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**Catalogue of manuscripts from the Library
of the Sunderland Preparative Meeting of the
Society of Friends**

Date range of material: 19th-20th century

Durham University Library
November 2016

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Preface

Creation of catalogue

Typescript list by RC, scanned and converted to HTML RIH November 1995, converted to SGML RIH August 1996. Minimal list

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Introduction

Collection title: Manuscripts from the Library of the Sunderland Preparative Meeting of the Society of Friends

Reference code: GB-0033-SSF

Dates of creation: 19th-20th century

Extent: 8 volumes.

Repository: Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections

Creator: manuscripts from the library of the Sunderland Preparative Meeting of the Society of Friends, mostly library records.

Language of material: English

Contents

The Sunderland Meeting is among those listed in the earliest record of Friends' particular meetings in Co. Durham, in 1679. References in the Meeting's own records show that it was purchasing books at least by 1710 and had an established library by 1725. This small group of manuscripts includes rules for the library, catalogues, a borrowing register, and a book of suggestions for purchase, 19th-early 20th century, together with a two-volume manuscript anthology of poems and hymns compiled c.1862-9, probably by members of the Barnard family.

The Sunderland Friends' Library

The purchase of books, for personal edification and for putting at the disposal of the "World's" people, has been a marked feature of Quakerism since its mid-17th century beginnings. Friends have always been attached to the lessons to be learnt from the example of their early martyrs, and fascinated by the history of their Society. These aims, coupled with the campaigns for increased human rights which became a feature of Victorian Quakerism, and continue to the present day, and a desire to shelter impressionable minds from the pernicious influence of unsuitable reading matter, are the clue to the composition of the Sunderland Friends' collection.

The first reference to things bookish in the records of the Preparative Meeting comes in a minute of February 11, 1710, agreeing to purchase ten copies of Robert Barclay's *A Catechism and Confession of Faith* 4th ed. (1701), (Durham C.R.O., Sf/Su 2). Not until 1725 is there an explicit mention of an established library, when custodianship of the books was transferred from John Freeman to Edward Browne "wth an Acc^t. in what Fr^{ds}. hands y^e rest are & when any of s^d. Books are Lent, a Mem^d. to be kept to whom". (Ibid, 10.11.1724).

The Quaker Yearly Meeting for England and Wales reminded all Friends' meetings in 1805 of the importance of "a diligent acquaintance with the Sacred Records [of the Society], and a diligent endeavour to store the Minds of their tender offspring, with the great truths of Christian Redemption". By 1832, the official purchasing policy of the Library was the buying of "Works of our early Friends, which are now becoming scarce; and also ... the addition, from time to time, of the recent Publications of the Society". The public Friends also expressed satisfaction at the "extensive use" being made of the Library. *A catalogue of Books* (1856), pp ii-iii). The Catalogue of the Library was revised, and first printed in 1824, revised and reprinted in 1832 and updated again in 1856 as *A catalogue of books, belonging to the Society of Friends, of Sunderland* (Sunderland, 1856). Of the the items listed in the 1856 edition, 38 were missing from the collection received by the University Library in 1974.

The collection is strong in the 19th century works that form the backbone of many Quaker meeting house libraries, (largely superseded in the 20th century by Friends' private libraries). It also contains a proportion of earlier books. These titles are occasionally polemical, but mostly pious and edificatory works dating from the 18th century, with a much smaller contingent from the 17th century. Most of these earlier books complement the rich late 17th century and very early 18th century holdings of Anglican material in Durham University Library's other Special Collections, which include a good number of controversial anti-Quaker writings by such authors as Thomas Comber, Charles Leslie, Francis Bugg and George Keith.

The small group of manuscripts associated with the collection, and described in this handlist are mainly of interest for the study of Quaker library and intellectual history. The borrowing records (4 and 5 below) show a high interest amongst 19th century and early 20th century Friends in 17th-century and 18th-century books, particularly the missionary work of early travelling ministers. Over the years, William Penn's *Christian Travels*, Isaac Pennington's *Memoirs of his life*, John Woolman's *Journal of his life* and John Richardson's *Account of his life* were perennial favourites; George Fox's *Journal*, although regularly borrowed, did not show the pre-eminence in popularity that we might expect. Amongst 19th century Quaker "saints", Susanna Corder's *Life of Elizabeth Fry* was most in demand.

Friends also regularly consulted the Society's *Christian Discipline*. Of the doctrinal works, two Restoration books retained a leading place; Robert Barclay's *Apology*, originally published in English during 1678, and still being reprinted in the 19th century, remained the standard-bearer of Quaker "theology"; vying with the *Apology* in popularity amongst Sunderland Friends was William Penn's *No Cross, No Crown*, in its 23rd edition by 1854.

The number of attenders of the Sunderland Friends' meeting for worship in the 19th century are unknown; indeed it would be a contradiction of the ethos of Quakerism for such records to have been kept. Therefore, we cannot judge what proportion of Quaker worshippers made use of their Library, or if it was used by outsiders. A brief survey of one year, 1886, reveals that a total of 53 books, accounted for by 36 different titles, were borrowed by 22 different Friends. At least 50% of these titles concerned the first 75 years of Friends' existence from 1650 to 1725, and only one borrower was a woman, though at 5 loans for the year she borrowed twice as many books as the average user of the Library in 1886.

Accession details

Deposited, with its library, by the Sunderland Preparative Meeting of the Society of Friends, 1974.

Form of citation

The form of citation should be GB-0033-SSF, or the collection title manuscripts from the Library of the Sunderland Preparative Meeting of the Society of Friends, and the *reference number*.

To order items in the searchroom, use the collection reference code(s), derived by removing the repository code (GB-0033-), followed by the reference number. Citing the section of the finding aid is useful.

Related material (internal)
Durham University Library

The major part of the surviving library of the Sunderland Preparative Meeting of the Society of Friends, was deposited in Durham University Library in 1972.

The deposit, amounting to c.880 volumes, includes all the early books which now survive. The collection is entirely by and about Quakers from the foundation of the Society of Friends onwards, or about some of Friends' particular interests, such as pacifism. All items within the scope of the published catalogue, ie up to 1856, are kept together. These amount to 680 volumes (600 titles), including c.100 Wing items. The remainder of more recent date (200 volumes) are dispersed in the University Library's general collections on Quakerism.

Related material (elsewhere)

Durham County Record Office

The other records of the Sunderland Preparative Meeting of the Society of Friends, including some library records and references to library matters in the more general records.

Sunderland Friends' Library MSS

1

"Books belonging to the Society of Friends Sunderland"

[title from leather label on front cover]

Note: A considerable number of pages which appear from the stubs to have been written on following 1a. have been cut out.

1 vol. 166 pp.

1a

"Numerical catalogue 1868"

Inventory, with later alterations, deletions and additions, the latest number being 381 and the latest date 1886. Gives book number, title, author, and usually date. The original book numbers have in most cases been crossed out and replaced by a later numeration.

1b

An alphabetical catalogue, in random order within each letter of the alphabet; some books entered under author, others under title. Gives location number, author and title, and occasionally date.

1c

List of "Old Books in Lower Case", 19 titles dated 1672-1861.

1d

List of books in a late Nineteenth Century hand, possibly later accessions than those recorded in a and b.

1e

Jottings of new additions to the Library in the 1890's.

2

Two sheets found loose inside 1.:

Pencil draft and ink fair copy of a report on the Library, [c. 1909?- pencil draft is written on back of a carbon commercial letter bearing this date].

3

"Catalogue of books"

(ms. title written on Sunderland Friends Library bookplate stuck on front cover, with ms. location number: "Shelf P. No.1504").

Inventory. Main list covers items numbered 1 to 483, and is followed by a short additional list. The numbers appear to correspond to the amended numbers in 1a. Gives title, author, date - latest date 1913.

1 vol. 84 pp.

4. - 5

Regulations of the Sunderland Friends Library, 1824, and Borrowing Register 1824-1915.

4 (v.1) 1824-1863/4

Begins with the Library regulations, as approved by Sunderland and Durham Preparative Meeting on August 8, 1824. One regulation states "Friends may have free access to the Library at all times; except for half an hour before and after each Meeting, when Women Friends have the like privilege". The 1856 published catalogue has a simplified version of these rules; for example, omitting the 1824 rule about women Friends, but contains a statement of the Library's purposes and of its purchasing policy.

144 pp.

5 (v.2) 1864-1915

Both volumes give short title or author of book borrowed, the date of loan and return, and the identity of the borrower.

150 pp.

6

"Memorandum Book in which any member may propose a book or books which they would like to have added to the Library" [of Sunderland Friends]

Contains 15 suggestions with the name of the proposer of each. Mostly marked "Got" or "Presented", but one is erased and marked "Objected to". Compiled around the 1880's? (1884 is the latest discoverable date of publication for the books mentioned)

1 vol.

7-8

Manuscript anthology of poems and hymns transcribed, 1862-9. Both volumes are transcribed in copperplate, possibly by several hands. Date of transcription given at end of most items. Earlier volume has inscription Samuel Barnard on front pastedown, and transcription dates 2 December, 1862 - 23 February 1865. The later volume begins 15 August, 1868 and ends 16 August 1869; the 1869 entries are dated at Whitburn, and one earlier entry has the note "Copied by H.M.B. of Rawdon 11 mo 1st 68".

Samuel Barnard appears regularly in the Sunderland Friends' Library Borrowers' Register (5. above) from 1889 until its closing date of 1915.

2 vols. v.1: (90 pp) with Index on p.90; v.2: (90 pp) with numbered index on p.89