

1990.0083 CORRESPONDENCE OF JAMES BUTCHART 1841-1853

Creator	Butchart, James
Creator's Activity/Occupation	Stock and station agents - Farmers
Biography: James Butchart migrated from Fifeshire, as a lad of 19, disembarking in Melbourne from the William Nicol in February 1842. Over the ensuing decade he undertook pastoral employment with James MacArthur at Ballawarra, Capt. John Hepburn at Smeaton Hill, Donald Campbell Simson at Glenisla and Charlotte Plains, and with William Campbell, M. 1. C., at Strath Loddon. During this time, James Butchart also acquired pastoral interests of his own. In 1853 (when the present series of letters ceases) he entered into partnership with William Kaye as a stock and station agency (Kaye & Butchart), purchasing the business of Messrs Mickle & Bakewell in Bourke Street. This enterprise was very successful, and after ten years James Butchart retired. He built a mansion - 'Beleura' - at Mornington, and died there on 11 Nov. 1869, aged 47.	

Reference Number	1990.0083
Collection/Series Title	CORRESPONDENCE OF JAMES BUTCHART
Date Range of Collection/Series	1841-1853
Size/Extent	1 box (0.12m)
Access Conditions	Access: Open All items digitised and available online.
Scope and Content of Series All but one of the letters in the present series were written by James Butchart, and were addressed to his father Robert, his brother George, his sisters Cecilia and Isabella, or a combination of family members. The odd letter in the series, from D.C; Simson to George Butchart, has been placed last on the following list, otherwise the letters are listed in simple chronological order. This collection of letters is presently held by James Butchart's grand-nephew.	
System of Arrangement	Chronological
This list created 14 February 2020	

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To request access to records on the list below via the University of Melbourne Archives Reading Room, quote the Unit/Box reference in full.				
Unit/Box	Item number	Title	Date range	Description
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00001	James Butchart, Leith, to father	3 September 1841	Previous control number: 1. Written just prior to embarkation to Port Phillip.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00002	James Butchart, aboard the William Nicol, off Wick to father	9 September 1841	Previous control number: 2.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00003	James Butchart, 'The Ocean's mighty waste' to father	October 1841	Previous control number: 3.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00004	James Butchart, Atlantic, to father	29 November 1841-21 December 1841	Previous control number: 4. Written on 29 November, 18 December, and 21 December 1841
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00005	James Butchart, Melbourne, to father	15 February 1842	Previous control number: 5. Has just arrived: talks of the current depression in the colony; prices; received by James Graham, who introduced him to James MacArthur (fourth son of John MacArthur); impressions of Melbourne; his prospects; is going shepherding for MacArthur.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00006	James Butchart, Ballawarra (MacArthur's run, near Ballarat), to brother (George)	4 September 1842-7 October 1842	Previous control number: 6. Written on 4 September and 7 October 1842. More about the depression; may be his own master in four or five years; description of aborigines and their way of life; has been offered an overseer's job; has had no word from home yet. His letter his observations of Indigenous Australians "squatting" nearby and their "mode of life" including, hunting, habitats, nomadic life, clothing/ furs, hunting tools as well as their intelligence and courteous manner when meeting a white settler.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00007	James Butchart, Ballawarra, to father	23 October 1842	Previous control number: 7. Details of Capt. Hepburn's offer of a job, and his property; still no word from home.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00008	James Butchart, Melbourne, to father	20 December 1842	Previous control number: 8. Has received letters from father and brother; more details of job with Hepburn; prospects; prices; father and James would do well if father could come out with c£300 capital, but he

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				might not weather the voyage too well; depression; wages.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00009	James Butchart, Smeaton Hill (Hepburn's run), to father	March 1843	Previous control number: 9. An account of his routine as overseer; flies; grass fires, and method of extinguishing; contains this postscript: 'I never write poetry now'
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00010	James Butchart, Smeaton Hill, to father	24 September 1843	Previous control number: 10. Discusses the possibility of his father's emigrating; prospects; prices; estimates how much it would cost to stock a run and live for a year, what the following year's expenses would be, etc.; fortune-seekers bad for the colony; state of Hepburn's property; James now has 24 men working under him.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00011	James Butchart, Smeaton Hill, to brother	10 December 1843	Previous control number: 11. Shearing and shearers; wages; bush furniture; food; continuing insolvencies in town; methods of conducting money matters; saved £49 in the last year (out of a wage of 50); mentions that they had thought of migrating to America; low cost of living in Victoria - prices of meat, wheat, tea and sugar; visit of Sir John and Lady Franklin to the property.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00012	James Butchart, Smeaton Hill, to father	5 March 1844	Previous control number: 12. Again urges his father to migrate; sheep prices rising because of the boiling-down system; may go to New Zealand when his term with Hepburn expires; squatters all annoyed at Gipp's proposed new licensing regulation.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00013	James Butchart, Melbourne, to brother	31 July 1844	Previous control number: 13. First trip to Melbourne since Dec. 1842; prices very low.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00014	James Butchart, Smeaton Hill, to sisters	6 August 1844	Previous control number: 14. Story of being lost in the bush; is glad to hear that his family is migrating; tells them what to bring, and what to do on board; should get rid of Scots accent if they wish for jobs as governesses.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00015	James Butchart, Smeaton Hill, to brother	1 and 8 February 1845	Previous control number: 15. Is upset that his family has apparently been deterred from migrating by something which James said in a letter; has bought and sold some sheep; wages; weather; grass fires; prices low; what they should bring if migrating.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00016	James Butchart, Melbourne, to whole family	21 August 1845	Previous control number: 16. Has left Hepburn; several offers of partnership;

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				again advises them on migration procedure; price of farms.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00017	James Butchart, Mount Eliza, to brother, then father	4 December 1845	Previous control number: 17. Is in partnership with Henry David in a 'small' (12 and a half square miles!) cattle run; getting some sheep; a little cultivation; lots of kangaroos and birds; four house ride from Melbourne; wreck of the Cataragui on King Island; prices and wages; father is now in Glasgow.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00018	James Butchart, Melbourne, to brother	7 May 1846	Previous control number: 18. Has sold out of the partnership at a loss, and signed up with D.C. Simson as superintendent; growth of Melbourne; prosperity in the colony; a railway projected; James Graham is married, and doing well; Australia's prospects.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00019	James Butchart, Charlotte Plains (Simson's home station, near Hepburn's property), to sisters	28 May 1846	Previous control number: 19. Simson could take one sister as a governess, and the Coghill family the other (Mrs. Simson was a Coghill); more advice on migration.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00020	James Butchart, (Glenisla, the property which he is superintending for Simson, on the Glenelg River, near Balmoral), to brother	13 December 1846	Previous control number: 20. Has bought a 'small place' near Glenisla; shearing time; wages; James lives in a slab hut, and the storekeeper's wife acts as his servant.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00021	James Butchart, Glenisla, to father	August 1846- January 1847	Previous control number: 21. Description of the property and his job; cultivation on neighbouring land; description of a trip with Coghill to the Murray River looking for a run; running cattle relates being followed by group of Aborigines; again urges his father to migrate; wages, prospects. Note: 'January 1847' is written at the top in pencil, but the letter was evidently commenced in about August 1846, and resumed on 13 December 1846, the latter date appearing at the top of page 2 PLACE NAMES: Gariwerd / Grampians (W Vic SJ54-03, SJ54-07, SJ54-08) PLACE NAMES: Victoria Range (Gariwerd / Grampians W Vic SJ54-07)

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				<p>PLACE NAMES: Glenelg River (W Vic SJ54-07, SJ54-08)</p> <p>PLACE NAMES: Murray Bridge (SE SA SI54-13)</p> <p>PLACE NAMES: River Murray (SW NSW, N Vic, SE SA SI54, SI55)</p> <p>KEYWORDS: Koori, Aboriginal, Indigenous</p>
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00022	James Butchart, Melbourne, to brother	26 April 1847	<p>Previous control number: 22. Further references to the small property he has bought, with 20 cows; wages; prospects; 'I am sorry to say, Age and hot climate have not done much to improve my personal appearance however what I want in good looks I make up by Blarney so that I am not after all behind my neighbours except in the length of my purse however I hope that will mend...'.</p>
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00023	James Butchart, Melbourne, to father	23 March 1848	<p>Previous control number: 23. Is sorry that his sister Cecilia has died without ever having come to Australia; has engaged for another year with Simson; wool prices have fallen, and things are dull; is not married.</p>
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00024	James Butchart, Charlotte Plains, to brother and sister	22 April 1848	<p>Previous control number: 24. Is minding the Simson homestead while that family is in Melbourne for the races; gives a sketch of life at the homestead; stone house.</p>
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00025	James Butchart, Charlotte Plains, to brother	19 December 1848	<p>Previous control number: 25. Refers to brother's exchange of letters with Simson (see letter No.38, below); haymaking, and harvesting barley, then wheat; affairs still dull; stock and stations have fallen in price= 'not now worth more than half what they were worth two years ago'; many settlers have abandoned runs for lack of water'.</p>
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00026	James Butchart, Glenisla, to brother	7 December 1849	<p>Previous control number: 26. Starting to have more definite discussions with George on the question of his migration to Australia; James says he himself is now worth 'upwards of 400 pounds if my debtors don't fail'; Port Phillip 'is far superior to Scotland with all due deference to my native land'; description of Glenisla Station; has sold his own place at a 'fair profit'; as to the suggestion that he write an article for a U.K. journal, 'I have observed that few persons who write much get on well and so I rather eschewed that line'.</p>

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1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00027	James Butchart, Melbourne, to father	20 August 1849	Previous control number: 27. Has left Glenisla, and will spend the next six months at Charlotte Plains; may go to Adelaide after that; sends 15 pounds- can't afford more, partly because 'my clothes cost me so much more now from the society in which I move'.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00028	James Butchart, Charlotte Plains, to brother	20 October 1849	Previous control number: 28. Heavy migration to Port Phillip, even though wages have fallen (give examples); is thinking of 'erecting a store in the Bush that is a mart of general merchandise', and wonders if George could establish contact with a house in Glasgow and run the export end of the business.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00029	James Butchart, Charlotte Plains, to sister	23 December 1850	Previous control number: 29. Encloses two pages of verse entitled 'Sabbath musings in the Bush of Port Phillip'; still with Simson but has also entered into a partnership with John Ralph Blois- Blois and Butchart- in a station near Western Port, not far from where he was at Mount Eliza, but not on the coast.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00030	James Butchart, Togola (his property), to father	10 May 1851	Previous control number: 30. Now residing on his station with Blois; they have 3,000 sheep although the run could carry 7,000; Blois, although a 'new chum', has been managing so well that James is thinking of leaving him in charge and going to New Zealand to take up another run there; has made his first trip to Gippsland; also comments that 'This country has given indications of becoming a second California and every day brings fresh Rumours of gold and silver and copper mines being discovered. And men of property begin to fear the effects ...'. If reports turn out to be true he may himself take a few weeks at the diggings; prices are rising.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00031	James Butchart, Tongola and Melbourne, to sister and brother	31 August 1851-10 September 1851	Previous control number: 31. It is the day after the 10th anniversary of his departure; Simson died shortly after James left his employ; because Tongola is small, he is leaving Blois in charge, and going to manage William Campbell's station on the Loddon; mentions the gold mines 'of which Mr. Campbell was the first discoverer'. In his pages addressed to George (10 September) he mentions the elections

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				for the first Legislative Council of Victoria, and believes that Campbell has been elected. Simson's widow wants him to return as manager.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00032	James Butchart, Strath Loddon (Campbell's property), to sister	3 November 1851	Previous control number: 32. The richest mines so far discovered are said to be on this run, six or eight miles away; last week, he allowed one of his shearers two days at the diggings and the man mined 120 pounds worth of gold; steady stream of vehicles; men of all grades and professions; now c. 5,000 people: 'I supply them with sheep'; his house is said to be above a deposit, and he had needed police to help to stop prospectors 'from digging within ten yards of the door'.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00033	James Butchart, Strath Loddon, to brother	27 December 1851	Previous control number: 33. Country 'almost revolutionized through the successful working of Gold', Is himself bound till the following September, but intends then to try his luck; describes alluvial workings, cradling etc.; some 'dig deep holes and the gold they pick out with a knife from the crevices of the slate Rock'; wages have risen greatly.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00034	James Butchart, Mount Alexander diggings, to brother	19 October 1852	Previous control number: 34. I write to you from the El-Dorado of Australia'; has left Campbell, and is buying and selling sheep; he and Blois lost 1,000 sheep with catarrh; prices; advises George to invest all he has in books, shoes and Wellington boots and consign them to James; has had four offers of partnership.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00035	James Butchart, Smeaton Hill, to sister	9 December 1852	Previous control number: 35. Doing better than ever, dealing in sheep; goldfields a bit dull; tent city in Melbourne.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00036	James Butchart, Melbourne, to 'My Dear Friends'	4 May 1853	Previous control number: 36. Proposed to start with William Kaye as a stock agent; has had losses through scab; has 2,000 pounds to put in with Kaye (and still has Tongola); they are to start on 1 July, and he may be able to get George a job as a clerk; sends 20 pounds.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00037	James Butchart, Melbourne, to family	15 May 1853	Previous control number: 37. Sends another 20 pounds.
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00038	D.C. Simson, Charlotte Plains, to George	9 November 1848	Previous control number: 38. Simson assures George that his brother James

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Records Description List

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		Butchart, Commercial Bank of Scotland, Glasgow		is well (this is the letter referred to in letter number 25).
1990.0083 Unit 1	1990.0083.00000 .0001			

End of list