Herbert Family Papers: Finding Aid

Processed by Huntington Library staff and completed on March 26, 1956; supplementary encoding and revision supplied by Brooke Dykman Dockter and Diann Benti.

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Overview of the Collection
Title: Herbert Family Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1667-1780
Collection Number: mssHE 1-419
Creator: Herbert (Family)
Extent: 419 pieces in 14 boxes and 13 volumes.
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Abstract: This collection contains the personal and business papers of Thomas Herbert (died 1712), who was bailiff of the estates near Whittlebury, Northamptonshire, England, and his son Edmund Herbert (died 1769) of Gray's Inn, a deputy in the Pay Office of the marines. Includes detailed personal expense accounts of Edmund Herbert kept from 1708 until 1769.
Language: English.
Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. Herbert Family Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
Purchased from H. M. Fletcher, 1954.
Biographical Note
Thomas Herbert (died 1712) of Whittlebury, Northamptonshire, England, served as bailiff on the estates near Whittlebury of Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington, from 1672-1712. Henry FitzRoy, 1st Duke of Grafton, husband of Herbert's daughter Isabella, became Ranger of Whittlebury (or Whittlewood) Forest in 1685. Charles FitzRoy, 2d Duke of Grafton, who became Forest Ranger in 1712. The forest was situated between Towcester, Stony Stratford, and Lillingstone Dayrell, adjoins to the southwest the area of Stowe, Bucks.
Thomas Herbert had two sons, Edmund Herbert (died 1769) and Thomas Herbert (died 1728). Edmund moved to London where he spent most of his life as a clerk or secretary, and later as a deputy, in the Pay Office of the marines. His brother, Thomas, remained in Whittlebury and succeeded his father as bailiff of the Duke of Grafton's estates. Thomas died in 1728, leaving as survivors his widow, Agnes, and one or two daughters, one of whom married Thomas Cooke about 1772.
In 1709-1710, Edmund Herbert participated in an expedition to the Scilly Islands to recover sunken treasure. It was there that some of Sir Clowdesley Shovell's ships were wrecked on October 22, 1707. The information regarding the venture is all too scanty. After buying a map of the Islands, compasses, and a "book of roads," Herbert left London on September 4, 1709. All his expenses, "except cloths, & collection of coins &c." were defrayed by the Lagan Adventurers, apparently under the supervision of one "Mr. Hambly." Prior to his departure, Herbert had recorded in his notebook: "Aug. 26. About noon the Project for diving first tryed at Fox Hall in 3 1/2 fathom water. He staid under water 10 minutes." Then on October 25 he wrote: "... out all day wth 5 men sounding & discovering--found Buckle." "29th. Out at Minalter diving 1st time for Ivory, went at noon, out w th 5 men till night." It is hard to say what success these adventurers met with, except that some months later Herbert wrote in his notebook: "At night lost out Mrs. Bants House ¥24.10. crown, half crowns, 3 English shillings, some pcs. of 8, 2 sp. Royals, & several 1/2 Royals."
Upon his return to London Herbert apparently went to work for Arthur Swift, a clerk in the Treasury or Pay Office of the marines. Herbert must have done a lot of leg work, for his notebooks are full of expenses for reheeling and re-soling his shoes. In 1740 Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, paymaster of the marines, appointed Edmund his deputy. Most of Herbert's life seems to have been devoted to getting the government to pay off ten regiments of disbanded marines. As a matter of
interest, Herbert's salary was ¥400 by 1750, but six years later he requested ¥600, the amount a fellow worker was receiving.

In 1715, Herbert bought Shrob Walk in Whittlewood Forest and in 1732 bought a small farm at Whittleborough. On June 2, 1725, he was entered a member of Gray's Inn and lived there throughout his life. In 1748 he bought four sets of chambers there for ¥450, keeping one set for his own use and renting the others. In 1753 he purchased Stocking House, another estate near Whittlebury, for eleven hundred guineas. Herbert never married and his estates were inherited by his niece.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the personal and business papers of Thomas Herbert (died 1712) of Whittlebury, Northamptonshire, and of his son, Edmund Herbert (died 1769), of Gray's Inn.

Persons represented by five or more pieces: Agnes Cooke (19 pieces); Edmund Herbert (approx. 150 pieces); Thomas Herbert (35 pieces); John Leighton (8 pieces); John Scrope (11 pieces); and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams (6 pieces).

Items related to Thomas Herbert include his estate accounts as bailiff (including wood books and documents relating to Whittlebury Forest).

The papers related to the life of Edmund Herbert document his work at the Pay Office of the Marines and his personal life. Documents related to Herbert's work at the Pay Office consist of accounts and memoranda, as well as drafts of memorials address to the treasury commissioners and correspondence regarding payment of marines. Personal papers include expense and memora-and notebooks and notes regarding his duties in the pay office; correspondence with his sister and nieces; papers relating to his quarters in Gray's Inn, including accounts, receipts, leases, etc. There are also school copy books and a few papers regarding poor rates and levies for church repairs at Whittlebury and Poulterbury, Northants.

Of particular interest in the collection is Edmund Herbert's daily account of expenses and memoranda. These records were kept assiduously throughout his life, with all of his accounts and notes for each month carefully written on long narrow strips of paper. Each year these strips were tied together, making a small bundle or booklet. The notes run continuously from 1708-1734, and from 1739-1768. His accounts were kept with the utmost detail and record expenditures for such items as food, drink, clothing, rent, transportation, gratuities, charity, books, postage, entertainment, and household expenses. Specific items of interest include: liver for his dog; a new watch crystal; mathematical club dues; "wine to soak millepides"; violin lessons; birds, birdseed, and cages; mousetraps; and ketchup.

On the back of each month's account Herbert would note down a record of his business transactions, including money borrowed or loaned; his trips out of London; the dates of births, deaths, marriages, and christenings of his friends and their children; and occasionally more personal records of his life. From these notes one can also learn quite a good deal of his daily work in the Pay Office of the marines. The account books also document Herbert's gambling expenses; each month he noted down how much he won or lost at backgammon or hazard. He frequently purchased lottery tickets, and for several years was even a paid commissioner in the lotteries.

The accounts reflect Herbert's interest in music, book-collecting, astronomy, and the study of foreign languages. One learns from his notebooks that he actively studied French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, German, Polish, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Chaldee, Ethiopic, and Samaritan. While learning German he kept his accounts in the language (1726) and did the same while studying Greek (1731-32). His instructor for Hebrew and the Biblical languages was Moses Marcus, and for Greek, a Mr. Xeres. One interesting entry in his accounts is for three astronomical instruments he purchased at the dissolution of Cannons, Mx.

Parallel with this study of languages, the volumes document his book buying. On a single day, he often purchased from six to a dozen volumes. His interests centered in languages and the classics, though he bought widely, including works on arts and crafts, bookkeeping, farming, forest law, etc.; and literature. A number of times he subscribed for books currently being published. Of particular interest are the lists of books he bought at the following auction sales: Thomas Pellett, 1745; Lord Oxford, 1746 (120 vols.); and the Michael Matteaire sale, 1748 (200 vols.).

Herbert's accounts are full of human interest as well. He purchased chocolate for his father; fresh fruit for his mother; and Christmas boxes for servants, with whom he came into contact. He sympathizes with a friend who was jailed for his debts, only to die a few months after being released from prison; etc.

Some notable items include:

- Bennet, Charles, 1st Earl of Tankerville. Permission to Duke of Grafton to cut wood in Whittlebury Forest. 1715, Dec. 28
- Herbert, Edmund. Copy book. 1700-1701
- Herbert, Edmund. Copy of bond to Society of Gray's Inn, 1725, June 2
Herbert, Edmund. Expenses and memoranda. 1708-34, 1739-69.
Herbert, Edmund. A Register of the Survey of all the Common fields of Whittlebury. 1733, Nov. 8.
Herbert, Edmund. Lists of inhabitants of Gray's Inn. 1742-1760. 9 pieces.
Herbert, Thomas. Account book, including a note of "what goods Mr. Benett sent to Jamaica."
Herbert, Thomas. Wood books for Whittlewood and Salcey Forests, 1688-1691.
Williams, Sir Charles Hanbury. Deputation to E. Herbert as assistant paymaster. 1740, July 14.
"Twenty-four new country dances." 1 vol. 4to. Approximately 1702 (HE 47)

Arrangement
Organized in the following manner: 1. Correspondence and papers (1640-1799) (Boxes 1-9); 2. Gray's Inn (Box 10); 3. Edmund Herbert's expense accounts (Boxes 11-12); 4. Copy books (Box 13); 5. Miscellaneous (Box 13).

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

Subjects
Herbert, Thomas, -1712.
Herbert, Thomas, -1728.
Herbert, Edmund, 1708-1769.
Great Britain. Royal Marines. Pay Office.
Gray's Inn.
Book collectors -- Great Britain -- History -- 18th century.
Administration of estates -- England -- Northamptonshire -- 17th century.
Administration of estates -- England -- Northamptonshire -- 18th century.
Great Britain -- History -- 18th century -- Sources.
London (England) -- Social life and customs -- 18th century.
Whittlebury (Northamptonshire, England) -- History -- Sources.

Forms/Genres
Letters (correspondence) -- Great Britain -- 18th century.
Journals (accounts) -- Great Britain -- 18th century.
Accounts -- 17th century.
Accounts -- 18th century.
Account books -- 17th century.
Memorandums -- 18th century.
Family papers -- Great Britain.

Alternate Authors
Herbert, Thomas, -1712.
Herbert, Edmund, 1708-1769.
Great Britain. Royal Marines. Pay Office.

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Correspondence and papers

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Gray's Inn
Box 10

Gray's Inn HE 84-98
Edmund Herbert’s expense accounts

Box 11

Expense Accounts, 1708-1733 HE 100 (1-26)

Box 12

Expense Accounts, 1739-1769 HE 100 (27-54)

Copy books

Box 13

Copy Books HE 61-71

Miscellaneous

Box 14

Miscellaneous HE 47-49, 52, 101
Treatise on English Government. Approximately 1800? HE 47
Country dances. Approximately 1702 HE 48
Sermons. 1721-1760 HE 49
A Briefe Survey of the Forrists of Whittlewood [vellum roll]. 1677 HE 52
Herbert, Edmund. Hatch books. 1707-1708 HE 101

Loose volumes

Herbert, Thomas. Disbursements and receipts. 1691-1698 HE 36
Herbert, Thomas. Personal account book. 1709-1711 HE 37
Herbert, Thomas. Account book. 1692-1695 HE 38
Herbert, Thomas. Account book. 1671-1673 HE 39
Herbert, Thomas. Miscellaneous account book. 1665-1673 HE 40
Herbert, Thomas. Journall or day booke. 1674-1681 HE 41
Herbert, Thomas. Account book. 1676; 1692-1707 HE 42
Herbert, Thomas. Account book. 1667-1672 HE 43
Pockett Booke. 1682-1700 HE 44
Miscellaneous account book. 1695-1711 HE 45
The Debt Booke. 1686-1698 HE 46
Account book of government annuities. 1697-1698 HE 50
Account book of government annuities (?). 1699-1702 HE 51