

# John Benjamin Dancer:

## An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Dancer, John Benjamin, 1812-1887
<b>Title:</b>	John Benjamin Dancer Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	1764-1928, undated
<b>Extent:</b>	1 document box, 1 oversize box (2.42 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	Includes one manuscript and one letter by the English instrument maker, optician, and photographic inventor John Benjamin Dancer. The bulk of the collection is made of letters received by Dancer from colleagues (including George Biddell Airy, Charles Darwin, Sir John Herschel, James Joule, and Charles Piazzi Smyth among others) and materials relating to Dancer or his family, including personal family records.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Manuscript Collection MS-1052
<b>Language:</b>	English and Latin
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research

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### Administrative Information

<b>Processed by:</b>	Joan Sibley and Jamie Hawkins-Kirkham, 2011 <b>Note:</b> This finding aid replicates and replaces information previously available only in a card catalog. Please see the explanatory note at the end of this finding aid for information regarding the arrangement of the manuscripts as well as the abbreviations commonly used in descriptions.
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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**Works:**

Notes on microphotographs for Sir David Brewster, 2 handwritten manuscripts, 1 leaf each, 1 September 1857, undated. **Container**  
1.1

**Letters:**

ALS to unidentified recipient, 14 March 1874. Included with this: ANS Edward S. Heywood to Dancer, undated; and AN in an unidentified hand written on an envelope, undated.

**Container**  
1.2

**Recipient:**

Airy, George Biddell, Sir, 1801-1892. ALS to Dancer, 2 June 1869.

**Container**  
1.3

Bird, Golding, 1815-1854. 2 ALS, 1 AL to Dancer, 1869.

Brewster, Miss. AL to Dancer, 10 March 1858.

Brewster, David, Sir, 1781-1868. 9 ALS to Dancer, 1856-1868. Included with these: a copy of part of ALS to Dancer, 2 January 1857 in unidentified hand.

Crawford, James Ludovic Lindsay, 1847-1913. ALS to Dancer, 28 September 1876.

Cumber, Charles. ALS to Dancer, 11 May no year.

Darwin, Charles Robert, 1809-1882. ALS, APCS to Dancer, 25 October 1881, undated.

Dawes, William Rutter, 1799-1868. ALS to Dancer, 9 August 1851.

De La Rue, Warren, 1815-1889. ALS to Dancer, 16 September 1872.

Dircks, Henry. ALS to Dancer, 23 August 1872. Not described in card catalog.

Edward VII, King of Great Britain, 1841-1910. ALS secretary Hubert Fisher to Dancer, 22 April 1867.

Ellesmere, Mary Louise Campbell, 1885-1916. AL to Dancer, 10 February 1858. Included with this: ALS Ellesmere to Beechey, Vincent, 10 February 1858.

Herschel, Alexander Stewart, 1836-1907. ALS to Dancer, undated.

Herschel, John Frederick William, Sir, 1792-1871. ALS to Dancer, 6 May 1867.

Hichens, William. ALS to Dancer, 23 January 1885.

Hopkinson, John, 1849-1898. 2 ALS to Dancer, 5 July 1872, undated. One on letterhead: Lighthouse Department, Glass Works near Birmingham.

Joule, James Prescott, 1818-1889. 21 ALS to Dancer, 1873-1886, undated.

**Container**  
1.4

Knollys, William Thomas, Sir, 1797-1883. 2 AL to Dancer, 26 October 1869, 14 December 1871.

**Container**  
1.5

Nasmyth, James Hall, 1808-1890. 3 ALS to Dancer, 1882-1886.

Playfair, Lyon Playfair, 1818-1898. ALS to Dancer, 1 May 1887.

Proctor, Richard Anthony, 1837-1888. ALS to Dancer, 10 February 1877.

Rawson, Harry. ALS to Dancer, 11 August 1885.

Roscoe, Henry Enfield, Sir, 1833-1915. ALS to Dancer, 22 February 1885.

Rosse, Laurence Parsons, 1840-1908. AL to Dancer, 20 June 1874.

Rushton, E. E. ALS to Dancer, 4 February 1832.

**Container 2.1**

Schunck, E. ALS to Dancer, 10 February 1868.

**Container 1.5**

Smyth, Charles Piazzi, 1819-1900. 2 ALS to Dancer, 23 September and 30 September 1882.

Stewart, Balfour, 1828-1887. ALS to Dancer, 29 June 1880.

Tollemache, John Tollemache, 1805-1890. ALS to Dancer, 28 June 1883.

Tyndall, John, 1820-1893. ALS to Dancer, 12 June no year.

Yang, W. H. ALS to Dancer, 20 October 1888. Letterhead: Chinese Legation.

**Miscellaneous:**

- Unidentified author. Biography of John Benjamin Dancer, handwritten manuscript written in notebook, 74 pages, undated. Described in Henry Garnett's biography of Dancer in the memoirs and proceedings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, vol. 73, 1928-1929, as a "dictated biography by his granddaughter."  
**Container**  
1.7
- Unidentified author Charlie. 2 ALS to Dancer, Lily, 27 August and 19 September 1878.  
**Container**  
1.6
- Barrow, Martha. Baptismal certificate, handwritten manuscript / copy from parish register, 1 page, February 1800. Copy made by parish clerk 30 June 1803.
- Barrow, Martha. Marriage certificate, signed handwritten and printed document, 1 page, 23 March 1825. Certifies marriage with John Silcock.
- Bird, Golding. Biographical note, handwritten manuscript written on an envelope in unidentified hand, 1 page, undated.
- Carpenter, William Benjamin, 1813-1885. Letter of recommendation for Dancer's achromatic microscope, handwritten manuscript, 2 pages on 1 leaf, 30 November 1846.
- Chorlton, Thomas. Will, handwritten manuscript / fragment / copy and notes in an unidentified hand, 1 leaf, undated. Included with this: legal brief concerning Chorlton's estate, handwritten manuscript, 1 page, undated.  
**Container**  
2.2
- Dancer, Catherine, 1852- . Birth certificate, signed handwritten and printed document / copy from the official register, 1 leaf, 30 June 1852. Copy made by the Superintendent Registrar, 23 January 1915.  
**Container**  
2.3
- Dancer, Elizabeth Eleanor, 1845- . Birth certificate, signed handwritten and printed document / copy from the official register, 1 leaf, 8 August 1845. Copy made by the Superintendent Registrar, 20 June 1912.  
**Container**  
2.4
- Dancer, Elizabeth. Notes on bequests to her daughters Annie and Kate, 2 signed handwritten manuscripts, 1 page each, 8 February 1887.  
**Container**  
1.6
- Dancer, James. Membership card of the Manchester Field-Naturalists' Society, signed handwritten and printed document, 1 leaf, 28 March 1860. On verso engraving by "J. N. 1860," probably James Nasmyth.
- Dancer, John Benjamin, 1812-1887:
- Baptismal certificate, signed handwritten and printed document, 1 leaf, 21 March 1813. Information extracted from the parish register 20 September 1847.  
**Container**  
1.6

Certificate appointing J. B. Dancer as Optician in Manchester to HRH the Prince of Wales, signed handwritten and printed document with seal, 1 November 1869. Signed by Sir William Knollys. **Container** 1.5

Envelopes addressed to J. B. Dancer, 5 items, 1867-1874, undated. **Container** 1.6

List of early photographs contributed by J. B. Dancer to the ... Manchester Jubilee Exhibition, 1887, handwritten manuscript, 1 leaf, undated. **Container** 2.6

Marriage certificate, signed handwritten and printed document, 1 leaf, 22 March 1836. Certifies marriage with Elizabeth Barrow. **Container** 1.6

Note concerning the disposition of his bank account at his death, signed handwritten manuscript, 1 leaf, 4 May 1883. Included with this: enclosing envelope with AN by Dancer and a blank check signed by Dancer.

Notes on Dancer family genealogy, 5 handwritten manuscripts, 1 leaf each, undated. Notes by A. H. Fallwood and others, most unidentified.

Testimonial from the Manchester Mechanics' Institution, signed handwritten and printed document, 1 leaf, 3 September 1857. **Container** 2.7

Will, signed handwritten manuscript, 1 leaf, 16 October 1872. Included with this: printed mourning card. **Container** 1.6

#### Dancer, Michael.

Certificate admitting Dancer to freedom of the city of London, 3 September 1776. **Container** 2.8

Indentures for apprentices to Michael Dancer, joiner of London, four signed and printed documents on parchment with paper seals, 1 leaf each, 1784-1808. Those apprenticed were: Isaac Arnott, Ebenezer Hoppe, Edward Marsh, and William Green. **Container** 1.6

#### Dancer, William, 1841- .

Birth certificate, signed handwritten and printed document / copy from the official registry, 1 leaf, 1 March 1841. Copy made by the Superintendent Registrar, 3 June 1921. **Container** 1.6

Certificate from the University of Heidelberg, signed handwritten and printed document with paper seal, 1 leaf, 7 December 1862. In Latin. **Container** 2.9

Dancer Family. Cemetery and burial documents concerning members of the dancer family, 18 pieces, 1876-1928. Not described in card catalog. **Container** 1.8

- Garnett, Henry. The original binocular stereoscopic camera of John Benjamin Dancer and Charles Henry Oakden, galley proof, 2 sheets, undated. **Container** 2.10
- Hartley. Envelope addressed to Dancer, 1 item, undated. Written on this: AN by Dancer "left personally by Mr. Hartley." **Container** 1.6
- Jones, Francis, 1845-1925. ALS to Dancer, William, 2 April 1911.
- Joule, James Prescott, 1818-1889. Statement supporting William Dancer's application for County Analyst, signed handwritten manuscript, 17 January 1876.
- Leslie, John, Sir, 1766-1832. ALS to Adie, John, 1831.
- Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society, TLS Gerald Andrew to Dancer, William, 28 February 1928.
- New Mechanic's Institution, Manchester. ALS secretary E. Hutchings to Dancer, 31 October 1857. Included with this: printed photograph of a binocular stereoscopic camera.
- Old Owensian Association (Manchester). ALS to Dancer, William, 4 July 1927.
- Playfair, Lyon Playfair, 1818-1898. ALS to unidentified recipient, 6 April 1888.
- Roscoe, Henry Enfield, Sir, 1833-1915. Statement supporting William Dancer's application for County Analyst, signed handwritten manuscript, 1 leaf, January 1876. Letterhead: The Owens College, Manchester. Included with this: form letter to Dancer, 16 November 1877.
- Rushton, Josiah. Certificate admitting Rushton to freedom of the city of London, signed handwritten and printed document on parchment, 1 leaf, 5 December 1764. **Container** 2.11
- Schorlemmer, Carl, 1834-1892. Statement supporting William Dancer's application for Public Analyst, signed handwritten manuscript, 1 leaf, undated. Letterhead: The Owens College, Manchester. **Container** 1.6
- Wilkie, John, 1871- . Birth certificate, signed handwritten and printed document / copy from the official register, 1 leaf, 18 February 1871. Copy made by Registrar, 6 March 1871.

## Explanatory Note Concerning Manuscript Collections Cataloged in the Card Catalog

Prior to 1990 when archival cataloging procedures were adopted at the Ransom Center, all manuscript collections were described in a card catalog.

### Organization of Collections:

- Manuscripts for each author collection were organized into four categories:
- **Works:** manuscripts by the author, arranged alphabetically by title;
- **Letters:** the author's outgoing correspondence, arranged alphabetically by recipient name;
- **Recipient:** the author's incoming correspondence, arranged alphabetically by the author of the letter; and
- **Miscellaneous:** all other manuscripts and correspondence, arranged alphabetically by creator.

Materials that did not fit into these categories, such as art, photographs, books, and near-print materials such as newspaper clippings, were dispersed to other Ransom Center collections for cataloging and storage.

### Abbreviations Used in Descriptions:

The symbols below were used in combinations. For example **ALS** means autograph letter signed; **Tccms** means typed carbon copy manuscript, etc.

- **A** = autograph (i.e., handwritten)
- **T** = typed
- **S** = signed
- **I** = initialed
- **Ms** = manuscript
- **Mss** = manuscripts
- **L** = letter
- **FL** = form letter
- **N** = note
- **D** = document
- **C** = card
- **PC** = post card
- **cc** = carbon copy
- **p** = page
- **pp** = pages
- **l** = leaf
- **ll** = leaves
- **nd** = no date
- **inc d** = incomplete date