

Elizabeth Montagu Collection

LWL MSS 49



by Lewis Walpole Library Staff

March 2024

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Collection Overview

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CALL NUMBER: LWL MSS 49

CREATOR: Montagu, Elizabeth Robinson, 1718-1800

TITLE: Elizabeth Montagu collection

DATES: 1740-1909

BULK DATES: 1740-1785

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.21 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Elizabeth Montagu Collection contains letters to and from her friends and relatives. Family highlights include twenty letters Montagu wrote to her husband Edward, ten letters to and from her sister Sarah Robinson Scott, and one from her brother brother, Matthew Robinson-Morris, Baron Rokeby, who wrote his opinion of their cousin Elizabeth Lumley marrying the author Laurence Sterne, whom he described as "a Parson, who once delighted in debauchery." Also present are communications to and from Montagu's bluestocking friends including Anne Donnellan, Margaret Cavendish-Harley, Duchess of Portland, Ann Dillingham Ord, Benjamin Stillingfleet, and Elizabeth Vesey, as well as family friends Rev. William Freind and Dr. John Gilbert. The outlying correspondence is three letters from 1909 written by Montagu's editor Emily J. Climensohn; they came with the collection and provide provenance documentation.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/lwl.mss.049>

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.049>.

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 from Myers & Co., Ltd., in January 1948. 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

Library records indicate that the Montagu letters Wilmarth S. Lewis acquired from Myers & Co., Ltd., in January 1948 "were removed from a large fol. vol. of autograph letters labeled 'Autograph Letters Relating to Bath, 1602-1830'" before he bought them from Myers & Co., Ltd. Those letters present are identifiable by the glassine hinge strips (some with album page paper still attached) along one vertical border. They are also mentioned in Emily J. Climensen's three letters in Series III, which were marked as having come from the same album though their hinge strips and attached album page paper is different, suggesting that Climensen had mounted her collection in an album that she sold to the recipient of her letters, and her own letters were added on separate leaves by the album's new owner. Climensen's letters may even have been addressed to Myers & Co. founder Albert Myers, who had opened as Albert I. Myers, Antiquarian Booksellers at 59 High Holborn, London, in 1901. Climensen had published her two-volume edition of Montagu's correspondence, *Elizabeth Montagu, the Queen of the Blue-stockings*, in London in 1906 and was likely familiar with the Myers shop.

The album was apparently dismantled once it entered the Myers firm. Material that Lewis purchased separately is identified at the folder level, if the vendor is known.

Prior to February 2024 the material in LWL MSS 49 had been interfiled in the Lewis Walpole Library Manuscript Miscellany (formerly LWL MSS MISC, now LWL MSS 36). The material in Box 1, Folders 1-23 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 Elizabeth Montague 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

Elizabeth Montagu Collection. The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

Elizabeth Robinson Montagu (1718-1800)

Elizabeth Robinson Montagu was born in Yorkshire, the daughter of Matthew Robinson (1694-1778) and Elizabeth Drake Robinson. Both she and her sister Sarah Robinson Scott (1720-1795) were educated in languages and literature, and both became writers. In 1742 she married Edward Montagu (1692-1775)

of Northumberland, and the couple had one child, John, who died in 1744. The Montagus maintained residences in Northumberland, Berkshire, London, and Bath; in London and Bath Elizabeth Montagu became a respected host noted for her literary salons that attracted writers and artists, both male and female, for intellectual conversation. She founded, led, and hosted the Blue Stockings Society, an informal discussion circle composed of educated and privileged women and men.

Scope and Contents

The Elizabeth Montagu Collection contains letters to and from her friends and relatives. Family highlights include twenty letters Montagu wrote to her husband Edward, ten letters to and from her sister Sarah Robinson Scott, and one from her brother brother, Matthew Robinson-Morris, Baron Rokeby, who wrote his opinion of their cousin Elizabeth Lumley marrying the author Laurence Sterne, whom he described as "a Parson, who once delighted in debauchery." Also present are communications to and from Montagu's bluestocking friends including Anne Donnellan, Margaret Cavendish-Harley, Duchess of Portland, Ann Dillingham Ord, Benjamin Stillingfleet, and Elizabeth Vesey, as well as family friends Rev. William Freind and Dr. John Gilbert. The outlying correspondence is three letters from 1909 written by Montagu's editor Emily J. Climenson; they came with the collection and provide provenance documentation.

Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Letters to Montagu, 1740-1785. II. Letters from Montagu, 1741-1779. III. Other Papers, 1909.

Collection Contents

Series I: Letters to Montagu, 1740–1785

13 Folders

Organized alphabetically.

b. 1, f. 24	Berry, Agnes, 1764-1852 Purchased from John Wilson, September, 2010.	[179–]
b. 1, f. 1	Boscawen, Edward, 1711-1761	1756 November 16
b. 1, f. 2	Donnellan, Anne, -1782	[1743 September]
b. 1, f. 3	Ellis, Anne Stanley, 1723-1803	1760 February 10
b. 1, f. 4	Freind, William, 1715-1766	1740, 1741
b. 1, f. 5	Hanbury-Williams, Frances, Lady, -1781	1760, 1761
b. 1, f. 6	Lyttelton, George Lyttelton, Baron, 1709-1773 The 1765 letter was purchased from Myers & Co., Ltd., March 1952.	1756, 1765
b. 1, f. 7	North, Frederick, Earl of Guilford, 1766-1827	[No year] April 30
b. 1, f. 8	Portland, Margaret Cavendish Holles Harley Bentinck, Duchess of, 1715-1785	1747 November 11
b. 1, f. 9	Robinson, William, 1704-1785	1785 March 8
b. 1, f. 10	Rokeby, Matthew Robinson-Morris, Baron, 1713-1800	[1741 April 19]
b. 1, f. 11	Scott, Sarah Robinson, 1723-1795 The letter of October 8, 1743, is incomplete; the final page(s) missing.	[1743], undated
b. 1, f. 12	Stillingfleet, Benjamin, 1702-1771	1756 October 21

Series II: Letters from Montagu, 1741–1779*10 Folders*

Organized alphabetically.

b. 1, f. 13	Gregory, John (1724-1773 The reference to his daughters as "dear little friends" suggests 1766 as a possible date. Purchased from Myers & Co., Ltd., January 1953.	[1766?]
b. 1, f. 14	Montagu, Edward, 1692-1775 The letter of July 11, 1753, is incomplete; the final page(s) missing.	1749–1765
b. 1, f. 15	Ord, Ann Dillingham, 1726-1808 Purchased from Myers & Co., Ltd., January 1953.	undated
b. 1, f. 16	Portland, Margaret Cavendish Holles Harley Bentinck, Duchess of, 1715-1785 Purchased from Myers & Co., Ltd., January 1948.	undated
b. 1, f. 17	Scott, Sarah Robinson, 1723-1795	1741-[1779]
b. 1, f. 18	Smelt, Leonard, 1719?-1800	1779
b. 1, f. 19	Stillingfleet, Benjamin, 1702-1771	[1757] August 7
b. 1, f. 20	Vesey, Elizabeth Vesey, 1715?-1791	[1784 November 25 and December 9]
b. 1, f. 21	Unidentified recipient	[1762]
b. 1, f. 22	Unidentified recipient Fragment cut from a letter, with a closing note and Montagu's signature. Removed from a volume of miscellaneous manuscripts purchased from the Carnegie Book Shop, May 1951.	undated

Series III: Other Papers, 1909

1 Folder

b. 1, f. 23

Climenson, Emily J. (Emily Jane), 1844-1921

1909 April

In three letters to an unidentified person, Climenson describes a "Bath collection" that she is seeking to sell.

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

Names

Climenson, Emily J. (Emily Jane), 1844-1921

Montagu, Edward, 1692-1775

Montagu, Elizabeth Robinson, 1718-1800

Scott, Sarah, 1720-1795

Stillingfleet, Benjamin, 1702-1771

Corporate Body

Blue Stocking Society