Samuel Johnson Collection: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Diann Benti.
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Overview of the Collection

Title: Samuel Johnson Collection
Dates (inclusive): 1753-1916
Collection Number: mssHM 20821-20833, HM 40960-40967
Creator: Johnson, Samuel, 1709-1784.
Extent: 22 items in 1 box
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Abstract: This collection contains 21 letters and drawings related to or by English writer Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) that were previously bound together in one volume.

Language: English.

Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. Samuel Johnson Collection, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance
Purchased from George D. Smith, April 1919.

Biographical Note
Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) was an English lexicographer, writer, and critic.

Scope and Content
This collection contains 21 letters and drawings related to or by English writer Samuel Johnson that were previously bound together in one volume. Items include six letters by Samuel Johnson to various recipients: publisher Thomas Longman (HM 20824); Samuel Richardson (HM 20821); John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute (HM 20825); Nathan Wetherell (HM 20826); and two letters to John Taylor (HM 20822, HM 20827), as well as an 1841 letter from Taylor (HM 20823) and notes by Johnson scholar George Birkbeck Hill (HM 40967) about the June 23, 1784, letter from Johnson to Taylor. There are also single letters from Alexander Johnson (HM 20828); William Seward (HM 20829); James Boswell to his daughter (HM 20830); Hester Lynch Piozzi (HM 20831); Sir Joshua Reynolds (HM 20832); and William Cowper (HM 20833) to various individuals (not Samuel Johnson).

There are also seven drawings and one 1916 newspaper clipping. The drawings include an unfinished drawing of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Edmund Burke, Samuel Johnson, and others (HM 40960), copies of portraits of Johnson, and images of locations related to Johnson.

Items were originally bound in a folio black straight-grained morocco binding that was disbound in 1975.

Arrangement
The collection is arranged in call number order in one box.

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

Subjects
Burke, Edmund, 1729-1797 -- Pictorial works.
Johnson, Samuel, 1709-1784 -- Archives.
Johnson, Samuel, 1709-1784 -- Pictorial works.
Johnson, Samuel, 1709-1784 -- Portraits.
Reynolds, Joshua, Sir, 1723-1792 -- Pictorial works.
Authors, English -- 18th century -- Archives.
Authors, English -- 18th century -- Pictorial works.
Forms/Genres
Drawings -- Great Britain -- 18th century.
Drawings -- Great Britain -- 19th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- Great Britain -- 18th century.

Alternate Authors
Boswell, James, 1740-1795, correspondent.
Buckler, John, 1770-1851, artist.
Bute, John Stuart, Earl of, 1713-1792, addressee.
Cowper, William, 1731-1800, correspondent.
Hill, George Birkbeck Norman, 1835-1903.
Piozzi, Hester Lynch, 1741-1821, correspondent.
Reynolds, Joshua, Sir, 1723-1792, correspondent.
Reynolds, Joshua, Sir, 1723-1792, artist.
Richardson, Samuel, 1689-1761, addressee.
Seward, William, 1747-1799, correspondent.
Smith, Charles John, artist.
Smith, George D. (George Dallas), 1870-1920, former owner.
Taylor, John, 1711-1788, correspondent.
Trotter, Thomas, 1756-1803, artist.

Box 1 HM 20821-20833, HM 40960-40967

Correspondence


HM 20824 Johnson, Samuel. Letter to Thomas Longman. [1746 June].


HM 20827  **Johnson, Samuel. Letter to John Taylor. 1784 January 24.**  

HM 20828  **Johnson, Alexander. Letter to Mr. Nourse. 1780 April 19.**  
Note: this letter was previous cataloged as a letter of Samuel Johnson; corrected January 1975.

HM 20829  **Seward, William. Letter to Richard Ball. [Before 1784].**  
Autograph letter signed, 1 page. Letter mentions Johnson.

HM 20830  **Boswell, James. Letter to Veronica Boswell. 1791 August 19.**  
Petersfield, Hampshire. Autograph letter signed, 2 pages.

HM 20831  **Piozzi, Hester Lynch. Letter to the Proprietors of the Monthly Mirror. 1798 June 17.**  


HM 20833  **Cowper, William. Letter to [John Newton]. 1785 January 5.**  

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**Drawings**

HM 40960  **Sir Joshua Reynolds, Edmund Burke, Samuel Johnson, and others [unfinished pencil, ink and wash sketch, possibly for an engraving]. [After 1750?].**  
Drawing, 1 page; 18 x 21.5 cm. Verso has unfinished drawing of man's body dressed in robe, lacking head.

HM 40961  **[Reynolds, Sir Joshua]. Portrait of Samuel Johnson [pencil sketch, possibly for an engraving]. [After 1779?].**  
Copy (drawing), 1 page; oval 10 x 7.5 cm. Reference to print: *Catalogue of engraved British portraits preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* (1910), vol. II, p. 649, #16.

HM 40962  **Gosden, J. Epitaph on Samuel Johnson's tombstone in Westminster Abbey [pen and watercolor sketch]. [After 1784?].**  
Drawing, 1 page; 23 x 16 cm

HM 40963  **Urns to Samuel Johnson at Gwaynynog [Denbigh, Wales] [watercolor]. [After 1784?].**  
Drawing, 1 page, 17.5 x 12 cm. Title supplied in pencil on verso of watercolor.
HM 40964 [Trotter, Thomas?]. Portrait of Samuel Johnson [pencil sketch, possibly rubbed from a plate]. Drawing, 1 page 15 x 10 cm. [After 1784?].

HM 40965 [Smith, Charles John]. Edial Hall, near Lichfield [pen and wash drawing for the engraving by Charles John Smith]. [Approximately 1835].
  Drawing, 1 page; Image, 10.5 x 15; mount, 17.5 x 18.5 cm. Plate 9 in Graphic Illustrations of the Life and Times of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. (London: John Murray, 1837).

HM 40966 [Buckler, John]. Kettel Hall, Oxford [pen and ink wash drawing for the engraving by Charles John Smith]. [Approximately 1836].
  Drawing, 1 page; Image 6.5 x 10 cm, sheet 16 x 23 cm. Plate 18 in Graphic Illustrations of the Life and Times of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. (London: John Murray, 1837).

Notes and ephemera


"To Organize an American Samuel Johnson Club" [article from the Public Ledger (Philadelphia)]. 1916 February 20.