

Mariana Islands Letters

1678-1687, undated

MS.2004.068

Archives and Manuscripts Department

Boston College

140 Commonwealth Avenue

Chestnut Hill, MA, 02467

617-552-3282

burns.reference@bc.edu

<http://www.bc.edu/burns>

Table of Contents

Summary Information 3

Administrative Information 5

Historical Note..... 6

Sources for Historical Note..... 6

Scope and Content Note..... 7

Collection Inventory..... 8

Summary Information

Library Unit	Archives and Manuscripts Department
Creator - Recipient	Aveiro, Maria Guadalupe de Lencastre, duquesa de, 1630-1715
Creator - Author	Borja, Francisco de
Creator - Recipient	García, Francisco, 1641-1685
Creator - Author	Morales, Luis de
Creator - Author	Salgado, Francisco
Creator - Author	Vidal de Figueroa, José, 1630-1702
Title	Mariana Islands letters
Date [inclusive]	1678-1687, undated
Extent	1.25 Linear feet (1 box)
Location	Room 114
Language	Spanish
Abstract	A collection of eight letters and one list, written in Spanish to María de Guadalupe de Lencastre y Cárdenas and Francisco García, regarding Jesuit missionary work and Spanish colonization of the Mariana Islands between 1678 and 1687.

Preferred Citation

Identification of item, Box number, Folder number, Mariana Islands letters, MS.2004.068, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Processed by Edward Copenhagen, 2004, and Katie Lyle, 2011. This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit.

Last Update

November 21, 2011

Access note

Collection is open for research.

Copyright restrictions

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Source of Acquisition

MS.2004.068. Unknown. Acquired by the repository prior to 1986.

Accession date

August 17, 2004

Historical Note

Though now a U.S. territory, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands was discovered by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521 and colonized by Spain in 1668. These lightly populated volcanic islands along the Marianas Archipelago are located in the western Pacific Ocean, just north of Guam in the Federated States of Micronesia. Magellan first named the Marianas *Islas de ladrones* (islands of thieves). Two decades later, Spanish colonizers renamed the islands for Queen Mariana of Spain in honor of her financial support for the missionary work there.

Starting in 1688, Jesuit mission work like that of priest Diego Luis de San Vitores brought the construction of churches and religious schools in attempts to convert the indigenous people of the islands to the Catholic faith. Native inhabitants of the Marianas, who did not see Christianity as compatible with the religion of the island, resisted and revolted against the Spaniard's efforts at conversion. To the end of quelling the resulting conflicts, Spaniards forced migration and segregation of the indigenous people. This cultural shock and the introduction of devastating diseases such as small pox, tuberculosis, leprosy and others lead to the depletion of the native population. Survivors then formed relationships with Europeans, Latin Americans and other Asian populations, leading to the varied ethnic representation seen in the islands today.

While they have maintained the Spanish name, rule over the Marianas changed from Spain to Germany in 1898. This purchase yielded a division of what was then the Mariana Islands into the present day Northern Marianas and Guam. Japan invaded and occupied the Marianas during World Word I; during World War II, the United States gained control. After many decades of military rule in the islands, the Commonwealth is now self-governing, although the Head of State is the US president.

Sources for Historical Note

"Puerto Rico and the U.S. Island Areas". US Census Bureau. http://www.census.gov/population/www/proas/pr_ia_hist.html

"Northern Mariana Islands". Britannica Academic Edition. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/419782/Northern-Mariana-Islands/54017/History>

Scope and Content Note

This collection includes nine documents: eight letters and one list, all handwritten in Spanish between 1678 and 1687. Most of these letters were written by Spaniards taking part in a mission to the Mariana Islands to María de Guadalupe de Lencastre y Cárdenas, the Duquesa de Arcos, Maqueda, y Aveiro praising and thanking for her support and aid in the mission. The one exception is a letter addressed to Francisco García de la Compañía de Jesús, a Jesuit priest. Among the details included in the letters are descriptions of the European arrivals on the islands, Spaniard and the indigenous encounters, and daily life and Jesuit missionary work, as well as reports of Jesuit deaths, ship and supply status, and requests for additional materials and/or men.

Collection Inventory

Joseph Vidal to María de Guadalupe de Lencastre y Cárdenas, Mexico, 1678 February 18 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/0]	Box 1	Folder 1
Francisco Salgado to María de Guadalupe de Lencastre y Cárdenas, Sevilla, 1678 June 7 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/1]	Box 1	Folder 2
Francisco Salgado to María de Guadalupe de Lencastre y Cárdenas, Sevilla, 1678 June 14 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/2]	Box 1	Folder 3
Francisco de Borja to María de Guadalupe de Lencastre y Cárdenas, Manila, [1684 June 24] [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/3]	Box 1	Folder 4
Joseph Vidal to Francisco García, Mexico, 1685 March 3 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/4]	Box 1	Folder 5
Luis de Morales to María de Guadalupe de Lencastre y Cárdenas, Sevilla, 1685 [August] 14 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/5]	Box 1	Folder 6
Joseph Vidal to María de Guadalupe de Lencastre y Cárdenas, Mexico, 1686 January 12 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/6]	Box 1	Folder 7
Francisco Salgado to María de Guadalupe de Lencastre y Cárdenas, San Pedro, 1687 July 20 [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/7]	Box 1	Folder 8
List of islands and coordinates, [Palma de las Canarias], undated [http://hdl.handle.net/2345.1/8]	Box 1	Folder 9