Descriptive Summary
Title: William Congreve papers
Inclusive Dates: 1803-1869
Collection Number: mssCongreve
Collector: Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828
Extent: 116 items in 2 boxes
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Fax: (626) 449-5720
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org
Abstract: This is the most significant archive extant of manuscript materials by and about the prolific English inventor and technologist William Congreve and his family.
Language of Material: The records are in English and French.
Access
Collection is open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, please go to following web site .
Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
William Congreve papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Acquisition Information
Gift of Jeremy M. Norman, December 2013.
Forms part of: Jeremy Norman Collection on the History of Aerodynamics, Aviation and Aerospace.
Biography
Sir William Congreve, 2nd Baronet KCH FRS (1772-1828) was an English inventor and rocket artillery pioneer distinguished for his development and deployment of Congreve rockets, and a Tory Member of Parliament (MP). He was son of Lt. General Sir William Congreve, 1st Baronet (1742-1814), the Comptroller of the Royal Laboratories at the Royal Arsenal.
Scope and Content
The archive extends over six decades, from 1803 to 1869. Included in the archive are letters and manuscripts covering William Congreve’s career in rocketry. The most notable of these is his diary of the 1807 Copenhagen bombardment, which represents the first truly successful large-scale use of the Congreve war rocket in combat. Other noteworthy manuscripts include a signed draft and a fair copy of a “Report to the Commissioners of the Navy” dated October 1813, in which Congreve summarized his war rocketry activities from 1805 to 1813; a letter dated November 1813 relating to “the expense, or rather the economy of the Rocket System”; bills for materials used in rocket construction; an undated letter to a Captain Elliot discussing the subject of a “rocket cavalry”; letters discussing a plan of “applying Rockets for throwing ropes ashore from shipwrecked vessels”; and letters in which Congreve writes of his achievements and his attitude towards his work. The archive also contains manuscripts and letters relating to some of Congreve's other inventions: naval guns, bombships, and Congreve's design for a paddlewheel boat, which is detailed in a long letter illustrated with Congreve's sketches. Also included are a long series of love letters that Congreve wrote to his wife, Isabella, and another series of long, detailed letters written to Congreve during the last few months of his life by his secretary, R. Drake, discussing, among other things, Congreve's political career as a Member of Parliament, his precarious financial position, the publication of his Treatise on the General Principles, Powers, and Facility of Application of the Congreve Rocket System (1827), and negotiations with the British East India Company for exclusive rights to the Congreve war rocket for use in India. Included in the remainder of the archive is a letter from Congreve's father, William Congreve Sr., to Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), president of the Royal Society, discussing the elder Congreve's responsibilities at the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich. Another
series of letters, some written by Congreve, concern a will of which Congreve's aunt, Miss Mary Congreve, was the executrix. There are numerous letters written by Isabella Congreve after Congreve's death in 1828, mostly on financial matters-- Congreve's affairs were left somewhat embarrassed upon his death, and the archive includes several records of bills and promissory notes, both paid and owing. Lastly, there are several letters presumably written by Congreve's descendants, the last dated Feb. 1, 1869.

A PDF of the Calendar of Manuscripts in the Congreve Archive is available on Jeremy Norman's History of Science web site.

**Personal Names**
Banks, Joseph, 1743-1820
Congreve, Isabella Charlotte
Congreve, William, Sir, 1742-1814
Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828
Croker, John Wilson, 1780-1857

**Subjects**
Artillery
Caronades
Gunpowder
Military history
Rocketry

**Geographic Areas**
Great Britain -- History -- 19th century

**Genre**
Financial records
Legal documents
Letters (correspondence)
Manuscripts

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<td>Bergenhous, Colonel ----, A.L.S. to &quot;Madame Augusta,&quot; (1868, Dec. 30)</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Binna, A. de A.L.S. to Chevalier de Ribeiro, (1837, May 17)</td>
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<td>Folder 4</td>
<td>Congreve, Isabella Charlotte A.L. to [King of Great Britain George IV, 1762-1830] or [King of Great Britain William IV, 1765-1837], [after 1828]</td>
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<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>[Congreve, Isabella Charlotte] A.L.S. to &quot;Gentlemen,&quot; (1836, June 2)</td>
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<td>Folder 7</td>
<td>[Congreve, Isabella Charlotte] A.L. to &quot;My Lord,&quot; [undated]</td>
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| 12      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, (1826, Feb. 3)  
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| 13      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, (----, Apr. 10) |
| 14      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, (----, Oct. 31) |
| 16      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated]  
Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons |
| 17      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 18      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 19      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 20      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 21      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 22      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 23      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 24      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 26      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 27      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 28      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 29      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, [undated] |
| 30      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L. to [Isabella Charlotte Congreve], [undated]  
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| 31      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L. to [Isabella Charlotte Congreve], [undated]  
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| 32      | Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L. to [Isabella Charlotte Congreve], [undated]  
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Folder 34  Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to [Mary] Congreve, [1810]
Folder 40  Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to [John Wilson Croker, 1780-1857], [undated]
Folder 41  [Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828] A.L. to ----- Attwood, (1826, Apr. 10)
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Folder 42  Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Elliot -----, [undated]
Folder 43  Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to Vivian -----, [undated]
Folder 44  Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to "Dear Sir," [1810]
Folder 47  Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to "My Dear Sir," (1813, Nov. 26)
Folder 49  Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.L.S. to "My Lord," [1814]
          Included: Copy of letter to the Earl of Liverpool
Folder 51  Cullendin, Sydney A.L.S. to ----- [Branbin?], (1863, May 19)
Folder 52  Drake, R. A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, (1828, July 23)
Folder 53  Drake, R. A.L.S. to Sir William Congreve, 1772-1828, (1827, Jan. 29)
          London (England)
Folder 54  Drake, R. A.L.S. to Sir William Congreve, 1772-1828, [1827], (Aug. 6)
          Incomplete
Folder 55  Drake, R. A.L.S. to Sir William Congreve, 1772-1828, (1828, Jan. 4)
          London (England)
CONTAINER LIST

Folder 56  
Drake, R. A.L.S. to [Sir William Congreve, 1772-1828], (1828, May 6)  
London (England)

Folder 57  
Drake, R. A.L.S. to [Sir William Congreve, 1772-1828], (1828, May 9)  
London (England)  
Included: Copy of letters from J. Dart and R.F. Wade; and "Extract from Articles of Agreement"

Folder 58  
[du Demain, -----] A.L.S. to [Chere Madame?], [undated]  
In French and English

Folder 59  
Dyneley, Coverdale & Lee A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, (1832, Mar. 7)

Folder 60  
Ferry, C.G. A.L.S. to "Demoiselle Marie," (1855, Sep. 12)  
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Box 2  
Correspondence, documents, ephemera, manuscripts, and financial records
Hammersley, ----- A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, (1836, Apr. 14)

Folder 2  
Hayes, -----? A.L.S. to [Sir William Congreve, 1772-1828], (1814, July 8)  
Halifax (England)

Folder 3  

Folder 4  
[Hure, E.?] A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, (1829, Dec. 4)  
In French

Folder 5  
Knighton, W. A.L.S. to Sir William Congreve, 1772-1828, [undated]

Folder 6  
[Richards, E.C.?] A.L.S. to G.C. Hawkins, (1835, May 1)  
Lisbon (Portugal)

Folder 7  
Sarum, J. A.L.S. to Mary Congreve, (1810, May 16)

Folder 8  
Sharpin, Eliza A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, (1831, May 10)

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Folder 10  
Vivian, John A.L.S. to Sir William Congreve, 1772-1828, (1808, Aug. 18)

Folder 11  
[Ware, Charles H.?] A.L.S. to [Sir William Congreve, 1742-1814], (1810, May 14)

Folder 12  
Watson, Fred B. A.L.S. to Isabella Charlotte Congreve, ([after 1828], Nov. 8)

Folder 13  
[---cker, B.?] A.L.S. to Sir William Congreve, 1772-1828, (1807, May 14)

Folder 14  
-----, John A.L.S. to Mimi -----, (1856, Oct. 14)  
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)

Folder 15  
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Folder 19  ----- ----- A.L. to [Mme. West?], [undated]
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Folder 20  ----- ----- A.L. to [My Lord?], [undated]
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Folder 21  ----- ----- A.L. to "Sir," [undated]

Folder 22  ----- ----- A.L. to ----- -----, [undated]
            Re: Trial of Queen Charlotte

Folder 23  Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 A.M.S. [Diary], (1807, Aug-Oct.)
            Incomplete

Folder 24  ----- -----, Legal document, (1808, Dec. 25)
            For [Mary] Congreve with instructions for probating a will

            Re: Legal opinion proving of a will


Folder 27  Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828. Statement, (1813)
            Re: "Colonel Congreve's statement relative to the Rocket service, from its commencement from 1805-1813"


Folder 29  Robertson, Alexander. Bill, (1821, July)
            Re: Bill for services "Extra Hyde Part coronation account at the Serpentine river - Robertson Carpenter"

Folder 30  Chevalier de Bury; Chevalier Albert. Legal document, (1822, Mar. 21)
            In French

Folder 31  Chevalier de Bury; Chevalier Albert. Legal document, (1822, Mar. 21)
            In French

Folder 32  Chevalier de Bury; Chevalier Albert. Legal document, (1822, Mar. 21)
            In French

Folder 33  Chevalier de Bury; Chevalier Albert. Legal document, (1822, Mar. 22)
            In French

Folder 34  [Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828]. [Oath], (1822, Oct. 27)
            Warwick (England)

Folder 36  
**Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828 and Spooner & Co. [Bill], (1824)**  
Note: Memorandum written in the lower right-hand corner of the document dated 1825, Aug. 6

Folder 37  
Re: "Rockets accts."

Folder 38  
**Thwartes & Read. Bill, (1826)**  
Re: Itemized bill for supplies

Folder 39  
**Longman & Co. Memorandum, (1827, May 19)**  
Re: The publication of the Rocket Volume

Folder 40  
**Venn, John. Promissory note, (1828, Mar. 31)**  
On verso: A.MS. non-payment of promissory note

Folder 41  
**Dyneley, Coverdale & Lee. Statement, (1832, Aug.)**  
Re: "Ex parte Sir William Congreve deceased. Statement of debts and probable assets"

Folder 42  
Re: Creditors' lawsuits against Congreve estate  
Copy

Folder 43  
**[Prescription?] for [Isabella Charlotte Congreve], (1836, July 6)**  
In Latin

Folder 44  
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Folder 45  
**Carew, George and Whiting, Charles Fenton. Agreement, (1858, Feb. 22)**  
Re: Sale and purchase of 9 Maida Hill West

Folder 46  
**[Fitzpatrick Heighams, Annie Alexandria?]. Will, (1868, July 8)**  
Last will and testament

Folder 47  
**[Lonnoy?, -----]. Bill to Mme. West, (1869, Feb. 1)**  
In French

Folder 48  
**Empty envelope, (1869, Jan. 8-9)**  
Addressed to Madame West

Folder 49  
**Grammar School, Maidstone. Bill to [Sir William Congreve, 1772-1828], (----, Dec. 20)**  
Printed document with handwritten calculations

Folder 50  
**[Congreve, William, Sir, 1772-1828]. Balance sheet, [undated]**  
Debts and assets

Folder 51  
**Congreve, William, Sir, 1742-1814. Untitled manuscript beginning, "The family of Congreve is of Saxon origin...," [undated]**

Folder 52  
----- -----, Memorandum, [undated]  
Re: "Memorandum of the prime cost of three thousand Rockets old pattern with the price of each of the new pattern"
| Folder 53 | ----- -----. Memorandum, [undated]  
|          | "Private memo" related to the royal family |
| Folder 54 | ----- -----. Menu, [undated] |
| Folder 55 | Congreve, William, Sir, 1742-1814. Sketch and plans of coffin and memorial, [undated]  
|          | 3 fragments |
| Folder 56 | ----- -----. [Sketch of an armor suit and shield], [undated] |