Overview of the Collection
Title: Robert Burns Collection
Dates (inclusive): 1784-1829
Bulk dates: 1784-1796
Collection Number: mssHM 2584, etc.
Additional Collection Numbers: mssHM 2584, mssHM 7394, mssHM 13021-13061, mssHM 16300, mssHM 34699
Creator: Burns, Robert, 1759-1796.
Extent: approximately 45 items in 1 box (26 folders) and 18 loose cases and volumes
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org

Abstract: This collection contains approximately 45 pieces of correspondence and manuscripts chiefly in the hand of Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796), dating from 1784. Within the documents, there are approximately 36 different pieces of verse by Burns, including poems, ballads, and songs. The correspondence, often containing lines of verse, primarily consists of one to two letters from Burns to various friends and patrons.

Language: English.

Access
Items are available with curatorial approval. Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.

Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. Robert Burns Collection, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance
The collection was assembled from various sources, including:
  • HM 2584, acquired from H.V. Jones, December 1918 (no. 256)
  • HM 7394, received as part of the Gable Collection.
  • HM 13029 and HM 13031, purchased by Henry E. Huntington from William K. Bixby through the Anderson Galleries (Sale 1280, Lots 588 and 589), February 1917.
  • HM 13036-13039, acquired from William K. Bixby, date unknown.
  • HM 13061, acquired from the collection of Henry G. Bohn.
  • HM 34699, acquired from G. D. Smith.

Processing/Project Information
  • HM 16300, removed from the Geddes Burns (Call number: 151851).
  • HM 13051, 13053-6, and 13058 were originally bound together as a volume of Burns manuscripts and disbound by Huntington Library staff in November 1971.

Biographical Note
Robert Burns (1759-1796) was a Scottish poet and lyricist. His first volume of poems, Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish dialect, was published in 1786.

Scope and Content
This collection contains approximately 45 pieces of correspondence and manuscripts chiefly in the hand of Scottish poet Robert Burns, dating from 1784. Within the documents, there are approximately 36 different pieces of verse by Burns, including poems, ballads, and songs. The correspondence, often containing lines of verse, primarily consists of one to two letters from Burns to patrons and friends including Robert Cleghorn, Frances Anna Dunlop, Robert Muir, John Richmond,
Burns's printer William Creech. In addition there are also a few later letters consisting of a letter from Burns's brother Gilbert Burns to "Dobie," a letter from painter Alexander Nasmyth to William Cribb, and a letter from Jean Jeffrey Renwick to Henry Brevoort.

- **Burns, Robert, 1759-1796. Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect. (1787)** (Call number: 110910). With 39 annotations in Burns's hand, filled in the names of persons and localities originally printed with asterisks.
- **Collins, William, 1721-1759. The Poetical Works of Mr. Williams Collins. (1765)** (Call number: 120027). Autograph presentation copy from Burns, with an inscription to Jean Lorimer.
- **Burns, Robert, 1759-1796. Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect. (1787)** (Call number: 151851). The "Geddes Burns," containing 15 leaves inserted of which 27 pages bear handwriting and contain 13 manuscript poems by Burns.
- **Burns, Robert, 1759-1796. [Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect] (1793)** (Call number: 110909). With manuscript corrections attributed to Burns.

**Arrangement**

The collection consists of material organized in the following 2 series:

- Manuscripts
- Correspondence

Items listed in the finding aid are chiefly housed in individual folders in 1 box, with 18 items separately housed in decorative gilt leather volumes or pull-off cases.

**Indexing Terms**

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

**Subjects**

Burns, Robert, 1759-1796 -- Archives.
Poets, Scottish -- 18th century.

**Forms/Genres**

Letters (correspondence) -- Scotland -- 18th century.
Poems -- Scotland -- 18th century -- Archives.
Songs -- Scotland -- 18th century.

**Added Entries**

Creech, William, 1745-1815, recipient.

**Collection Access Information**

Items are available with curatorial approval. Requires extended retrieval and delivery time.
Manuscripts

Arrangement
Items arranged alphabetically by author, and then alphabetically by title.

Related Material
See the correspondence section in this finding aid for letters within the collection that contain verse:

"Behold my love, how green the groves..." in Burns, Robert. Letter to Lady Mary Douglas. 1795 May 2. (HM 2584)

"Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson" in Burns, Robert. Letter to Robert Cleghorn. 1790 July 23. (HM 13054.)


"Lassie wi' the lint-white locks, ..." [Burns, Robert]. Letter to [Alexander Findlater?] [1794 September]. (HM 13057)

"My Chloris, mark how green the groves, ..." in Burns, Robert. Letter to Lady Mary Douglas. 1795 May 2. (HM 13042)


"Why should na poor people mow." Burns, Robert. Letter to Robert Cleghorn. 1792 December 12. (HM 34699)

Box 1 HM 13044. [Burns, Robert]. "A down winding 'Nith I did wander ..." [1793]

Physical Description: A.M.S. 2 p.

Song titled: "Song-Tune, Geordie's byre." Annotation of explanation in the author's hand at the end of the song. "To Miss Phillis McMurdo--with the Bard's most respectful Complints."

Pull-off case HM 13023. [Burns, Robert]. Epithalamium [a poem] and Epitaph for H... L... Esqr. Of L..., Hic jacet wee Johnie Wilson, and Hic jacet Johannes Fusius, ... [three epitaphs]. [c. 1800?]

Physical Description: A.Ms. 2 p.

With HM 13021-13025. A forgery?

Box 1 HM 13041. Burns, Robert. Excise. 87th Year, 1st Q[uarte]r 1793. Dumfries Collection & District, D 1st Division, 2d Round Abstract. 1793

Physical Description: A.D.S. 2 p.

Dumfries. [Scotland].

Box 1 HM 13026. Burns, Robert. "The friend who wild from Wisdom's way..." [after 1793]

Physical Description: A.M.S. 1 p.

A poem of two quatrains. Addressed to "Mr. S. McKenzie."

Box 1 HM 13048. [Burns, Robert]. "Fy, let us a' to Kirk-t, ..." [1795]

Physical Description: A.M.S. 1 p.

Incomplete: only line 1-28 of The Heron Ballad [Ballad II], titled "A Ballad-Tune, Fy let us a' to the bridal."

Case HM 13061. [Burns, Robert]. Glenriddel Hermitage, June 28th 1788. [1789]

Physical Description: A.Ms. 2 p.

A poem.
Box 1  HM 13046. [Burns, Robert]. "And I'll kiss thee yet, yet ..." [1788-1789?]  
Physical Description: A.M.S. 2 p.  
Two songs: "And I'll kiss thee yet, yet ..." titled "Tune--Brae's o' Balquidder," with "Green sleeves and tartan ties ..." on verso.

Box 1  HM 13058. [Burns, Robert]. The Kirk's Alarm--A Ballad -- Tune, Push about the brisk bowl. [1789 July-August]  
Physical Description: A.M.S. 3 p.  
Annotations of explanation and corrections in the author's hand.

Box 1  HM 13050. [Burns, Robert]. [Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn]. [between 1791 January and 1791 October]  
Physical Description: A.M.S. 2 p.  
An elegy; missing the first two verses. Corrections in author's hand.

Box 1  HM 13049. [Burns, Robert]. "The last time I came o'er the moore..." [1793?]  
Physical Description: A.M.S. 2 p.  

Volume  HM 13036. [Burns, Robert]. "No Churchman am I for to rail and to write ..." A Song. [1783-1784]  
Physical Description: A.Ms. 2 p.  
Pasted on sheet in bound volume with HM 13037-13039.  
Titled "Tune--Prepare, my dear brethren, to the tavern let's fly." With annotations of explanation in author's hand. Author's signature pasted on verso by James Portes; also history of manuscript given on verso by Portes.

Box 1  HM 13056. [Burns, Robert]. On a Scotch Bard, gone to the West Indies. [1786 after April]  
Physical Description: A.M.S. 2 p.

Box 1  HM 13055. [Burns, Robert]. On Captn. Grose's present peregrination through Scotland collecting the Antiquities of that Kingdom. [after 1789 April]  
Physical Description: A.M.S. 2 p.  
A poem with corrections in the author's hand.

Pull-off case  HM 13025. [Burns, Robert]. On Mr. Pit's Hair-Powder Tax. [1795]  
Physical Description: A.Ms. 1 p.  
With HM 13021-13024. A poem of four lines concerning the hair-powder excise tax begun under the prime-ministership of William Pitt.

Pull-off case  HM 13022. [Burns, Robert]. To Miss Jeany Cruikshank, a very young lady, only child of Mr. Cruikshank of the High School- Edinr. Written on the blank of a Song-book presented to the young lady by Mr. B--.  
Physical Description:  
With HM 13021-13025. A poem beginning "Beauteous Rosebud young & gay,..."

Pull-off case  HM 13021. [Burns, Robert]. To Miss Susan Logan, Park[house]--With Beattie's Poems. 1787 January 1.  
Physical Description: A.Ms. 1 p.  
Edinburgh, [Scotland].  
Bound with HM 13022-HM 13025. A poem of three quatrains.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pull-off case</th>
<th>HM 13024. [Burns, Robert]. To Mr. McMurdo, with a Pound of Lundiefoot Snuff. [1789]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: A.M.S. 1 p.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>HM 13040. [Burns, Robert]. To Mrs. Mc-- Alias Clarinda [with On Scaring Some Water-Fowl in Loch Turit]. [1787-1788]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: A.Ms.S. 2 p.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 poems. The poem &quot;To Mrs. Mc--&quot; is signed &quot;Sylvander.&quot; The poem &quot;On Scaring Some Water-Fowl ...&quot; is incomplete and includes only the last 16 lines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>HM 13051. [Burns, Robert]. Queen Mary's Lament. [1791?]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: A.M.S. 3 p.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A poem.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>HM 13045. [Burns, Robert]. &quot;Their groves o' sweet myrtles let Foreign Lands reckon ...&quot; [1795]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: A.M.S. 4 p.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consists of two songs titled &quot;Song--Tune, Humors of glen&quot; (beginning &quot;Their groves o' sweet myrtles ...&quot;) and Johnie B---'s lament-Tune The babes o' the wood&quot; (beginning 'Twas in the seventeen hunder year...)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>HM 13047. [Burns, Robert]. &quot;There was an auld man and he has a bad wife ...&quot; [before 1792]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: A.M.S. 2 p.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is either an early version of &quot;Kelly Burn Braes&quot; or a traditional ballad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pull-off case</th>
<th>HM 13035. [Burns, Robert]. &quot;Thou lingering star with lessening ray ...&quot; [1789 approximately November]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: A.Ms. 2 p.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A song; with annotation in unknown hand: &quot;Song-addressed to Mary in Heaven--!!!&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>HM 13059. [Burns, Robert]. &quot;'Twas where the birch and sounding thong are ply'd ...&quot; [before 1796 July]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: A.M.S. 2 p.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A poem titled &quot;A Tale,&quot; with corrections in the author's hand and annotations in pencil in an unknown hand at the end.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1</th>
<th>HM 13053. [Burns, Robert]. The Whistle--A Ballad--[and] The Prose Story of the Whistle. [1791?]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description: A.Ms. 4 pp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With annotations of explanation in the author's hand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correspondence**

Arrangement

Items arranged alphabetically by author and then by recipient and date.

**Volume**

HM 13038. [Burns, Gilbert. Letter to Dobie. 1825 October 13.]

Physical Description: A.L.S. 3 p.

Pasted on sheet in bound volume with HM 13036-13039.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Mss Number</th>
<th>Correspondent</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Physical Description</th>
<th>Includes/Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1</td>
<td>HM 13042.</td>
<td>Burns, Robert.</td>
<td>1795 May 30</td>
<td>Dumfries, [Scotland]</td>
<td>A.L.S. 8 p.</td>
<td>17 epigrams and a song titled &quot;A Song.-- Tune, My lodging is on the cold ground, beginning &quot;My Chloris, mark how green the groves, ...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1</td>
<td>HM 13057.</td>
<td>Burns, Robert.</td>
<td>1794 September</td>
<td></td>
<td>A.L.S. 2 p.</td>
<td>Incomplete. Includes a portion of a song, &quot;Lassie wi' the lint-white locks, ...&quot;</td>
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