

# Guide to the Sterling Family Papers

GEN MSS 306



by Beinecke Staff

July 1997

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** GEN MSS 306

**CREATOR:** Sterling family

**TITLE:** Sterling family papers

**DATES:** 1811-1950

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.04 linear feet (3 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection consists of writings by John Sterling, including Coeur-de-Lion, The Swiss Peasant Girl, and Thoughts in Rhyme; letters from Sterling to his son Edward concerning his education; and commonplace books and diaries kept by other members of the family, including his brother, Sir Anthony Coningham Sterling, and his mother Hester. The collection also contains a sketchbook which belonged to Sterling's granddaughter, the painter Frances Sterling.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.sterling>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.sterling>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Blackwell's with Library Associates Funds, 1950.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Sterling Family Papers are the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Sterling Family Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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## Processing Information

This finding aid was produced from a previously existing card set in the Manuscripts Catalog, or from another inventory. All pertinent bibliographical information has been retained. If the collection also contains unlisted or unsorted material, this has been noted in the box-and-folder list.

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## SIR ANTHONY CONINGHAM STERLING (1805-1871)

Sir Anthony Coningham Sterling, eldest son of Captain Edward Sterling and Hester Coningham Sterling, was born in Dundalk in 1805. After several terms at Trinity College, Cambridge, he enlisted in the military and married Charlotte Baird. He was highly decorated for his part in the Crimean campaign of 1854 but became the center of an internal military scandal after the Indian Mutiny (1857-58). He authored a number of books including a translation of *Russia under Nicholas I* (1841) and *Letters from the Army in the Crimea, written by a Staff Officer* (1857). Sterling died in London on March 1, 1871.

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## JOHN STERLING (1806-1844)

John Sterling, younger brother of Sir Anthony Coningham Sterling, was born on the island of Bute on July 20, 1806. While studying at Trinity College, Cambridge, under Julius Charles Hare, Sterling became a member of the Apostles and befriended Richard Chenevix Trench and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, among others. Upon his departure from Cambridge, Sterling purchased and briefly edited the *Athenaeum* with Frederick Denison Maurice before marrying Susannah Barton in 1830. Despite declining health, he published the novel *Arthur Coningsby* (1833) and *Poems* (1839) and gathered literary friends such as Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill together at his monthly "Sterling Club" entertainments. He died of tuberculosis on September 18, 1844. Sterling is perhaps best known today as the subject of Carlyle's *Life of Sterling* (1851).

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## Scope and Contents

The Sterling Family Papers consist primarily of manuscripts by John Sterling, along with diaries and writings by other family members. The papers are arranged in two series: I, *Sterling Family Papers*, and II, *Related Material*. The papers span the dates 1811-1950, with the bulk of the material dating from 1811 to 1844.

[Series I, \*Sterling Family Papers\*](#), is arranged by family member into four subseries: Sir Anthony Coningham Sterling, Frances M. Sterling (granddaughter of JS), Hester Coningham Sterling (mother of AS and JS), and John Sterling. Material within each subseries is arranged alphabetically by title or type of material. Contents include diaries and commonplace books kept by A.C. Sterling and H.C. Sterling and a scrapbook and sketchbook kept by Frances M. Sterling, an accomplished painter.

Writings of John Sterling are located in folders 9-26 and include manuscripts of the poems "Coeur-de-Lion" and "The Swiss Peasant Girl"; a bound notebook of *Thoughts in Rhyme*; copies of letters to his son Edward; and several children's stories written for his family.

[Series II, Related Material](#), consists of biographical material about John Sterling, A. C. Sterling, and Frank Stone, and a TLS from Marion Mabey to Elizabeth H. Butler regarding the history of the Sterling papers.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Sterling Family Papers, 1811-1900

26 Folders

Series I, *Sterling Family Papers*, is arranged into four subseries by family member and thereafter, by type of material or title.

#### STERLING, ANTHONY CONINGHAM, SIR

b. 1, f. 1	Commonplace book, 1826-[1830] Collection of manuscript poems, probably by A. C. Sterling and John Sterling, written partly in A. C. Sterling's hand and partly in several unidentified hands.	1826-30, n.d.
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b. 1, f. 2	<i>Verses 1834-1848</i> Autograph manuscript poems, mostly signed and dated, together with a few prose translations and extracts.	1834-48, n.d.
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#### STERLING, FRANCES M.

b. 1, f. 3	Scrapbook of catalogues, clippings, etc., concerning the exhibitions of Miss Sterling's pictures	1892-1900
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b. 1, f. 4	Sketchbook with pencil sketches mainly of hands and figures	[ca.1895-99]
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#### STERLING, HESTER CONINGHAM

b. 1, f. 5	Commonplace book Collection of poems, riddles, epitaphs, etc., most copied by Hester Sterling, the mother of John Sterling and A. C. Sterling.	1811-42
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b. 1, f. 6-8	Diaries: 1833-36, 1838-39 Six autograph manuscript diaries.	1833-39
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#### STERLING, JOHN

b. 2, f. 9	36 letters (copies) to his son, Edward C. Sterling Letterbook in an unidentified hand.	1842-44
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#### "Coeur-de-Lion"

b. 2, f. 10-17	Autograph manuscript poem in eight cantos, written in eight paper covered notebooks	n.d.
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b. 2, f. 18-23	Manuscript of cantos 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8 and one page of canto 5, written in several unidentified hands	n.d.
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b. 2, f. 24	"The Swiss Peasant Girl" Manuscript of a narrative poem, possibly in the hand of Sterling.	[1844]
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b. 2, f. 25	"Tales for Children" Autograph manuscripts of seven stories written for John Sterling's children. Three of the stories were written in letters addressed to his wife.	1838-39, n.d.
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STERLING, JOHN (continued)

b. 3, f. 26

*Thoughts in Rhyme*

n.d.

Manuscript verses in an unidentified hand. The verses are divided into four groups: Meditative, Satirical, Lyrical, and The Two Minstrels.

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**Series II: Related Material, 1950, n.d.**

*2 Folders*

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b. 3, f. 27	TLS from Marion Mabey to Elizabeth Butler, Upper Montclair, New Jersey	1950 Sep 5
b. 3, f. 28	Manuscript copy of <i>DNB</i> entries for John Sterling, A.C. Sterling, and Frank Stone	n.d.

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

English poetry -- 19th century

### **Genres / Formats**

Commonplace books

Diaries

### **Names**

Sterling, Anthony, 1805-1871

Sterling, Edward

Sterling, Frances

Sterling, Hester

Sterling, John, 1806-1844

### **Families**

Sterling family