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George William Manby Papers

Collection Summary

Title:	George William Manby Papers
Call Number:	MS 94-01
Size:	0.25 linear feet
Acquisition:	Purchased by Martin Bush from Christie, Manson and Woods, 1986
Processed by:	AG, 4-1994; JEF, 4-20-1999; MN, 11-21-2011
Restrictions:	None
Notes:	None

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Content Note

As Secretary of State for the Home Department and Ordnance Department in England, George William Manby devoted much time and effort to developing a system of saving persons who were involved in shipwrecks. The three letterbooks comprising the collection involve this major project and describe many of the procedures used. Manby invented improvements for lifeboats, fire extinguishing, catching persons jumping from burning buildings, and saving from drowning those who had broken through ice. The books in this collection date from 1810 to 1816, and they include Manby's sketches and some of his correspondence.

Biography

George William Manby was born November 28, 1765, at Denver, England, near Downham Market, Norfolk. His father, Matthew Pepper Manby, was a captain in the Welsh fusiliers. George Manby began his schooling at Downham, transferred to a school at Bromley, Middlesex, and eventually studied mathematics at the Tower military drawing room. Later, he joined the Cambridgeshire Militia and achieved the rank of captain. In 1793 he married a woman named Preston and returned to

Denver, but left the home in 1801 because of some domestic problems.

Manby established himself at Clifton, near Briston, England, and devoted his time to writing and illustrating his literary works with engravings from his drawings. A pamphlet he produced in 1803, "An Englishman's Reflections on the Author of the Present Disturbances," regarding Napoleon's threats to invade England, so impressed the Secretary of War, Charles Yorke, that he appointed Manby as a barrack-master at Yarmouth.

A major storm in February 1807, in which 67 people were killed when the snipe gun brig was destroyed near Yarmouth, attracted his attention to shipwrecks. He concluded that communication with the shore was the first avenue toward rescue. He borrowed a mortar from the Board of Ordnance and invented apparatus to throw a rope from the ship to the shore, where a lifeboat was launched to save the victims.

Manby later extended his inventions to lifeboat improvements, fire extinguishing, and catching persons who were jumping from burning buildings, and saving people who had broken through ice from drowning. In recognition of his accomplishments, he was elected as a member of the Royal Society in 1831.

After the death of his first wife in 1814, Manby married Sophia Gooch of Suffield in 1818. He died November 18, 1854 at his home in Southtown, Yarmouth.

Manby's writings include "A Guide from Clifton to the Counties of Monmouth, Glamorgan, etc.," 1802; "An Essay on the Preservation of Shipwrecked Persons, with Descriptive Account of the Apparatus and Manner of Using It," 1812; "Journal of a Voyage to Greenland," 1822; "Hints for Improving the Criminal Law, with Suggestions for a New Convict Colony," 1831; "Reminiscences," 1839; and "A Description of the Nelson Museum at Pedestal House," at Yarmouth, 1849. (Summarized from *The Dictionary of National Biography* by Avis German).

Series Listing

Series 1	Box 1 FF 1-3	Letterbooks
Series 2	Box 1 FF 4	Processing Notes

Box and Folder Listing

Series 1 – Letterbooks

Box 1	FF 1	Book 1. This book includes letters and reports written by Manby dating from 1810 to 1813 regarding his life-saving equipment and his efforts to put his apparatus to use along the coast of England. He conducted training sessions for saving the lives of shipwrecked victims, and instructed officers along the coast in the techniques of saving these people. It also contains a detailed account of various locations and the peculiar dangers that each place had along the coast. Included in this account are several maps and sketches drawn by Manby. Also included is a report from a committee representing the Highland Society of Scotland and a recommendation for the adoption of his plans.
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| Box 1 | FF 2 | Book 2. This book contains extensive correspondence with the Secretary of State from the Home Department and Board of Ordnance from 1814 to 1815. Many of the letters regard Manby's attempts to call attention to his plan concerning saving lives of shipwrecked persons and putting his plan to use. Also contains a copy of the agreement dated October 1811 between Manby and Henry Gouldburn which granted Manby a leave of absence for two years so that he may work on the development of his plan. The letter concerning his absence is in Book 1. |
| Box 1 | FF 3 | Book 3. This book contains several journal entries dating from 1813 to 1833 regarding the development of Manby's plan to save shipwrecked persons. Also included is a letter dated October 2, 1873 from Manby to Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Shirk asking her to tell Princess Victoria about his plan. An essay of his quest for approval of his project is also included. This book also contains several sketches of lighthouses, castles, and other sketches of Manby's. Please note that this book is in a weakened condition. One cover is missing and some of the sections are no longer attached. Also, some of the handwriting is difficult to read. |

Series 2 – Processing Notes

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| Box 1 | FF 4 | Contains notes of Avis German, collection processor. |
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