
John Ruskin and Louise Blandy Papers: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Diann Benti in 2015.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

Manuscripts Department

The Huntington Library

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Overview of the Collection

Title: John Ruskin and Louise Blandy Papers

Dates (inclusive): 1874-1882

Collection Number: mssHM 57251-57339

Creator: Ruskin, John, 1819-1900.

Extent: Approximately 90 items in 3 boxes

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Abstract: Eighty-seven letters primarily from English art critic and author John Ruskin (1819-1900) to his pupil Louise Blandy (1860-1870), discussing her studies and chronicling their relationship.

Language: English.

Note:

Finding aid last updated on September 3, 2015.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item]. John Ruskin and Louise Blandy Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

Purchased from Christie's, lot 196, June 23, 1993.

Access

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

Biographical note on John Ruskin

John Ruskin (1819-1900), an English critic of art, architecture, and society, as well as an artist and a teacher, was born February 8, 1819, in London, England. He graduated from the University of Oxford in 1843. After gaining wide recognition as an author, artist, and social reformer, he moved from London to Brantwood, Coniston Water, in 1872, where he remained until his death. Ruskin was elected first Slade Professor of Art at Oxford in 1870 and held the post until 1878 and then again from 1883 to 1884.

From 1878 until his death, Ruskin was plagued with recurring brain attacks. He made many trips abroad, several in an attempt to cure himself of his illness. However, by 1889 his literary career was at an end. Ruskin died January 20, 1900, and was buried at Coniston.

Blandy

Biographical note on Louise Blandy

Louise Virenda Blandy (1860-1890) was the daughter of a London dentist. John Ruskin began tutoring Blandy in drawing and painting in 1873. Initially, Ruskin met and corresponded with Blandy regularly, though he began limited their interactions in the late 1870s, as his illness intensified and she appeared to grow more dependent on him. Blandy married Ronald MacDonald, an American, in 1888, and she died two years later from tuberculosis in North Carolina.

Scope and Content

This collection contains eighty-seven letters, primarily written from English art critic and author John Ruskin to his drawing and painting pupil Louise Blandy, discussing her studies and chronicling their relationship. There is one letter to Ruskin from Edward Burne-Jones and a letter from Joan Severn to Mrs. Blandy. Included also are a sketch by Blandy, two photographs, and Louise Blandy's album where the letters were originally kept. Preserved in the album are three page of pressed leaves, flowers, and mosses.

- [John Ruskin collection \(mssHM 6097-6104, etc.\)](#)

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- [John Ruskin papers \(mss\)R 1-874](#)

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in 3 boxes in the following order:

- Correspondence and drawing (arranged alphabetically by author)
- Photographs and ephemera
- Empty scrapbook volume

Indexing Terms

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

Subjects

Blandy, Louise, 1860-1890.

Ruskin, John, 1819-1900 -- Archives.

Art critics -- Great Britain -- 19th century.

Authors, English -- 19th century -- Archives.

Art -- Study and teaching. -- England

Forms/Genres

Drawings -- Great Britain -- 19th century.

Letters (correspondence) -- Great Britain -- 19th century.

Manuscripts -- Great Britain -- 19th century.

Contributors

Blandy, Louise, 1860-1890.

Box 1	<p>HM 57251-57298 Correspondence and drawing: Blandy, Louise - Ruskin, John (-1877 August 28)</p> <p>Chiefly letters from John Ruskin to Louise Blandy, including undated items and letters dating from November 24, 1875 August 28, 1877. There are also a few letters from Ruskin to Louise's parents, dating from 1874, and a letter from Edward Burne-Jones to Ruskin (HM 57252), as well as one item by Louise Blandy: a pencil sketch of a man and woman (HM 57251).</p>
Box 2	<p>HM 57299-HM 57339 Correspondence: Ruskin, John (1877 September 7-) - Severn, Joan; Photographs and Ephemera</p> <p>Chiefly letters from John Ruskin to Louise Blandy, dating from September 7, 1877, to July 11, 1882, as well as two fragments of unidentified essays by Ruskin (HM 57336-7), a letter from Joan Severn to Mrs. Blandy (HM 57338), 2 photographs of the water and outdoor areas between Craydon and Epsom (HM 57339), and 2 clippings.</p>
Box 3	<p>Scrapbook volume</p> <p>Original scrapbook volume with empty pages, except for three pages of pressed botanical specimens. The verso of the flyleaf has the ms. ink inscription: "Louise Virenda Blandy, in remembrance of April 12. 76, with much love, from Adelheid."</p>