

Sir Augustus John Foster Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81021139>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms008047>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

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Collection Summary

Title: Sir Augustus John Foster Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1794-1844

ID No.: MSS21139

Creator: Foster, Augustus John, Sir, 1780-1848

Extent: 77 volumes

Extent: 14 containers

Extent: 7 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm81021139>

Summary: British minister to the United States. Diaries, correspondence, and notes concerning Foster's assignment as a British diplomat to Washington, D.C., prior to the War of 1812, Naples (capital of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies), and Turin (capital of the Kingdom of Sardinia).

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Devonshire, Elizabeth Cavendish, Duchess of, 1758-1824--Correspondence.

Foster, Augustus John, Sir, 1780-1848.

Places

Great Britain--Foreign relations--Italy--Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

Great Britain--Foreign relations--Italy--Sardinia.

Great Britain--Foreign relations--United States.

Kingdom of the Two Sicilies--Foreign relations--Great Britain.

Sardinia (Italy)--Foreign relations--Great Britain.

United States--Description and travel.

United States--Foreign relations--Great Britain.

Occupations

Diplomats--Great Britain.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Sir Augustus John Foster, British minister to the United States and Privy Councillor, were purchased by the Library of Congress in 1929. An additional item was purchased in 1933.

Processing History

The papers of Sir Augustus John Foster were arranged and described by Bradley E. Gernand and Patrick Kerwin in 2002. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Additional Guides

Descriptions of the Foster Papers appear in Report of the Librarian of Congress for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1934, p. 35, and in Library of Congress Information Bulletin, vol. 10, no. 46 (Nov. 13, 1951).

Copyright Status

It is the researcher's responsibility to determine requirements of domestic copyright laws and international treaties and conventions.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Sir Augustus John Foster are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Sir Augustus John Foster Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1780, Dec. 1	Born, Ireland [?]
circa 1802-1804	Secretary to British legation, Naples, Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (present-day Italy)
1805-1807	Secretary to British legation to the United States
1808-1810	British chargé d'affaires, Stockholm, Sweden
1811-1812	Great Britain's minister plenipotentiary to the United States
1812	Returned to Great Britain; elected member of Parliament for Cockermonth, England
1814-1824	British minister plenipotentiary, Copenhagen, Denmark
1815	Married Albinia Jane Hobart
1822	Became member of Privy Council, London, England
1824-1840	British minister plenipotentiary to Turin, Kingdom of Sardinia (present-day Italy)
1825	Knighted by King George IV
1831	Named Baron of Clyde Court, Ardee, County Louth, Ireland
1840	Retired from diplomatic service and began writing "Notes on the United States..."
1848, Aug. 1	Died by suicide at Branksea Castle, near Poole, England

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Sir Augustus John Foster (1780-1848) span the years 1794-1844. The papers are divided into three series: [Correspondence](#), [Diaries](#), and a narrative of observations by Foster entitled "[Notes on the United States of America](#)." Foster was the United Kingdom's minister to the United States when war with England was declared in 1812.

The [Correspondence](#) series consists of letters from Foster to his mother, later wife of the fifth Duke of Derbyshire, and her replies, 1798-1826, as well as miscellaneous correspondence dated 1794-1795.

The [Diaries](#) are recorded for the years 1798, 1806, 1809, 1811-1816, 1818, and 1825-1844. Some volumes contain years in addition to those marked on the covers. The volume for 1806 concerns Foster's service in Washington as secretary to the British legation to the United States. Other volumes concern his assignment as secretary to the British legation to Naples, capital of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and as British minister to the Savoy court at Turin, capital of the Kingdom of Sardinia (both in present-day Italy).

Also included is a five-volume draft entitled, "[Notes on the United States of America](#)," a narrative of Foster's observations of this country. This set of notes is a later version of a draft held by the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. It

was found in the 1930s by Foster's descendants in a cupboard in the family home in Northern Ireland. Portions of these papers have been transcribed and published.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [Correspondence, 1794-1826](#)
- [Diaries, 1798-1844](#)
- ["Notes on the United States of America," 1805-1812](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-8	<u>Correspondence, 1794-1826</u> Incoming and outgoing correspondence. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 9-13	<u>Diaries, 1798-1844</u> Diaries. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 14	<u>“Notes on the United States of America,” 1805-1812</u> Narrative of Foster’s observations in the United States. Arranged chronologically.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-8	Correspondence, 1794-1826 Incoming and outgoing correspondence. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	1794, Aug. 27-1802, June 29
BOX 2	1802, July 5-1806, Oct. 28
BOX 3	1806, Oct. 31-1814, May 1
BOX 4	1814, May 3-1816, Sept. 9
BOX 5	1816, Sept. 17-1820, June 28
BOX 6	1820, July 3-1821, Dec. 9
BOX 7	1821, Dec. 12-1823, June 24
BOX 8	1823, July 5-1826, Aug. 31, undated
BOX 9-13	Diaries, 1798-1844 Diaries. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 9	1798
BOX 9	1806, 1809, 1811-1812, 1818, 1829
BOX 9	1812-1814, 1816
BOX 9	1815
BOX 9	1825-1827 (4 folders)
BOX 10	1828-1831 (6 folders)
BOX 11	1832-1834 (6 folders)
BOX 12	1835-1837 (7 folders)
BOX 13	1838-1844 (6 folders)
BOX 14	“Notes on the United States of America,” 1805-1812 Narrative of Foster’s observations in the United States. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 14	Vols. I-V, 1805-1812 (5 folders)