

Archives and Special Collections

Dickinson College

Carlisle, PA

**COLLECTION REGISTER**

Name: **Chapman, John (1801-1854)** **MC 1999.8**

Material: Papers (1833-1854)

Volume: 1.25 linear feet (Document Boxes 1-3, 2 Photograph Folders, and 2 Oversized Folders)

Donation: Purchased from Charles Hamilton, 1958

Usage: There are no usage restrictions on these materials.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

John Chapman, engineer and inventor, Baptist deacon and political writer, was born the son of John Chapman of Loughborough, Leicestershire on January 20, 1801. Young John was educated first at a local school operated by Mr. Mowbray, and then later by Rev. T. Stevenson. In 1824 John Chapman married Mary, the daughter of John Wallis who was a lace manufacturer also from Loughborough. John and Mary had 10 children. Mr. Chapman was a member of the Baptist church; he taught Sunday school, became deacon and superintendent in 1838, and helped with the publication of the "Baptist Examiner." He was also interested in books and education and helped to establish the Loughborough Permanent Library.

John Chapman went into business with his brother William to establish J. & W. Chapman, a manufacturing firm. Their factory produced bobbin machinery and was at the forefront of industry due to its improved steam engine. In the 1830's, the firm became involved with exporting machinery to foreign industries, an act which was considered contraband. Chapman and others unsuccessfully appealed to Parliament for the repeal of the machine exportation laws; protectionism prevailed. In 1834 J. & W. Chapman was ruined due to the unsuccessful appeal.

Among his achievements, Chapman was responsible for making key improvements to the Hansom cab, and was granted the patent for the same in 1837, in cooperation with Mr. Gillett. He also built an improved steam engine and invented machinery for the railway and spinning industries. The "Ariel," a steam powered aircraft developed in the 1840's, was the collaborative work of Chapman, W. H. Henson, and others which very nearly became the first successful machine-powered aircraft - a pioneering effort, in any case.

Mr. Chapman became interested in India in 1842 when he was employed to research the possibility of developing a railway through the territory. In 1847 the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, emerged from these efforts. Chapman also explored public works in India, government

reform, cotton, and irrigation. In the 1850's, he had been working on an irrigation scheme for India, and shortly after his death, his irrigation plans were sanctioned by the government.

Throughout his life, Chapman managed and contributed to many publications including the "Times," the "Daily News," "Mechanic's Almanac," "Railway Times", the "Economist," and "Leader." He wrote about diverse subjects such as British politics, Indian development, manufacturing technology, and mechanics, and delivered lectures on these topics as well.

John Chapman died of cholera on September 10, 1854 at the age of 53. He was survived by his wife and 3 of his children.

## COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Chapman Papers are housed in 3 document boxes, 2 photograph folders, and 2 oversized folders. The collection is organized into seven categories: Correspondence, Essays Lectures, Notes, Projects, Miscellaneous Materials, and Photographs. This collection was purchased by Dickinson College in 1958 from Charles Hamilton.

The Correspondence section of the collection contains primarily letters received by John Chapman from business associates, as well as letters written by Chapman to the same. The correspondence are arranged alphabetically by author, and then chronologically. The bulk of the correspondence is from the early 1840s and from 1854, just prior to Chapman's death. The letters contain a wealth of information regarding Chapman's business dealings and engineering endeavors, with very little information of a personal nature being revealed.

The Essays section contains writings on social and political topics, several of which had been numbered, apparently by Chapman himself. The essays were written as if in conversation to a friend or student, and appear to follow a natural progression of ideas. The essays have been arranged according to their numbers, with the unnumbered two being at the end. The titles of these essays have been assigned by the collection arranger, as none were given by the author.

The Lectures section includes five of a series of six numbered lectures on basic physics and mechanics, arranged in order, with titles applied according to their subject matter. (Diagrams that accompany some of these lectures can be found among the oversized materials.) An exam based on these lectures follows the numbered lectures. One unnumbered lecture is found at the end of this section. It is not known for whom these lectures may have been prepared.

The Notes section contains several notebooks, the titles of which are Chapman's own, on various mathematical and mechanical topics. These notes are filled with detailed calculations.

The Projects section includes materials from several of Chapman's endeavors, particularly involving railways and public water works. These materials have been arranged alphabetically by project title or company name. Of note is Chapman's lengthy examination of London's water works, his extensive work with Cunningham and Carter regarding railway carriage propulsion using atmospheric pressure, and his work with Henson's knitting machine. Papers regarding his work in India can also be found here.

The Miscellaneous Materials section is arranged alphabetically by folder title and includes bills and receipts, printed matter, and various fragments of writings. Also included among these materials is a notebook with information about Chapman apparently gathered in the early 1940's.

Two folders of oversized papers, designated OC 1999.8, include several hand-written copies of a chart prepared by Chapman titled "Classification of Inventions," and diagrams that

accompany several of the lectures on mechanics. Also found among the oversized materials are maps and plans which reveal some of the projects in which Chapman may have been involved.

Two folders of photographs, designated PC 1999.8, have been separated out and are housed with the Dickinson College photo collection. Included are photos of the “new” *Lebaudy* airship, photos of an airship hanger, and negatives. The photos were a part of the purchase of the Chapman papers, although they clearly postdate Chapman’s death.

## COLLECTION INVENTORY

### BOX 1 - MC 1999.8

#### CORRESPONDENCE

- Folder 01) Aspey, Joseph
  - Letter to John Chapman - Feb. 22, 1841
- Folder 02) Chamberlain, H.
  - Letters to John Chapman - 1841-1842 (5)
- Folder 03) Chapman, John
  - Letter to Rev. J. Dudley - Jul. 8, 1833
  - Letter to Unknown - Feb. 18, 1834
  - Letter to Unknown - May 29, 1839
- Folder 04)
  - Letter to H. Robertson, Esq. - Jan. 7, 1841
  - Letter to Unknown - Mar. 9, 1841
  - Letter to L. Hill - Feb. 11, 1841
  - Letter to D. Davies - Feb. 18, 1841
  - Letter to William Chapman - Mar. 17, 1841
  - Letter to John Duncan, Esq. - Apr. 12, 1841
- Folder 05)
  - Letter to William Chapman - May 6, 1841
  - Letter to T. Green - May 6, 1841
  - Letter to Miss Carter - Aug. 31, 1841
  - Letter to William Dryden - Sep. 7, 1841
  - Letter to F. Marriot, Esq. - Dec. 28, 1841
- Folder 06)
  - Letter to John Duncan, Esq. - Apr. 9, 1842
  - Letter to John Duncan, Esq. - Apr. 11, 1842
  - Letter to Mr. Ward, Esq. - May 4, 1842
  - Letter to Unknown - May 26, 1843
  - Letter to Unknown - Nov. 12, 1844
  - Extracts of letters to Mr. White - Dec. 1845
- Folder 07)
  - Letter to Sir Charles Fox - Mar. 1852
  - Letter to Unknown - May 14, 1852
  - Letter to J. Dickinson, Esq. - May 14, 1852
- Folder 08)
  - Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Jan. 30, 1854
  - Letter to Robert Fletcher, Esq. - Feb. 3, 1854
  - Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Mar. 11, 1854
  - Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Mar. 26, 1854
  - Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. Mar. 31, 1854

**BOX 1 - MC 1999.8 (cont.)**

CORRESPONDENCE (cont.)

- Folder 09) Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Apr. 6, 1854  
Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Apr. 8, 1854  
Letter to Robert Fletcher, Esq. - Apr. 12, 1854  
Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Apr. 12, 1854  
Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Apr. 25, 1854  
Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - May 22, 1854  
Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Jun. 21, 1854
- Folder 10) Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Jul. 6, 1854  
Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Jul. 14, 1854  
Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Jul. 22, 1854  
Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Aug. 7, 1854  
Letter to Unknown - Aug. 14, 1854  
Letter to Robert Fletcher, Esq. - Aug. 16, 1854  
Letter to A. Hawkins, Esq. - Aug. 16, 1854  
Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq. - Aug. 26, 1854
- Folder 11) Cope, Sherwin  
Letters to John Chapman - 1841 (2)
- Folder 12) Dryden, William  
Letters to John Chapman - 1841 (4)
- Folder 13) Duncan, John  
Letters to John Chapman - 1841-1842 (14)
- Folder 14) Elkins, W.  
Letter to John Chapman - Sept. 28, 1841
- Folder 15) Fletcher, Robert  
Letter to John Chapman - 1851-1854 (5)
- Folder 16) Green, T.  
Letters to John Chapman - 1841-1842 (4)  
Letter to H. Chamberlain - Feb. 13, 1841
- Folder 17) Hunt, Robert  
Letters to John Chapman - 1854 (19)
- Folder 18) Larrai, John  
Letter to John Chapman - Jul. 6, 1841
- Folder 19) Lee, John  
Letter to Unknown - Sep. 1, 1841  
Letter to John Duncan - Sept. 13, 1841  
Letter to John Chapman - Sep. 18, 1841
- Folder 20) Marriot, F.  
Letters to John Chapman - 1841-1842 (2)
- Folder 21) Mordeur, J.  
Letter to John Duncan - Sept. 16, 1841
- Folder 22) Oswald, Henry  
Letter to Chamberlain - Oct. 23, 1841

## BOX 1 - MC 1999.8 (cont.)

### CORRESPONDENCE (cont.)

- Folder 23) Stratford, W. S.  
Letter to John Chapman - Oct. 23, 1843
- Folder 24) Strutts, J.  
Letter to John Chapman - Feb. 9, 1844
- Folder 25) Sullivan, G.  
Letter to Messrs. Roy, Blunt, Duncan, & Johnson - May 1841
- Folder 26) Williams  
Letter to Robert Hunt - Mar. 28, 1854
- Folder 27) Wallis, Sarah  
Letters to John Chapman - 1841-1842 (5)
- Folder 28) Miscellaneous  
Undated letters (5)

### ESSAYS

- Folder 29) 1. Doctrine of Limitation
- Folder 30) 2. Use of Force by the Government
- Folder 31) 3. Dissatisfaction with the Government and Reform
- Folder 32) 4. Extra Government and War
- Folder 33) 5. Taxation
- Folder 34) 6. Bounties, Protection, and Prohibitions
- Folder 35) Labor and Social Progress
- Folder 36) Social Merits of Machinery

### LECTURES

- Folder 37) 2. Force and Motion
- Folder 38) 3. Applications of Force and Motion
- Folder 39) 4. Further Applications of Force
- Folder 40) 5. Levers
- Folder 41) 6. Strength of Materials
- Folder 42) Examination based on Lectures 1-6
- Folder 43) Mechanical Action of Fluids

### NOTES

- Folder 44) "Investigations and Remarks" Notebook
- Folder 45) "Mouvement et Ecoulement des Jaz from Morin's *Aide-Memoir*"

## BOX 2 - MC 1999.8

### NOTES (cont.)

- Folder 01) "Rough Books 1-3"
- Folder 02) Thomas "Simpson's Fluxions"
- Folder 03) Miscellaneous Calculations
- Folder 04) Miscellaneous Drawings and Calculations

## **BOX 2 - MC 1999.8 (cont.)**

### PROJECTS

- Folder 05) Cunningham and Carter's Patent regarding Railway Improvements
- Folder 06) East and West India Docks and Birmingham Junction Railway
- Folder 07) Great Indian Peninsular Railway
- Folder 08) Henson's Knitting Machine
- Folder 09) London's Water Supply - Essay (2 drafts)
- Folder 10) London's Water Supply - Notebook
- Folder 11) Midland Railway - Leicester and Swannington Railway

## **BOX 3 - MC 1999.8**

### PROJECTS (cont.)

- Folder 01) North Staffordshire Railway
- Folder 02) Public Works in India
- Folder 03) St. Petersburg to Moscow Railway

### MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS

- Folder 04) Bills and Receipts
- Folder 05) Notes regarding Chapman
- Folder 06) Printed Matter
- Folder 07) Writings
- Folder 08) Writings

## **OVERSIZED - OC 1999.8**

- Folder 01) "Classification of Inventions" Charts  
Diagrams to accompany Lectures
- Folder 02) Miscellaneous Maps, Charts, and Plans

## **PHOTOGRAPHS - PC 1999.8**

- Folder 01) "New" *Lebaudy* Airship (13 photos)
- Folder 02) Airship Hanger (4 photos and 6 negatives)

This collection register was prepared by Suzanne H. Rhodes, May 1999.