The Wolfson Reading Room
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Introduction
Many businesses have deposited their papers with the University and as a result, it has acquired an unrivalled collection of material relating to the north-east of Scotland.

The University holds records of numerous businesses from all the region’s traditional industries (fishing, granite cutting etc.) and also from newer industries such as oil and gas production.

Outwith the collections deposited by businesses there is a wealth of material relevant for the research of business history, especially amongst the papers of local estates and families. These sources are especially important for evidence of early industry managed as part of larger landed estates.

This factsheet is to be used in conjunction with the factsheet QG HCOL011: Oil and gas industry resources in Special Collections.

Banking and finance
Aberdeen Stock Exchange: 1845 – 1952. Includes member company records such as articles of association and annual reports. Those included are: Scottish Steam Herring Fishing Co. and Tivoli (Aberdeen) Ltd. (MS 2756).

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


Scottish banking papers: 1806 – 1835 (MS 2565).

Broadcasting
British Broadcasting Corporation: Aberdeen programme material, particularly relating to Scottish country dance and folk music: 1930s – 1990s (MS 3628).

Building and construction
City of Aberdeen Land Association Ltd., minutes: 1874 – 1875 (MS 2626).


Alexander George Reid, Builder and Contractor, Kemnay: 1845 – 1937 (MS 3544).

Engineering
Aberdeen Trawlers and Traders Engineering Company Ltd.: 1900 – 1971 (MS 3248).

Barry, Henry and Cook Ltd., engineers: 19th century – 20th century (MS 3348 and MS 3268).


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

Farming
For a list of farmers see separate factsheet QG HCOL013: Agriculture and farming resources in Special Collections.

Fishing
Aberdeen Trawlers records: 1891 – 1913 (MS 2791).

Food and agriculture

Bennachie Coffee Estate, South India: 1882 - 1886 (MS 2769/I/87).


Flett and Sutherland, fish salesmen of Findochty, Banffshire: 1899 – 1921 (MS 3229).


Philorth Steam Cultivation & Traction Co Ltd: 1872 – 1888 (MS 3004/433, MS 3004/V30, MS3004/V74 & MS 3004/V78).
Rajawella Estate and Raja Coffee company c.1890s (MS 2911).


Aberdeen connections in Ceylon (coffee and tea plantations) papers: 20th century (MS 3813).

Manufacturing

Merchants
Adam Mackie, farmer, merchant and innkeeper, Fyvie, Aberdeenshire: 1818 – 1850 (MS 3347).
Thomas Milne, nurseryman, Aberdeen, ledger: 1839 – 1863 (MS 3395).
Captain William Penny, ship master: papers: 1842 – 1854 (MS 2295).
John Rickart of Auchnacant, merchant, Aberdeenshire (The Rickart manuscript): 1690 – 1724 (MS 2395).

Mining
Rubislaw Granite Company Ltd. (see papers of Ledingham Chalmers, solicitors).
Rubislaw Quarry papers, 1873-1888 (see papers below of F.A. MacDonald and Partners, engineers and surveyors (incorporating Walker & Duncan).

Oil & gas industry
For more resources relating to the above see the factsheet OG HCOLO11: Oil and gas industry resources in Special Collections.

Photography
George Washington Wilson and Co.: 1850 – 1905

Paper manufacturing
Culter Mills Paper Co. Ltd: 1865 – 1965 (MS 3076).


Printing and publishing
D. Wyllie & Son, publishers and booksellers, Aberdeen: 1846 – 1938 (MS 3205).
James Fenton, printer: c.1830 – 1877 (MS 3393).

Shipping
Aberdeen Harbour Board photographic collection: 1880s - 1930s (MS 3595).
Aberdeen Steam Navigation Co.: 1835 - 1925 (MS 2479).

Solicitors/advocates & accountants
Adam, Cochran and Company, advocates, Aberdeen: papers. This collection contains records from families, estates, businesses, trusts and other organisations which the firm represented: including James Strachan, bookseller: 1830 – 1919 (MS 3066).
Davidson and Garden, advocates, Aberdeen: 15th century – 20th century. This extensive collection contains records of some 200 families, estates, businesses, trusts and other organisations which the firm represented (MS 2769 and MS 3744).
Robert Dawson, accountant: legal papers and correspondence: 1866 – 1921 (MS 3515).


Ledingham Chalmers, solicitors: 18th century – 20th century. This collection contains records from families, estates, businesses, trusts and other organisations which the firm represented: such as Rubislaw Granite Company Ltd. (MS 3257, MS 3277, MS 3394, MS 3662, MS 3665 and MS 3713).


Surveyors
F.A. MacDonald and Partners, engineers and surveyors, Aberdeen (incorporating Walker & Duncan, Aberdeen): 18th century – 20th century. Includes papers from various businesses such as relating to Rubislaw Quarry (papers MS 2626 and maps and plans MS 3860).
Transport (road and rail)

Aberdeenshire Light Railways Company records: 1889 – 1898 (MS 4020).

Knox and Machray's Royal Mail Coach Office: 1831 – 1837 (MS 2639).

The O'Dell collection of both manuscript and printed material ranks as one of the major railway collections in Britain and also includes all aspects of transport, with an emphasis on the north and north-east of Scotland, particularly the history of the Great North of Scotland Railway Company.

Please see also the description of the printed book collection:
www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/cld/31.


Great North of Scotland Railway: see O'Dell collection above.

Other relevant collections

Amongst the papers of local estates and families there are many sources relating to local industry such as fishing, farming and distilling. For example, the papers of the Earls of Fife (Duff House) include items relating to the distillery industry (MS 3175).

'Lives in the Oil Industry' Oral History Archive & associated records was a major collection of sound recordings which was completed between 2001 and 2006 and includes interviews with nearly 200 people, totalling nearly 800 hours of recordings (MS 3769).

For more information see the factsheet QG HCOL009: Sound recordings in Special Collections.

Printed collections

The Local Collection, accessible via the Reading Room, contains relevant printed material such as Postal and Trade Directories and publications by the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce.

Access

Materials are available, upon request, for consultation in the Reading Room. Please search online catalogues to identify individual items. www.abdn.ac.uk/special-collections/search-catalogues/catalogues-60.php.

Further reading

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

Links

National Register of Archives http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/.

Business Archives Council of Scotland www.gla.ac.uk/services/archives/bacs/.