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* Manuscripts Division * One Washington Road * Princeton, New Jersey 08544 USA * Phone:
(609) 258-3184 * Fax: (609) 258-2324 * rbsc@princeton.edu * <http://www.princeton.edu/~rbsc> *

Sarah Ponsonby Collection, 1801-1822: Finding Aid

Summary Information

Call number:	C1172
Repository:	Princeton University. Library. Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections Manuscripts Division One Washington Road Princeton, New Jersey 08544 USA
Size:	0.2 linear feet 1 half-size archival box
Language(s) of Material:	English
Abstract:	Consists of selected letters of Sarah Ponsonby, one of the famous "Ladies of Llangollen."
Location:	This collection is stored onsite at Firestone Library.

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Biography

Sarah Ponsonby was the orphaned daughter of Chambre Brabazon Ponsonby. She lived an unhappy life with relatives in Woodstock, Ireland. She met Lady Eleanor Butler in 1768. Since both women shared a mutual love of the arts and were both unhappy with their lives, they decided to live a quiet rural life. They left Ireland and they set up home in "Plas Newydd," in Llangollen, North East Wales, in 1780. Because they led an unusual and secluded life, Ponsonby and Butler became known as the *Ladies of Llangollen*. Their relationship scandalized and fascinated their contemporaries, and they became famous all over Great Britain. Eventually, they attracted the interest of the outside world. Their new Gothic residence became a magnet for writers, intellectuals, and artists, such as Robert Southey, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, and Sir Walter Scott, as well as the Duke of Wellington, Caroline Lamb, and Josiah Wedgwood. Ponsonby and Butler lived together for the rest of their lives, over 50 years.

Description

The collections consists of selected letters written by Sarah Ponsonby to Richard Lloyd Williams, Mrs. Jones, or Lady Glyndwr of Wrexham, and others. Ponsonby's letters (14) to Williams, an architect in Denbigh, Wales, mainly deal with health problems which affect her friend and companion, Lady Eleanor Butler, and a problem with her eyes and eyesight. They all date from 1822. Letters (1801-1804) to Mrs. Jones are about information that Mrs. Jones had asked Ponsonby to obtain. The letters also discuss the health of Ponsonby's sister, Mrs. Lowther; her friend Mrs. Myddleton Biddulph and her husband, owners of Chirk Castle in Wrexham, North East Wales; and about friends or events in their hometown of Llangollen Vale in North East Wales, from where all the letters are addressed. Also included is a postcard of a lithograph of Ponsonby and Butler in their unusual clothes, and newspaper clippings of stories about their lives.

Arrangement

Folders are arranged by accession number.

Access and Use

Access

Collection is open for research use.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. No further photoduplication of copies of material in the collection can be made when Princeton University Library does not own the original. Permission to publish material from the collection must be requested from the Associate University Librarian for Rare Books and Special Collections. The library has no information on the status of

literary rights in the collection and researchers are responsible for determining any questions of copyright.

Acquisition and Appraisal

Provenance and Acquisition

Purchased on October 8, 1970.

Processing and Other Information

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Sarah Ponsonby Collection, Box and Folder Number; Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Processing Information

Folder inventory added by Nicholas Williams '2015 in 2012.

Encoding

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2012-06-20T10:16-0400

Descriptive Rules Used

Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Subject Headings

- Butler, Eleanor, Lady, 1738 or 9-1829 -- Relations with women.
- Lloyd-Williams, Richard -- Correspondence.
- Ladies of Llangollen.
- Women intellectuals -- Wales -- 19th century -- Correspondence.
- Llangollen, Vale of (Wales).
- Correspondence -- 19th century.
- British literature
- Women's studies

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