

Guide to the Lady Mary Hamilton Papers

OSB MSS 75



by Diane J. Ducharme

March 2003

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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CALL NUMBER: OSB MSS 75

CREATOR: Hamilton, Mary, Lady, 1739-1816

TITLE: Lady Mary Hamilton papers

DATES: 1758-1863

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.97 linear feet (3 boxes)

LANGUAGE: In English and French.

SUMMARY: Series I, Letterbook of Lady Mary Hamilton, contains correspondence by and to the author Lady Mary Hamilton, principally with her daughter Betsey Walker Thiébault and her son-in-law Paul Thiébault; her siblings, including Anne Leslie Carnegie, Countess of Northesk, and Alexander Leslie; and with George Robinson Hamilton and Sir Herbert Croft. Series II, Family Papers, contains a detailed biographical memoir of Lady Mary by her grandson, Baron Adolphe Thiébault.

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To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

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

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased on the James Marshall Osborn Fund, 2001.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Lady Mary Hamilton Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Lady Mary Hamilton Papers. James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Existence and Location of Copies

The collection is also available on microfilm.

LADY MARY HAMILTON, 1739-1816

Lady Mary Hamilton was born Lady Mary Leslie, youngest daughter of Alexander Leslie, 5th Earl of Leven and Melville, and Lady Elizabeth Monypenny Leslie. She married Dr. James Walker of Innerdovot, physician to the prison hospital in Edinburgh, on January 5, 1762. It was said to have been a "romantic" match, but she and Walker came to lead very separate lives.

According to her grandson, Lady Mary bore ten children, several of whom died in infancy. In 1782 she met and became involved with George Robinson Hamilton, a cousin of the Duke of Hamilton, and removed to France with him and two of her daughters, Betsey and Isabella. After the French Revolution, Betsey married Paul Thiébault, who became General Thiébault, while Isabella married Etienne de Jouy.

Lady Mary Hamilton, as she styled herself, was best known for her novel *Munster Village* (1778), a utopian work depicting a community of women pursuing higher education, but she also published *Letters from the Duchess de Crony* (1777); *The Life of Mrs. Justman* (1782); and *The Duc de Popoli* (1810).

George Robinson Hamilton died in October, 1797. Some time after his death Lady Mary moved to Amiens, where Sir Herbert Croft became a member of her household. She died there early in 1816, shortly before Croft himself.

Scope and Contents

The Lady Mary Hamilton Papers consist of letters and family papers documenting aspects of the life of Lady Mary Hamilton. The papers span the dates 1758-1863, with the bulk of the material dating from the 1790s, and are organized into two series: I. *Letterbook of Lady Mary Hamilton*; and II. *Family Papers*.

[Series I, *Letterbook of Lady Mary Hamilton*](#), is housed in Box 1, folders 1-128 and consists of letters and a few other papers which were gathered and bound by her grandson, Baron Adolphe Thiébault. The letters have been disbound but have been kept in the order in which Thiébault arranged them, which is roughly chronological.

The first 44 folders in the series contain letters from Hamilton's relatives and social acquaintances in Scotland and England. Correspondents include her siblings, Alexander Leslie and Anne Leslie Carnegie, Countess of Northesk; Sir Henry Erskine; Henry Dundas; and Lord Balgonie. Topics include Lady Mary's financial needs; plans for the education and careers of her various children, particularly her sons; advice on

settling "quietly in the country;" and social news. Folder 9 contains a letter from the Countess of Northesk describing the secret marriage and subsequent disinheritance of her eldest son Lord Rosehill; folder 34 a letter from Henry Dundas declining to assist her in her "case" beyond "barely a mention" of it to Lord North; and folder 37 contains a copy of a poem by Sir Henry Erskine.

There are over forty letters in the collection from Lady Mary to her daughter Betsey Walker Thiébault, addressed to "my dear daughter" or to "Kanker" (a nickname derived from her astrological sign). The letters discuss Lady Mary's and George Hamilton's opposition to, and eventual approval of, Betsey's impending marriage to Thiébault, then a soldier in the Revolutionary Army, as well as her continuing difficulties with her in-laws over dowry and settlement agreements. They also contain news of her siblings and her extended family in Scotland; refer obliquely to political events and developments, particularly Lady Mary's fears of persecution as a foreign national during the Revolutionary period; and reveal Lady Mary's own complex financial problems, which increased after the death of Hamilton in October, 1797.

Other letters include several by Sir Herbert Croft; notes concerning the confiscation of "cheveaux de luxe" by the local Revolutionary committees; six letters from George Robinson Hamilton to various recipients; and notes from Lady Mary to her grandchildren. Folder 95 contains a passport issued to Hamilton by Napoleon's police.

[*Series II, Family Papers*](#), is housed in Box 2, folders 129-132 and contains extensive genealogical notes and biographical information compiled by Lady Mary Hamilton's grandson, Baron Adolphe Thiébault. The "histoire de ma famille maternelle" includes Thiébault's impressions of his grandmother and commentary on topics as diverse as the probable paternity of several of her children during her marriage to Walker; analysis of her "romantique" temperament and love of her children; and his view of the character of Sir Herbert Croft.

Collection Contents

Series I: Letterbook of Lady Mary Hamilton, 1758-1859

0.41 linear feet (1 box)

Series I, *Letterbook of Lady Mary Hamilton*, is arranged in its original binding order.

b. 1, f. 1	Fragments found in the gutter of the volume when disbound in 2002	n.d.
b. 1, f. 2	Wrapper: "Lettres et papiers de Lady Mary Walker, nee Lester (1756 a 1816)"	n.d.
b. 1, f. 3	Table of contents Table of contents of the letterbook written by Baron Thiébault, grandson of Lady Mary Hamilton. In French.	1859 Jul 11
b. 1, f. 4	ALS from Elizabeth Monypenny Leslie, Countess of Leven; Edinburgh Docket: "My mother the Countess Dowager of Leven her last letter dated December 1781" With: lock of the Countess of Leven's hair	1781 Dec 6
b. 1, f. 5	ALS from James Walker [of Kinnaird to his daughter Isabella]	1788
b. 1, f. 6	Blank sheet	n.d.
b. 1, f. 7	Promissory note from Daniel MacKercher to James Walker for L 150	1771 Jan 29
b. 1, f. 8	ALS from David Leslie, Earl of Leven; Melvill	n.y. Jul 18
b. 1, f. 9	ALS from Anne Leslie Carnegie, Countess of Northesk; Edinburgh Docket: "Letter Lady Northesk to Lady Mary with copy of Letter from Ld Rosehill to Lord Northesk and Lady Northesks Answer" March 14 No. 5" (these letters not present)	1767 Mar 14
b. 1, f. 10	ALS from Anne Leslie Carnegie, Countess of Northesk "My Sister the Countess of Northesk her last Letter to me"	n.y. Sep 25
b. 1, f. 11	AN (in the third person) from David Carnegie, Earl of Northesk	1785 Jan 2
b. 1, f. 12	ALS from [Alexander Leslie of Beechwood]; Money Moon, County of Derry Signed "AL"	1763 Jul 23
b. 1, f. 13	Slip of paper	1763 Jul 23
b. 1, f. 14	ALS from Alexander Leslie; Bank Signed "AL"	1763 Oct 12
b. 1, f. 15	ALS from Alexander Leslie; Callidan Signed "AL"	1763 Sep 5
b. 1, f. 16	Blank sheet	n.d.
b. 1, f. 17	ALS from Alexander Leslie; Edinburgh Signed "AL"	1783 Apr 9
b. 1, f. 18	Blank sheet	n.d.

b. 1, f. 19	ALS to David Walker from Alexander Leslie; Edinburgh	1791 Apr 3
b. 1, f. 20	ALS from Alexander Leslie; Edinburgh Signed "AL"	1791 Apr 24
b. 1, f. 21	ALS from Alexander Leslie; Edinburgh Signed "AL"	1791 Aug 24
b. 1, f. 22	ALS from Alexander Leslie; Edinburgh Signed "AL"	1792 Jan 29
b. 1, f. 23	ALS from Alexander Leslie; Edinburgh Signed "AL"	1792 Sep 24
b. 1, f. 24	ALS from [Alexander Leslie]; Edinburgh	1792 Dec 9
b. 1, f. 25	AL (incomplete) from unidentified	n.d.
b. 1, f. 26	AL from unidentified	1783 Jan 17
b. 1, f. 27	Blank sheet cut in middle	n.d.
b. 1, f. 28	ALS from unidentified; Brewer Street	1784 Jan 18
b. 1, f. 29	AL (in the third person) from General Alexander Melville to General Thiébauld; London, Brewer Street	1802 Jul 5
b. 1, f. 30	ALS from Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland; Cumberland House "Letter from the late Duke of Cumberland" Signed "Henry"	1777 or 1778
b. 1, f. 31	ALS from Lord Balgonie; Balgonie Castle Addressed to "my dear Aunt;" announces the death of the Earl of Leven and Melville	1802 Jun 12
b. 1, f. 32	ALS from Elizabeth Crompton Hume-Campbell, Countess of Marchmont; Hemel Hempstead Signed "E Marchmont"	1789
b. 1, f. 33	ALS from Elizabeth Crompton Hume-Campbell, Countess of Marchmont Signed "E Marchmont"	1778 Jul 30
b. 1, f. 34	ALS from Henry Dundas (later Viscount Melville); Saville Row Docket: "Mr. Dundass 1779"	1779 Dec 4
b. 1, f. 35	ALS from William Wildman Barrington, Viscount Barrington; Paultons in Hampshire	1781 Nov 10
b. 1, f. 36	ALS from Sir Henry Erskine; Pall-Mall Docket: "Sir Harry Erskines Letter and my answer 1757"	1758 Nov 28
b. 1, f. 37	"The Goose:" AMS "Sir Harry Erskines Verse"	n.d.
b. 1, f. 38	AL (in the third person) from MH to Sir Henry Erskine; Leven Lodge Opens: "Lady Mary Leslie is concerned..."	1759 Apr 6

b. 1, f. 39	AL (in the third person) from Sir Henry Erskine; Pall-Mall	1759 Apr 20
b. 1, f. 40	ALS to Miss Glen Signed: "M. Walker"	1767 Jun 12
b. 1, f. 41	AL (incomplete) from unidentified	n.d.
b. 1, f. 42	AL draft, incomplete and corrected, from unidentified	n.d.
b. 1, f. 43	ALS from MH to [Alexander Melville?]	1784 Aug 12
b. 1, f. 44	"Dialogues:" AMS concerning conversation between MH and Mr. Morgan	1787 Jul 4
b. 1, f. 45	ALS from MH to [Etienne de] Jouy; Lille	1793 May 8
b. 1, f. 46	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	[1793?] Sep 7
b. 1, f. 47	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	[1793?] Sep 17
b. 1, f. 48	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	[1793?] Oct 2
b. 1, f. 49	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1793 Oct 29
b. 1, f. 50	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	[1793?] Nov 6
b. 1, f. 51	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1793 Nov 17
b. 1, f. 52	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	1793 Nov 20
b. 1, f. 53	ALS from M. Hamilton to "Citoyen Thiébault" [Paul Thiébault]; Lille	1793 Dec 12
b. 1, f. 54	ALS from MH to "My dear daughter;" Lille Addressed: "Au Citoyen Thiébault"	1793 Dec 5
b. 1, f. 55	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	1794 Jan 23
b. 1, f. 56	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	1794 Apr 18
b. 1, f. 57	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	1794 May 16
b. 1, f. 58	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	1794 Jul 28
b. 1, f. 59	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	1794 Aug 9
b. 1, f. 60	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1794 Aug 27
b. 1, f. 61	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	1794 Dec 30
b. 1, f. 62	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	1795 Jan 18
b. 1, f. 63	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Equeberg?	1795 Oct 16
b. 1, f. 64	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Equeberg?	1795 Oct 27
b. 1, f. 65	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	1795 Dec 28
b. 1, f. 66	ALS from MH to Paul [Thiébault]; Lille Congratulations on the birth of his son. In French.	1797 23 Feb

	ALS from MH to Paul Thiébault; Lille Stored in: Oversize Written on printed "Epitaph" for "George Robinson Hamilton, Esq.... Obit 29th October 1797."	[1797]
b. 1, f. 67	AMS concerning legal difficulties in the settlement of Hamilton's estate	n.d.
b. 1, f. 68	ALS from MH to Paul Thiébault; Lille In French.	1798 Oct 1
b. 1, f. 69	ALS from MH to Paul Thiébault; Lille In French. With: ALS from MH to Betsey Walker, n.d., attached to accounting note dated 1802 Apr 26.	1801 Jan 13
b. 1, f. 70	ALS from MH to Adolphe Thiébault	1802 Mar 18
b. 1, f. 71	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; 9 Buckingham Street, Strand, London	1801 Sep 29
b. 1, f. 72	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; 6 Adam Street, Adelphi, [London]	1801 Nov 22
b. 1, f. 73	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Lille	1802 Jun 3
b. 1, f. 74	ALS from MH to Paul Thiébault; Lille In French. With: fragment of AL to Betsey Walker, 1802 Jun 28	1802 Oct 22
b. 1, f. 75	ALS from MH to Paul Thiébault; Lille In French.	1802 Nov 2
b. 1, f. 76	ALS from MH to Paul Thiébault; Lille	1802 Nov 6
b. 1, f. 77	Empty folder	
b. 1, f. 78	ALS from MH to Paul Thiébault	1802 Nov 12
b. 1, f. 79	ALS from MH to Paul Thiébault In French. With: accounts concerning the settlement of Hamilton's estate, n.d.	1802 Nov 23
b. 1, f. 80	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker] With: "Paper of consequence respecting the debts and payments made to the créanciers de feu M. Hamilton," n.d.	1804 Feb 24
b. 1, f. 81	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1804 Mar 14
b. 1, f. 82	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1804 Apr 6
b. 1, f. 83	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1804 May 17
b. 1, f. 84	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1804 Aug 23
b. 1, f. 85	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1804 May 24
b. 1, f. 86	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1803 Oct 20
b. 1, f. 87	ALS from MH to Adolphe [Thiébault]; Amiens In French.	1806 Jan 2

b. 1, f. 88	ALS from MH to Sir Herbert Croft In French. Addressed: "A Monsieur Monsieur Le Chevalier Croft No. 4 Rue des Augustins a Amiens"	1806 Jul 2
b. 1, f. 89	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Amiens	1806 Sep 15
b. 1, f. 90	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; Amiens	1806 Jul 21
b. 1, f. 91	ALS (incomplete) from MH	n.d.
b. 1, f. 92	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker] "6 January, I open the letter to tell you it was neglected to be put in the post."	1810 Jan 4
b. 1, f. 93	ALS from MH to Adolphe Thiébault; Amiens	1806 Jan 4
b. 1, f. 94	ALS from MH to Adolphe Thiébault	1810 Jan 4
b. 1, f. 95	Passport issued to MH by the Police Générale for travel between Amiens and Lille Printed form, filled out, stamped and signed	1808 Aug 12
b. 1, f. 96	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1810 Aug 15
b. 1, f. 97	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1810 Sept 23
b. 1, f. 98	ALS from MH to Adolphe, Laure and [Betsey Walker]	1812 Jan 6
b. 1, f. 99	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]; London	1814 Nov 9
b. 1, f. 100	AL (incomplete) from MH to [Betsey Walker]; London	1814 Nov
b. 1, f. 101	ALS from MH to "Bell" [Isabella Walker Jouy]; Jamaica	1815 Apr 15
b. 1, f. 102	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker] With: ALS to "David"	1815 Sep 21
b. 1, f. 103	Engraved calling card: "Lady Mary Hamilton"	n.d.
b. 1, f. 104	ALS from MH to [Betsey Walker]	1816 Apr 16
b. 1, f. 105	ALS from MH to "Emma;" Londres?	1816 "fin de"
b. 1, f. 106	ALS from George Robinson Hamilton to MH; Bristol	1791 Apr 11
b. 1, f. 107	ALS from George Robinson Hamilton to [Etienne de] Jouy; Lille	1793 May 2
b. 1, f. 107	ALS from MH to Paul [Thiébault]	1793 May 5
b. 1, f. 108	ALS from George Robinson Hamilton to Paul [Thiébault]; Lille In French.	1793 Nov 27
b. 1, f. 109	ALS from George Robinson Hamilton to "Monsieur;" Lille In French.	1793 Jul 8
b. 1, f. 110	ALS from George Robinson Hamilton to "mon cher ami;" Lille In French.	1793 Nov 27

b. 1, f. 111	ALS from DeGras? concerning the confiscation of horses by order of "citoyen Griois, commissaire nationale" In French	1795 Jun 10
b. 1, f. 112	ALS from Dubais concerning the confiscation of "cheveux de luxe"	1795 Jun 11
b. 1, f. 113	"Soliloquy:" AMS by unidentified	n.y. Jul 27
b. 1, f. 114	AL (in the third person) from Sir Herbert Croft to David Walker, copy of letter from Croft to his brother Richard	n.d.
b. 1, f. 115	ALS from Sir Herbert Croft to Madame Thiébault [Betsey Walker]; Amiens	n.y. Aug 25
b. 1, f. 116	AL incomplete from unidentified	n.d.
b. 1, f. 117	ALS from Sir Herbert Croft to Madame Thiébault	1816 Aug 16
b. 1, f. 118	ALS from Sir Herbert Croft to "Dear Madam"	n.y. Dec 29
b. 1, f. 119	ALS from Sir Herbert Croft to Madame Thiébault; Amiens	1807 Dec 10
b. 1, f. 120	ALS from Sir Herbert Croft to Madame Thiébault	1807 Dec 23
b. 1, f. 121	"Sir Herbert Croft, Bart. to Mademoiselle de Jouy...." AMS of poem First line: "Dear Emma! This old ugly Latin,..." With: ALS from Croft to "Dear Madam," 1812 Mar 17	1810 Jul
b. 1, f. 122	AL (incomplete), unidentified	n.y. Jul 25
b. 1, f. 123	Letter fragment with notes, by MH and Sir Herbert Croft	n.d.
b. 1, f. 124	ALS from Sir Herbert Croft to "Mon cher hermite"	n.d.
b. 1, f. 125	AL to Lord Leven	1803 Aug 28
b. 1, f. 126	Genealogical notes on cousins-german	n.d.
b. 1, f. 127	List of people	n.d.
b. 1, f. 128	ALS to [MH] from "De Matigny"	n.d.

Series II: Family Papers, 1863*0.21 linear feet (1 box)*Series II, *Family Papers*, is arranged alphabetically by title and type of material.

b. 2, f. 129-30	"Complément à l'histoire de ma famille maternelle....ou, Histoire de Lady Mary Walker et de ses enfants" Autograph manuscript signed of family history by Baron Adolphe Thiébault, grandson of Lady Mary Walker Hamilton	1863 Mar 30
b. 2, f. 131	Manuscript notes for family history	n.d.
b. 2, f. 132	Original binding of letterbook	n.d.

Oversize

1.34 linear feet (1 box)

b. 3, f. 133

Obit notice for George Robinson Hamilton

1797 Oct 29

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

English fiction -- 18th century
Families -- England -- Domestic relations
Novelists, English -- 18th century
Prenuptial agreements
Women authors
Women authors
Women authors, English -- 18th century

Geographic Names

France -- History -- Revolution, 1789-1799
France -- Social conditions -- 18th century

Names

Croft, Herbert, Sir, 1751-1816
Erskine, Henry, Sir, d. 1765
Hamilton, George Robinson
Hamilton, Mary, Lady, 1739-1816
Jouy, Étienne de, 1764-1846
Northesk, Anne Leslie Carnegie, Countess of.
Northesk, William Carnegie, Earl of, 1758-1831
Thiébault, Adolphe, baron
Thiébault, Paul Charles François Adrien Henri
Dieudonné, baron, 1769-1846