James Abercromby Papers: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Huntington Library staff and updated by Diann Benti.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
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The Huntington Library
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Overview of the Collection
Title: James Abercromby Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1674-1787
Bulk dates: 1758
Collection Number: mssAB 1-976
Creator: Abercromby, James, 1706-1981
Extent: Approximately 1,000 pieces in 16 boxes also, 2 oversized folders and 1 bound volume.
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Abstract: This collection primarily contains letters, reports, memorials, returns, etc., written by or received from British Major General James Abercromby (1706-1781) during the 1758 campaign of the British army in North America during the Seven Years' War.
Language: English.
Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.
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Preferred Citation
Provenance
Biographical Note
British general James Abercromby (1706-1781) was a native of Banffshire, Scotland. He entered the army as a youth, and rose by degrees to be major general, in 1756. At this time, through the influence of the Earl of Loudoun, Abercromby was appointed his second in command in North America, and, in 1758, when Loudoun was recalled, succeeded him. It soon became apparent that Abercromby was unfitted for the supreme command, and he was replaced by Amherst within the year. Following his recall, he received the usual military promotion, and finally attained the rank of general in 1772.
Scope and Content
This collection primarily contains letters, reports, memorials, returns, etc., written by or received from British Major General James Abercromby during the 1758 campaign of the British army in North America during the Seven Years' War. Specifically, the materials concern orders and instructions for the 1758 campaign; the embargo on colonial shipping in March 1758; the fall of Fort William Henry and complications related to the exchange of prisoners of war; the surrender of Louisburg; the expedition against Fort Ticonderoga and the defeat of Major General Abercromby and the death of Lord Howe; alarms up the Mohawk River and defenses at the Oneida Carrying Place; the conquest of Fort Frontenac (Cadaraqui) by Lieutenant Colonel John Bradstreet; Brigadier General John Forbes's expedition against Fort Duquesne, including difficulties with the Indian allies, opening of roads and establishing of outposts, the capture of Major Grant and party, and French evacuation of Fort Duquesne; British use of and relations with the Indians, including efforts to unite the Northern and Southern Indians to the English cause, the gathering of the Cherokee Nation for the expedition to the Ohio, under Brigadier General Forbes, and conferences called by Pennsylvania Governor Denny; the internal affairs of the British army including returns of troops, arms, provisions, etc., returns of the staff, and orders, warrants, appointments, etc., issued by the commander in chief; and the recall of Abercromby.
Correspondents include John Appy, John Bradstreet, James De Lancey, William Denny, John Forbes, Thomas Hancock, Sir William Johnson, Charles Lawrence, William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham, Thomas Pownall, John Stanwix, and others. The documents addressed to Abercromby are originals; papers emanating from Abercromby are chiefly office copies written by...
The collection also contains a fragment of the 1758 journal of Christian Frederick Post and genealogical data on the Abercromby family. Also included is an item written by a relative of Abercromby, also named James Abercromby (1707-1775). He was agent to England for Virginia and North Carolina from 1738 to 1760. The item is "An examination of the acts of Parliament relative to the trade and the government of our American colonies." (1752, AB 976).

Some notable items include:

- Abercromby, James. An Examination Of the Acts of Parliament Relative To the Trade and the Government of our American Colonies. Also The Different Constitutions of Government in the Colonies Considered With Remarks By way of a Bill for Amendment of the Laws of this Kingdom in Relation to the Government and Trade of these Colonies... May, 1752
- James Abercromby, a kinsman of the general, served as agent in England for the colonies of Virginia and the Carolinas, 1738-60.
- Howe, George Augustus, 3d Viscount Howe. Two letters to Major General Abercromby reporting his preparations for the attack on Ticonderoga. May 28 and 30, 1758
- Post, Christian Frederick. Journal of Frederick Post's Journey from Philadelphia to Wioming. June 20, 1758
- Relation de L'affaire du 8 Jullet 1758. (Endorsed: A French Relation of the Affair of the 8th July, 1758, At Ticonderoga, found in the woods at Gaspe.)
- Wolfe, James. Letter to Major General Abercromby, relating his activities following the surrender of Louisbourg until his departure for England. Sept. 30, 1758
- Loudoun papers : Americana (mssLO 1-6999)
- Aaron Noble His Book, 1758, May 30 - Nov. 10 (mssHM 59428)
- Joseph Nichols diary, 1758-1766 (mssHM 89)

Arrangement
This collection is arranged chronologically, with 2 oversize items and a volume at the end.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library’s Online Catalog.

Subjects
Abercromby, James, 1706-1781 -- Archives.
Appy, John, active 1758 -- Archives.
De Lancey, James, 1703-1760 -- Archives.
Denny, William, 1718-1774 -- Archives.
Forbes, John, 1707-1759 -- Archives.
Hancock, Thomas, 1703-1764 -- Archives.
Johnson, William, 1715-1774 -- Archives.
Lawrence, Charles, 1709-1760 -- Archives.
Loudoun, John Campbell, Earl of, 1705-1782.
Pitt, William, Earl of Chatham, 1708-1778 -- Archives.
Post, Christian Frederick, 17107-1785. Journal, 1758.
Pownall, Thomas, 1722-1805 -- Archives.
Stanwix, John, 16907-1766 -- Archives.
Great Britain. Army -- Colonial forces -- Archives.
Abercrombie's Ticonderoga Campaign, N.Y., 1758.
Forbes Expedition against Fort Duquesne, Pa., 1758.
Indians of North America -- Government relations -- To 1789.
United States -- History -- Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775.
United States -- History -- French and Indian War, 1754-1763.
Fort William Henry (N.Y.) -- Capture, 1757.
Great Britain -- Colonies -- America.
Fort Frontenac (Ont. : Fort) -- Capture, 1758.
Great Britain -- History -- 18th century.

**Forms/Genres**
Military records -- Great Britain -- 18th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- Great Britain -- 18th century.
Personal papers Great Britain 18th century.

**Added Entries**
Abercromby, James, 1707-1775, correspondent.
Appy, John, active 1758, correspondent.
De Lancey, James, 1703-1760, correspondent.
Denny, William, 1718- correspondent.
Forbes, John, 1707-1759, correspondent.
Hancock, Thomas, 1703-1764, correspondent.
Johnson, William, 1715-1774, correspondent.
Lawrence, Charles, 1709-1760, correspondent.
Pitt, William, Earl of Chatham, 1708-1778, correspondent.
Post, Christian Frederick, 1710?-1785, correspondent.
Pownall, Thomas, 1722-1805, correspondent.
Stanwix, John, 1690?-1766, correspondent.

**Documents**

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Physical Description: 64 folders

Box 12
1758 August 27-September 10
Physical Description: 72 folders

Box 13
1758 September 11-September
Physical Description: 72 folders

Box 14
1758 October 1-October 15
Physical Description: 67 folders

Box 15
1758 October 16-November 5
Physical Description: 57 folders

Box 16
1758 November 6-1787 October 8
Physical Description: 60 folders

Volume 1
AB 976 An examination of the acts of Parliament relative to the trade and the
government of our American colonies. Also the different constitutions of government
in the colonies considered with remarks by way of a bill for amendment of the laws
of this kingdom in relation to the government and trade of these colonies. 1752 May
Physical Description: 1 volume

Folder Oversize 1
AB 157 Bond of the owners of Transports taken up by Captain Loring and arbitration
on the same, together with the copy of a letter from Capt. Loring to Brig. Gen.
Lawrence. 1758 April 14
Physical Description: 1 oversize folder

Folder Oversize 2
mssFAC 674 James Abercrombie letter to William Johnson Barnt. 1752 December 27.
Physical Description: 1 oversize folder