

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL**  
**ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT**  
**INFORMATION SHEET 61**  
**FAMILY COLLECTIONS**

The Archives Department is responsible for a number of collections that range from the business records of local manufacturers to local societies and research collections, and includes the records of our parent organisation, National Museums Liverpool.

The family collections are of interest to those with an interest in cultural and domestic history, emigration and the social aspects of family life. They offer a valuable insight into family life in middle-class families from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Unless otherwise stated the archives are stored at the Reserve Store, North Street (off Dale Street), Liverpool.

## **COLLECTIONS**

### **The Bryson Collection, 1753-c.1960**

The Bryson collection is a large collection of miscellaneous documents collected by Joe Bryson over twenty years. This diverse collection includes material about Liverpool business, legal records, personal letters and material about Liverpool families. Within the Bryson collection there are a number of family collections, mainly from the estates of people who emigrated. They are:

#### **Cobham Family Collection, 1863-1868**

George Ashworth Cobham (1806-1870) was a member of an old established Liverpool family who was committed to Lancaster Castle as a debtor. He had earlier married his sister-in-law, a breach of Canon Law, which made his nephews his sons. He escaped from prison and with his family set sail from Le Havre for New York. They settled in Warren, West Pennsylvania where he built a house that still stands today.

Surviving records cover his financial and business affairs both prior to and after his emigration. They include correspondence with his nephew John and solicitors in Liverpool. His letters, written at the time of the Civil War, reveal his support for the Union whilst his nephew was influenced by Confederate opinion in Liverpool. There are also many papers relating to the extensive litigation concerning the will of George Cobham Senior, their Lancashire estate and genealogical material dating the family back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **The Battersby Collection, 1844-1899**

A Liverpool Irish family, members of which emigrated to America and Australia. The collection consists of letters between members of the family in Liverpool and those who had settled abroad. It is an intriguing insight into the problems facing families who emigrated, how they adjusted to their new lives and their thoughts about the "New World" in which they lived. This collection can be consulted at the Maritime Archives & Library, Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool.

#### **The Danson Collection, c.1595-1978**

This collection is a rare example of a complete middle-class family archive. The main

sections of the archive relate to the main male members of the family: John Danson (1766-1847), William Danson (1793-1844), John Towne Danson (1817-1898), Sir Francis Chatillon Danson (1855-1926), John West Wood Danson (1853-c.1911), John Raymond Danson (1893-1975) and Edith Danson (c.1870-1950), wife of Sir Francis. The family was extremely well educated and travelled, and the records in the Danson collection relate to their many varied interests and journeys or residence abroad.

John Danson became Liverpool's leading barber and perfumer. His son, William Danson, was an unsuccessful lawyer.

More is known about John Towne Danson to whom the bulk of the archive relates. He was, in his lifetime, a journalist specialising in economic and social affairs, a farmer, barrister and marine insurance underwriter. From about 1852 until his death in 1898, he kept copies of all his letters, diaries and accounts, that are illustrated with photographs and sketches. He was interested in philosophy, economics, statistics, politics and science.

His son, Francis Chatillon, was an average adjuster, connoisseur and patron of the School of Tropical Medicine, Institute of Archaeology and Liverpool University. His famous collection of antiquities was bequeathed to National Museums Liverpool. He was knighted on account of his work for the Admiralty during the First World War. The collection includes copies of his correspondence from various parties regarding his business and interests, and also the correspondence and diaries of Edith Danson, wife of Francis.

John Raymond Danson was the younger son of Francis Chatillon and Edith, who served in both World Wars, and was made a Lieutenant Colonel commanding the Fourth Battalion Cheshire Regiment at Dunkirk during the Second World War. John Raymond continued his father's patronage of the School of Tropical Medicine and exhibited antiquities collected by his father. Documents in this part of the collection include his correspondence, diaries and copies of his accounts.

### **Lockett Family Collection, 1853-1908**

John Towne Danson married into the Lockett family of Llangollen and he took charge of their affairs. Members of the family emigrated to Australia and Canada and the collection includes papers relating to arrangements made prior to emigration, personal logs and correspondence between J.G.W. Lockett (1833-1878), Edmund Lockett (1837-1908), Elizabeth Mary Lockett (1845-post 1861) and J.T. Danson.

### **ADVICE AND INFORMATION**

Enquiries can be made by letter, telephone, fax and email. We may not be able to answer all enquiries but will endeavour to point you in the right direction. We are able to provide copies of material where they are suitable to be copied (items are copied at the Archivist's discretion). This is subject to charges to cover copying and handling.

### **ACCESS**

The collection is closed at present, urgent access is strictly by appointment. Please contact the Archivist to book an appointment. Times can be booked between 10.30 am and 4.00 pm. We are closed between 12.30 - 1.30 pm for lunch. There is no disabled access in

North Street as the Searchroom is reached by two flights of stairs. Alternative access arrangements could be made in certain circumstances.

## **CONTACT**

Maritime Archives & Library  
Merseyside Maritime Museum  
Albert Dock  
Liverpool L3 4AQ  
Tel: 0151 478 4424  
Email: [maritime.archives@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](mailto:maritime.archives@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)  
Website: [www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)