

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Lancaster, Joseph, Papers, 1796-1840

LOCATION:

Mss. boxes "C"
Oversize mss. boxes "C"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

17 manuscript boxes; 2 oversize folders

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

For information on Lancaster, see the *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 32, p. 39-42. For a note on his death, see the *Maine Farmer*, Tues., November 6, 1838, p. 310.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

Gift of Rev. William B. Sprague, 1846

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838) was the founder of a monitorial method of teaching that came to be known as the Lancasterian system of education. Born in England, he opened in 1798 a school to educate inexpensively poor children in the Borough Road neighborhood of London. His system of education gained widespread popularity and led eventually to the establishment of over two hundred schools modeled after the Borough Road institution. Dissension and monetary problems plagued him throughout his career in England, the U.S., Canada, and South America. Lancaster wrote several pamphlets and in 1833 published an autobiographical sketch and plea for financial support entitled Epitome of Some of the Chief Events and Transactions in the Life of Joseph Lancaster ...

Most of the collection is correspondence to Lancaster, either the original letters or transcripts of the letters made by Joseph Burlingham in preparation for his unfinished biography of Lancaster. The materials in the first three manuscript boxes are arranged in the order in which Burlingham planned to use them for his book and an index to this arrangement is in box three. Most of the letters concern education and schools but there are some personal letters from family members and friends.

The rest of the collection includes lecture notes, school notes, essays, autobiographical sketches, printed announcements, and annotated pamphlets. There are some items pertaining to Lancaster's experience as Superintendent of National Education in Caracas, Venezuela--a position to which he was appointed by Simon Bolivar.

In addition to the transcripts of correspondence, Burlingham also copied school reports, notes, lecture outlines, etc. Many of the transcripts appear to have been copied on the back of school papers and school reports. The collection also

(cont.)

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COLLECTION DESCRIPTION (cont.):

includes twenty-six chapters of the manuscript draft of Lancaster's autobiography that details his career to 1808.

The remaining miscellaneous manuscripts have been divided into three categories: dated, undated, and titled. The box of undated materials includes testimonials to Lancaster and a small collection of poems, a few of which were composed in Lancaster's honor. The other poems may have been collected by Lancaster. The box of dated manuscripts includes a folder of broadsides, many of them announcements of lectures by Lancaster and proposals for the establishment of schools. The titled manuscripts are primarily Lancaster's lectures and reports written by him for publication. there is a list of these items in box sixteen. Some of the manuscripts on that list could not be located, but those that are included in boxes sixteen and seventeen are designated with a check.

See Contents List.

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Joseph Lancaster, Papers, 1796-1840

Contents List

Manuscript Box

The items in boxes one through three were arranged by Joseph Burlingham in the order in which he planned to use them for his book. See index in box three.

- 1 Correspondence to Lancaster, c. 1806-c. 1819
--transcriptions by Burlingham; Burlingham #1-#82
- 2 Lancaster family correspondence, 1797-1838
--Burlingham #83-#144
 - Folder 1 Burlingham transcriptions
 - Folder 2 Burlingham transcriptions
 - Folder 3 Burlingham transcriptions
 - Folder 4 Letters from Lancaster's daughter, Elizabeth L. Jones, and her husband, Richard M. Jones, written from Mexico, 1825-1837 (original letters)
 - Folder 5 Lancaster family letters, 1809-1837 (original letters)
 - Folder 6 Correspondence between Lancaster and his parents, primarily his father, 1797 - 1819 (transcriptions)
 - Folder 7 Letters from John Epy Lovell, 1811-1838 (original letters)
--many written from New Haven, Conn.
- 3 Correspondence to Lancaster, c. 1818-c. 1838
--transcriptions by Burlingham; Burlingham #145 - #146
--original items scattered throughout the folders
 - Folder 1 Letters to Lancaster in America, 1818 August-1823 September
--mostly from students and teachers; principal correspondents include Edward Baker and Robert Ould
 - Folder 2 Letters to Lancaster in North America and South America, 1823 October-1827
 - Folder 3 Letters to Lancaster in the United States and Canada, 1827 May-1838 October
--includes letters from William B. Sprague
 - Folder 4 Burlingham's index to the materials in boxes one through three
 - Folder 5 Miscellaneous materials on Lancaster
--including 1839 letter by Burlingham about Lancaster
 - Folder 6 Materials from Burlingham's Life of Joseph Lancaster, 1839
--includes drafts and chapter outlines
 - Folder 7 Lancaster autobiographical sketches, reports, reminiscences?
--evidently gathered by Burlingham for incorporation in his Life...
- 4 Six volumes
--lectures, notebooks, and manual for the Lancasterian System of Education
- 5 Lancaster's Autobiography
Chapters 11 - 15 (see oversize folders for chapters one through ten)
--includes miscellaneous notes by Lancaster, Burlingham, and others?
- 6 Lancaster's Autobiography
Chapters 16 - 26 (cont.)

Manuscript Box

- 7 Correspondence, n.d.; 1796 - 1807
--most of the following correspondence consists of letters to Lancaster, but there are a few letters and drafts of letters by Lancaster
- 8 Correspondence, 1808 - 1809
--principal correspondents include William Knight, Alexander Henderson, David Holt, Harriet Howell, James George Penney
- 9 Correspondence, 1810
- 10 Correspondence, 1811
--includes letters from Edward Boyer
- 11 Correspondence, 1812
- 12 Correspondence, 1813 - 1817
--includes letters from John Veevers
- 13 Correspondence, 1818 - 1840
--includes letters from Louisa ("Lucy") Edmunds
- 14 Miscellaneous manuscripts, undated
- Folders 1-3 Includes lecture notes, school notes, essays, autobiographical sketches, printed announcements, etc.
- Folder 4 Testimonials (a few dated)
- Folder 5 Manuscripts relating to Mrs. Elizabeth Lancaster's sanity?
- Folder 6: Poems
- 15 Miscellaneous manuscripts, 1798 - 1840
- Folders 1-9 Includes lecture notes, school notes, essays, autobiographical sketches, printed announcements, etc.
- Folder 10 Broad­sides, newspaper clippings
- 16 Titled manuscripts
--for titles in this box see list enclosed in the box
- 17 Titled manuscripts
--for titles in this box see list enclosed in box 16

Oversize Manuscript Box

- Folders 1-2 Lancaster's Autobiography
 Chapters 1 - 10

Joseph Lancaster papers

In the published epitome of the life of J.L (R-L) Joseph Burlingham is listed as a subscriber. His town is listed as LaPrairie [Quebec]

printing related materials:

last item in box 13 fol 1

letter from Ebenezer Thomas (a printer? in Petersburg NC) box 13, fol 3 (3d from end)

13.3: printers bill from Webster and Skinner, Albany, 2/23/1819

13.4: 7/9/1821 letter from a school thanking Lancaster for his gift of 6 copies of his pamphlet.

Box 13, folder 8 (1835-6) has some letters by Charles Gauntt of Phila. whose son Charles aged 12 was entered in Lancaster's school (1st letter 11/28/35) the second letter was sent with cards printed by the boy (specimens not present in collection) along with the press and composing stick, which the boy had made.

prospectus for 2 vol. bio of Lancaster near end of last folder in box 13.

I believe there are subscription sheets and prospectuses scattered through the collection (letters are not infrequently written on them) could one get something together on subscriptions in the education book market or something? is there correspondence related to the book trades?

see memoir in Am. Journal of Education, vol. 10 (1861) 355- (other material in this issue about monitorial system)

The following portions of the Joseph Lancaster papers have been microfilmed:

filmed 10/81:

Box 2, folder 4: Letters of Richard M. Jones and Elizabeth Lancaster Jones, Mexico

filmed 2/89:

Box 2, folder 7: Letters from John Epy Lovell

Box 3, folder 3: selected transcriptions

filmed 7/92: items dated after April, 1824

Box 2, folders 3,5 (selections)

Box 3, folder 2 (selections)

Box 3, folders 4-7 (complete)

Box 13, folder 5 (selections)

Box 13, folders 6-8 (complete)