MS 3463).

Caseby, Reverend Alexander, missionary. Includes memoirs recalling life as a missionary and describing in detail, the work of the Livingstonia Mission, Malawi between 1908 and 1929: 1920s – 1980s (MS 3289).

Chalmers, Alexander, chief engineer in the Royal Navy, including Africa: 1843 - 1868 (MS 2884/1/2). Davidson, Frederick W., Boer War letters: 1899 - [1900] (MS 3078/1).

Duncan, Isabel, wife of William Duncan, master of the barque, Scotia, of Banff. Travel diaries and letters including South Africa and Mauritius: 1878 – 1893 (MS 2526).

Dixon, Waynman, engineer and amateur archaeologist, Great Pyramid diagrams: 1873 (MS 2031).

Hargreaves, John, Professor of History, papers relating to African studies: 1959 – 1995 (MS 3287 and MS 3728).

Holmes, Eileen, Principal of Aberdeen Pre-Nursing College, papers relating to Nigeria: 1951 – 1976 (MS 3441).

Laws, Robert, missionary. Notable papers relating to Law's work at Livingstonia Mission, Malawi including correspondence, a diary and later ephemera: c. 1872 – c. 1975 (MS 3290).

Macartney, William MacLeod, Church of Scotland Minister, notebooks for sermons preached in Africa: 1938 – 1945 (MS 3757).

Mackie, Adam, soldier, Egypt and Sudan: 1885 (MS 3018).

MacRae, Farquhar Baliol, colonial administrator, papers relating to Rhodesia: 1927 – 1968 (MS 3014).

Moir, James, industrial chemist, papers relating to the Mines Department of the Transvaal Government: 1900 – 1920s (MS 3129).

Ogston, Sir Alexander, surgeon, papers including a sketch book from the Sudan Campaign, 1885 and sketches of a trip to South Africa in 1894. Also four volumes of journals and photographs containing a detailed account of his experiences during the Boer War, 1899-1900 (MS 3850).

Pollard, Ellen, Egyptian diaries, loose leaf and exercise book which contains some personal letters from friends and family: 1892 - 1926 (MS 3518/4/5)

Stewart, John, typescript memoirs of 'Jungle Jock's Sudan': 2002 (MS 3737).

Tomlinson, George, 1st Bishop of Gibraltar, including papers relating to Egypt, comprising research notes, drawings, squeezes and correspondence: 19th century (MS 3470/16).

Wilson, Robert, physician and traveller, diaries. In 1816 Wilson embarked on a grand tour of Europe and in 1820 he pushed eastwards through Egypt, Nubia, Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia and India. In 1825, he travelled through Africa, Greece and Asia Minor: 19th century (MS 415, MS 434 and MS 3849).

Ostraca collection: 1 B.C. – 6th century A.D. (MS 3846).

Papyri collection: 1 B.C. – 5th century A.D. (MS 3847).

Oral history collections

University of Aberdeen Oral History Archive: comprises nearly 200 interviews with individuals connected with the University (MS 3620) - of particular interest are the interviews conducted with John Hargreaves, Professor of History (MS 3620/1/127).

Other relevant collections

The Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society was founded in 1789 in response to the perceived lack of medical teaching offered by both King's and Marischal Colleges. Of particular relevance here are the papers of Sir James McGrigor who served during the Peninsular War and in India and Egypt, and was a pioneer of field hospitals and ambulances (AMCS/4/1).

For more information see the website but please note that although the catalogue is available via the University, the papers are held by the Medico-Chirurgical Society.

Printed collections

An exceptional collection of printed atlases, topographical material and travellers' accounts demonstrate how the perception of these regions developed from the Renaissance period to the 20th century.

The printed collections include some of the most important atlases ever produced from the 16th and 17th centuries as well as early printed volumes in which maps and plans were inserted to inform or to embellish. Special Collections holds around 600 printed maps, atlases and plans. These encompass topographical maps, city and town plans and nautical maps and cover a chronological range from the 15th century to the present day and are representative of the printed cartographic history of Europe and Scotland. The earliest printed atlas is a 1482 reworking of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia* by Nicholas Germanus and there are several further 16th century examples of maps in the Ptolemaic tradition. Works by some of the most significant map-makers such as Blaeu, Mercator, Ortelius, and Hondius are also held.

The printed collections contain many printed memoirs written by University alumni who travelled and worked as part of the army and civil service and as doctors, ministers, surveyors or explorers.

Access

Materials are available upon request for consultation in the Reading Room. Please search our online catalogues to identify individual items:

Further reading

For further reading please also see the studies of a number of our manuscripts, printed books and collections in the journals *Aberdeen University Library Bulletin*, *Aberdeen University Review* and *Northern Scotland*.

A number of the above papers were highlighted in: Beavan, Iain; Davidson, Peter; Stevenson, Jane. *Library and archive collections of the University of Aberdeen: an introduction and description*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press with the University of Aberdeen, 2011).