

**Charles Lucien Jules Laurent
Bonaparte letters, 1825-1857
1825-1857
Mss.B.B642.1.7**

American Philosophical Society
105 South Fifth Street
Philadelphia, PA, 19106
215-440-3400
manuscripts@amphilsoc.org

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Background note	4
Scope & content	6
Administrative Information	7
Indexing Terms	7
Other Descriptive Information	7
Collection Inventory	9
Papers.....	9

Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Bonaparte, Charles Lucian, 1803-1857
Title	Charles Lucien Jules Laurent Bonaparte letters, 1825-1857
Date [inclusive]	1825-1857
Call number	Mss.B.B642.1.7
Extent	0.25 Linear feet
Extent	Ca. 80 items.
Location	LH-MV-C-3
Language	English
Language	Correspondence is in English, French, Italian.
Container	1
Abstract	The primary correspondence (ca. 65 letters) is with William Cooper (1798-1864) on Bonaparte's publications, especially "American Ornithology" and "Observations on the Nomenclature of Wilson's Ornithology," but also included are many references to American and European men of science and learned societies. There are also letters to Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, George Robert Gray, Titian Ramsay Peale, and Wilhelm P. S. Rüppell.

Background note

Bonaparte, Charles Lucien, Prince of Canino (1803-1857, APS, 1824). Charles Lucien Bonaparte, French naturalist and ornithologist, was a nephew of the Emperor Napoleon, the son of the Emperor's younger brother Lucien.

Charles Lucien Bonaparte, was raised in Italy and shared his father Lucien's republican political values. He received an extensive scientific education in Italian universities. In 1822 at the age of nineteen he married his cousin Zenaida-Charlotte-Julie, daughter of Joseph, king of Naples and Spain, and brought her to live in the United States for six years. The couple had twelve children.

Before the age of twenty he discovered a warbler, then unknown to science. And would make his greatest contributions to zoology, even though he had begun his scientific career with several essays in botany. While in the United States Bonaparte published numerous ornithological notes in the *Journal of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences*. He continued Alexander Wilson's work on birds, updating the latter's *American Ornithology*. He also sponsored the then unknown John James Audobon for membership in the Academy of Natural Science in 1824, although Audobon was not elected.

Returning to Europe in 1828 at the age of 25, Bonaparte settled in Italy and began a period of major political activity. He advocated for the organization of scientific congresses that also provided an opportunity for meetings of independents and reformers. After the accession of the initially liberal Pope Pius IX in 1846, Bonaparte became a member of the Pope's party, but proceeded to move in a more radical direction, affiliating with the radicals and joining the Supreme Junta that seized power in the Roman states during the Revolutions of 1848. After the flight of Pope Pius in November 1848, Charles Lucien became deputy for Viterbo in the *Assemblée Nationale Romaine*; he was eventually elected Vice-President of the *Assemblée*. He also served on a commission to draft a constitution for the Roman Republic. When his cousin Louis Napoleon sent French troops to restore the Pope, Bonaparte participated in the defense of Rome with the Republican army. After its defeat and the fall of the Roman Republic, he fled with his family back to France, first to Marseilles and then Orléans, where he was arrested and released. Louis Napoleon ordered him out of the county and he set sail from Le Havre for England.

While in England, Bonaparte attended the 1849 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Birmingham, then visited the Scottish ornithologist Sir William Jardine. During his sojourn in England Bonaparte started work on a classification of every bird in the world, visiting museums across Europe to study their collections. The following year, 1851, he was allowed to return to France, where he and his family settled in Paris. At this point he gave up politics and concentrated exclusively on his scientific endeavors.

Bonaparte became interested in the principles of biological classification as early as 1831. In his early work he departed from the concepts of Georges Cuvier, of whom he was quite critical. He classified Insectivora before the Rodentia and separated the Chiroptera from the Primates. He made use of location, structure and the relationships of the branchiae in his classification of fish. Also, in developing classifications, he considered physiological data and morphology. Consequently, he raised the Batrachia to a subclass, then united the saurians and ophidians (Reptilia). He devoted the final years of his life

to establishing a definitive classification of zoological groups, publishing synopses, conspectuses, and catalogs of the fauna of France. To this end, he not only encouraged fellow zoologists to study local fauna, but in 1857 conceived a general work in collaboration with Victor Meunier on the fauna of France entitled *Histoire naturelle generale et particuliere des animaux qui vivent en France*. Bonaparte's death later that year prevented the realization of the project.

Charles Lucien Bonaparte was deeply interested in the French Muséum d'histoire naturelle and hoped to see the addition of a special gallery for native fauna. He bequeathed his library, containing works on the natural sciences, meteorology, history and politics, as well as his extensive correspondence, to the Muséum.

Scope & content

Most of the correspondence (64 letters) in the collection of Charles Lucien Jules Laurent Bonaparte letters is between Bonaparte, the 19th century French naturalist and ornithologist, and the American conchologist and collector William Cooper, who helped to found the New York Lyceum of Natural History. The correspondence-- in French, English and Italian--spans the period from 1825-1857, and relates to Bonaparte's publications, particularly *American Ornithology* (1825-1833) and *Observations on the Nomenclature of Wilson's Ornithology* (1826). While these letters comprise the core of this collection, a second group of eleven letters between Bonaparte and the American ornithologist John James Audobon (whom he had unsuccessfully sponsored in 1824 for membership in the Academy of Natural Sciences) covers the ten year period between March 15, 1825 and June 24, 1835. Other correspondence in the collection include individual letters to Geoffroy Saint-Hillare, George Robert Gray, Titian Peale, Wilhelm Peter Eduard Rüppell, Coenraad Jacob Temminck and (anonymously) to "Mon cher collegue". No inventory of this collection is available.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Accessions, 1953-1958. In-house list with purchase information, accession numbers, and dates.

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- General Correspondence
- Scientific Correspondence

Occupation(s)

- Scientists.

Subject(s)

- Learned institutions and societies.
- Literature, Arts, and Culture
- Natural History
- Ornithology.
- Science -- Societies, etc.
- Science and Technology

Other Descriptive Information

The Charles Lucien Bonaparte collection is noteworthy for its ornithological content and for the exchanges with William Cooper, a fellow ornithologist who had a large collection of bird specimens. The majority of the correspondence surrounds Bonaparte's American Ornithology. The letters are all from Bonaparte to Cooper. Their content shows Cooper to be an engaged and active ornithologist who provided Bonaparte with critical advice on his proofs. Cooper founded the Lyceum of Natural History in New York and studied zoology in Europe. He is credited with helping edit Bonaparte's last two works. Bonaparte, for his part, repaid his friend by naming a new species of hawk Cooper's Hawk.

The collection contains correspondence with other individuals either involved directly or indirectly with this publication. Titian Ramsay Peale and James Audubon are among the other correspondents. The Audubon correspondence are facsimiles and occasionally in French.

Combined with the Audubon and Ord Collections, the Bonaparte collection helps round out the American Philosophical Society's strong collection in early American ornithology.

Charles Lucien Bonaparte was a prominent ornithologist in nineteenth century America. Charles was also the Prince of Canino and Musigano and nephew to Napoleon Bonaparte, although Napoleon was not close to him. He also published works on zoogeography and zoology in Europe.

Lucien Bonaparte was born in Paris France, was educated in England, and lived in Italy studying natural history until he traveled to the United States in 1823, where he established himself as a leading ornithologist. He lived in and around Philadelphia for five years before returning to Europe. He was a friend of John James Audubon and tried to introduce Audubon to established intellectual circles in Philadelphia, only to be thwarted by Audubon's rival George Ord.

Bonaparte's most important work published in America was a work revising Wilson's Ornithology, then the standard work on American birds. Bonaparte's book, American Ornithology; or, The Natural History of Birds Inhabiting the United States Not Given by Wilson, was illustrated by Titian Ramsay Peale. One illustration was also from John James Audubon, his first published piece.

As a member of the American Philosophical Society, Bonaparte represented the society at numerous meetings in Italy throughout the 1840s. Although these meetings were ostensibly for scientific purposes, many of them were political in nature that sought to create a unified Italian republic.

Collection Inventory

Papers

Bonaparte, Charles Lucian, 1803-1857	July 30, 1834	10-1/2x8
Letter to John J. Audubon, London;		
Rome, A.L.S. 4p.,add., end. In French. Concerning birds. Concerning natural history.		
Bonaparte, Charles Lucian, 1803-1857	June 17, 1844	10-1/2x8-1/2
Letter to Wilhelm Peter Edward Simon Ruppell, Messina;		
Rome, A.L.S. 1p.and add. In Italian.		
Bonaparte, Charles Lucian, 1803-1857	Nov. 20, 1849	10-1/2x8-1/4
Letter to Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Paris;		
Leyde, A.L.S. 4p.,add. In French. Concerning birds. Refers to Cuvier and Milne-Edwards.		
