



## **Inventory**

**Acc.12055**

**Mungo Park**

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Correspondence, 1799-1855, of or relating to Mungo Park (1771-1806), physician and African explorer and his family and estate. The personal letters, 1801-5, almost all to his wife, mostly relate to the preparations for and documented course of his last, fatal expedition to the River Niger, 1805-6. Later correspondence refers mostly to Park's financial estate and family financial affairs, and to the death of his last surviving son, Mungo, junior, in the Gold Coast [Ghana], 1828.

1. Letters of Mungo Park:

- (i) Edinburgh, 4 Jan. 1801, to his wife Allison, or Alice ('My Dearest Allie'), née Anderson; addressed to Fowlshiels, Selkirk. Reports on his activities since arrival in the city and announces departure for London on Thursday. Meeting with John Home, author of 'Douglas', and the latter's promise to procure him one of the Duke of Buccleuch's best farms if his plans miscarried.
- (ii) No place or date [ probably London, Jan. 1801], to Allison Park; addr. to Fowlshiels. Possibility of an appointment in New South Wales, but the change of ministers "has thrown everything into confusion". Will only accept offer of a regimental surgeonship if nothing better offered.
- (iii) London, 27 March, 1801, to Allison Park; addr. to Fowlshiels. After three months in the city no vacancy for a surgeon's appointment in NSW; perplexed as to what to do, but unwilling to take a regimental post. His disappointment, and discouragement at lack of success. Resolves to waste no more time "dancing attendance", and to return to Scotland. Interest in John Home's offer to procure a farm tenancy from the Duke of Buccleuch.
- (iv) London, 5 Dec. 1803, to Allison Park; addr. to Peebles. Things are moving on briskly there & he hopes to get away soon. He will send down a fresh supply [of money] "and settle all matters before I sail". A letter from home gives him great pleasure "I am always cheerful for 24 hours after". His clothes almost all made, "I am quite a Buck".
- (v) London, 7 Dec. 1803, to Allison Park, addr. to Peebles. "How wearisome are the days when I am absent from you". Has heard nothing concerning the expedition since his last letter, but he is to see Sir Joseph [Banks] tomorrow. He and Alexander {her brother, Alexander Anderson} spend most of their time in expedition preparations "Tell Betty to give the Sword & Pistol a rub as they will probably be called for soon". Sandy desires him to tell her "that his brain will be turned before it is long with the cheating, knavery, &c of London".
- (vi) London, 9 Jan. 1804, to Allison Park, addr. to Peebles. The expedition will sail on the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month, or else it will be deferred until August or September. He has hopes for this month and has been busy in settling matters. His greatest

pleasure has been to get her letters, and he constantly thinks of her. If they sail on the 25<sup>th</sup>, he is to have the whole management of the expedition.

- (vii) London, 9 October, 1804, to Allison Park, addr. to Fowlshiels: signature cut from letter. He has not the smallest doubt of “accomplishing the whole in one year from the time we leave England. I can likewise assure you that unless the King of Bondou consent to receive and protect us we shall return immediately to Goree. Government have no wish that I should run the smallest risk, the great object of the Expedition being to keep up a friendly intercourse with the Kings of the Country.” The thoughts of her prevent him from sleeping, and the children are constantly in his mind. Supposes they will sail next month, if at all, for if they do not it will be too late to go [that season].
- (viii) London, 28 Oct. 1804, to Allison Park; addr. to Fowlshiels. Since he wrote last nothing of consequence has happened. He has been at Brighton two days with Major Rennell [geographer & adviser to the African Association] and called twice on Lord Camden. Preparations go on slowly and the present ministers have a good deal of the “uncertainty” that characterised their predecessors. He shall probably see Mr Pitt before he leaves town. Her picture is “in fine stile” and his constant companion. His anxieties about her health. He will send her some money next week.
- (ix) London, 14 Nov. 1804, to Allison Park; addr. to Fowlshiels: signature cut from letter. Andrew has arrived with her letter. Their sailing time is not yet fixed. He believes that Sir Joseph {Banks} has thought of nothing but the object of their journey since he told him. Yesterday he bought £600 worth of beads for the expedition. Expects to return in 12 months when “Alexr. and I will then have both of us made something handsome in the money way”.
- (x) London, 28 Nov. 1804, to Allison Park; addr. to Fowlshiels. Since his last he has received one year’s salary and he will receive the remainder when they go away. The sum is £182 and 10 shillings. Unless detained long in London he will be able to send her £100, and she will be able to live tolerably on it for a year. Hopes she wants for nothing for health and comfort. No vessel yet appointed to carry them.
- (xi) London 10 Dec. 1804, to Allison Park; addr. to Fowlshiels: signature cut from letter. The expedition moves forward, but no departure date. He has sent £100 by John, the watch with chain and key, a shawl and a white gown. Quite “on the fidgits” until her “business” [pregnancy with Archibald, their fourth child] is over.
- (xii) London, 26 Dec. 1804, to Allison Park; addr. to Peebles: signature cut from letter. Encloses a ten pound note, all he can spare until he receives more money in a week or ten days. He will put everything in a proper way before he leaves London. Thanks her for the lock of hair she sent. He will send her some of his hair before he leaves.

- (xiii) London, 3 Jan. 1805. Her anxieties on the dangers of the expedition are natural, but “the unhealthiness of the Climate is the only thing we have to fear”. As they shall remain on the coast only a very short time, and that during the most healthy season he is in hopes that they will escape sickness entirely. He hopes to receive £1000 of his salary before leaving “which I will put into the Stocks as a Nest=Egg till I return” Expects that Ombark [Sidi Ombark Bouby, his Arabic tutor] will leave for Morocco in a fortnight or so. “I am sometimes almost at the crying when I think about you”
- (xiv) Crescent [transport ship for West Africa], Spithead, 28 January, 1805, to Allison Park: addr. to Foulshiels. They hope to sail tomorrow. While he lives she shall be “the constant and darling object of my thoughts”. They expect to be at St. Jago in about a month & as soon as they have bought the asses [for transport] they will proceed to Goree and thence into the Gambia. Repeats expectation of being home “this day twelvemonth”.
- (xv) Port Praya Bay, Island of St. Jago, 12 March 1805, to Allison Park; addressed to [Foulshie]ls: bottom half of second page, incl. signature, is missing. He sends this letter by a Portuguese vessel bound for Lisbon. “How dreary the world seems without you”. Their passage has been more tedious than expected. They expect to sail for Goree on Saturday. He dreams of home every night.
- (xvi) Kayee, River Gambia, 26 April, 1805, to Allison Park; addr. to Fowlshiels. He has not dared to look at her picture for these six days “for fear it would make a coward of me”. Warns that opportunities to send letters “will be but few”. They set out for the interior tomorrow morning. Everything looks favourable at present. “The Natives instead of being frightened of us, look on us as their best friends and the Kings have not only granted us protection but sent people to go before us.” His soldiers are in the highest spirits. He is confident that they could defeat any number that might oppose them “but of this we have not the most distant expectations”. The King of Kataba, the most powerful in Gambia, has given them a messenger to conduct them safely to the king of Wooli [Wuli]. Expects to be able to write to her from Konkodoo or Bamako “by some of the slave traders”. She should not be surprised if she does not hear from him for some months. He has enjoyed excellent health and has great hopes to bring the expedition to a happy conclusion.
- (xvii) Badoo near Tambacunda, 29 May, 1805, to Allison Park; addr. to Fowlshiels: signature cut from letter. They are half-way through their journey “without the smallest accident or unpleasant circumstance”. They are on the most friendly terms with the natives and he has seen many of his old acquaintances. By 27 June they expect to be afloat on the river [Niger]. Alex. Is quite free of his stomach complaints. They carry their own victuals and live very well. They set forward this evening for Tambacunda and in two days they reach Baniserile near the Faleme River.

- (xviii) Sansanding near Segou [ *ie.* Ségou], 16 Nov. 1805, to his father-in-law, Thomas Anderson; addr. to Selkirk. Death of Alexander Anderson on 28 October: “your son my Dear Dear friend has shut his eyes on the scenes of time & opened them on the Glories of Eternity.” A detailed account of the breakdown of his health since 30 June follows. Account of the last stages of his illness, Park’s treatment, and his final affirmations of Christian faith. “Kontoo Mamadu the chief man of this town attended his Corps to the Grave”. Continues to affirm his expectation to be in England in May [1806].
- (xix) Sansanding, 19 Nov. 1805, to Allison Park; addr. to Fowlshiels: endorsed, ‘of an old date Recd. At Mr Windham’s Office, 4<sup>th</sup> October’ [1806]. The last surviving letter of Park to his wife, reporting the death of her brother. Refers her to her father’s letter for the details. Her anxieties may lead her to consider his situation is a good deal worse than it really is, though “my Dear friends, Mr Anderson and G. Scott have both bid adieu to the things of this World and the greater part of the soldiers have died on the march during the Rainy Season”. But he is in health, the rains are over and “the healthy season has commenced, so that there is no danger of sickness and I have still a sufficient force to protect me from any insult in sailing down the river to the sea”. They sail the moment he has finished this letter. He does not intend to stop or land until they reach the coast at the end of January. He thinks it not unlikely he will be in England “before my Allie receives this”. The rainy season which came on them during January caused their delay and affected almost all the soldiers with fever.
2.
    - (i) Letter, 2 Jan. 1799, of Allie Anderson to Mungo Park, before their marriage (2 Aug., 1799).
    - (ii) Letter, signed ‘Alice Park’, to her daughter, Elizabeth Meredith postmarked 15 Jan. 1840, and dated ‘Tewsdlay Evening’ {14 Jan.}, on her health, money matters and giving news relatives and friends; with a lock of hair, presumably the writer’s.
  3. A letter of John Sullivan, Under-Secretary of State for War, to Mungo Park, 18 May 1804, expressing confidence that the change of ministry will not affect their African plans and his pleasure that the “Moor”, *ie.* Park’s Arabic tutor, Sidi Ombark Boudy, gives satisfaction.
  4. A letter, 23 Feb. 1806, of Jeremy Robinson to Alice Park, enclosing a letter of Mungo Park which came into his hands after the wreck of the vessel in which it was intended to be sent.
  5.
    - (i) Letter of Thomas Park, on H.M.S. “Sybelle”, in Plymouth Sound, to his mother, Alice Park, 26 April 1827.
    - (ii) Letter of Richard Fry, Accra, 28 January 1828, to Thomas Anderson, surgeon in Selkirk, with an account of the death of his nephew, Thomas Park.

- (iii) A manuscript, 'Lines on the Death of Mr Thomas Park, son of the celebrated Mungo Park', signed A.H.; with a contemporary press-cutting from the *Chester Advertiser* of another poem on the same theme
- 6. Park, Anderson, and Meredith correspondence, mostly between Adam Park, his uncle Dr Thomas Anderson, and his sister, Elizabeth, and her husband Henry Meredith, 1826-55, relating largely to the Mungo Park estate, and to family financial matters.
- 7. 'Translation of the Song of the Fezzaneus on Boo-Khaloom's Death', verses, n.d. but on early 19<sup>th</sup> century paper.  
'Translation of an extempore Arab Song', n.d., but same paper.  
'The Intercessor', verses, based on John XVII, n.d., but paper ca. 1850-60.