

European Manuscripts, Post-1500



Correspondence of Miss Nessy Heywood. 1790-92. Case MS E 5 .H5078.

The Newberry's holdings of modern European manuscripts (post-1500) comprise some 2,000 items, both individual pieces and collections. Principal topics represented include literary works and literary criticism, calligraphy, music, letters and family papers, religious texts, histories, official documents, and military affairs. The principal languages represented are French, Italian, Portuguese, English, German, and Spanish.

French Manuscripts

The principal guide to the Newberry's holdings of modern French manuscripts is Cynthia Wall's Checklist of [Post-1500 French Manuscripts](#). That list, compiled in 1991, enumerates some 440 manuscripts or manuscript collections, either by a French author, written in French, written in France, or concerning French affairs. Consequently, not all are in the French language and some (for example, music manuscripts) may have little, if any, text. One-third of the manuscripts listed by Wall are in the Wing collection, and most of these are of calligraphic interest, although the Wing collection also includes important documents on the history of printing and publishing in France (including many ordinances and arrêts). Somewhat less than a third of the manuscripts (133) are in the Ayer collection, meaning that they relate to American history and particularly to Indian-French relations in North America. Fifty-seven manuscripts (13 percent) are related to music—such as scores, songs, and treatises. The remaining one-quarter (98 items) cover a range of topics, including history, military affairs, and religion. Three large collections should be mentioned:

- The William M. Spencer Collection devoted to Napoleon and his circle (more than 1,000 items) is fully described and many individual items noted in Ségolène de Dainville-Barbiche, "Histoire d'une collection de documents napoléoniens: la collection Spencer à la Newberry Library de Chicago," *Revue de l'institut Napoléon* 137 (1981): 90-103. An

English version of Mme Barbiche's paper is available in the Special Collections Info. File.

- Papers of Count Valentin Esterhazy (1740-1805, 17 vols.) [[Case MS 5002](#)]
- Petitions addressed to governmental bureaus and intra-governmental correspondence (1789-1815, 5 vols..) [[Case MS F 393.682](#)]

Italian Manuscripts

The principal guide to the Newberry's holdings of modern Italian manuscripts is Cynthia Wall's Checklist of [Post-1500 Italian Manuscripts](#). That list, compiled in 1990, enumerates 378 manuscripts or manuscript collections, either by an Italian author, written in Italian, written in Italy, or concerning Italian affairs—consequently, not all are in the Italian language and some (for example, music manuscripts) may have little, if any, text. Perhaps three-quarters of the manuscripts listed by Wall are related to music—for the most part, these will also be listed in D. W. Krummel's *Bibliographical Inventory to the Early Music in the Newberry Library* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1971), pp. 1-20. There are a considerable number of calligraphic manuscripts, including alphabet books, examples of Italian official hands, and writing manuals. Wall's list also includes citations to three collections of Italian family papers which deserve separate mention:

- Archives of the [Parravicini family](#) of Valtellina (15th-19th cents.), ca. 3,600 pieces, largely administrative documents
- Papers of the Angelio family of Barga (16th-19th cents.), ca. 65 pieces, literary in character
- Papers of the [Strozzi family](#) of Florence (16th-19th cents.), 139 pieces, literary in character

Additional information on these family papers can be found in Maria X. [Wells](#), *Italian Post-1600 Manuscripts and Family Archives in North American Libraries* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1992), pp. 67-68. A calendar of part of the Parravicini archives, "The Records of Abbot Giovanni Parravicini, 1726-1779," is available in the Special Collections Info File.

English Manuscripts

The principal guide to the Newberry's holdings of modern English manuscripts is Sarah Cusk's Checklist of [Post-1500 English Manuscripts](#). This list, compiled in 1991, enumerates some 395 manuscripts or manuscript collections, written in English or by English or American authors. The checklist was compiled from the shelf lists of the Case, Wing, and Graff collections. The checklist does not include the Newberry's collection of facsimiles of various English manuscripts in other libraries; entries for such facsimiles will be found in the card catalog. The checklist also does not contain English manuscript material in the Ayer collection; these manuscripts are found in the online catalog. The heterogeneous nature of the manuscripts listed is a good reflection of the broad range of topics that can be studied at the Newberry, for example,

manuscript copies of early-modern prose romances, letters exchanged between Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, and collections of eighteenth century songs.

Other European Manuscripts

- Portuguese Manuscripts are found in the [Greenlee Historical MSS](#) (420). See also the [Luso-Brazilian Collection](#).
- German Manuscripts (200)
- Spanish Manuscripts (30)