

L DFJT

Thomas Johnson Manuscripts

1640-c.1885

Historical Background: The Johnson Manuscripts were reputed to have been written by Alderman Thomas Johnson (twice mayor of Hull in 1672 and again in 1685), together with four of his lineal descendants.

The volumes in the Local Studies Library are copies from the reputed originals. In 1883, they were copied by Joseph Temple, a local antiquarian and collector of newspapers who had one of the biggest private libraries in the district. He spent three years copying these with a further year and a half spent indexing the ten volumes.

The Johnson Manuscripts are said to have come in to the possession of Alderman J. Symons. In 1858 George Johnson, a descendent and owner of the Johnson Manuscripts, visited Hull and loaned some of them to William Gunnell. It was presumably from Gunnell's access to the manuscripts that he published his 'Sketches of Hull Celebrities or memoirs and correspondence of Alderman Thomas Johnson' in 1876. Through his close connection with Gunnell, Joseph Temple was able to access the Johnson Manuscripts with the intention of revising them and arranging them chronologically with a view to their ultimate publication.

The originals, which have not survived, came under much scrutiny during the latter half of the 19th century from notable local figures such as J.R. Boyle, Hull Corporation record clerk, and historian, J. Travis-Cook. The Manuscripts were controversial with some denying their authenticity while others, including Joseph Temple and William Gunnell, re-asserted until his death that possession of these came from the last surviving member of the Johnson family. Whether true or not, Gunnell took the secret to his grave ensuring the mystery surrounding their authenticity remained unsolved. It is these copies by Joseph Temple that are in the custody of Hull's Local Studies Library. Later volumes are in the hand of both William Gunnell and Joseph Temple.

Eight of the ten volumes contain, what is probably still unpublished material as noted in the Eastern Morning News, 21 Jan 1879.

Custodial history: Deposited with Hull's Local Studies Library.

Description: Bound within the volumes are newscuttings, extracts, articles and illustrations. They also include cuttings relating to the authenticity of the Johnson Manuscripts, the history of the Johnson family, events which had taken place in the town, notable inhabitants of the town, visits to the town (including that of Henry VIII and Charles I, and a subsequent copy of Charles I death warrant among other things). Note that the volumes cover the period 1640-1658 but refer to events, visits and individuals which pre-date 1640. These volumes do not appear to follow strict chronological order. As such to help provide some chronology the latest entry is provided with each volume description.

L DFJT/10 is an index to volumes 1-8 (nos.1-89). The index is arranged alphabetically, by individual surname for example. These items were formerly in safe D, library reference L.9.7

Related material: The Local Studies Library has copies of William Gunnell's Sketches of Hull Celebrities [Ref: L.9.7] and J.R. Boyle's 'A modern literary fraud: the Johnson MSS' [Ref: L.9.7].

Access conditions: Access will be granted to any accredited reader

Extent: 10 volumes

Hull History Centre: Thomas Johnson Manuscripts

L DFJT/1	Includes Johnson family pedigree, newscuttings, photographs and notes on individuals/ events. Latest entry is marked Thomas Johnson, 1657. Formerly Safe D, library reference L.9.7. 1 volume	1883
L DFJT/2	Includes newscuttings, illustrations and notes on individuals/ events. The latest entry is marked Mathew Johnson, 1717. Formerly Safe D, library reference L.9.7. 1 volume	1883
L DFJT/3	Includes newscuttings, illustrations and notes on various individuals/ events. The latest entry is marked Matthew Johnson 1730. Formerly Safe D, library reference L.9.7. 1 volume	1883
L DFJT/4	Includes newscuttings, illustrations and notes on various individuals/ events The latest entry is marked Thomas Johnson 1679. Formerly Safe D, library reference L.9.7. 1 volume	1883
L DFJT/5	Includes newscuttings, illustrations and notes on various individuals/ events The latest entry is marked Thomas Johnson 1683. Formerly Safe D, library reference L.9.7. 1 volume	1883
L DFJT/6	Includes newscuttings, illustrations and notes on various individuals/ events The latest entry is marked David Johnson 1792. Formerly Safe D, library reference L.9.7. 1 volume	1883
L DFJT/7	Includes newscuttings, illustrations and notes on various individuals/ events. The latest entry is marked appears to be that of Matthew Johnson 1720. Formerly Safe D, library reference L.9.7. 1 volume	1883
L DFJT/8	Includes newscuttings, illustrations and notes on various individuals/ events. Indexed by Joseph Temple. The latest entry marked appears to be that of Lawrence Thos. Johnson 1762. Formerly Safe D, library reference L.9.7. 1 volume	1883
L DFJT/9	Bound and published copy of Hull Celebraties by W.A. Gunnell. Includes newscuttings and	1876

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illustrations pasted in the back of the volume.
Formerly Safe D, library reference L.9.7.
1 volume

L DFJT/10

Index was compiled by Joseph Temple over a two year period. The first number, relates to the number on the spine, i.e. 1-89, the second number is the page number within that numbered sequence. Contents listed in alphabetical order. Volume also contains signatures of Hull Mayors. Formerly Safe D, library reference L.9.7.
1 volume

c.1876-
c.1885