

## Aikin/Barbauld Collection

Aikin/Barbauld collection.....	1
Biographical sketch.....	1
Custodial history/Immediate source of acquisition.....	1
Scope and content .....	1
Items.....	2
1. Letter.....	2
2. Reading lessons.....	2
3. Story.....	2
4. Letter.....	2

**Aikin/Barbauld collection.** – 1813 - [186-]. – 6 cm of textual records.

**Biographical sketch:** Mrs. Anna Laetitia (Aikin) Barbauld (1743-1825) was an essayist, editor, poet and writer of children’s books, often co-authoring with her brother, John Aikin MD. Born in Leicestershire, she was the only daughter of John Aikin, DD and was well-educated as a result of her precocious abilities. In 1774 she married Rev. Rochemont Barbauld, a Dissenting minister and they ran a well-regarded school for boys at Palgrave in Suffolk for 11 years. After her husband’s death in 1808 she concentrated on literary work, undertaking an edition in 50 volumes of the best English novelist, with a lengthy prefix and biographical notices. She also published poetry, essays and works for children, including *Hymns in prose for children* and *Early lessons*. Her brother’s daughter, Lucy Aikin (1781-1864), was the biographer of her father and aunt, and a children’s author and editor in her own right.

**Custodial history/Immediate source of acquisition:** The collection was purchased in 1983.

**Scope and content:** Collection contains material related to the education of young people in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A manuscript copy of a short moral tale (“no education can overcome nature”) and four stories written in print script are included. The four stories were likely written out as a didactic tool for the teaching of reading skills. A letter addressed to Miss A.L. Aikin from Sarah Lawrence, a close friend of the Aikin family who ran a boarding school for girls is included, dated 1813, written in print script to a very young child and her sisters as an aid to reading. Finally, the collection contains a letter from Lucy Aikin discussing a new printer for her forthcoming lesson book.

## Items

### 1. Letter

Dates of creation: March 31, 1813

Scope and content: 1 folded sheet (now split along the central fold) written in print script on 3 sides, from Sarah Lawrence. The salutation is to 'My dear little Anna', Mrs. Barbauld's great-niece. The letter mentions *Evenings at Home*, co-written by Mrs. Barbauld and her brother John Aikin.

### 2. Reading lessons

Scope and content: File contains 4 short stories and a folded cover titled 'Reading lessons written by Mrs. Barbauld for A.L. Aikin'. The stories include:

1. "Bears are very fond of honey..." A single small folded sheet, mounted on other sheets for strength, and written in print script.
2. "An elephant was walking quietly..." Similar to the above.
3. "There were two little girls, Sally and Polly..." One larger sheet, folded, written fully on one side and partially on the verso, with a blank paper attached to the lower verso for strength. Written in print script.
4. "As a huge lion one day was lying asleep..." One sheet written on both sides with a two-verse poem on the verso.

Also included is a fragment of a geography lesson.

### 3. Story

Dates of creation: 1814

Scope and content: 1 ½ pages of an autograph draft of a moral tale for children, written on the verso of an address sheet, addressed to Mrs. Barbauld and postmarked September 5 1814. The story concerns a hare who befriends a deserted puppy, only to be killed by a pack of hounds.

### 4. Letter

Dates of creation: [186-]

Scope and content: 1 small sheet, written on both sides, to 'Dear friend' and signed L Aikin, Hampstead June 22. She discusses the new edition of her lesson book, to be published as *Instructive Stories*.