Walter Dundas Bathurst Papers, 1883-1923 : Finding Aid

Summary Information

Call number: C1588

Repository: Princeton University. Library. Department of Rare Books and Special Collections
Manuscripts Division
One Washington Road Princeton, New Jersey 08544 USA

Size: 0.4 linear feet
1 box

Language(s) of Material: English

Abstract: Consists primarily of three diaries that William Dundas Bathurst (1859-1940) kept while serving as an officer of the Association Internationale du Congo (AIC) from December 1883 to September 1886.

Location: This collection is stored onsite at Firestone Library.
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Walter Dundas Bathurst (1859-1940) was the son of Henry Thomas Dundas Bathurst (1811-1891), a career civil servant, and Margaret Ann Dundas Bathurst (1834-1916), of London. In 1883, he signed a contract with the Association Internationale du Congo (AIC) to serve for three years as an assistant attached to one of the association's stations.

Bathurst took up his duties at the beginning of February 1884, occupying H.M. Stanley's old room at Vivi beyond Boma on the Congo River, where he came under the direct command of Stanley himself. One of his first jobs was to supervise road-building to link the trading posts that had been established. In August 1884, Bathurst was posted to Kinshasa and worked alongside Arthur Swinburne, H.M. Stanley's former secretary. By the end of his term, Bathurst's role in efforts to gain territory for the Belgian colony had increased to a degree where he was engaging in high-level negotiations with key players, such as the rulers of the Teke people.

After his service with the AIC, Bathurst, with help from his father, continued in his father's footsteps as a civil servant with the Exchequer and Audit Department. He started out as a senior clerk auditing the accounts of the Gold Coast and Lagos in 1889. His service required his residency in Gibraltar for a time in the early 1890s.

Bathurst was married to Alice Matilda Willis (b. 1862) from 1891 until her death in 1917. They had one child, Marjorie Dundas Bathurst (b. 1892). In 1919, Bathurst married Rhona Batstone (1887-1977) with whom he had a son, Thomas Dundas Bathurst (1919-2006).

Principally, this collection consists of three diaries kept by Walter Dundas Bathurst (1859-1940) during his time as an officer with the Association Internationale du Congo (AIC) from December 1883 (with his departure from England) until September 1886. They offer a detailed, first-hand account of Bathurst's involvement in the colonization efforts of King Leopold II in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Also included is some correspondence and ephemera related to Bathurst's time with the AIC as well as other professional correspondence and personal documents. Photographs, documents, and ephemera related to the Bathurst family are also included.

Access

Open for research.

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

Purchase, 2017. (AM 2018-55)

Appraisal

No materials were removed from the collection during 2018 processing beyond routine appraisal practices.

Processing and Other Information

Encoding

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2018-02-21T12:47-0500

Descriptive Rules Used

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

Subject Headings

- Stanley, Henry M. (Henry Morton), 1841-1904—Sources
- Great Britain. Exchequer and Audit Department--Sources.
- International Association of the Congo—Sources.
- Civil service—Great Britain--Sources.
- Teke (African people)--Africa, Central--History--19th century--Sources.
- Indigenous peoples--Africa, Central--History--19th century--Sources
- Indigenous peoples--Congo (Democratic Republic)--History--19th century--Sources.
- Belgium—Colonies—Congo (Democratic Republic).
- Belgium--Colonies--Africa--Administration--Sources.
- Congo (Democratic Republic)—Colonization--Sources.
- Congo (Democratic Republic)—History—19th century--Sources.
- Congo (Democratic Republic)—History—To 1908—Sources.
- Congo (Democratic Republic)—Foreign relations--Belgium--Sources.
- Great Britain—Politics and government—19th century--Sources.
- Diaries -- 19th century.
- Africa
· European history
Relating to Association Internationale du Congo Tenure, 1883-1890

Description: Includes Bathurst's diaries and correspondence.

Diaries, 1883 December 11-1886 September 24

Description: Each diary contains a list of outgoing letters entered on the upper inside cover.

Diary, 1883 December 11-1884 July 26
Description: The second half of the notebook includes a partial script of James Albery's comedy, "The Two Roses," (1870) written in another hand.

Diary, 1884 July 27-1886 February 28
Description: The last couple of pages of the notebook includes a section entitled, "Curious Witch Palavers," in which three related stories are recounted.

Diary, 1886 March 1- September 24

Correspondence, 1884 September 4-1890

A.B. Swinburne, 1884 September 4
Description: A memorandum signed by A.B. Swinburne from Leopoldville, sending supplies to Bathurst at Kinshasa.

Concerning Congo Star, 1890
Description: Correspondence with both the British and Belgian authorities concerning Bathurst's application to be awarded the Congo Star. Incoming letters are in French.

Unused AIC Supply Request Form, circa 1885

General Correspondence, 1888-1895

John Rose Troup, 1889-1890
Description: Four autograph letters by Bathurst's former colleague John Rose Troup, one of the few surviving veterans of the Rear Column of H.M. Stanley's Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, discussing the controversy that broke out about the expedition after their return to England.

Relating to Exchequer and Audit Department, 1888-1895
Description: Correspondents include Henry Thomas Bathurst, C. Mallet, C.L. Ryan, and Richard A. Hoblyn, among others.
Henry Thomas Dundas Bathurst, 1891 September 13
Description: Last letter Bathurst received from his father before his father's death.

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Personal Legal Documents, 1891-1923
Description: Includes marriage and death certificates related to Bathurst's first wife, Alice Matilda, as well as a rental agreement.

Box: B-001180
Folder: 10

Receipt for Bathurst's Stay at a Hotel in Funchal, Madeira, 1886 November 12

Box: B-001180
Folder: 11

Bathurst Family Documents, Photographs, and Ephemera, circa 1890
Description: A couple of items relate to Henry Thomas Dundas Bathurst.

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