Guide to the Gibbon Family Papers, 1519-1813

Department of Special Collections
Green Library
Stanford University Libraries
Stanford, CA 94305-6004
Phone: (650) 725-1022
Email: specialcollections@stanford.edu
URL: http://library.stanford.edu/spc
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Collection number: M0348

Department of Special Collections and University Archives
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Descriptive Summary
Title: Gibbon Family Papers, 1519-1813
Date (inclusive): 1519-1813
Collection number: Special Collections M0348
Creator: Gibbon family
Extent: 1 linear ft.
Repository: Stanford University. Libraries. Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives.
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Access Restrictions
None.
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Biographical Note
Edward Gibbon was born in Putney, 27 April 1737. His mother died in 1747, and his father, Edward Gibbon (1707-1770), retired from a political career to live at Buriton, near Petersfield, in Hampshire. Gibbon entered Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1752, but left in 1753 without taking a degree. He spent the next five years living in Lausanne, Switzerland and returned to England in 1758, when his father married his second wife, Dorothea Gibbon, (née Patton).

At Lausanne in 1764 Gibbon met John Baker Holroyd (1735-1821), the first Earl of Sheffield. He became his most intimate friend and most important correspondent. In this year as well the idea came to him to write a comprehensive history of Rome: as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted fryars were singing Vespers in the Temple of Jupiter... the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind. However, filial obligations and military service prevented him from devoting himself to writing full-time until his father's death in November, 1770. He then moved to London, where the eight volumes of his The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire were published at regular intervals.
starting in 1776. He took up residence again at Lausanne in 1783, where he continued his work on The Decline and Fall. He
returned to England upon the death of the first Lady Sheffield in 1793. He died suddenly of gout in 1794 and was buried at
Fletching Church, Sussex. In 1796 Lord Sheffield published two quarto volumes of Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works. A second
edition was printed in 1814.

Scope and Content
Special Collections M0348 consists of letters, household bills and accounts, and legal documents related to the Gibbon
Family. The three autograph letters by Edward Gibbon are addressed to Mrs. Holroyd, the first Lady Sheffield, at
Brightelmstone. The first concerns his father's fatal illness, 1770. The other two are light in tone, as he jokes about the
dilatory nature of her dressmaker and his bookbinder (Madame de Sevigné... is now in Hall's hands from which books do
not easily escape) and sends her news of mutual friends, 1775. The collection also includes letters to Lord Sheffield by Jean
David Levade, a professor of moral theology at the Séminaire de Lausanne, announcing the death of one of Gibbon's
closest friends, Mme. Catherine Charrière de Sévery, 1796; by W. Charrière de Severy, her son, one concerning Gibbon's
legacy to him, 1796-1820; and G. H. de Seigneux, 1820. There are two letters by Hester Gibbon, Edward Gibbon's aunt, one
of which refers to her nephew, the historian, 1786. There is also a letter from Francis North, later second Earl of Guilford, to
his sister Anne, later Countess of Sheffield and third wife of John Baker Holroyd, in which he gives an irreverent description
of Gibbon at a party in Lausanne, 1791. The collection also contains a memorandum of an agreement, signed, between
Lord Sheffield and John Murray, for publication of Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works.

The household documents include Edward Gibbon senior’s house and farm account book at Buriton, 1765, and fragments of
the account book, 1767, household correspondence, bills and accounts, 1742-70. Also included are letters and documents
concerning the estate of Dorothea Gibbon, 1790-97 and photocopies of sequestered papers relating to the Gibbon property
at Mapledurham, 1693-1744.

Series I: Letters to Lady Sheffield

Box 1, Folder 1
Gibbon, Edward. TLS to Lady Sheffield, 13 April 1770(?).
Physical Description: 2pp.

Box 1, Folder 2
Gibbon, Edward. TLSs to Lady Sheffield, 1775.
Physical Description: 2 items.

Series II: Letters to Lord Sheffield

Box 1, Folder 3
Barrett, John. TLS to Lord Sheffield, 29 January, 1816.
Physical Description: 1p.

Box 1, Folder 4
Charrière de Sévery, W. TLSs to Lord Sheffield, 1794-1820.
Physical Description: 4 items.

Box 1, Folder 5
Gibbon, Hester. TLSs to Lord Sheffield, 1886.
Physical Description: 2 items.

Box 1, Folder 6
Levade, Jean David. TLS to Lord Sheffield, 20 January, 1796.
Physical Description: 1p.

Box 1, Folder 7
Murray, John. TLS to Lord Sheffield and Memorandum of Agreement, 1813-1815.
Physical Description: 2 items.

Box 1, Folder 8
North, Francis. TLS to Anne North, 29 January, 1791.
Physical Description: 2pp.

Box 1, Folder 9
de Seigneux, G.H. TLS to Lord Sheffield, 6 June 1820.
Physical Description: 2pp.
### Series III. The Gibbon Family’s Household Documents

| Box 1, Folder 10 | Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1742.  
|                 | Physical Description: 2 items. |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1760-69.  
|                 | Physical Description: 23 items. |
| Box 1, Folder 12 | Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1773-1814.  
|                 | Physical Description: 3 items. |
| Box 1, Folder 13 | Edward Gibbon’s Account Book, 1765.  
| Box 1, Folder 14 | Fragments of Edward Gibbon’s Account Book, 1767.  
|                 | Physical Description: 11 items |
| Box 1, Folder 15 | Bills and Receipts, 1690-1765 (and undated).  
|                 | Physical Description: 39 items. |
| Box 1, Folder 16 | Bills and Receipts, 1760-96.  
| Box 1, Folder 17 | Household Accounts, 1753-67.  
|                 | Physical Description: 13 items. |
| Box 1, Folder 18 | Miscellaneous.  
|                 | Physical Description: 5 items. |

### Series IV. Documents Concerning the Estate of Dorothea Gibbon

| Box 2, Folder 1 | Gibbon, Dorothea. Last Will and Testament, 2 February, 1794.  
|                 | Physical Description: 1p. |
| Box 2, Folder 2 | Documents Concerning the Estate of Dorothea Gibbon, 1790-97.  
|                 | Physical Description: 14 items. |
| Box 2, Folder 3 | Letters Concerning the Estate of Dorothea Gibbon, 1790-97.  
|                 | Physical Description: 16 items. |

### Series V. Papers Concerning the Gibbon Property at Mapledurham

| Box 2, Folder 4 | Photocopies of sequestered papers concerning the Gibbon property at Mapledurham, 1694-1744.  
|                 | Physical Description: 45 items. |
| Box 2, Folder 5 | Photocopies of sequestered papers concerning the Gibbon property at Mapledurham, 1694-1744.  
|                 | Physical Description: 23 items. |