

AUSTRALIAN JOINT CPYING PROJECT

DENISON FAMILY

Papers, 1819-1915

Reels M1615-16

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**National Library of Australia
State Library of New South Wales**

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Sir William Thomas Denison (1804-1871) was the third surviving son of John Denison of Ossington Hall in Nottinghamshire. He attended Eton College and the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, graduating as a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. He served in Canada and later worked on harbour defences in southern England. He was promoted to the rank of captain in 1841 and made a lieutenant-colonel in 1854. In 1846 he was appointed lieutenant-governor of Van Diemen's Land and he was knighted in the same year. He held the post for eight years. In 1855 he took up the office of governor of New South Wales, with the additional title of 'Governor-General of Australia'. From 1861 to 1866 he was governor of Madras.

(Caroline) Lucy Denison (d. 1899) was the second daughter of Admiral Sir Phipps Hornby. She married William Denison on 1838. They had 13 children, ten of who survived childhood.

William Evelyn Denison (1843-1916) and Frank G. Denison (b. 1844) were the eldest sons of William and Lucy Denison. They both attended Eton College. William was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery in 1864 and promoted to the rank of captain in 1876. He retired from the Royal Artillery in 1878. He was elected to Parliament as the member for Nottingham in 1874, but did not stand again at the 1880 election. He was appointed deputy lieutenant of Nottinghamshire in 1875 and high sheriff of the county in 1895. He inherited the Ossington estate on the death of his uncle in 1873.

John Evelyn Denison (1800-1873), 1st Viscount Ossington (created 1872) was the eldest of the nine sons of John Denison. He was educated at Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford. He entered Parliament in 1823, but only ever held one minor office in government. He was out of Parliament from 1837 to 1841, but returned as the member for the borough of Malton and retained the seat until his retirement in 1872. He was unanimously elected as Speaker of the House of Commons in 1857 and was three times re-elected to the chair unopposed.

Edward Denison (1801-1854) was the second surviving son of John Denison. He was educated at Eton College and Oriel College, Oxford, and was ordained as a priest in 1827. He was a traditional high churchman with liberal Whig sympathies. Lord Melbourne appointed him bishop of Salisbury in 1836 and he held the post until his death.

(Robert) Alfred Denison (1816-1887) was the eighth surviving son of John Denison. He migrated to New South Wales in 1840 and became a grazier. He was a member of the Legislative Council in 1851. For a time he was private secretary of his brother, Sir William Denison.

Edward Denison (1840-1870) was the son of Bishop Denison. He was educated at Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford. He was called to the bar in 1868 and in the same year was elected to Parliament. He had a strong interest in the state of the poor, especially in London, and was an active member of the Charity Organisation Society. In 1869 he decided to visit Australia to study questions of emigration and colonisation, but his health worsened on the voyage and he died in Melbourne.

Louisa Evelyn Denison (1841-1919) was the daughter of Bishop Edward Denison and Clementina Denison.

DENISON FAMILY

Reel M1615

C Correspondence

C1

Letter from Edward Denison to his brother Alfred Denison, 14 Nov. 1867.

C2-34

Letters mostly to Clementina Denison, wife of Bishop Edward Denison, 1845-70.

C8 Lord Canterbury (Melbourne) to Clementina Denison, 28 Jan. 1870: death of her son Edward Denison shortly after his arrival in Melbourne; funeral arrangements. [Lord Canterbury, the governor of Victoria, was a nephew of Bishop Denison.]

C35-36c

Letters from Edward Denison to his grandmother, Lady Charlotte Hamilton, n.d.

C37-55

Letters to Louisa Denison, daughter of Bishop Edward and Clementina Denison, 1866-1910.

C56-61

Letters to Sir William Denison, 1853-66.

C56 Sir George Grey (Colonial Office) to Denison, 28 June 1854: Queen has approved his appointment as governor of New South Wales.

C59 Duke of Newcastle to Denison, 22 Feb. 1853; reasons for the decision to send no more convicts to Van Diemen's Land; embarrassment of Government arising from cases of Chapman and Turnbull; difficulty of Denison's position in the colony; possibility of a transfer.

C60 Duke of Newcastle to Denison, 3 July 1854: recommended appointment as governor of New South Wales; prejudice against Denison on account of his stand on transportation.

C62

Lord Salisbury to Lady Denison, 31 Dec. 1877: conferral of order of Crown of India in memory of the services of Sir William Denison.

C63-77

Letters from Sir William Denison to his sons William and Frank Denison in England, 1855-63.

The Australian letters (C63-71) refer to family news, guests at Government House in Sydney, balls and other social events, the cottage at Parramatta, elections, ministerial changes, travels in country districts, the wreck of the *Dunbar* (1857), his visit to Norfolk Island (1859), the separation of Queensland from New South Wales, and the war in New Zealand.

C78-82

Letters from Lord Grey and Sir Charles Wood to Sir William Denison, 1852-63.

C78

Lord Grey (London) to Denison, 26 Feb. 1852: Grey's imminent departure from Colonial Office; agrees that continuance of convict transportation is necessary, especially following the discovery of gold; convict assignment system; refers to Mauritius emigration ordinance; great value of Denison's services to Van Diemen's Land.

The letters from Sir Charles Wood refer to Denison's administration of Madras.

C89-96

Letters from Lady Denison to her sons William and Frank Denison in England, c. 1855-60.

The letters, which are not precisely dated, refer to family news, birthdays, social events, news from England, elections, honours, the construction of the Pyrmont Bridge, and a cricket match between New South Wales and Victoria.

C97-166

Letters to William and Frank Denison from their brothers and sisters in Sydney, c. 1855-60.

Most of the siblings were quite young and only wrote a few letters. There are longer runs of letters from the elder sisters, Mary Charlotte (C122-40) and Susan Maria (M141-66), who wrote in much more detail and referred to their social life, concerts, travels in the colony and political events.

C167-68

Letters from Frederica Lucy Hornby and Lina Mary Hornby to their cousin, William E. Denison, n.d.

C169-76

Letters from Maria Sophia Hornby to her grandsons, William and Frank Denison, n.d.

C178-228

Letters from Lady Denison to her sons William and Frank Denison, 1855-60.

The letters, which are not precisely dated, were written by Lady Denison in Sydney to her eldest sons, who were attending Eton College in England. They mostly deal with the activities of her various children, the death of her son Charles Denison (1858), life at Government House in Sydney, visitors, birthday parties and other social events, and excursions to beaches, Sydney Harbour and elsewhere. She also wrote about the progress of William and Frank at school, their future careers, and activities described in their letters. More generally, the letters discuss news from England, the Crimean War, colonial politics, her visits to schools, orphanages and Sydney University, tours by Sir William Denison of the colony and his visits to Norfolk Island, the transfer of the Pitcairn Islanders to Norfolk Island, colonial politics, the opening of railway lines and the telegraph between Sydney and Melbourne, news from Tasmania, the Victorian gold rushes, concerts, visits to the theatre, and trips to Parramatta and Wollongong. There are references to many individuals including Alfred Denison (the brother of Sir William Denison), Sir Charles Nicholson, Professor John Woolley, Archdeacon William Cowper, Sir Daniel Cooper, Christiana Dumaresq, Captain Henry Denham, Captain Stephen Fremantle, Captain William Loring and Sir Henry Young.

C229-61

Letters from Sir William Denison to his sons William and Frank Denison, 1856-59.

The letters were mostly written in Sydney and were sent to Denison's eldest sons at Eton College in England. They are extremely detailed and were often written in diary form, recording the daily activities of the Denison family. Apart from family news, the letters describe visits to church, sermons, concerts, theatrical performances, cricket matches, dinners and balls, trips to Parramatta and other places in the vicinity of Sydney, walks and horse rides, visits to schools, orphanages, Sydney University and the Australian Museum, meetings of the Philosophical Society and the Horticultural Society, the opening of Parliament and the formation of ministries, arrivals and departures of warships, the despatch of troops to India (1858), work on Sydney defences, the opening of railway lines, Denison's travels in the colony, including the Blue Mountains and southern districts, and his visit to Norfolk Island and New Zealand (1857). There are many passages containing religious reflections and advice and references to books that Denison had been reading. Among the individuals mentioned in the letters are Reverend Robert Allwood, Bishop Frederic Barker, Sir Daniel Cooper, Charles Cowper, Reverend William Cowper, Alfred Denison, Stuart Donaldson, Captain Stephen Fremantle, Admiral Phillip King, Captain William Loring, General Edward Macarthur, James Macarthur, Archbishop John Polding and Professor John Woolley.

C262

Letter book containing copies of letters from Sir William Denison to his sons William and Frank Denison, 1855-56. (25 letters)

Many of the copies duplicate the original letters (C229-61), but several dating from October 1855 to January 1856 are not among the originals. Written in diary form, they cover similar subjects: religious reflections, family news, social events, walks and horse rides, excursions to Coogee Bay, Rose Bay and other parts of Sydney, committee meetings, lectures, meetings of the Executive Council and ministerial changes. More specifically, they deal with the opening of the railway to Parramatta (Sept. 1855), a journey to Bathurst and the surrounding region (Dec. 1855 – Jan. 1856), the opening of St Paul's College at the University of Sydney (25 Jan. 1856), and the construction of an observatory and time ball. As well as some of the individuals mentioned above, there are references to Captain William Dumaesq, John Hampton, Henry Parker, George Ranken and Edward Deas Thomson.

Reel M1616

C Correspondence

C 263-66

Correspondence between Charles Athill (Richmond Herald, London), Capt. Cecil Allanson (Madras), W.F.E. Denison and Lady Phillimore concerning the coat of arms granted to Sir William Denison, 1914-15.

E Estate papers

E1-8

Miscellaneous papers, 1873-1902, including a letter about the lease of Cotes Grange Farm, a list of rentals of the Nottinghamshire estates of Lord Ossington, a list of rentals of Kelston Estate, Lincolnshire, and valuations and insurance of jewellery at Ossington Hall.

F Family papers

F1-5

Miscellaneous papers, including notes on members of the Denison Family (poor legibility), notes on the death of Bishop Edward Denison (1854), and a printed pedigree of the Denison Family of Wakefield, Methley and Leeds, descendants of Giles Denison (d. 1637).

O Official papers

O1-9a

Certificates of appointment and other documents including the appointment of William T. Denison as a gentleman cadet (1819), the appointment of John E. Denison as a privy councillor and his oath as a privy councillor (1857), the appointment of Sir William Denison as governor of Madras (1860), the appointment of Sir William Denison as a major-general (1868), the appointment of William E. Denison as a captain (1873), the appointment of William E. Denison as deputy lieutenant of the county of Nottinghamshire (1875), a licence to allow Lady Ossington to take the surname Scott rather than Denison (1882), and a passport issued to Capt. William E. Denison (1884).

O10-13

Printed and typescript items, comprising a speech of Edward Denison, Bishop of Salisbury, in the House of Lords, 15 June 1853 (12pp, printed), a report by Louisa Denison on her tour of schools in South Africa, Oct. 1903 (19pp, typescript), a report by Louisa Denison on information collected in Cape Colony, 1903 (11pp, typescript) and a memorandum of Sir William Denison on secondary punishment, submitted to the Executive Council of New South Wales in 1857 (8pp, printed).

X Miscellaneous papers

X1-8

Miscellaneous printed and manuscript items, of no Australian relevance.