

Research Space

Working paper

**Knowledge profit and knowledge loss in an enlightened house:
the library collection of the Hammonds of St Alban's Court, Kent
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Knowledge profit and knowledge loss in an Enlightened House: the library collection of the Hammonds of St Alban's Court, Kent

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The family at SAC and their reading tastes in context

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Chapter 1: People, place and time: the family at St Albans Court and their reading tastes in context

'[A] gallery-like space for books, its varied contents of portraits, cabinets and objects of virtue, and the significance of themes of personal memory and English identity. It is an interpretation of the room, as assembled over the owner's lifetime, rather than an investigation of his intellectual range.'

Susie West, *An Architectural Typology for the Early Modern Country House Library, 1660-1720*ⁱ

A case of seeing now through a glass, darkly, the inventory partially reflects what we know about the interests and personalities of several members of the Hammond family through the physical record of their library collections. Patterns of book ownership, some more personally meaningful than others, and possible social signifiers emerge from the record and may provide some insights into the people behind titles. The picture that emerges over the C17th and C18th is a family whose focus was on social mobility and expansion: new political directions, new cultural explorations, new domestic settings and new business interests. Through research into the lives of several key family membersⁱⁱ, intergenerational commonalities become apparent: a predominantly conservative outlook, a keenness for classical knowledge, art and culture, a passion for travel and a sustained and sometimes immersive interest in religion.

To illustrate this, four Hammond generational groups have been selected for further research as possible driving forces behind the development of the library collections, either actually or in terms of their outlook and attitude-legacy. Their interests form a basis for the growth of the family's cultural interests, the most visible sign being their library holdings. These may be linked with the physical place and the development and growth of St Albans Court itself: an embodiment of stability, wealth and home that lends itself to the existence of an extensive personal family library.

From the beginning of the C17th, the Hammond dynasty is rooted in a fertile mixture of culture and religion, with links to the establishment from the first generations of the family. Sir William Hammond (1579 - 1615), knighted by James I in 1608ⁱⁱⁱ was married to Elizabeth Archer, the granddaughter of Edwin Sandys, most notably the Archbishop of York and one of the authors of the translation of the Bible known as the Bishops' Bible, and a strong advocate for education^{iv}. Elizabeth was also a niece of the poet and adventurer George Sandys, the seventh son of Edwin^v. This background encapsulates the early generations of the Hammond family perfectly: church, state and culture finely blended. These two generations of Hammonds are of also of particular note in the wider political scene, both with a lasting physical legacy in their cultural record. Two of Sir William's brothers, Francis (b. 1584) and Robert (b.1587), were adventurers and soldiers, excelling in combat and both visible members of a political and social class that can only have helped with the upward mobility and aspirations of the family at St Albans Court. They sailed with Raleigh to south America in search of treasure and fought on the side of crown in the Civil War^{vi}.

As physical reminders of their significance in perpetuity, it is these two brothers whose portraits were taken by leading society artist Cornelius Johnson^{vii} and that now hang in The Beaney in Canterbury^{viii}.

Sir William was succeeded by his eldest son Anthony Hammond (1608 – 1661) when Anthony was a minor. What is also interesting is that his brother and Sir William's third son, also William Hammond (b.1614, died c.1665^{ix}), was a published poet^x, linking this generation with the legacy of his mother's family and indicating that education and learning were as much a feature of the early family as warring and adventuring. He published 55 poems in his lifetime, and his poetic legacy was revived by Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges (1762 – 1837)^{xi}, a bibliographer and cousin by marriage of William Hammond (1752 – 1821); the possible significance of this link will be explored in due course. The connection to poetry did not end there: Anthony Hammond's grandson, also Anthony Hammond (1668 – 1738)^{xii} and his son, Anthony's great grandson, James Hammond (1710 – 1742), were also poets^{xiii}. This is clearly a family who not only had the time for such leisured pursuits but also the resources and the education. Looking back through the genealogical records of the family of St Alban's Court, it is clear that the Hammond sons were expected to follow a well worn path to either Oxford or Cambridge Colleges.

The family's spirit of adventure did not die with Sir William's brothers Francis and Robert, something that can also be detected in the library holdings according to the inventory of 1901. As early as 1655, William Hammond (1635 – 1685) had set off on a cultural journey for what can only be described as a Grand Tour through France, Italy and Germany^{xiv}. Ostensibly with the purpose of studying European medicine, William relayed his journey to his parents in Kent through a series of 37 letters which seemed to have little reference to academic study and more focus on satisfying his 'gadding humour'^{xv}. This (possibly misleading) outward appearance of academic rigour is reflected elsewhere in his life: although it is likely he was a founding fellow of the Royal Society, established in 1660 to promote excellence in scientific study, Society records from 1661 seem to indicate a level of disconnect, listing him as 'barely active'.^{xvi}

Working notes/areas still to cover

William Hammond 1721 – 1773, studied classics at Pembroke Cambridge^{xvii}

William Hammond 1752 – 1821 – cousin of Samuel Egerton Brydges Started the family history record and possibly the Hammond Bank. Extended the manor house in 1790 – did these extensions inc a library???

William Osmund Hammond 1790 – 1863; Poor Law expert; aesthetic/religious

William Oxenden Hammond 1817 – 1903; naturalist, painter; religious tract writer

Rebuilding of the court – find floor plans- library?

Religion: various clerics in family throughout

ⁱ An Architectural Typology for the Early Modern Country House Library, 1660–172; West, Susie; *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, Volume 14, Number 4, December 2013, pp. 441-464

ⁱⁱ Research from original documents is limited due to lockdown restrictions on travel and opening of the Kent History Centre. The histories of the family have been gained from discussions with Peter Hobbs, *Burkes Peerage* and *Dictionary of National Biography* entries. These will be substantiated when access to primary sources can be gained.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Hammonds of St. Alban's Court; *Nonington: a Small Place in History* website; <https://www.nonington.org.uk/eswalt-later-st-albans-court-nonington/the-hammonds-at-st-albans-court/>; accessed 29 April 2021

^{iv} [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_Sandys_\(bishop\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_Sandys_(bishop)); accessed 29 April 2021

^v https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Sandys; accessed 29 April 2021

^{vi} *Ibid.*

^{vii} See introduction

^{viii} <https://canterburymuseums.co.uk/cornelius-johnson-charles-is-forgotten-painter/>; accessed 8 May 2021

^{ix} [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Hammond_\(died_1685\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Hammond_(died_1685)); accessed 29 April 2021

^x *Dictionary of National Biography* online;

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12163?print=pdf>; accessed 8 May 2021

^{xi} <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12163?print=pdf>; Brydges may be significant to the story of the library at St Alban's Court as a near neighbour and a founding member of the Roxburghe Club, the seat of bibliomania. Brydges had a connection with the area both as his place of birth and as MP for Maidstone. He is related to the Hammonds by marriage, with his grandfather being William Egerton, Prebendary of Canterbury (1682 – 1757) and whose eldest daughter Charlotte Jemima married William Hammond (1721- 1773). The family links with the Hammonds explain the later naming of the last two family members to possess St Albans Court Egerton.

^{xii} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Hammond , accessed 29 April 2021

^{xiii} <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12158?rskey=wnW7oT&result=1>; accessed 8 May 2021

^{xiv} *The Origins of the Grand Tour: The Travels of Robert Montagu, Lord Mandeville (1649-1654), William Hammond (1655-1658), and Banaster Maynard (1660-1663)*; Brennan, G, ed.; *The Hakluyt Society series III vol 14*; 2004

^{xv} Stymeist, D. (2006); review of Brennan, *Ibid.*; *Renaissance Quarterly*, 59(1), 250-251 <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/renaissance-quarterly/article/michael-brennan-ed-the-origins-of-the-grand-tour-the-travels-of-robert-montagu-lord-mandeville-16491654-william-hammond-16551658-banaster-maynard-16601663-the-hakluyt-society-third-series-14-london-the-hakluyt-society-2004-xviii-331-pp-index-illus-bibl-9995-isbn-0904180859/1CCAE025B250A11E2E4CBEDE142DE5F6> accessed 29 April 2021

^{xvi} *The Social Basis and Changing Fortunes of an Early Scientific Institution: An Analysis of the Membership of the Royal Society, 1660-1685*; Hunter, Michael; *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* , Jul., 1976, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Jul., 1976), pp. 9-114; Royal Society, London; Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/531552>; accessed 29 April 2021

^{xvii} <https://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/university-of-cambridge/alumni-cantabrigienses-a-biographical-list-of-all-known-students-graduates-and-ala-899/page-104-alumni-cantabrigienses-a-biographical-list-of-all-known-students-graduates-and-ala-899.shtml>