Descriptive Summary

Creator: Wesley, John, 1703-1791.
Title: John Wesley papers, 1735-1791
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 153
Extent: 2.0 cubic feet (4 boxes)
Abstract: Consists of diaries, correspondence, and related materials of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access
Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction
All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Related Materials in Other Repositories
Collection on John Wesley (Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University), John Wesley Correspondence (Methodist Library, Drew University), Wesley Family papers (Rubenstein Library, Duke University), and Wesley Family papers (University of Manchester Library)

Related Materials in This Repository
Charles Wesley papers (MSS 159) and Wesleyana Collection (RG 020-3)

Source
Gifts and purchases since 1911. Some materials in this collection were previously part of MSS 100 at Rose Library.

Custodial History
A large portion of the collection was part of the R. Thursfield Smith Collection, which Warren Akin Candler purchased from W. H. Smith in 1911. The 1736 diary was also from the R.
Thursfield Smith Collection, although acquired separately from Bishop Eugene Russell Hendrix prior to 1911. Additional gifts and purchases from 1929, 1941, 1970, and 1994. The majority of this collection was in the possession of the Rose Library (MSS 100) prior to being transferred to Pitts Theology Library in January, 2018. The materials from the Rose Library were added to the existing John Wesley collection at Pitts Theology Library (MSS 153). Some materials were previously part of an oversized bound volume containing letters of Wesley family members and other earlier Methodists. These letters were removed from the bound volume due to conservation concerns and all of these letters are marked with the note OBV1 and a page number to retain provenance information. When provenance for a particular item is known, that information is provided at the item level.

Citation
[after identification of item(s)], John Wesley Papers, MSS 153, Archives and Manuscript Department, Pitts Theology Library, Emory University.

Processing
Processed by Rose Library staff; Nancy Watkins, 1997; Brandon Wason, February 2018.

Collection Description

Biographical Note
John Wesley (1703-1791) was a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford University; presbyter of the Church of England; and founder of the Methodist movement. He was born on June 17, 1703 at Epworth, Lincolnshire, England. He was the second son of the Anglican priest Samuel Wesley (1662-1735) and Susanna Annesley Wesley (1669-1742). Though Wesley's parents were committed to the Church of England, his grandparents on both sides were Nonconformists. John Wesley graduated from Christ Church, Oxford University, in 1724. He was ordained deacon in 1725, elected a fellow of Lincoln College in 1726, and ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1728. Wesley returned to Oxford in 1729 to fulfill the residential requirements of his fellowship. While there he joined his brother Charles and others in a religious group called the Holy Club. Group members were derisively called "Methodists" because of their emphasis on study and devotion.

In 1735, John Wesley, along with his brother Charles, sailed to colonial Georgia. John Wesley was motivated by the opportunity to practice primitive Christianity among Native Americans, yet he was distracted from that goal by his duties to oversee the spiritual lives of the colonists. Wesley's ministry in Savannah was mostly unsuccessful and after a failed relationship with a young woman named Sophia Hopkey, he left Georgia and returned to England in 1737. In May of 1738, through the influence of Moravian believers, John Wesley had a personal religious experience. He began an itinerant ministry preaching to the unchurched and organizing them into Methodist societies.

Following the end of the American Revolution in 1784, Wesley took it upon himself to ordain preachers to serve in the United States. Though his intention was to remain within the Church of England, American Methodists formed their own, separate denomination in December of 1784. They called themselves the "Methodist Episcopal Church." Wesley continued to oversee the
growth and development of the Methodist movement until his death. John Wesley died on March 2, 1791 in London.

Publication Note

Scope and Content Note
The collection includes three of John Wesley's diaries. The original 1736 diary documents part of his trip to Georgia (1735-1738) with his brother Charles, and is written partially in the cipher they sometimes used in their letters. The other two diaries are photocopies of the 1735 and 1737 volumes held by Methodist Archives in London (which has since been transferred to the University of Manchester).


Other materials in the collection relate to John Wesley's life and ministry. This includes an affidavit against John Wesley by Captain Robert Williams. The affidavit concerns Wesley's failed romantic relationship with Sophia Hopkey during the time he was in Georgia and describes his repeated attempts to meet with her in private after her marriage to William Williamson. As a result of his actions, Wesley was tried by a grand jury, indicted, and released on bail. Before the trial was held, Wesley left Savannah "in a clandestine manner" and returned to England. Included is a pasted-in print copy of the excerpt from Wesley's diary that is a response to Captain Williams' statement and a handwritten copy of a letter written by Wesley to Williams. Other items in this series include an autobiographical sketch by Thomas Hanby, which contains John Wesley's manuscript corrections and John Wesley's epitaph on Dr. Dodd. The last item is an undated fragment consisting of a list of thirty-eight names and the church offenses they committed, including drunkenness, gaming, racing, dancing, railing, and scolding. The number of those expelled is totaled at the bottom.

Arrangement Note
The collection is arranged in three series: (I) Diaries, (II) Correspondence and Letters, and (III) Fragments and Other materials. The first series is in chronological order. The second series is divided into three groups: (A) correspondence and letters to individuals, (B) facsimiles and reproductions of letters to individuals, and (C) printed circular letters. Each group in the second series is in chronological order. The third series is in chronological order.
## Container List

### Series I. Diaries (1735-1737)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1   | 1      | 1735 Oct 17 - 1736 Apr 30 [Photocopy]  
Photocopy from the Colman Collection, Vol. XI, Methodist Archives, London |
| 1   | 2      | 1736 May 1 - 1737 Feb 11 [partially in cipher]  
This diary was in the possession of Henry Moore, John Wesley's executor. R. Thursfield Smith acquired it from Moore and sold it to Bishop Eugene Russell Hendrix who, in 1918, gave it to Bishop Warren Akin Candler for Emory University. In print *Wesley Works* 18:381-472. |
| 1   | 3      | 1737 Feb 12 - Aug 31 [Photocopy]  
Photocopy from the Colman Collection, Vol. XIII, Methodist Archives, London |

### Series II. Correspondence and Letters (1738-1791, undated)

#### A. Correspondence with individuals, arranged by date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2   | 1      | John Wesley to Susanna (Annesley) Wesley, July 6, 1738, Utph (ALS, 2 pages).  
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 1:249-250 and *Wesley Works* 25:556–57. |
| 2   | 2      | Philip Henry Molther to John Wesley, [January 25, 1740, London] (ANS, final 8 lines [fragment]).  
Also included are additional notes (4 lines) from Joseph Hutton; 11 lines from Joseph Hutton [his son]; and 11 lines from Joseph Verding. A handwritten copy and an explanatory note follow in the same folder. |
| 2   | 3      | Charles Wesley to John Wesley, October 23-24, 1740, no place (AL, 3 pages).  
| 2   | 4      | John Wesley to Howell Harris, March 3, 1746, Newcastle upon Tyne (ALS, 2 pages).  
| 2   | 5      | John Wesley to Ebenezer Blackwell, April 20, 1748, Dublin (ALS, 2 pages).  
Extracted from OVB1:1; in print Telford 2:148 and *Wesley Works* 26:311. |
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 3:25 and *Wesley Works* 26:395-96. |
| 2   | 7      | John Wesley to John Bennet, March 12, 1751, Bristol (ALS, 2 pages). |
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 3:63 and Wesley Works 26:452-53.

2 8 John Wesley to Mary (Goldhawk/Vazeille) Wesley, April 2, 1751, no place (ALS, 3 pages). Extracted from OVB1:2; in print Wesley Works 26:456–57.


2 18 John Wesley to Elizabeth (Harvey) Woodhouse, April 23, 1764, Hutton Rudby (AL, 1 page). Signature cut away. From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 4:240 and Wesley Works 27:363–64.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Recipient</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>July 5, 1764</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>Leeds</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page. From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 4:252 and Wesley Works 27:375.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>November 2, 1764</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page. From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 4:274-275 and Wesley Works 27:399.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>November 6, 1764</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page. From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 4:275 and Wesley Works 27:400.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>May 2, 1766</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne</td>
<td>AL, 1 page. Signature cut away. From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 5:9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>November 7, 1766</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page. From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 5:29-30.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>November 30, 1766</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>ALS, 2 pages. From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 5:31-32.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>March 29, 1767</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>Port Patrick</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page. From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 5:45.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>August 27, 1767</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>Witney</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page. From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 5:62.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>To Whom</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>31 March 1767</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>33 December 1766</td>
<td>Emma Moon</td>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>34 December 1767</td>
<td>Elizabeth (Harvey) Woodhouse</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>37 January 1768</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>38 January 1768</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>40 February 1768</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>Shoreham</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 January 1769</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 January 1769</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 January 1770</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 January 1770</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 March 1770</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 January 1771</td>
<td>John Wesley</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Recipient(s)</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>July 7, 1772</td>
<td>John Wesley to Hannah Ball</td>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>AL, 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dec 11, 1773</td>
<td>John Wesley to Peter Garforth</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>May 6, 1774</td>
<td>John Wesley to John Atlay</td>
<td>Whitehaven</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>June 12, 1774</td>
<td>John Wesley to Miss Lewin</td>
<td>Weardale</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>August 28, 1774</td>
<td>John Wesley to John Bredin</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>September 30, 1774</td>
<td>John Wesley to Mr. Burke</td>
<td>near Bristol</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>January 24, 1776</td>
<td>John Wesley to Isaac Andrews</td>
<td>[Scarborough]</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>October 12, 1778</td>
<td>John Wesley to Cornelius Bayley (spelled &quot;Bailey&quot;)</td>
<td>near London</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>October 17, 1778</td>
<td>John Wesley to &quot;Sammy&quot; Samuel Bradburn</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>November 9, 1779</td>
<td>John Wesley to John Bredin</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>September 22, 1781</td>
<td>John Wesley to John Bredin</td>
<td>near Bristol</td>
<td>ALS, 1 page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8
3 23 John Wesley to Robert Lindsay, October 7, 1781, Bristol (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 7:85.

3 24 John Wesley to Jane (Hilton) Barton, November 6, 1781, London (ALS, 1 page).
In print Telford 7:87-88.

3 25 John Wesley to Ellen Gretton Christian, February 12, 1782, Lambeth (ALS, 1 page).
In print Telford 7:104-105.

3 26 John Wesley to Joseph Benson, February 22, 1782, London (ALS, 2 pages).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 7:106.

3 27 John Wesley to Mrs. Nuttal, May 7, 1782, Leeds (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 7:122.

From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 7:132.

3 29 John Wesley to Robert Hall, Jr., September 6, 1783, Leeds (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 7:189.

3 30 John Wesley to Richard Rodda, October 3, 1783, Bristol (ALS, 1 page).
Extracted from OVB1:16.

2 32 John Wesley to Mr. Churchey (fragment containing address only), 1783 (AN, 1 pages).
Possibly the address for Wesley's letter to the unidentified man, Dec 10, 1783 (Dallas, Texas, Harlan Crow Library).

3 31 John Wesley to Francis Wrigley, June 20, 1784, Scarborough (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 7:220.

3 32 John Wesley to Charles Atmore, March 3, 1786, Bristol (ALS, 1 page). Includes cut-out address fragment. Also contains a manuscript facsimile as above.
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 7:321.

3 33 John Wesley to Sarah Crosby, Oct 18, 1786, no place (ALS, 1 page).
Part of the original MSS 153 (purchased June 1994).

3 34 John Wesley to Henry Moore, November 4, 1786, London (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 7:349.

4 39 Sarah Wesley (1760-1828) to John Wesley; [1786] Dec 29, Chesterfield [Street, London] (ALS, 3 pages). Partially mutilated, "this letter was never sent."

3 35 John Wesley to Ann (Foard) Thornton, February 4, 1787, London (ALS, 1 page and postscript).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 7:367.
John Wesley to "My Dear Brother" [unaddressed], July 2, 1787 [?], Dublin (ALS, 1 page).
Extracted from OVB1:17.

John Wesley to "My dear Brother" [unaddressed], Aug 7, 1787, Birmingham (ALS, 1 page).
Part of the original MSS 153 collection.
Note: this letter has been judged a forgery by Frank Baker (in his manuscript list), Richard Heitzenrater, Randy Maddox, and Ted Campbell.

John Wesley to Adam Clarke, December 8, 1787, London (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:53.

John Wesley to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley, April 12, 1788, Manchester (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:53-54.

John Wesley to Sarah Wesley, April 21, 1788; Blackburn (AL, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:56.

Sarah Wesley (1760-1828) to John Wesley; 1788 May 24, Chesterfield Street, [London] (ALS, 2 pages). "I shall take it kind of you to burn this letter."

John Wesley to Catherine Warren, July 22, 1788, near London (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; Telford 8:75-76.

John Wesley to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley, July 25, 1788, City Road [London] (ALS, 1 page).
In print Telford 8:76.

John Wesley to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley; August 7, 1788; North Green (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:81.

John Wesley to George Baldwin, March 14, 1789, Kingswood (ALS, 1 page).
Extracted from OVB1:18.

John Wesley to Jane Bisson Cock (Jane Cork?), April 7, 1789, Dublin (ALS, 1 page).
Extracted from OVB1:19; in print Telford 8:128.

John Wesley to "Billy" William Simpson, April 12, 1789, near Longford (ALS, 1 page).
Extracted from OVB1:20.

John Wesley to John Bredin, June 1, 1789, Londonderry (ALS, 1 page).
Extracted from OVB1:21; in print Telford 8:139.

John Wesley to Jane (Bisson) Cock (Jane Cork?); August 3, 1789, Leeds (ALS, 1 page).
Extracted from OVB1:22; in print Telford 8:159.

4 10 John Wesley to Jane (Bisson) Cock (Jane Cork?), November 3, 1789, no place
(ALS, 2 pages).
Extracted from OVB1:23; in print Telford 8:183.

4 11 John Wesley to George Holder, November 29, 1789, near London (ALS, 1 page).
Also contains a manuscript copy.
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:189.

4 12 John Wesley to "Sally" Sarah (Mallet) Boyce, December 15, 1789, Canterbury
(ALS, 1 page). On verso is note by John Wesley, undated (AN, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:190.

4 13 John Wesley to "Tommy" Thomas Rutherford], January 22, 1790, London (ALS,
1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:197.

4 14 John Wesley to "Tommy" Thomas Tattershall, February 28, 1790, London (ALS,
1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:203.

4 15 John Wesley to Ann Loxdale Coke, March 27, 1790, no place (ALS, 4 pages
[fragment??]).
Extracted from OVB1:24.

4 16 John Wesley to Sarah Wesley, July 31, 1790, Bristol (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:229-230.

4 17 John Wesley to "Sister" Gobby, August 12, 1790, Haverford (ALS, 1 page).
Extracted from OVB1:25.

4 18 John Wesley to Sarah Wesley, October 5, 1790, London (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:239

4 19 John Wesley to Sarah Wesley, October 27, 1790, Hinxworth (AL, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection; in print Telford 8:243

4 20 John Wesley to Sarah (Gwynne) Wesley, December 20, 1790, West Street
[London] (ALS, 1 page).
From the R. Thursfield Smith Collection

4 41 Sarah Wesley (1760-1828) to "My dearest Uncle and Friend" [John Wesley?],
[179??], [London] (AL, 2 pages [incomplete]).

4 36 William Law to John Wesley; undated, no place (ALS, 2 pages).
Extracted from OBV1:27.

B. Facsimiles and reproductions of letters to individuals, arranged by date

4 21 John Wesley to the Rev. Samuel Walker, November 20, 1755, London (ALS, 2
pages). Manuscript facsimile.

4  26  John Wesley to Nancy Jarvis, March 31, 1790, no place (ALS, 1 page).
    Photocopy.

4  22  John Wesley to John Bredin, May 17, 1781, Manchester (ALS, 1 page).
    Manuscript facsimile.

4  23  John Wesley to "Tommy" Thomas Taylor, January 6, 1791, London (ALS, 1
    page). Photocopy.

4  24  John Wesley to Thomas Greathead, January 22, 1791, London (ALS, 1 page).
    Facsimile.

    Facsimile.

C. Printed circular letters, arranged by date

4  27  John Wesley, circular letter to "My Dear Brother" [unaddressed], November 24,
    1767, London (PLS, 2 pages).

4  28  John Wesley, circular letter to "Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North
    America," September 10, 1784, Bristol (PL, 2 pages).

Series III: Fragments and Other Materials (1739, 1779-1788, undated)

4  29  Robert Williams, The Life and Conversation of that Holy Man Mr. John Wesley,
    during his Abode at Georgia (Affidavit), 1739 Mar 14.
    Part of the original MSS 153 collection.

4  30  Thomas Hanby, Autobiographical sketch, 29 pages (pages 25-26 missing),
    November 12, 1779, Liverpool; and note to John Wesley, 7 pages Manuscript
    corrections by John Wesley.

4  31  Thomas Coke, Appointment as superintendent for American church, 1 page
    (facsimile), September 2, 1784, (signed by John Wesley)

4  32  Robert Gamble, Appointment as elder, 1 page (facsimile), August 10, 1788.
    (signed by John Wesley)

4  33  Thomas Owens, Appointment as deacon, 1 page (facsimile). August 10, 1788.
    (signed by John Wesley)

4  34  John Wesley, 8 lines; epitaph on Dr. Dodd, undated.
    Extracted from OBV1:26.

4  35  John Wesley, Church discipline fragment, undated.
    Part of the original MSS 153 collection.

4  37  John Wesley's tomb inscription manuscript, undated.

4  38  Wesley family genealogy, manuscript, undated.