A History and Description of the Burney Project

by

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Dr. Charles Burney (1726-1814) emerged from provincial obscurity to become 18th century England's most noted music historian. His daughter Fanny (1752-1840) also became famous as the author of novels which would later influence the works of Jane Austen. Both figures left behind voluminous memoirs, journals and letters which are being edited for publication by the scholars of McGill's Burney Project. The current Director, Professor Lars Troide, describes the Project's history to date and its present status.

Charles Burney (1726-1814), sorti d'un obscur milieu provincial, devint le plus grand historien de la musique que l'Angleterre connut au XVIIIe siècle. Sa fille Fanny (1752-1840) connut également la notoriété grâce à des romans qui devaient par la suite influencer l'oeuvre de Jane Austen. Tous deux ont laissé de volumineux mémoires, des journaux intimes et des lettres dont les responsables du projet Burney de McGill préparent une édition. L'actuel directeur, le Pr Lars Troide, décrit l'histoire du projet jusqu'à ce jour et sa situation actuelle.

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The "Burney Project," as it has come to be called over the years, is an internationally known editorial enterprise currently housed in the "Burney Room" on the McTavish Street level of the Redpath Library Building. Both names, the products of custom, are somewhat misleading. The Burney Room is in fact a large working space with two inner offices. One office is the headquarters of ongoing work on the memoirs and letters of the 18th-century music historian, Dr. Charles Burney. The other is headquarters of another, related project, a critical edition of the journals and letters of Fanny Burney (Figure 4), Dr. Burney's daughter and a well-known novelist.

The careers of both these figures are good examples of upward social mobility in 18th-century England. Charles Burney was born in Shrewsbury in 1726, one of the many offspring of James MacBurney, a minor actor and artist. Early displaying strong musical talents, he came to London in 1744 as apprentice to Thomas Arne, composer of the famous "Rule Britannia." Burney performed there as a violinist in the Drury Lane Theatre orchestra and also made at this time the acquaintance of George Frideric Handel, of whom he would later record many valuable anecdotes. He also became acquainted with Fulke Greville, a wealthy aristocrat, who was so charmed with Burney's talents and by his engaging personality that he bought up the remainder of Burney's indenture to Arne and admitted him to his entourage as a full-time musical companion. As Greville's companion in London and Wiltshire, Burney widened significantly the range of his contacts with important and influential social and artistic figures.

In June 1749 Burney married Esther Sleepe, the 23-year-old daughter of a sometime leader of the Lord Mayor's Band. The wedding ceremony was arranged and concluded with some haste, since their first child, Esther, was
Fig. 4. Fanny Burney, 1782, from a painting by her cousin, Edward F. Burney. Frontispiece in *Diary and Letters of Mme. D’Arblay*, London, Macmillan, 1904, vol. 1.
baptised on the same day as the wedding! In 1751 Burney was forced, for reasons of health, to flee with his young family from the smoky air of London. Released from his service to Greville, he settled in King's Lynn, in Norfolk, where he became organist of St. Margaret's Church and built up a clientele of young music students, children of the Lynn elite. He also charmed his way into the Houghton circle of George Walpole, 3rd Earl of Orford, grandson of the late great prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole.

By 1760 Burney's health had mended enough so that he was able to return to London with his still-growing family. The Burneys settled in Poland Street, then a fashionable neighborhood. Charles built up a new group of students and also instructed the girls at Mrs. Sheeles' Academy in Queen Square. In 1762 he was devastated by the death of his wife, Esther, but within a few years remarried, this time to Mrs. Elizabeth Allen, widow of a wealthy Lynn merchant and an old friend of the family.

For all his devotion to music Burney had long desired to make a name for himself as a man of letters, a distinct step upward on the social ladder. About 1753 he began amassing materials for a comprehensive history of music, ancient and modern, the work that would, he hoped, make his reputation. Along the way he decided it would be useful, both socially and professionally, to obtain a doctor's degree. As a result he arranged to receive a doctorate in music from Oxford University, a degree conferred upon him in June 1769 after the composition and successful performance of a lengthy and complicated anthem. Henceforth and to this day he would be known to the world as "Dr." Burney.

Fame came to Dr. Burney somewhat earlier than he had anticipated. In 1770 and 1772 he undertook tours of the European continent to meet prominent composers there and to gather further materials for his projected history. He kept journals of both trips, publishing them in 1771 and 1773. The first of these publications, on his tour of France and Italy (The Present State of Music in France and Italy), met with limited interest because of its confinement to purely musical matters. But his second book (The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces, 2 vols.), in which he retained his well-written and lively accounts of non-musical matters, found a much wider readership and met with the enthusiastic approval of no less a critic than Dr. Samuel Johnson who, shortly after, modelled his Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland on it. The notice of the famous Dr. Johnson was enough to insure instant renown to Burney, who became Johnson's close friend and who was soon included in the leading literary circles of the day. The publication in 1776 of the first volume of his authoritative General History of Music cemented his reputation. (The fourth and final volume appeared in 1789.)

After his first child, Esther (who became a talented harpsichordist), Dr. Burney would have five more children by his first wife and two by his second (not counting several infant mortalities). The third of his surviving offspring, Frances, better known in our century as Fanny, was born in Lynn on the 13th of June 1752. Fulke Greville's wife, Frances, stood as godmother. As a young child Fanny was characterized by an extreme shyness and even seemed a little backward to her family. In reality, though, she had a keen intelligence and early became an acute observer of the people around
her. She was also a born writer and in 1768 began putting down her observations in a remarkably precocious and literate journal (she was not yet 16). At first written for herself and addressed to "Miss Nobody," her journals soon became known to the family and later were passed around to friends of the family who relished Fanny's lively and perceptive accounts of the people who visited the Burneys in London or whom she met on her excursions elsewhere. After a few years Fanny's journals became journal-letters, addressed mostly to her favorite younger sister, Susan.

By the age of 15 Fanny had already written a novel, *The History of Caroline Evelyn*, which she dutifully consigned to the flames with all her other early writings (poems, plays, even an epic!) because of the stigma attached to women-writers in the 18th century. The urge to write a novel, however, still proved stronger than the fear of social disapproval. The sequel to *Caroline Evelyn*, about Caroline's daughter, gestated for the next decade in Fanny's mind. Finally, in 1776, with a third of the novel actually written (in secret), Fanny summoned the courage to approach a publisher, which she did anonymously through the mediation of her brother Charles and later her cousin Edward. Her first choice, James Dodsley, refused to consider an anonymous work. The second man approached, however, Thomas Lowndes, did agree to read it, and eventually offered her the niggardly sum of 20 pounds for the finished novel. Fanny, initially offended by the amount, finally capitulated, and *Evelina: or, a Young Lady's Entrance into Life* appeared in January 1778.

*Evelina* was, in effect, a new kind of novel, a "domestic comedy of manners." This sub-genre would later find its highest expression in the novels of Jane Austen, whose reputation would largely eclipse Fanny's but who owes a direct debt to her predecessor. Fanny's novel became, virtually, an overnight sensation. Readers were enthralled by Fanny's uncanny ear for realistic dialogue and by her ability to capture "types" of character (for example, the crude sailor in Capt. Mirvan or the rakish, devious aristocrat in Sir Clement Willoughby). They loved the uplifting moral messages that Fanny was at pains to embed throughout the narrative. Edmund Burke claimed to have started the novel placed on the mantel-piece of his fireplace and to have stood there reading through the whole night. His enthusiasm was matched throughout London. Everywhere people clamored to know the identity of the author of *Evelina*.

Whereas Dr. Burney had always been unequivocal in his search for fame, Fanny's reaction to celebrity was a mixture of elation and terror: elation that the world approved her book, and terror that it now wanted to place its spotlight on *her*. Inevitably her authorship, at first known only to Susan, Charles, and Edward, was revealed to the rest of her family and to the world at large. To her delight and chagrin Fanny, like her father before her, now found herself sought after by bluestocking hostesses such as Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Vesey. Barely noticed, if noticed at all, by Dr. Johnson on his previous visits to the Burney household, she was now befriended by the great man and praised by him in company to the point of acute embarrassment. Besides admiring her literary gifts, Dr. Johnson seems to have taken a genuine, avuncular liking to the shy Miss Burney, a feeling warmly reciprocated. During the week Johnson habitually stayed with his friends the Thrales at Streatham Place outside of town and Fanny became a
regular visitor there and a close friend of Mrs. Thrale. Relaxing at Streatham, Johnson showed the sportive, playful side of his personality (a side seldom if ever seen by Boswell). This amiable aspect of Johnson Fanny captures inimitably in her journals of that period.

The remaining events of Fanny's life can be summarized briefly. In 1782 she published a second novel, *Cecilia*, also well received by critics and the public. From 1786 to 1791 she was Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte, consort of George III, a position which she hated and eventually escaped to keep her health. In 1793, despite her strong anglophilia and Church of England faith she married a handsome and placid French Catholic emigré, General Alexandre d'Arblay, who had fled the Revolution. In 1794 an only child, Alexander, was born. He eventually became a divine and predeceased her. Sales of a third novel, *Camilla* (to which Jane Austen was one of the many subscribers), published in 1796, enabled the d'Arblays to build a country dwelling, Camilla Cottage. From 1802 to 1812 the d'Arblays were trapped in France by the Napoleonic Wars. After their return to England Fanny published a last novel, *The Wanderer*, in 1814 (which, though not greeted favorably like her earlier efforts, is receiving increasing critical attention in our day). General d'Arblay died in 1818. Fanny survived him by two decades, occasionally visited by literary figures such as Sir Walter Scott who tended to view her as a relic of another age. She finally died in January 1840, at the age of 87.

Dr. Burney had died in 1814, aged 88. For the last three decades of his life he had been organist of Chelsea Hospital, where he took up permanent residence in 1789. At his death he left behind a voluminous correspondence and memoirs, which it fell to the lot of Fanny to sift through for possible publication. Fanny spent the last 20 years of her life largely going through her own journals and the papers of her family with an eye to posterity. In 1832 she published her last work, *The Memoirs of Doctor Burney*, which is mostly her own narrative interspersed with carefully selected excerpts from Dr. Burney's manuscript memoirs. At her death she bequeathed her own journals and correspondence to her niece, Mrs. Charlotte Barrett, and her father's papers to her nephew, Charles Parr Burney. Mrs. Barrett published an incomplete edition of her aunt's journals and letters in the 1840s (reprinted with notes by Austin Dobson in 1904-5). Mrs. Annie Raine Ellis published the *Early Diary* (of 1768-77) in 1889 (reprinted three times subsequently). Except for some items in the Memoirs and occasional pieces in scholarly books and journals, the letters of Dr. Burney have never been published.

Dr. Burney's letters and other papers, bequeathed to Charles Parr Burney, remained in that branch of the family until 1953 when they were released on the market along with other Burney family material that had accrued over the years. The letters (and the rest of the material) were purchased by the American collector James Marshall Osborn and are now in the Osborn Collection in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscripts Library, Yale University. Fanny's journals and letters descended through Mrs. Barrett to the Wauchope family. In 1924 a large part of the Wauchope manuscripts was purchased by the American lawyer and industrialist Owen Young, who later transferred them to the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library. The residue of the Wauchope cache remained in the possession of Miss Ann
Julia Wauchope (1866-1962), who in 1952 authorized its transfer to the British Library.

Enter Joyce Hemlow, the architect of modern Burney studies and founder of the McGill Burney Project. Dr. Hemlow, a native of Nova Scotia who received her undergraduate education at Queen's University, became interested in Fanny Burney while a graduate student at Harvard in the late 1940s. Under the direction of the eminent Pope scholar George Sherburn she wrote her dissertation on *Fanny Burney and the Courtesy Books*. In the meantime the Burney materials in the Berg Collection had become available to scholars. After she came to the McGill English Department in 1948 the Osborn materials surfaced. In addition, Dr. Hemlow was the prime mover in the uncovering of the papers possessed by Miss Wauchope, who responded to a query sent out by Hemlow in 1951 to descendants of the Burney and Barrett families. It was Joyce Hemlow whom Miss Wauchope entrusted with arranging the transfer of the Wauchope materials to the British Library. Equipped with a mass of manuscript materials never before available, Dr. Hemlow now embarked on the writing of a badly needed scholarly biography of Fanny Burney. Dr. Hemlow's work, *The History of Fanny Burney*, was published by the Clarendon Press of Oxford University in 1958. It met with great critical acclaim, winning, among other honors, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in Britain and, in Canada, the Governor-General's Award for Biography.

It is appropriate that Fanny Burney was a friend of Frances Bowdler, sister of the Thomas Bowdler of "bowdlerizing" fame (or infamy). For Dr. Hemlow's examination of the Burney papers revealed the pains the elderly Fanny had taken to destroy or otherwise suppress "offensive" materials. Fanny was concerned not so much with "indecencies" (though they are there) as with suppressing materials that might portray the Burneys in an unfavorable light or cause offence to the families of other people mentioned. Dr. Burney had begun this process of destruction when, after his second wife's death in 1796, he burned all his correspondence with her. Also fed to the flames were most of the letters of his early patron Fulke Greville, with whom he eventually had suffered a permanent breach. After Dr. Burney's death Fanny went through her own journals as well and destroyed large portions. For example, her journals of 1768 to 1777 amount to some 800 manuscript pages, but (judging by remaining stubs and other evidence) probably at least another 400 pages were burned. In addition, about 20% of the surviving text has been laboriously crossed out, line by line, with heavy black ink.

Fanny's ghost would no doubt be horrified to discover that 95% of these lines, which she thought she had obliterated, have now been deciphered after long, painful scrutiny under a magnifying glass and a strong light. To be sure, these recovered lines indicate that her intentions were not simply of the whitewashing variety. In some cases she merely tried to get rid of material she thought might be boring or repetitious to future readers (such as accounts of business details relating to her books or of concerts attended in London). But in many instances skeletons come rattling out of closets. For instance, a suppressed paragraph reveals that in 1770 Fanny's stepsister Maria Allen was jilted by her suitor Martin Rishton. This fact might seem inconsequential since Rishton later made up with Maria and romantically eloped with her to Ypres. Fanny, however, was unable to bring
herself to destroy Maria's letters to her, since Fanny loved her stepsister, and the letters of 1798 reveal that Rishton had been carrying on a lengthy affair (20 years long, in fact) with Maria's erstwhile best friend Mrs. Dorothy (Dolly) Hogg, whose name, with one accidental exception, is entirely suppressed from Fanny's journals. Rishton's early jilt takes on a new significance in the light of his later philandering.

The consequences for biography of this kind of cloaking are obvious. An example is G. E. Manwaring's biography of Fanny's elder brother James Burney, published in 1931 under the title My Friend the Admiral: The Life, Letters, and Journals of Rear-Admiral James Burney, F.R.S. The main title is in fact a quotation from Charles Lamb, whom Burney befriended in his later years. Fanny herself was very proud of referring to him as "my brother, Admiral Burney." This is in spite of the fact that Burney didn't receive his promotion to Rear-Admiral until in his 72nd year, only four months before his death. And despite the fact that he hadn't been allowed an active command in the navy since 1785, 36 years before his demise (this during the period of the Napoleonic Wars!). Manwaring, handicapped by a lack of evidence, fails to address the issue of this forced inactivity, merely dismissing it as an "enigma" (234). Suppressed passages in Fanny's journals, however, and a closer examination of Admiralty records reveal that James Burney had a history of insubordination culminating in his failure to obey a superior's orders while convoying a fleet of merchant vessels to the East Indies in 1782. Small wonder, then, that he was eased out of active service in 1785 and never trusted again with a command. Other suppressed passages and newly surfaced letters in the Burney Papers disclose that as a young officer with Captain Cook James Burney had (not so surprisingly) a "Piece" in Tahiti (letter of Samuel Crisp to Fanny Burney, 22 Aug. 1775, British Library), and, far more damningly to a proto-Victorian like Fanny, that in 1797, though married with two children, he succumbed to an incestuous impulse and ran off with his half-sister Sarah Harriet Burney. (He returned five years later to his wife, who is scarcely dealt with in Manwaring's book.) In the light of these subsequent revelations of Burney's character, Manwaring's biography of "the Admiral", though fairly well-researched, becomes little better than hagiography.

Long before concluding her biography of Fanny, it had therefore become evident to Dr. Hemlow that, for a number of major reasons, a new edition of Fanny's journals and letters was called for. Not only was Mrs. Barrett's seven-volume edition of 1842-6 (Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay) grossly incomplete, containing, conservatively, less than a third of the extant material, but the depredations by both Fanny and Mrs. Barrett on the surviving text needed to be rectified. (Added to Fanny's obliterations and revisions were Mrs. Barrett's shuffling of the papers out of proper chronological order and her attacks with scissors and glue-pot, whereby she sometimes cut up three different letters and combined parts thereof into a "new" one!) Even Mrs. Ellis's relatively admirable edition of the earliest years was marred by her failure to decipher the 4,000 obliterated lines in the manuscripts. A new edition was needed of (as far as possible) Fanny's original text, complete and unexpurgated, with modern, full annotations. (Mrs. Ellis's annotations are full in their way but woefully digressive and inaccurate. Mrs. Barrett's notes are cursory, at best, and little improved on by Dobson.)
After the publication of her biography, then, Dr. Hemlow began the long and arduous task of preparing the new edition. The University fathers, recognizing her achievement as Fanny's biographer and the importance of the enterprise, gave her as working space the huge octagonal room in Morrice Hall (formerly the reading room of the Presbyterian College). Here she was joined in her labors by colleagues and students from the English Department. (Early colleagues who helped with the Project include Professors Curt Cecil and the recently retired Archie Malloch.) The Department also granted her funds to hire a project secretary, and so she was joined by Mrs. Patricia Hawkins, who would loyally serve as her secretary and editorial assistant for over 20 years.

A major task at the outset was to track down all the surviving correspondence of the Burney family that was not in the three major Burney collections. Casting her net as widely as possible, Dr. Hemlow dispatched queries to some 3,000 libraries and archives around the world. Eventually letters or groups of letters turned up in a hundred collections, public and private, from geographically as far away as Sydney, Australia. The results of her search were published in 1971 by the New York Public Library and the McGill–Queen's University Press as *A Catalogue of the Burney Family Correspondence 1749–1878*, by Joyce Hemlow with Jeanne M. Burgess and Althea Douglas. Listing some 10,000 letters, the catalogue begins with a note (now at Harvard) to Dr. Burney from the poet Christopher Smart, dated 29 July 1749, and concludes with a letter in the Osborn Collection of 24 April 1878 by Mrs. Barrett's son Richard Arthur Francis Barrett. Besides the letters of four generations of Burneys, there are letters by over a thousand people who wrote to them. But the largest correspondences by far are those of Dr. Burney and of Fanny Burney. (Since 1971 additional letters have continued to surface, most recently from a private owner in New York City.)

A concurrent, major task was to obtain copies of the correspondences of Dr. Burney and of Fanny, to be used for the editing work at McGill. The result is to be found in the Burney Room's fireproof safe, containing over 120 microfilm reels, and in several filing cabinets filled with photocopies. Additional letters had to be transcribed on the spot, since filming was not permitted in certain collections. Letters on film or photocopy then were transcribed in the Burney Room by a succession of typists. Transcription of the 10,000 manuscript pages of Fanny Burney's journals and letters, begun in the early 1960s, was not finally completed until 1983 (see below).

At the outset Dr. Hemlow was faced with the same dilemma that had confronted Mrs. Barrett over a century earlier: how to contend with the sheer magnitude of Fanny's journals. Mrs. Barrett's publisher, Henry Colburn, had quickly made it clear that it would be impossible to publish them all. As a result, Mrs. Barrett skipped over the first ten years (1768–77), beginning her edition with the publication of *Evelina* in 1778. She also chose to concentrate on the period up to 1791 (which includes the so-called "Streatham years" and the years of Fanny's service at Court), besides choosing selectively from that period. Thus she was able to limit her edition to seven volumes, with approximately five devoted to the years of Fanny's greatest fame, when the astonishing success of *Evelina* was still a recent memory.
Given the existence of Mrs. Ellis's edition of the decade 1768-77 and the paucity of space allotted by Mrs. Barrett to the years after 1791, Dr. Hemlow decided to begin her new edition with Fanny's exit from Court in 1791. Thus her edition covers in effect roughly the latter half of Fanny's life, from 1791 to 1840, the years of her marriage to General d'Arblay and of her widowhood. Fanny's constant devotion to her journal-writing is evidenced by the fact that the 10,000 surviving manuscript pages of her journals divide almost equally between the periods 1768-91 and 1791-1840. Starting as she was, therefore, in 1791, Dr. Hemlow initially set her typists the task of transcribing the 5,000 pages of the later period. Their work was considerably slowed down, of course, because of the need to examine concurrently the original manuscripts in order to decipher obliterations and to undo the cutting and pasting work of Mrs. Barrett (accomplished by "float-off" operations in the New York Public Library and the British Library, for a fuller discussion of which see below). Dr. Hemlow also undertook the annotation of the journals, necessitating frequent and lengthy trips to libraries, record offices and archives in the United States and England, where she consulted manuscript materials as well as unique or rare book sources. Work was also necessary in France because of the years Fanny spent there.

Dr. Hemlow's edition of *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay)*, 1791-1840 began to appear in 1972 with the publication by Clarendon of the first two-volume installment. Like her biography of Fanny, these volumes were greeted with the highest critical praise. Reviewers such as C. P. Snow and Malcolm Muggeridge were "enthralled" by the unfolding narrative of Fanny's journals and deeply impressed by the editor's job of restoration and the thoroughness and accuracy of her annotations. Ten more volumes were to follow, some edited by Dr. Hemlow with or without assistance and others by outside scholars whom she had enlisted, including Professors Edward and Lillian Bloom of Brown University and Providence College, Professor Peter Hughes of the University of Zurich, and Mr. Warren Derry, biographer of the classicist Samuel Parr (*Dr. Parr: Portrait of the Whig Dr. Johnson*, Clarendon Press, 1966). The final two volumes, closing out Fanny's life, appeared in 1984, to the same favorable response that had greeted all their predecessors.

In 1972 Professor Slava Klima, Dr. Hemlow's colleague in the McGill English Department and editor of Joseph Spence's *Letters from the Grand Tour* (published by McGill-Queen's in 1975), was invited to join the Project for the purpose of editing the letters of Dr. Burney. Arguably the last major unpublished correspondence of the 18th-century, Dr. Burney's contains a wealth of information about contemporary composers and musicians, besides revealing important aspects of his musical thought not found elsewhere. His letters also afford a major gloss on the genesis of his magnum opus, the *General History of Music*, which remains to this day perhaps the single most important source for music historians of the 18th century. The informal letters he penned to family and friends are written in a lively and entertaining style, punctuated by wit and sallies of imagination. Publication of all the letters has been long overdue.

In 1975 Professor Klima, who as a graduate student at Yale had worked with James Osborn, was joined in his efforts by Alvaro Ribeiro, a doctoral candidate at Oxford who was also an alumnus of the Osborn Collection. Mr.
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Ribeiro undertook to edit the earliest letters, of 1749 to 1784. His edition was presented as his dissertation at Oxford, which conferred on him the degree of D.Phil. in 1980. His advisor there was Roger Lonsdale, yet another protegé of Mr. Osborn and author of Dr. Charles Burney: A Literary Biography (Clarendon Press, 1965). In the meantime Dr. Klima continued his redaction of the remainder of the letters, from 1784 to Dr. Burney's death in 1814, a task which he is still engaged in. The first volume of the letters, revised from his thesis by Dr. Ribeiro, is scheduled to be published by Oxford this year, with the remaining four or five volumes to follow in due course. A concurrent project, now nearing completion, is an edition of The Memoirs of Dr. Charles Burney up to 1769, reconstituted from the autograph fragments left by Fanny and now scattered among the Berg and Osborn Collections and the British Library. This volume, edited by Dr. Klima, Gary Bowers (formerly a McGill Ph.D. candidate), and Dr. Kerry Grant, currently Director of the School of Music at the University of Nebraska, is due to be published by Nebraska, also in 1988.

As work progressed on the 12-volume edition of Fanny's later journals, it became evident to Dr. Hemlow (who "officially" retired from McGill in 1975, though she stayed on in the Burney Room to see her volumes to their conclusion) that another hand would be needed to edit the early years. Accordingly, I was offered an appointment in the English Department in 1976, with the understanding that I would undertake the editing of the 5,000 manuscript pages of 1768 to 1791. This opportunity was given to me because of my background as co-editor of volumes 37-9 of The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence, 48 Vols., general editor W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937-83), my volumes having appeared in 1974. I had also edited Walpole's last literary notebook, which I presented as my dissertation at Yale (and which was published by the Yale University Press in 1978 as Horace Walpole's Miscellany, 1786-1795). Aided from 1978 by generous annual grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, I began the transcription and editing of the journals of 1768 to 1791, employing a succession of McGill graduate students as my assistants.

Before this could be started, however, it was first necessary to perform yet another "float-off" operation on the manuscripts in the Berg Collection in New York. As mentioned in passing earlier, this operation had previously been performed on the Burney manuscripts in the British Library and the Berg, but the Berg operation had been limited to the journals from 1791 onwards. This time around, it was necessary to repair the damage inflicted by Mrs. Barrett on the earlier journals in the Berg, from 1768 to 1791. The operation, as its name suggests, involves literally the soaking of manuscript leaves in pans of tepid water until the pieces of paper pasted on them "float off." The leaves and "paste-overs" are then allowed to dry, and microfilmed for later transcription. The latest (and last) operation was performed by Mrs. Althea Douglas in February and March of 1979. In the 2,500 leaves or 5,000 pages of 1768-91 there were over a thousand paste-overs on some 500 leaves. The paste-overs thus removed consist mostly either of blank pieces of paper used by Mrs. Barrett to cover the text beneath, or of fragments of leaves (usually with writing on both sides) transposed from other places in the run of manuscripts. Once the manuscripts had been floated for this final time, it was at last possible to finish the job of transcribing all the extant text of Fanny's journals. My assistants finished their work in 1983.
Even with all the pasted-over leaves floated, however, there still remained, in this first phase of my work, the chore of deciphering the 4,000 lines Fanny had attempted to obliterate in the journals of 1768 to 1777. Fanny's "oblits" had proven stubbornly opaque to the methods of modern science, including the use of infrared light and even nuclear activation autoradiography, attempted unsuccessfully on a letter by Fanny in the Osborn which was sent to the Brookhaven Laboratory on Long Island in 1980. Fortunately, timely help arrived in the person of Dr. James Neil Waddell who had written his dissertation at the University of Leicester on "The Language of Fanny Burney" and who now volunteered to decipher Fanny's oblits. Armed with a magnifying glass, a strong light, and his knowledge of Fanny's idiom, Dr. Waddell was able, over a period of a month, to recover an astounding 95% of the obliterated lines, restoring the 20% of the surviving text of 1768-77 that had been rendered illegible. (The deciphered obliterations amount to perhaps a hundred published pages). As noted above, these recovered passages contain much valuable material that had been effectively "lost" for over 150 years.

In the meantime I had begun my annotations of the early journals. This work necessitated several trips a year to Yale and the New York Public Library to examine the manuscripts there and books not available at McGill. In addition, between 1980 and 1983 I spent a total of four months in England consulting materials in the British and Bodleian Libraries and in numerous other record offices and archives in London and the provinces. My work during this time was greatly facilitated by a Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, D. C., which gave me a year off from my teaching duties (in 1981-2). As a result I was able virtually to complete my researches on the journals of 1768 to 1777. The first volume of The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney, covering 1768 to 1773, was co-published this year by the Clarendon and the McGill-Queen's Presses. Volume two (1774-77) should follow in 1989.

It is impossible to say with any certainty how many years it will take to complete my edition. There should ultimately be 12 volumes in all, creating an exact symmetry with Dr. Hemlow's (which I substantially follow in style and apparatus). To speed up the process I have enlisted the aid of outside scholars in Canada, the United States, and England who will edit some of the later volumes. The Burney Project (which in 1981 was moved to its present spacious quarters in the Redpath Library Building) has now also entered the computer age, with a pair of PCs joining the sturdy old Recordak microfilm readers that have served us for over 20 years. My hope (not prediction) is that the final volume will be published by the year 2000.

Dr. Hemlow, her edition of the later Journals finally completed, retired to Halifax several years ago, but still returns on occasion to visit the Project. Her long-time secretary, Mrs. Hawkins, died in 1986. Currently the work force in the Burney Room consists of myself, Dr. Klima, and my assistants Stewart Cooke, Elsie Wagner, and Andrew Miller. Mr. Cooke and Mr. Miller are both Ph.D. candidates in the McGill English Department. Their presence confirms the ongoing pedagogical value of the Project, which has served as a training ground in 18th-century editorial scholarship for a long succession of McGill students. The Project is also periodically visited by students and scholars from other institutions, who come to utilize its valuable
research materials. Eminent visitors in recent years have included the noted music scholar and conductor Christopher Hogwood, and the 18th-century literary critic and scholar W. B. Carneochon.

Major holdings in the Burney Room include virtually complete microfilm runs of the Burney family manuscripts in the Berg and Osborn Collections and the British Library, and photocopies or microfilms of all the correspondence of Dr. Burney and of Fanny Burney. In addition, there are filing cabinets filled with information gleaned from almost forty years of hunts through wills, parish registers and other unique archival materials, as well as notes, quotations and other data taken from rare published works in the Bodleian and other major research libraries in Britain and the United States. The books in the Burney Room are a mixture of items owned by Dr. Klima and myself and works on loan from the McLennan Library, McGill's research library for the humanities and social sciences. Items in the first category worth mentioning include my complete set of the Gentleman's Magazine from 1731 to 1846 (180 volumes) and Dr. Klima's first-edition copies of Dr. Burney's journals of his tours. Works on loan from the McLennan include a complete run of The Annual Register from 1758 to 1853, early editions of various peerages (Burke, Debrett, Cokayne), lists of the alumni of Oxford, Cambridge, Eton and Westminster, numerous biographies of 18th-century figures, editions of the letters or correspondences of Swift, Pope, Johnson, Burke, Gibbon and others, an original set of Rees's Cyclopaedia (to which Dr. Burney contributed the musical articles), and many other books on virtually all aspects of 18th-century life and culture.

The Project's resources are open to all serious scholars and graduate students and, in general, may be consulted on weekdays between the hours of 10 and 5. As suggested above, they should prove useful to anyone interested in the 18th century (as well as the early 19th century), but will be of particular value to students of 18th-century social, musical and literary history, and, more specifically still, to people wanting to learn more about the Burneys and their circle, which included so many of the major figures of their time. The continuing vitality of the Project is a tribute to the pioneering work of Dr. Joyce Hemlow, Professor Emerita of English Literature at McGill, to whom all students of the 18th century will forever owe a debt.

Notes


2. Fanny Burney to Mrs. Thrale, 9 Sept. 1780. This letter is not included in Margaret M. Smith's article on Burney in her Index of English Literary Manuscripts Volume III 1700-1800 Part I (New York and London: Mansell,
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1986), pp. 79-82, which updates the Catalogue.

3. The term is Muggeridge's. See his review in The Observer, 23 April 1972.

4. This procedure was specifically devised for the Burney manuscripts, and as far as I know it has never been used on any other set of manuscripts. It is feasible only with good-quality rag paper and ink.

5. The latter procedure consists of rendering the manuscript slightly radioactive, and then making a series of photographic exposures of it. It was hoped, in vain, that the inks used by the young and old Fanny would have different half-lives, thus making it possible to separate images of the original writing from the later cross-overs.