

Resources relating to the Americas in Special Collections

September 2021

QG HCOL050

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

University institutional papers

Jean Boyd, Charleston, Carolina, letter (including sketches of a plan) to James Fraser regarding the colonisation of the area: c.1691 (MS 3952/9).

Family and estate papers

Duff, Earls of Fife, includes papers on the administration of the Lucky Hill and Friendship Estates of Gibson Dalzell and his successors in St Mary's Parish, Jamaica. See bundles Z/61, Z183, Z198, Z204, Z208, Z214, Z216 and B2(56)1: 1739 – 1789 (MS 3175).

Gordons of Buthlaw and Cairness, papers including correspondence, reports, accounts, lists of slaves and some Jamaican publications, relating to estates in Jamaica, in particular their estate of Georgia: 1727 – 1899 (MS 1160/5, MS 1160/6, MS 1160/7, MS 1160/9/4 and MS 1160/14/1).

Gordons of Buthlaw and Cairness, papers concerning the Georgia estate of deceased Randolph Norman Lesmoir Gordon, planter, St. James, Falmouth, Jamaica: 1876 - 1894 (MS 3193/10).

Gordon of Cluny, papers relating to Canadian interests: 1883 - 1924 (MS 3600/1/13).

Gordon of Cluny, papers including letters and reports relating to the Tobago estates in Bacolet, Speyside and Trois Rivieres. Also more current material collected for historical research purposes: 1847 – 1990s (MS 3600/1/14).

James Keith Trust including papers of North-West Co. of Canada and Hudson Bay Co.: 19th century (MS 2769/II/57 & MS 2769/II/74)

Kintore, Lady Hilda Keith Falconer, journals of various trips around the world including North and South America and the West Indies: 1890s – 1900s (MS 3064).

Leith of Freefield and Glenkindie, includes letters from Antigua: 1752 – 1753 (MS 2849).

Leith-Ross of Arnage, papers of John Ross of Arnage relating to his residence in East Florida as plantation factor including a ledger and a claim made against him (including land grant and manumission of a slave): 1775 - 1790 (MS 3346/4 and MS 3346/12).

Ogilvie-Forbes of Boyndlie, papers mainly relating to America which contains references to the West Indies: 1742 – 1825 (MS 2740/10).

Ogilvie-Forbes of Boyndlie, Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes, diplomat in Mexico: 1927 - 1930 (MS 2740).

Shand of The Burn, Fettercairn and Straloch, papers including correspondence, accounts, legal documents and slave lists relating to the Jamaican estates of Kellits, Mamee Gully, Belmont and others: 1816 – 1835 (MS 3652).

Organisation papers

Scottish Episcopal Church, Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney, papers relating to the Episcopal Church in America: 1726 – 1967 (MS 3320/5).

Business papers

Aberdeen Trust Ltd. (formerly North of Scotland Canadian Mortgage Co. Ltd.): 1875 – 1984 (MS 3211).

St. Thomas Central Sugar Factory, Annotto Bay, Jamaica, papers relating to establishment: 1902 – 1923 (MS 2368).

Espuela Land and Cattle Company Ltd and Espuela Syndicate, Texas: 1884 – 1912 (MS 2626).

Personal papers

Anderson, John, magistrate, 'A Magistrate's Recollections in St. Vincent's'. The considered record and analysis of all aspects of Vincentian natural, social and legal history during the significant Apprenticeship transitional period from slavery, supplementing official report to the Colonial Office: 1836 – 1838 (MS 602).

Beattie, James, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic, Marischal College, Essay on Slavery: 1788 (MS 30/49).

Bell, Reverend Patrick, minister and inventor, journals of his visit to Canada: 1833-1837 (MS 2137).

Buchan, Peter, printer, writer and ballad-collector, volume containing poems, notes on Scottish Song and notes on voyage from Peterhead to Greenland: 1831 – 1841 (MS 2303/7).

Bulloch, John Malcolm, journalist, papers relating to the Gordon family specifically relating to the West Indies. Compilation of news cuttings, letters and written articles: c.1913 – c.1928 (MS 3051/4/43).

Cardno, David Hawthorn, whaler, journals of whaling and sealing voyages around the arctic: 1866 – 1960s (MS 3090).

Conway, George Robert Graham, historian, papers relating to Mexico's early colonial history: 20th century (MS 2713).

Duncan, Isabel, wife of William Duncan, master of the barque, Scotia, of Banff: travel diaries and letters including the Americas and the Caribbean: 1878 – 1893 (MS 2526).

Farquhar, Sir Arthur, Post-Captain, H.M.S. Blanche, West Indies, volume of memos and orders: 1832 – 1843 (MS 2769/II/119).

Ferguson, William, of Kinmundy, businessman: 'Journal of my work in America, Spring 1857' (MS 3816/6/3/8).

Hay of Seaton, Malcolm Vivian, historian and author, papers relating to a visit to the Falkland Islands: 1929 - 1933 (MS 2788).

Henderson, Walter, surgeon, diary of a whaling voyage from Peterhead to Greenland: 1853 (MS 2719).

Irvine, Charles, Friendship Estate, St Thomas in the East, Jamaica. Includes estate records of accounts, lists and valuations of slaves, shipping lists and inventories of the estate: 1794 – 1859 (MS 2769/II/72).

Johnstone, Alexander, M. D., personal papers and notebooks relating to Jamaica and Pennsylvania (microfilm reels): 1750 – early 19th century (MS 3527).

Kerr, George, surgeon, diary of whaling expedition: 1791 (MS 2238).

McBean, John, farmer and journalist, letters from Manitoba, Canada to family in Scotland: 1902 - 1906 (MS 3184).

Trail, James William Helenus, Professor of Botany, material relating to expedition to the Amazon: 1873 – 1875 (MS 851 - MS 853, MS 863).

Troup, Jonathan, physician of Aberdeen, Scotland and Dominica, West Indies. These three volumes of journals record his voyages to and from Dominica and his life at Fort Shirley. They give a graphic picture of life on the island, including detailed observations of the health of slaves on plantations, illustrated with sketches. Please note that MS 2070 is available on the website: 1788 – 1797 (MS 2070, MS 2900 and MS 3027).

Washington, George, President of the United States of America: letter to Richard Lee regards the writing of a history of the American Revolution: April 1788 (MS 906).

Unknown author, collection of letters to correspondents in Aberdeenshire and West Indies: 1778 - 1787 (MS 661).

Unknown author, diary of a whaling voyage from Aberdeen to the David Straits: 1831 (MS 673).

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.

Museums

The University Museums hold extensive collections relating to Africa. Many are available to view via the website.

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).

'The Aberdeen Connection: Scottish Ties and Exploration in Canada' (University of Aberdeen Development Trust, undated).

'This most beautiful country: American material in Aberdeen' (University of Aberdeen Development Trust, undated).