

Guide to the Jones family archive

MSS 18



YCBA Library Court. Photograph by Richard Caspole, YCBA, 2016.

compiled by Alice Wolfram

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<https://britishart.yale.edu/about-us/departments/rare-books-and-manuscripts>

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Center for British Art, Rare Books and Manuscripts
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CALL NUMBER: MSS 18

CREATOR: Jones family

TITLE: Jones family archive

DATES: 1805-1945

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3 linear feet (6 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The collection comprises correspondence, photographs, sketchbooks, travel journals, notebooks, and printed material concerning Charles Jones (1780-1850) and his descendants. The correspondence spans the better part of the nineteenth century (1805-1878), with the bulk of the letters dating from the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s; it offers a window into the life of a large middle-class dissenting family in mid nineteenth-century London.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/ycba.mss.0018>

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is unprocessed and may not be available for immediate access.

Conditions Governing Use

The collection is the physical property of the Yale Center for British Art. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Preferred Citation

Jones family archive. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Fund

Biographical / Historical

The descendants of Charles Jones (1780-1850), of whom there is a wash portrait in the present collection, were gifted in both arts and sciences. His grandson Henry Chapman Jones (1854-1932), lecturer at the Royal College of Science, was a pioneer photographer, who published works on the science and practice of photography, and was an inventor of instruments for the investigation of photographs. His grandson Sydney Langford Jones (1888-1948), sculptor, painter, engraver, book-illustrator and designer of coins, medals and medallions, was connected with members of the Arts and Crafts movements.

Scope and Contents

The collection comprises correspondence, photographs, sketchbooks, travel journals, notebooks, and printed material concerning Charles Jones (1780-1850) and his descendants. The correspondence spans the better part of the nineteenth century (1805-1878), with the bulk of the letters dating from the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s; it offers a window into the life of a large middle-class dissenting family in mid nineteenth-century London.

The collection includes: a number of letters written by young children of the Jones family; bundles of letters sent in the 1840s from St Omer (France) to Frances Caroline Chapman, who had married Charles James Jones in 1837; diaries (including the travel diary of Mary Ann Jones, who visited Germany in 1893, to further her musical and cultural education); photographs and photograph albums of family portraits; original poetry, including The complete poetical works of Henry Chapman Jones, philosopher-poet (1878); hand-made Christmas and birthday cards; recipes compiled by Mrs. Chapman Jones; 1908 menu card "du diner des Savants," signed by Major Baden Powell and Mr. Shackleton; and a later sketchbook with watercolors of wild flowers, rural England, and house interiors. The collection also includes Sydney Langford Jones' turn-of-the-century school exercise books, complete with the caustic comments of schoolmasters; and his Royal College of Art notebooks, with marginalia of witty caricatures and decorations showing architectural details. There are also many of his tiny engravings, and some of his design work. His signature was always "Jonah" (meaning dove) -- for he was a Quaker and a conscientious objector, imprisoned for seventeen months for his beliefs during World War I. The collection includes photographs of him at work, and also a rare copy of his Peace portfolio, produced with Laurence Housman (1935).

Charles Jones was a brass founder, and several of the letters give a glimpse of the workings of his business and the lives of the men and boys he employed (including his son Charles) in his small shop. The Jones family worshiped at the dissenting Poultry Chapel in the City and buried their dead at Abney Park, the cemetery of choice for dissenters after Bunhill Fields had filled up.

Much of the early material in the Jones archive relates to Henry Chapman Jones's mother: Caroline Chapman, and later Caroline Jones. Specifically, it offers a glimpse of her protracted and emotionally intense relationship with a friend from the boarding school in St. Omer, France, where Caroline had spent several years as a teenager. The relationship between the two young women is in many ways characteristic of the "female world of love and ritual" described by the historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg: a world of emotionally intense bonds between women, separate from but fully compatible with the heterosexual and heterosocial world of familial and matrimonial life.

Much of the correspondence dating from the later 1840s and 1850s involves the Jones children, especially the two eldest sons, Charles and Thomas, both of whom died young. Thomas, the younger of the two, spent a series of stints with friends and relatives in the countryside, recuperating from various illnesses, and his absences provided the occasion for much of the correspondence. The letters detail not only the progress of his own symptoms, but also his religious education and development, and his daily life and activities. In the summer and fall of 1854, the letters include many references to the cholera epidemic that

was then ravaging London. Several of the Jones children became ill during this period, perhaps with cholera, and Charles died in early November from what the family doctor described as "simple fever."

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

Brass industry and trade -- Great Britain
Cholera -- Great Britain
Female friendship
LGBTQ resource
Photographers -- Great Britain
Quakers -- Great Britain

Genres / Formats

Correspondence
Diaries
Exercise books
Greeting cards
Notebooks
Photographs
Sketchbooks

Families

Jones family

Names

Jones, Charles, 1780-1850
Jones, Charles, 1838-1854
Jones, Charles James, 1813-1881
Jones, Frances Caroline, 1814-1895

Corporate Body

Royal College of Art (Great Britain)

Contributors

Jones family
Jones, Henry Chapman, 1854-
Jones, Mary Ann, 1850-1926
Jones, Sydney Langford, 1888-1948
Jones, Thomas, 1840-1859
Jones, Charles, 1780-1850
Jones, Charles, 1838-1854