

BEDAZZLED BY BURNEY

Sales of Frances Burney Books, Manuscripts & Images
from the Paula Peyraud Collection (Chappaqua, New York).
Bloomsbury Auctions, New York (May 2009)



By Maureen E. Mulvihill
Princeton Research Forum, Princeton, NJ

Excerpted, with permission, from the author's Peyraud auction report,
Eighteenth-Century Studies (Fall 2009), 151-163; with 8 images & detailed buyers' list



Portrait Miniature of Burney by John Bogle, 1783

Watercolour on ivory, oval. 4" x 3". Signed & Dated

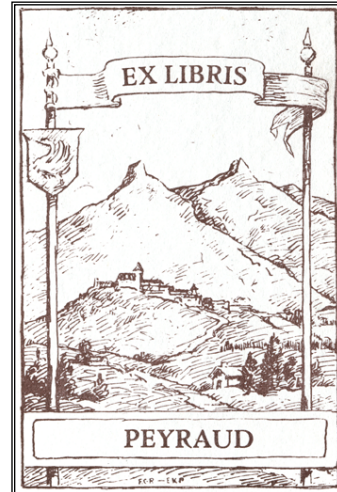
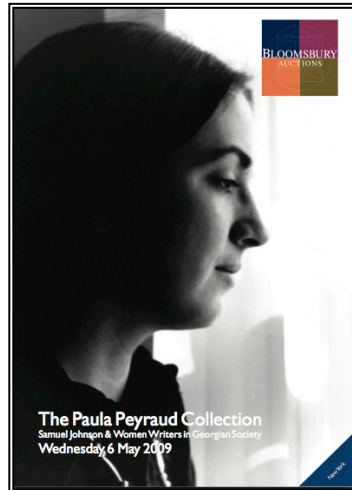
Inscribed on verso, "Miss Burney"

Peyraud Sale, Lot 185. \$12,200, including fees. Private Collection, Prudence Carlson, NY.

This buyer also acquired Lot 186, a portrait miniature of Burney's mother (1759), \$3904, with fees.

Photographer, Oliver Lei Han, Bloomsbury Auctions NY. Peyraud sale catalogue, p117

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‘DARK LADY’ OF RARE BOOK COLLECTORS: PAULA FENTRESS PEYRAUD (NY, 1947~2008)

Peyraud Collection Auction, May 2009, Bloomsbury Auctions NY. 483 Lots (books, mss., images).

\$1.6 million, including fees. Photographer, Margie Van Dyke.

Collector’s Bookplate: Peyraud copy of Burney’s *Cecilia* (Lot 218), McGill University Library, Montreal.



Though Hester Thrale Piozzi was the priciest literary lady at the Peyraud sale -- her *Spectator* fetching \$140,300 from Yale’s Beinecke Library -- Frances Burney was the runaway favourite. A quantity of Burney and Burneyana graced the auction catalogue. The principal Burney sale was an autograph manuscript notebook (Paris, c1809-1811; red morocco gilt, 8vo, some 95 pp) of mostly literary exercises (*thèmes*) by Frances Burney, addressed to her French circle, most notably Barron Larrey who performed her mastectomy. The notebook was acquired for \$14,640, including fees, by McGill University, home of The Burney Centre. Burney holdings at McGill’s library are now enhanced by this new acquisition, along with 9 other lots from the sale. “Paula Peyraud was the world’s most active Burney collector,” said Peter Sabor, Burney Centre director, in his pre-auction talk, “but who of us knew the extent of this collection!”

On 6 May 2009 at Bloomsbury Auctions, New York City, the largest archive in private hands of books, manuscripts, and images associated with the late Georgian period (1760–1820) was sold at auction in 483 lots. The sale of the Peyraud Collection was the principal literary event of New York’s 2009 spring season. The auction’s total sales, including fees, of \$1,598,114 surpassed the presale estimate of \$1 million. Of the 104 registered buyers, most of these were private collectors and buyers for U.S. libraries. The dominant figures in the collection were literary women of the late Georgian era: Frances Burney, Hester Thrale Piozzi, the Bluestockings, Maria Edgeworth, Jane Austen, and the Brontës; literary men on offer included Samuel Johnson (some 30 items), Alexander Pope, Edmund Burke, David Garrick, Horace Walpole, and Lord Byron. The entity organizing the Peyraud sale was the New York office of Bloomsbury Auctions. The event’s principals -- Richard Austin, Tom Lamb, James Cummins, Stephen Massey, Oliver Lei Han -- worked the consignment with special care; their handsome sale catalogue (277 pp), with its large colour images and generous lot descriptions, is itself a collector’s item and scholarly resource. The sale represented some 30 years of dedicated collecting by an intriguing ‘dark lady’ in the antiquarian market: **PAULA FENTRESS PEYRAUD**, the quietly brilliant librarian at The Chappaqua Library, NY. Her principal agents were Robert J. Barry (CA Stonehill Inc., New Haven, CT) and Joanne Winterkorn (Quaritch Ltd., London); these two were admitted to Paula’s rarefied world. By the time of Peyraud’s sad death from lung cancer in 2008 (age 61), the total Peyraud Collection ran to some half a million printed books and over 100 paintings; this considerable treasure trove of rarities, evidently three generations of Peyraud libraries, ‘lived’ in the subterranean gallery of the family home in Chappaqua. While the Peyraud auction was not comparable in scale to, say, the Hyde Eccles Collection sale (Christie’s 2004) or the Brett-Smith Library sale (Sotheby’s 2004), it was a dramatic validation of continuing interest and commercial investment in cultural property of the Georgian period, especially its women writers. The Peyraud Collection is now dispersed (sadly), but it has been given a second, public life. And Paula Peyraud is not lost in time. ◆

Selected List of Burney Sales (Books & Manuscripts), Peyraud Auction (May 2009)

All sums reflect hammer prices + auction house premium.

For additional buyers, see the author's auction report, *Eighteenth-Century Stds* (Fall 2009), 151-163; 8 images.

Update: An extraordinary Burney family album of letters and documents (Peyraud Estate) was unsold at Bloomsbury Auctions NY, 24 Feb. 2010, Lot 210, \$4000-\$6000. See <http://ny.bloomsburyauctions.com/detail/NY041/210.0>

Canada

McGill University Library, Montreal. 10 Lots: Frances Burney & Burneyana

Frances Burney, rare ms notebook, red morocco gilt, 8vo. Some 40 (draft) letters in French by Burney to her circle; Lot 202, \$14,640, **highest Burney sale** (funder: Breslauer Foundation, NY). Also: Sophia Elizabeth Burney, niece of Frances, her ms of "Novels. Plays. and Poems" (c1790), Lot 223, \$5124. And: Lot 204, \$1708; Lot 205, \$3904; Lot 211, \$1830; Lot 216, \$1098; Lot 217, \$2684; Lot 218, *Cecilia* (1812), with Peyraud bookplate, \$1952; Lot 219, \$2318; Lot 223, \$5124. See news piece, McGill U. Web site.

United Kingdom

John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. 9 Lots: Autograph Letters of Frances Burney

ALS (initials) to Hester Thrale Piozzi re *Cecilia*, etc., Lot 193, \$9150. ALS (initials) to same re their circle, Lot 190, \$6100. ALS (initials) to her father Charles Burney re Samuel Johnson's views on her *Cecilia*, Lot 194, \$7930. Other Burney acquisitions: Frances Burney to Hester Thrale Piozzi, Lot 192, \$7930; Lot 195, \$3660. Also: Lots of Thrale Piozzi mss: Lot 381, \$793; Lot 393, \$7320; Lot 404, \$9150; Lot 406, \$5490.

United States

Harvard University, Houghton Library, Hyde Eccles Collection (Johnson & His Circle). 36 Lots

Hester Thrale, ALS, to Frances Burney on Thrale's impending marriage to Piozzi; Lot 383, \$19,520. Harvard was the **principal buyer at the Peyraud auction**, acquiring most notably Thrale's annotated copy of Richard Cumberland's *Memoirs*. Lot 426, \$42,700. Also: Samuel Johnson, ALS, to Hester Thrale Piozzi; Lot 305, \$23,180. Other Peyraud properties at Harvard: Lots 306, 309, 328, 380, 382, 384-89, 390-92, 394-99, 402, 403, 405, 412, 424, 427, 431, 440-44, 463. See news piece, Houghton Library Web site.

Vassar College Libraries, Special Collections, Poughkeepsie, NY. 3 Lots of Burney Letters

Frances Burney ALS ("F. Burney") to Mrs. Walsingham on her appointment to the Queen. Lot 197, \$1708. Also: 8 autograph letters to Burney from female correspondents, Lot 209, \$1464. Also: Autograph letter from Burney's niece, describing Burney's death, Lot 224 (\$610). Thus, a small but interesting Burney collection (10 items) at Vassar. See Vassar's Web site for news piece.

Yale University, Beinecke Library. 9 Lots (\$165,615)

ALS from Frances Burney to her father on *Camilla*, Lot 201, \$7,320. Also: Hester Thrale Piozzi, her heavily annotated copy of *The Spectator* (8 vols.), later provenance in Queen Victoria, Lot 422, \$140,300 (**star of the show**). Also: Lots 413, \$1464. Lot 189, \$3660. Lot 198, \$2684. Lot 334, \$2928. Lot 344, \$3904. Lot 367, \$2440. Lot 368, \$915.

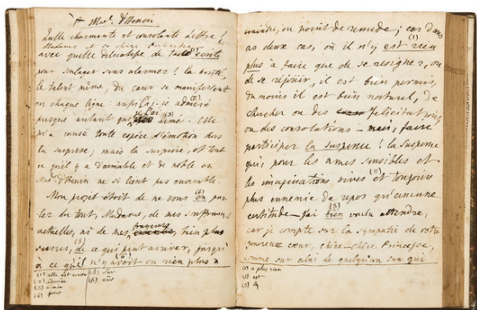
Selected Private Collectors

Paula Stepankowsy, President, Burney Society. 1 Lot. Frances Burney ALS (1770) to her sister Esther "Hetty" Burney, re Hetty's engagement to Charles Rousseau Burney, Lot 188, \$1464.

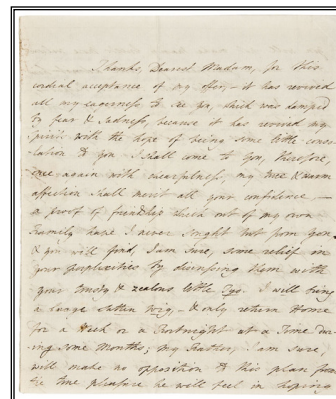
Lorna J. Clark, Carleton University, Ottawa. Member, Burney Society. Editor, *The Burney Letter*. Authority on Sarah Burney, literary sister of Frances. 4 Lots. Sarah Burney, *Traits of Nature*, 5 vols. (1813), Lot 221, \$1098. Also: Lot 212, \$610; Lot 220, \$976; Lot 222, \$336.

Loren R. Rothschild, Los Angeles. Prominent Johnsonian. Former owner of Reynolds's 'blinking Sam' portrait (gift to Huntington, 2006). 2 Lots. Edm. Burke's letter (1782) to Burney, praising *Cecilia*, Lot 174, \$2928. Also: ALS, Burney to Hester Thrale re Mr Thrale's death (1781), Lot 191, \$9760. ♦

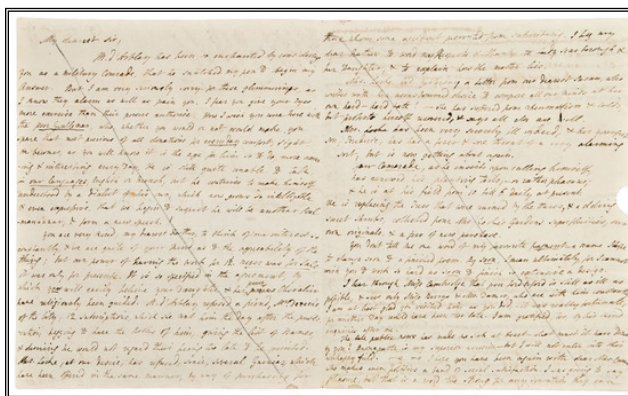
SELECTED BURNEY SALES, PEYRAUD COLLECTION AUCTION (NY, MAY 2009)
FROM THE PRINTED CATALOGUE, OLIVER LEI HAN, PHOTOGRAPHER. LOT 197 IMAGE FROM ONLINE CATALOGUE.
reduced format; sale prices include premium



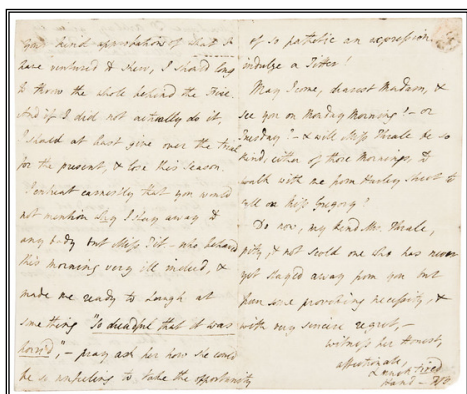
Frances Burney, Manuscript Notebook. Lot 202.
\$14,640. McGill University Library, Montreal.



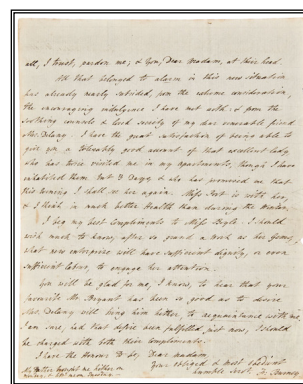
Frances Burney to Hester Thrale,
on the death of Mr Thrale. Lot 191.
\$9760. Loren R. Rothschild, Los Angeles.



Frances Burney to her father, Dr Charles Burney, on *Camilla*.
Lot 201, \$7320. Beinecke Library, Yale University.



Frances Burney to Hester Thrale Piozzi,
on Burney's *Cecilia*. Lot 193. \$9150.
Rylands Library, University of Manchester UK.



Frances Burney to Mrs Walsingham,
on her royal appointment. Lot 197. \$1708.
Vassar College Libraries, New York.