Richard Carlile Papers: Finding Aid

Processed by Huntington Library staff in March 1989; supplementary encoding and revision supplied by Xiuzhi Zhou and Diann Benti.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
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Overview of the Collection
Title: Richard Carlile Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1819-1900
Collection Number: mssRC 1-621
Creator: Carlile, Richard, 1790-1843.
Extent: 620 pieces in 9 boxes and 1 oversize box.
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Abstract: This collection consists of letters, manuscripts, and documents related to the blasphemy and libel trials of British freethinker and journalist Richard Carlile (1790-1843), Jane Carlile, and Mary Anne Carlile. Other topics in the collection include the liberty of the press in Great Britain, Carlile's religious views, and prison conditions in Great Britain.
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
[Identification of item]. Richard Carlile Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
Purchased from Mrs. Norman F. Stevens of Pasadena, the great-granddaughter of Carlile and a granddaughter of Theophila (Carlile) Campbell, 1936-1938.
Biographical Note
Richard Carlile (1790-1843), British freethinker and journalist, became a strong advocate of freedom of the press and was first arrested in 1817 for the illegal distribution of periodicals. Thereafter he was prosecuted several times for publishing the works of Thomas Paine and other literature considered blasphemous or radical, and altogether spent over nine years in prison as a result. Foremost among his publications was The Republican (1819-26), most of which was written during his six-year confinement in Dorchester Gaol. A freethinker in religion as in politics, Carlile was strongly anticlerical and was once imprisoned for resisting the payment of church rates.
Scope and Content
This collection consists of letters, manuscripts and documents related to the blasphemy and libel trials of Richard Carlile, Jane Carlile, and Mary Anne Carlile. Other topics in the collection include the liberty of the press in Great Britain, Carlile’s religious views and the Bible and science, and prison conditions in Great Britain. The blasphemy and libel trials are:

1. Richard Carlile, for publishing Paine's Age of Reason and Elihu Palmer’s Principles of Nature in 1819 (RC 538-555) and for writing an article inciting agricultural workers to riot in 1830 (RC 604-620)
2. Jane Carlile (first wife of Richard Carlile), for printing a blasphemous article written by Carlile in The Republican, 1820 (RC 556-558)
3. Mary Ann Carlile (sister of Richard Carlile), for selling an Appendix to Paine’s Theological Works, 1821 (RC 559-560)

Persons represented in the collection by five or more pieces include Theophila Carlile Campbell (7 pieces), Eliza Sharplees Carlile (43 pieces), Richard Carlile (265 pieces), Squire Farrar (6 pieces), George Jacob Holyoake (7 pieces), Logan Mitchell (9 pieces), Alexander Morison (6 pieces), Francis Place (7 pieces), and Robert Taylor (40 pieces).
Some notable items include:
• Carlile, Richard. Papers relating to a suit for libel brought against the owners of the Nottingham and Newark Mercury for printing an alleged libel on Carlile's character contained in a letter written to the newspaper by Joseph Gilbert, Congregational divine, on Sep. 6, 1828. 1828-1834 (RC 564-603)
• Cobbett, William. Letter to Carlile warning him not to publish a certain letter until he has seen it again. Kensington, July 14, 1831 (RC 88)
• Detrosier, Rowland. Letter to Carlile. ...I have been much pained by the circumstances of this afternoon, and I cannot but think you have not done me justice. I intended good, you appear to me to have viewed it as wholly evil. I do not deserve this... [approximately 1830] (RC 96)
• Hone, William. Manuscript of Carlile's defense. 1819 (RC 544)
• Place, Francis. Letter to Richard Carlile. ...I cannot see how it can ever be possible for you or any one else ever to cause or even to compel the priests of any sect to teach science generally... July 23, 1841 (RC 185)

Arrangement
Arranged in chronological order followed by oversize boxes and folders.

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

Subjects
Cambell, Theophila Carlile, Mrs.
Carlile, Eliza Sharples.
Carlile, Jane.
Carlile, Mary Anne.
Carlile, Richard, 1790-1843.
Farrar, Squire.
Holyoake, George Jacob, 1817-1906.
Mitchell, Logan.
Morison, Alexander, 1779-1866.
Place, Francis, 1771-1854.
Taylor, Robert, 1784-1844.
Free thought -- Great Britain -- 19th century.
Freedom of the press -- Great Britain.
Freethinkers -- Great Britain -- Correspondence.
Trials (Blasphemy) -- Great Britain.
Trials (Libel) -- Great Britain -- 19th century.
Prisons -- Great Britain.
Great Britain -- Politics and government -- 1800-1837.

Forms/Genres
Diaries -- Great Britain -- 19th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- Great Britain -- 19th century.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Campbell, Theophila Carlile.
Carlile, Eliza Sharples.
Farrar, Squire.
Holyoake, George Jacob, 1817-1906.
Mitchell, Logan.
Morison, Alexander, 1779-1866.
Place, Francis, 1771-1854.
Taylor, Robert, 1784-1844.

Box 1 1819-1825
Box 2 1826-1832
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