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# Guide to the Henry Hunt Papers MS 563 1760-1838



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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Identifier</b>	ICU.SPCL.MS563HHUNT
<b>Title</b>	Hunt, Henry. Papers. MS 563
<b>Date</b>	1760-1838
<b>Size</b>	2.5 linear feet (2 boxes)
<b>Repository</b>	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

**Abstract** The collection, Codex MS 563, contains correspondence to, from, and about English political reformer and orator Henry Hunt. The collection also contains other papers, such as business agreements and financial settlements, petitions, and poems. The material dates from 1760 to 1838, with the bulk of it dating from 1819 to 1831.

## Information on Use

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Henry Hunt Papers. MS 563, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

## Biographical Note

Henry Hunt was born on November 6, 1773 to Thomas and Elizabeth Powell Hunt, on a prosperous farm in Wiltshire, England. He grew up and was educated in and around Wiltshire. During the 1790s, Hunt served in the local yeoman cavalry, and upon succeeding to his father's estate set himself up as a gentleman farmer. On January 19, 1796, Hunt married Ann Holcomb. The couple had two sons, Thomas and Henry, and a daughter Ann. Henry and Ann separated in 1802, and it is believed that Henry settled with his mistress Catherine Vince.

The dissolution of Hunt's marriage coincided with his political radicalization around the turn of the century. He became a follower of Major John Cartwright and a supporter of reformist MP Francis Burdett. Hunt himself made several unsuccessful runs for Parliament, running on programs of radical democratic reform that included annual Parliaments and universal suffrage. Hunt's political activities made him the target of numerous spurious legal actions and politically

motivated prosecution attempts, which forced him to quit farming in the early 1810s and eventually move to London.

Hunt's political reputation derived mainly from his skills as a public speaker; detractors dubbed him "Orator Hunt." He was invited to speak at the mass meetings at Spa Fields 1816, which devolved into the Spa Fields riots. More significantly, he was the featured speaker at a Manchester rally that took place on August 16, 1819. Organized by the Manchester Political Union, the rally was a reaction to poor economic conditions following the Napoleonic Wars, limited suffrage in the North of England, and legislation such as the protectionist Corn Laws, which imposed high import duties on foreign grain, keeping food prices high and preventing adequate food access for the working classes. Hunt was arrested at the rally on a warrant issued that day, but as the cavalry charged through the crowd to get to him, chaos ensued and about 15 people were killed. The gathering had taken place in St. Peter's Field, and so the event was dubbed the Peterloo Massacre in an ironic reference to the Battle of Waterloo. Hunt was tried in early 1820 for sedition, and was sentenced to a term of 30 months at Ilchester Gaol.

During his incarceration, Hunt kept busy writing. He drafted petitions and speeches, wrote letters, and attempted to launch repeated inquiries into the circumstances of his trial and conviction. He complained vociferously about the conditions of his imprisonment (he spent about 40 days in solitary confinement) and about prison conditions generally. His time in prison also produced *The Memoirs of Henry Hunt, Esq.*, a three-volume account of his life and political activities published between 1820 and 1822.

Upon his release, Hunt returned to London, where he was elected city auditor in 1826. Ever the reformer, he pushed for openness and accountability with the city's accounts. He served until 1829, and in December 1830 was elected to Parliament from Preston, where he continued to fight for universal suffrage, parliamentary reforms, improved labor conditions and agricultural policies, and an end to the Irish tithe and expansion of the English Poor Laws to Ireland.

After leaving farming, Hunt turned to various business ventures to make money. One, launched just before his imprisonment, was a "Breakfast Powder" made of roasted grain that was meant to be tax-exempt, an affordable alternative to the heavily-taxed tea and coffee. After prison he went into the boot blacking business, selling bottles in England and Paris with progressive slogans on the labels. The boot-blackening venture provided cartoonists of the period with easy material, but did not survive past 1830.

Hunt's term in Parliament ended in 1832 and he failed to win re-election. He died in February 1835 at Arlesford, Hampshire, shortly after suffering a stroke.

## **Scope Note**

The collection was originally catalogued as Codex MS 563. The collection is divided into three series: Correspondence, Documents, and Oversize.

Series I, Correspondence, contains letters to and from Henry Hunt, as well as some correspondence among his associates. Much of the correspondence dates from Hunt's 1819-1922 prison term. Material is arranged chronologically, with undated material at the end.

Series II, Documents, contains business agreements and other records, petitions and legal documents as well as manuscripts of two poems by Thomas Hunt, Henry's father. Material is arranged chronologically, with undated material at the end arranged alphabetically by author.

Series III, Oversize, contains oversize correspondence and a petition.

Though small, the collection is notable for the correspondents represented and the letters from Hunt's imprisonment. It includes correspondence with radical Scottish MP Joseph Hume, prison reformer and suffrage supporter Charles Pearson, writer and editor Richard Alfred Davenport, and one letter from Hunt to the Marquis de Lafayette. Of particular interest is a short series of letters from Ellen Courtenay, mother of a child by Irish Catholic political hero Daniel O'Connell. Arrested long after the child's birth for debts incurred in raising it, Courtenay appealed several times to Hunt for whatever assistance he could give her. Hunt forwarded a copy of the first of her letters to O'Connell, accompanied by a letter of his own indicating no great admiration for O'Connell's character and an inclination to believe Courtenay.

Among the other documents, items of interest include Hunt's separation agreement with wife Ann and a draft page of his memoir. Series III includes an 1821 petition (not apparently signed by Henry Hunt) regarding conditions at Ilchester Gaol.

## **Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

O'Gorman Mahon. Papers

## **Subject Headings**

- Hume, Joseph, 1777-1855
- Hunt, Henry, 1773-1835
- Pearson, Charles, 1794-1862
- Corn laws (Great Britain)
- England. Parliament. House of Commons

- Great Britain--History--1800-1837
- Great Britain--History--19th century
- Great Britain--Politics and government--1800-1837
- Great Britain--Politics and government--19th century
- Ilchester Gaol
- Peterloo Massacre, Manchester, England, 1819

## **INVENTORY**

### **Series I: Correspondence**

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 1**

Correspondence, 1793:

- William Brake, Shipton near Tedbury Glostershire, to F. Lawrence, London. October 29, 1793

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 2**

Correspondence, 1803-1805:

- Earl of Pembroke, London, to Henry Hunt, Devizes, August 14, 1803
- Henry Hunt, Devizes, to "My Lord" [Pembroke], August, 1803 (draft of August 15 letter with agreement between Henry Hunt and Thomas Bowring, April 13, 1803, on overleaf)
- Henry Hunt, Chisenbury House, to "My Lord" [Pembroke], August 15, 1803
- Earl of Pembroke, Margate, to Sir J. Me. Poore, Wiltshire, September 11, 1803
- S. S. Hunt, London, to Richard Alfred Davenport, London, May 17, 1804
- Henry Hunt, Chisenbury House, Pewsey Wells, to "My Lord" [Marquis of Lansdowne at Bow-Wood], April 30, 1805

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 3**

Correspondence, 1812-1815:

- Henry Hunt, London, to Richard Alfred Davenport, London, October 1, 1812
- Unsigned, to "Monsieur" (in French), January 20, 1812
- Henry Hunt, Newington, to Richard Alfred Davenport, London, February 17, 1813
- Unsigned, to "Dear Sir," December 8, 1814

#### **Box 1**

##### **Folder 4**

Correspondence: 1819

- John Cartwright to Henry Hunt, February 11, 1819
- Henry Hunt, New Bailey Prison, to the Manchester Magistrates (copy) August 18, 1819
- Henry Hunt, New Bailey Prison, to the Manchester Magistrates, August 26, 1819 (with affidavit on overleaf)
- Henry Hunt, New Bailey Prison, to "the above nam'd Defendants" October 16, 1819
- Henry Hunt, New Bailey Prison to the Sitting Magistrates of New Bailey Prison, "Wednesday Morn," 1819

#### **Box 1**

**Folder 5**

Correspondence, 1820:

- Henry Hunt, Ilchester, to Richard Alfred Davenport, June 18, 1820
- Henry Hunt, Ilchester, to J. Chitty, London, November 28, 1820
- Henry Hunt, Ilchester, to Richard Alfred Davenport, Buxton, July 11, 1820
- Henry Hunt, Ilchester, to Richard Alfred Davenport, Buxton, July 18, 1820
- Henry Hunt, Ilchester, to Richard Alfred Davenport, Buxton, September 19, 1820
- Henry Hunt, Ilchester, to Richard Alfred Davenport, December 24, 1820

**Box 1****Folder 6**

Correspondence, 1821:

- R. Wilson, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, March 15, 1821 (with envelope)
- Joseph Hume, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, April 3, 1821 (with envelope)
- William Shepherd to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, May 13, 1821?
- Thomas Hunt, Ilchester, to Thomas Addis, June 4, 1821 (copy)
- R. Wilson, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, July 4, 1821 (with envelope)
- Henry Hunt, Ilchester, to Richard Alfred Davenport, December 21, 1821
- Charles Pearson to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, circa 1821

**Box 1****Folder 7**

Correspondence [1 of 2], 1822:

- Joseph Hume, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, January 29, 1822 (with envelope)
- H[um]ph[r]ey Bennet, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, February 20, 1822 (with envelope)
- Joseph Hume, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, February 22, 1822 (with envelope)
- John C. Hobhouse, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, February 23, 1822
- W. Shepherd to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, February 25, 1822
- H. Bennet, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, February 27, 1822 (with envelope)
- H. Bennet, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, April 3, 1822 (envelope only)

**Box 1****Folder 8**

Correspondence [2 of 2], 1822:

- Lord Lansdowne, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, May 8, 1822 (with envelope)
- R. Wilson, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, June 5, 1822 (with envelope)
- H. Bennet, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, June 13, 1822 (envelope only)
- R. Wilson, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, June 28, 1822 (with envelope)
- Joseph Hume, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, July 2, 1822
- R. Wilson to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, July 9, 1822
- Joseph Hume, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, July 13, 1822 (envelope only)
- R. Wilson, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, August 3, 1822 (with envelope)

**Box 1****Folder 9**

Correspondence, 1823-1824:

- Charles Pearson to Henry Hunt, November 17, 1823 (with note, Charles Pearson to Mr. Froggate, November 17, 1823)
- M. Parkins to Henry Hunt, March 29, 1824

- Henry Hunt, London, to Richard Alfred Davenport, London, December 29, 1824

**Box 1**

**Folder 10**

Correspondence, 1825:

- Henry Hunt, London, to the Chairman of the Select Committee on County Rates, March 18, 1825
- S. B. Davidge & Co., Royal Coburg Theatre, to Henry Hunt, London, December 7, 1825
- Henry Hunt, London, to S. B. Davidge & Co., Royal Coburg Theatre, December 12, 1825

**Box 1**

**Folder 11**

Correspondence, 1826:

- Henry Hunt, London, to Richard Alfred Davenport, January 5, 1826
- J. Thelwall, London, to Richard Alfred Davenport, January 10, 1826
- Sir Charles Wolseley, Brussels, to Henry Hunt, London, October 30, 1826
- Henry Hunt, London, to Richard Alfred Davenport, November 4, 1826

**Box 1**

**Folder 12**

Correspondence, 1827-1828:

- Henry Hunt, London, to Richard Alfred Davenport, December 23, 1827
- A. T. Francia, Ostend, to "My Silent Friend," June 23, 1828
- Henry Hunt, London, to Richard Alfred Davenport, London, December 5, 1828

**Box 1**

**Folder 13**

Correspondence, 1829:

- Lord Vassal Holland, London, to Mr. Tinmouth, Durham, March 11, 1829 (with envelope)
- J. Hume, London, to William Tinmouth, Durham, March 17, 1829
- Charles Wolseley, London?, to Henry Hunt, London, December 18, 1829

**Box 1**

**Folder 14**

Correspondence, 1831:

- R. M. Martin to Henry Hunt, January 20, 1831
- Henry Hunt, London, to General Lafayette, September 1, 1831
- Henry Hunt, London, to Daniel O'Connell, Dublin, November 25 (with copy of letter from Ellen Courtenay to Henry Hunt, November 23, 1831)
- Ellen Courtenay, Temple Bar, to Henry Hunt, London, December 7, 1831
- Ellen Courtenay, Fleet Prison, to Henry Hunt, London, December 12, 1831
- Ellen Courtenay, Fleet Prison, to Henry Hunt, London, December 16, 1831
- Ellen Courtenay, Fleet Prison, to Henry Hunt, London, December 28, 1831

**Box 1**

**Folder 15**

Correspondence, 1834, 1838:

- Henry Hunt, London, to Richard Alfred Davenport, London, July 31, 1834



- J. W. Chippendale, London?, to Monsieur [Richard Alfred] Davenport, Boulogne, France, November 5, 1838

**Box 1**

**Folder 16**

Correspondence, undated:

- John Barr, Somer's Town, to Henry Hunt

**Box 1**

**Folder 17**

Correspondence, undated:

- Humphrey Bennet, to unknown recipient
- Henry Hunt, 8 Norfolk Street Strand, to Robert Bird
- Lady Charlotte Lindsay, Montague House, to Henry Hunt, April 7
- Charles Pearson, Hertfordshire, to Mr. Froggate, London
- Charles Pearson to Henry Hunt, London
- A. S. Thelwall to Richard Alfred Davenport
- Unsigned, to "Sir"

**Series II: Documents**

**Box 1**

**Folder 18**

Hunt, Thomas – "The Gentleman's Scull [sic]" and "The Lady's Scull," July 23, 1760

**Box 1**

**Folder 19**

Henry Hunt, et al. – Parish of Enford, Cattle Pioneers Resolution, May 4, 1798

**Box 1**

**Folder 20**

Bond for Provision of Ann Hunt and Children (Henry and Ann Hunt Separation), September 6, 1802

**Box 1**

**Folder 21**

Hunt, Henry and James Target, Gamekeeping Agreement, February 20, 1811

**Box 1**

**Folder 22**

Hunt, Henry – Subscription Account Statement of Payment, July 10, 1820

**Box 1**

**Folder 23**

Tripp, Henry – "Mr. Tripp's Opinion" (Prison Rules), March 22, 1821

**Box 1**

**Folder 24**

Hunt, Henry – Memoir Excerpt (manuscript draft, numbered 368) with letter from Henry Hunt, Ilchester, to Richard Alfred Davenport, "Tuesday 19th Day Solitary," on overleaf, circa 1821

**Box 1**

**Folder 25**

Hunt, Henry and James Down – Agreement, September 6, 1822

**Box 1**

**Folder 26**

Hunt, Henry and John Epps – Rental Agreement, October 13, 1823

**Box 1**

**Folder 27**

Hunt, Henry, Charles Wolseley, and Frederick Stade – Blacking Manufacture and Sales Agreement, July 17, 1828

**Box 1**

**Folder 28**

Hunt, Henry, Thomas Sunderland, and Levy Zachariah – Business Agreement, May 15, 1830

**Box 1**

**Folder 29**

Berthold, Henry – Petition to the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament Assembled, undated

**Box 1**

**Folder 30**

Hunt, Thomas – “Song,” undated

**Box 1**

**Folder 31**

Pearson, Charles – Bankruptcy Settlement with Henry Hunt, undated

**Box 1**

**Folder 32**

Unsigned Manuscript “Read this and tremble . . .,” undated

**Series III: Oversize**

**Box 2**

**Folder 1**

Correspondence, 1802-1828:

- Earl of Pembroke, Wilton House, to Henry Hunt, Anesbury, Wiltshire, August 20, 1801
- Henry Hunt, Middleton Cottage, to William Bryant, London, January 1, 1819 (with list of names and addresses on overleaf)
- Sir Robert T. Wilson, London, to Henry Hunt, Ilchester, March 1, 1821 (with envelope)
- Henry Hunt, London, to Richard Alfred Davenport, London, July 3, 1825
- Sir Charles Wolseley, Brussels, to Henry Hunt, London, March 11, 1827
- [Sir Charles Wolseley], Brussels, to Henry Hunt, London, February 17, 1828

**Box 2**

**Folder 2**

Petition to William Hanning, High Sheriff of the County of Somerset, 1821