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://lccn.loc.gov/mm81021139

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

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2008
Revised 2023 April
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://lccn.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
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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-8</td>
<td><strong>Correspondence, 1794-1826</strong></td>
<td>Incoming and outgoing correspondence. Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 9-13</td>
<td><strong>Diaries, 1798-1844</strong></td>
<td>Diaries. Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 14</td>
<td><strong>“Notes on the United States of America,” 1805-1812</strong></td>
<td>Narrative of Foster’s observations in the United States. Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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) |