

UNIV ONLINE CATALOGUES

UC:S17 Papers of Robert Clarke (Fellow 1777-82)

Robert Clarke, a Durham man, matriculated at Christ Church in October 1772, taking his BA there in 1776. In June 1777 he was elected a William of Durham Fellow, being admitted to the same in December of that year. As Fellow he held various College offices, namely Praelector in Greek for 1778/9–1781/2, Bursar for 1779/80–1780/1, Moderator of junior undergraduates for 1781/2 and Dean for 1780/1–1781/2. He also worked as a tutor, having (according to the Admissions Register) 1 pupil in 1778, 16 in 1779, 13 in 1780, 15 in 1781, and 3 in 1782.

Early in 1782, Clarke was elected to serve for as Bursar and Dean for another term, but he died on 28 March of that year. After his death, several of his personal papers were bundled up with this official ones and put among the archives. In the late 1980s, David Sturdy, then Assistant Archivist, reassembled Clarke's personal papers. It is this collection which was found in the archives in the summer of 1993, and is catalogued here.

The papers comprise letters from undergraduates and Fellows written to Clarke in his capacity as Bursar, and bills relating to Clarke's personal expenses. There is no collection quite like this at University College for any other Fellow of the eighteenth century.

See also L. G. Mitchell, 'The Tribulations of a Bursary, 1779–81', *UCR* Vol. XIV no. 3 (2007), pp. 77–84.

Catalogued in May 2004.

UC:S17/C1 - LETTERS CONCERNING DORMER VINCENT

Dormer Vincent, the eldest son of Francis of Weddington, Warks., esq., signed the Admissions Register of University College on 1 December 1779, as a Commoner aged 18. Clarke was one of his Tutors. All these letters were written to Clarke by his mother, Mercy Vincent, and are addressed from Northampton. The letters show that Vincent, despite his family's hopes, had little inclination for their chosen profession for him of the law, and instead joined the army. According to *Alumni Oxonienses*, Vincent went on to serve in the 33rd, 22nd and 69th foot, becoming a lieutenant of the 5th Regiment in 1799 and a Captain in the 38th in 1804, but then died in Bath in December 1806.

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| UC:S17/C1/1 | Letter from Mercy Vincent to Clarke asking what her son owes the College, and hoping that he will be in Oxford soon. | 7 Nov 1780 |
| UC:S17/C1/2 | Letter from Mercy Vincent to Clarke enclosing money towards settling her son's debts. | 14 Nov 1780 |
| UC:S17/C1/3 | Letter from Mercy Vincent to Clark, expressing her astonishment and anger that her son has not yet arrived at Oxford, as he had promised. She also expressed her hopes that her son will become a lawyer. | 21 Nov 1780 |

Archivist: Dr Robin Darwall-Smith E: Robin.Darwall-Smith@univ.ox.ac.uk T: +44 (0)1865 276 952



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- UC:S17/C1/4** **12 Dec 1780**
Letter from Mercy Vincent to Clarke thanking him for the trouble he is taking with her son, and passing comment on his character.
- UC:S17/C1/5** **17 Dec 1780**
Letter from Mercy Vincent to Clarke expressing concern at news of her son's illness, and asking for news.
- UC:S17/C1/6** **12 Mar 1781**
Letter from Mercy Vincent to Clarke reporting that her son now wishes to join the army, and serve abroad, but would like to keep his name on the College books for now.
- UC:S17/C1/7** **15 May 1781**
Letter from Mercy Vincent to Clarke thanking him for his assistance, and making arrangements to settle her son's affairs.
- UC:S17/C1/8** **16 Oct 1781**
Letter from Mercy Vincent to Clarke settling her son's affairs, and reporting that his son is in the West Indies.

UC:S17/C2 - LETTER FROM ROBERT FENWICK

Robert Fenwick, the fourth son of Robert of Lemmington, Northumberland, esq., signed the Admissions Register of University College in November 1772 as a Commoner aged 17. William Scott was his Tutor. In Jun 1782 he was admitted to a Percy Fellowship. He married in 1789, and resigned his Fellowship the following year.

More letters from Fenwick to another Bursar of University College may be found in **UC:S18** below.

- UC:S17/C2/1** **23 Jun 1781**
Letter from Fenwick to Clarke (address, Durham), apologising for his financial difficulties, which included Clarke having one of Fenwick's bills refused.

UC:S17/C3 - LETTERS FROM WILLIAM COUTURE

William Couture, the eldest son of Peter of Pinner, Middlesex., Esq., signed the Admissions Register of University College in May 1771, as a Commoner aged 16. William Scott was his tutor. On 25 Mar 1772 he was elected a Bennet Scholar, and in November 1777 he was elected to a Bennet Fellowship. He held no College posts until 1788/9, when he acted simultaneously as Catechist, Dean and Registrar. In March 1789 he was presented to the College living of Checkendon in Oxfordshire, and resign his Fellowship the following year.

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Couture remained at Checkendon until his death in February 1820. On 30 April 1801 his name was taken off the College's Buttery Books for non-payment of battels; the following letters show that Couture's financial improvidence had begun early.

- UC:S17/C3/1** **n.d. (probably Spring 1780)**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (address 338 Oxford Street, London), apologising for the trouble caused by his creditors, and his hoped to settle his debts.
- UC:S17/C3/2** **25 Feb (according to the postmark; written 1780)**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (address 338 Oxford Street, London), congratulating him on coming to the end of a College office, and expressing his hopes of coming to Oxford to take part in College life.
- UC:S17/C3/3** **22 Mar 1780**
 Note from William Couture promising to pay Clarke £30.
- UC:S17/C3/4** **8 Apr 1780**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (address 338 Oxford Street, London), assuring him that Clarke is released from his bond, but regretting that Couture may be summoned before the Chancellor's court for a debt from an unnamed "troublesome woman" (revealed in later letters as his laundress).
- UC:S17/C3/5** **Tues Apr 11 [1780]**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (no address given) concerning his debts to his laundress. Couture arranged payment of it, and there is a receipt in the letter from the laundress (Sophia Martin) for £5 12s.
- UC:S17/C3/6** **14 Apr 1780**
 Note of the sums payable in the Chancellor's Court for Martin v. Couture.
- UC:S17/C3/7** **7 Jun 1780**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (no address given). Couture plans to give up his College rooms, and to settle his debt with one Charles Fielding using some of his next dividend.
- UC:S17/C3/8** **14 Jul 1780**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (no address given) concerning settling his debts both with Fielding and with a certain Hunt.
- UC:S17/C3/9** **17 Jul 1780**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (no address given) on the same subject as above, with some harsh words on Hunt.

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- UC:S17/C3/10** **before 27 Oct 1780**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (address Maidenhead Inn, High Wycombe), explaining that he has been arrested for a debt of £12, and asking for a loan to set him free. Clarke has written on the bottom that two ten-pound notes were sent to Couture on 27 Oct.
- UC:S17/C3/11** **27 Oct 1780**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (address High Wycombe) thanking him for the money which has set him free, and explaining his circumstances.
- UC:S17/C3/12** **17 Nov 1780**
 Order from the Chancellor's Court to Clarke (as Bursar of University College) that he is to pay Robert Hunt of Oxford, mercer, a debt £34 13s 1d out of the income due to William Couture, with £3 15s legal charges.
- UC:S17/C3/13** **18 Nov 1780**
 Receipt from Robert Hunt for the repayment, though Clarke, of his debt from William Couture.
- UC:S17/C3/14** **14 Dec 1780**
 Letter from P. Couture (father of William) to Clarke (address 338 Oxford Street) asking whether he has paid his son any of his Fellowship money yet.
- UC:S17/C3/15** **15 Jan 1781**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (no address given) asking him to pay Thomas Taylor five guineas.
- UC:S17/C3/16** **15 Jan 1781**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (address Guildford) asking him to pay the above five guineas as the balance of his stipend for the year.
- UC:S17/C3/17** **Jun 1781**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (address 21 Great Portland Street), regretting that Clarke will not advance him any money. He has the prospect of an appointment under a Dr. Kennet, but cannot take it up until he has settled a debt.
- UC:S17/C3/18** **possibly 7 Jul [1781], to judge from the postmark**
 Letter from Couture to Clarke (address 21 Great Portland Street), apologising for his financial embarrassment, and asking that, when Clarke uses Couture's stipend to pay his creditors, he will also do Couture "a friendly act" (advance him some money?).

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- UC:S17/C3/19** **22 Sep 1781**
Request from Couture to Clarke to pay £15 6s to Charles Fidler three months after the date of this document.
- UC:S17/C3/20** **15 Oct 1781**
Letter from Couture to Clarke (address 21 Great Portland Street), asking Clarke for a title for priests' orders, and requesting another remittance.
- UC:S17/C3/21** **20 Oct 1781**
Letter from Couture to Clarke (address 21 Great Portland Street), asking again for money, which he needs to pay the Rector of the living where he is to be a curate.
- UC:S17/C3/22** **21 Oct [1781?]**
Letter from Couture to Clarke (address Brompton) thanking him for sending such money as he could.
- UC:S17/C3/23** **22 Oct 1781**
Letter from Couture to Clarke (address Great Portland Street), thanking him for his letters.

UC:S17/C4 - CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING HENRY RIDLEY

Henry Ridley, the youngest son of Matthew of Heaton, Northumberland, esq., signed the Admissions Register of University College in 1770 as a Commoner aged 16. William Scott was his tutor. He was elected a Percy Fellow in June 1775. In March 1781 he was instituted as Rector of Headbourne Worthy, and resigned his Fellowship the following year. He resigned his living of Headbourne Worthy before 19 Oct 1805. According to *Alumni Oxonienses* he was also a prebendary of Gloucester from 1804, rector of Kirkby Underdale, Yorks., from 1805, and Rector of St. Andrew cum Mary, Hertford, from 1817 until his death in 1825.

- UC:S17/C4/1** **10 Jun 1781**
Letter from Henry Ridley to Clarke (address Newcastle) thanking him for a draft for £50, and asking him to send £8 15s to one Kirby at Winchester as his salary.
- UC:S17/C4/2** **22 Jul 1781**
Letter from Laurence Kerby to Clarke (address Winchester) asking for the £8 15s from Ridley's account.

UC:S17/F1 - CLARKE'S PERSONAL BILLS

Clarke appears to have kept a great many of his personal bills, even those dating back to his time at Christ Church. They were found arranged according to subject, and it was decided to keep this order, since the original one is not known.

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| UC:S17/F1/1–39 | | 1773–80 |
| | Bills for Clarke's clothes and shoes, both for their purchase and their repair. | |
| UC:S17/F1/40–61 | | 1772–8 |
| | Bills for Clarke's furniture and pictures, for the decoration of his rooms. | |
| UC:S17/F1/62–73 | | 1773–8 |
| | Clarke's battels bills at Christ Church. | |
| UC:S17/F1/74–88 | | 1773–9 |
| | Bills for Clarke's coal, firewood, candles and lamps. | |
| UC:S17/F1/89–94 | | 1777–80 |
| | Bills for Clarke's use of a horse. | |
| UC:S17/F1/95–102 | | 1773–80 |
| | Bills for Clarke's books, for his tutors, and for the receipt and carriage of his letters and parcels. | |
| UC:S17/F1/103–126 | | 1773–80 |
| | Bills for Clarke's laundry. | |
| UC:S17/F1/127–148 | | 1773–80 |
| | Bills for Clarke's bedmakers (or scouts). | |
| UC:S17/F1/149–166 | | 1773–9 |
| | Bills for Clarke's purchases of food and drink. | |
| UC:S17/F1/167 | | 1777 |
| | Bill to Clarke from a servant for waiting on him. | |

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