

Yale University Library
Lewis Walpole Library

Guide to the Anne Seymour Damer Collection

LWL MSS 48



by Lewis Walpole Library Staff

2024

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Lewis Walpole Library
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CALL NUMBER: LWL MSS 48

CREATOR: Damer, Anne Seymour, 1748 or 1749-1828

TITLE: Anne Seymour Damer Collection

DATES: 1783–1828

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.21 linear feet (1 box)

LANGUAGE: Chiefly in English; some material in French.

SUMMARY: The collections holds letters to and from Anne Seymour Damer's friends and relatives, with a small group of documents in her hand.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/lwl.mss.048>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/lwl.mss.048>.

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

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

W. S. Lewis purchased most of the material at Christie's (Sir Wathen Arthur Waller sale, Lot 12), December 14, 1947. Bequest of Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis (Yale 1918), 1979.

Additional material has been and will be acquired from various sources. For more information see the finding aid.

Custodial History

Prior to February 2024 the material in LWL MSS 48 had been interfiled in the Lewis Walpole Library Manuscript Miscellany (formerly LWL MSS MISC, now LWL MSS 36).

The material in Box 1, Folders 1-28 and 31, was purchased by Wilmarth S. Lewis; all material in boxes and folders following those was purchased by the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Anne Seymour Damer Collection is the physical property of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the W. S. Lewis Librarian/Executive Director.

Preferred Citation

Anne Seymour Damer Collection. The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

Biographical / Historical

Anne Seymour Conway Damer, a sculptor and author, was born on November 8, 1749, at Coombe Bank, Sevenoaks, Kent, the only child of the military officer and politician Henry Seymour Conway (1719-1795) and his wife, Caroline Campbell Bruce, Lady Ailesbury (1721-1803). In 1767 she married the Hon. John Damer (1743-1776), but they separated seven years later. After his death she studied anatomy, modelling, and carving with the intention of becoming a sculptor; she was successful and exhibited her works at the Royal Academy over more than thirty years.

Damer was associated with British theatrical and literary circles, studied Greek and Latin, and published one novel, *Belmour* (1801). She traveled to Italy and France, including Florence and Naples, where she visited Sir William Hamilton and Paris where she presented sculptures to Napoleon. In London, Damer formed close friendships with several prominent women such as Mary Berry and Sarah Siddons. One of the greatest influences in her life and champions of her work was Horace Walpole (1717-1797) who was her guardian in her youth when her parents were abroad, and a promoter of her sculpture. Walpole made Damer his executor and bequeathed his home, Strawberry Hill in Twickenham, to her; she lived there from 1797 to 1811. Anne Seymour Damer died at her home in London on May 28, 1828.

Scope and Contents

The collections holds letters to and from Anne Seymour Damer's friends and relatives, with a small group of documents in her hand.

Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Letters to Damer, 1783-1823. II. Letters from Damer, 1793-1828. III. Other Papers, 1815-1828.

Collection Contents

Series I: Letters to Damer, 1783–1823

15 Folders

The letters in here are mostly single notes to Damer from a variety of friends, but there are multiple letters from some, such as the five from the Duchess of Devonshire and four from the Duke of Richmond, who wrote most often about his health. Among the interesting correspondents is Henry Richard Vassall, Baron Holland, who was sending proof pages from his edition of Horace Walpole's *Memoires of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George the Second* (1822) that contain any mention of Damer's father Henry Seymour Conway "in case there should be any thing which you wish expunged." Also of note is Sir William Hamilton who, in his six-page letter wrote of "a chain of melancholy events" in Naples, cataloging the deaths of his wife Catherine (putrid fever), Dr. Alexander Monro Drummond (a fractured skull after a fall from William Beckford's horse), and most dramatically, of the Princess Giraci Grimaldi, who was buried alive in her home in an earthquake and died of starvation.

Series I is organized alphabetically.

b. Box 1, f. 1	Bertrand, Fanny, comtesse, 1785-1836	1821 August 10
b. Box 1, f. 2	Caroline, Queen, consort of George IV, King of Great Britain, 1768-1821	1821
b. Box 1, f. 3	Craven, Elizabeth, 1750-1828	1823 June 19
b. Box 1, f. 4	Cavendish, Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire, 1757-1806	1803, undated
b. Box 1, f. 5	Dorchester, Joseph Damer, Earl of, 1718-1798	undated
b. Box 1, f. 6	Farquhar, Walter, 1738-1819	undated
b. Box 1, f. 7	Fox, Charles James, 1749-1806	undated
b. Box 1, f. 8	Hamilton, William, Sir, 1730-1803	1783 February 25
b. Box 1, f. 9	Harcourt, George Simon Harcourt, Earl, 1736-1809	undated
b. Box 1, f. 10	Holland, Henry Richard Vassall, Baron, 1773-1840	1820 November 1
b. Box 1, f. 11	Josephine, Empress, consort of Napoleon I, Emperor of the French, 1763-1814	1802
b. Box 1, f. 31	Maria, Duchess of Gloucester, 1736-1807	1786–1798
b. Box 1, f. 12	Melbourne, Elizabeth Milbanke Lamb, Viscountess, 1752-1818 The letter is not signed but the hand was identified by Jonathan Gross, editor of <i>Byron's "Corbeau Blanc": the Life and Letters of Lady Melbourne</i> (1997)	1806 April 5
b. Box 1, f. 13	Paul, Prince of Württemberg, 1785-1852	undated
b. Box 1, f. 14	Richmond and Lennox, Charles Lennox, Duke of, 1735-1806	1805–1806
b. Box 1, f. 15	Robinson, G.	1806 March 29

Series II: Letters from Damer, 1793–1828*11 Folders*

The letters here are primarily personal, but three are to businessmen: one to James Christie, and two to the coachmakers Lukin and Allan. Among the personal letters are notes to the sculptor George Bullock inviting him to visit her in Strawberry Hill, writing that she “will, with pleasure, send a ticket” when he chooses the day, and to her cousin, Francis Ingram Seymour, Marquess of Hertford, regarding her father’s papers; and a longer letter of thanks to the merchant/ancient languages scholar John Livie thanking him for getting her started with the study of Greek and reporting on her progress.

Series II is organized alphabetically.

	Banks, Joseph, 1743-1820 Purchased from M. Papentonio, 1947.	
b. Box 1, f. 30	Letter Purchased from John Wilson, July 2010.	1802 June 2
b. Box 1, f. 16	Letter Purchased at the Thomas Henry Foster Sale, lot 246.	undated
b. Box 1, f. 29	Bullock, George, 1777-1818 Transferred from the James Marshall and Marie Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 1998.	1799? May 27
b. Box 1, f. 17	Christie, James, 1773-1831 Purchased from Winifred A. Myers, Ltd., May 1971.	1809 September 12
b. Box 1, f. 18	Edwards, James, 1756-1816 James Edwards, bookseller and bibliographer, married Katharine, the only daughter of Rev. Edward Bromhead, in September 1805. Purchased from I. Kyrle Fletcher, March 1949.	1805 November 12
b. Box 1, f. 19	Hertford, Francis Ingram Seymour, Marquess of, 1743-1822 Purchased from Frank Hollings, November 1973.	1797 May 3
b. Box 1, f. 20	Howard, George, Sir, 1718-1796 Purchased from James Tregaskis, June 1928.	1795 July 16
b. Box 1, f. 21	Livie, John, 1730-1798 Purchased from Elkin Mathews Ltd., December 1943.	1793 November 24
b. Box 1, f. 22	Lukin and Allan The 1804 letter was purchased from Peter Murray Hill, July 1947.	1804, 1811
b. Box 1, f. 23	Unidentified recipient Damer responds to an inquiry about her father’s papers and references in them to Major General Lloyd. Purchased from Winifred A. Myers, Ltd., February 1955.	1828 May 18

b. Box 1, f. 24	Unidentified recipient	undated
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Damer thanks the recipient for the "flattering expressions and approbations you have honoured me with," and contrasts those against the "slights" she has experienced in her own country.

Purchased from Winifred A. Myers, Ltd., August 1958.

Series III: Other Papers, 1811–1826*4 Folders*

b. Box 1, f. 25	Account of her presentation of a Charles Fox bust to Napoleon and Josephine in 1812	approximately 1815
b. Box 1, f. 26	Biographical sketch with a list of her works	undated
b. Box 1, f. 27	Inscription in the hand of Anne Seymour Damer Text: Given by Her Majesty / The Empress Josephine / of France / To Anne Seymour Damer / 1811 Purchased from Winifred A. Myers, Ltd., May 1971.	1811
b. Box 1, f. 28	Statement appointing Jonathan Wathen Waller as her executor, signed	1826 March 16

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

Female friendship
Women artists -- Great Britain

Occupations

Women sculptors

Names

Cavendish, Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of
Devonshire, 1757-1806
Damer, Anne Seymour, 1748 or 1749-1828
Hamilton, William, Sir, 1730-1803
Maria, Duchess of Gloucester, 1736-1807
Richmond and Lennox, Charles Lennox, Duke of,
1735-1806