

John Nicholson Family Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2016**

Contact information:

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

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<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms016016>

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm80034710>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Collection Summary

Title: John Nicholson Family Papers

Span Dates: 1786-1868

ID No.: MSS34710

Creator: Nicholson, John, 1757-1800

Extent: 800 items ; 2 containers ; .8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Financier, land speculator, and public official of Pennsylvania. Correspondence, diary fragments, business and financial records, and printed matter. The papers relate primarily to the Pennsylvania Land Company, the Asylum Company, and to Nicholson's other land holdings in Pennsylvania, the western territories, and Washington, D.C. Records of Nicholson's heirs relate to attempts to regain properties that had been alienated.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Bedwell, Thomas--Correspondence.

Broom, James M. (James Madison), 1776-1850--Correspondence.

Joubert, Thomas--Correspondence.

Livingston, Edward, 1764-1836--Correspondence.

McLane, Louis, 1786-1857--Correspondence.

Morris, Robert, 1734-1806--Correspondence.

Nicholson family.

Nicholson, John, 1757-1800.

Taney, Roger Brooke, 1777-1864--Correspondence.

Organizations

Asylum Company.

Pennsylvania Land Company.

Subjects

Land speculation--Pennsylvania.

Land tenure--Northwest, Old.

Land tenure--Pennsylvania.

Land tenure--Washington (D.C.)

Titles

Nicholson family papers

Occupations

Financiers.

Land speculators.

Public officials.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The family papers of John Nicholson, financier, land speculator, and public official of Pennsylvania, were acquired by gift and purchase, 1919-1970.

Processing History

The John Nicholson Family Papers were processed in 1979. The finding aid was created in 2016.

Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include microfilm of John Nicholson papers in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pa.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of John Nicholson is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of John Nicholson family are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, John Nicholson Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|--------------|--|
| 1757 | Born in Wales |
| 1782 | Appointed controller general by Pennsylvania legislature |
| 1787 | Appointed escheator general of Pennsylvania |
| 1792 | Joined the South Carolina Yazoo Co. |
| 1794 | Organized firm of Morris & Nicholson |
| 1800 | Arrested for debt |
| 1800, Dec. 5 | Died |

Scope and Content Note

The family papers of John Nicholson (1757-1800) span the years 1786-1868. The collection consists of diary fragments, printed matter, and business and financial records kept by Nicholson and his heirs.

The first portion of business records, 1786-1800, contains letters and miscellaneous financial matter concerning the Pennsylvania Land Company, the Asylum Land Company (intended to offer Pennsylvania lands as a haven for French and Haitian refugees), and other of the senior Nicholson's real estate enterprises. Correspondents include Thomas Bedwell, James M. Broom, Thomas Joubert, Robert Morris, Louis McLane, and Robert Brooke Taney.

Business records after Nicholson's death derive principally from his son, also named John, and are related to attempts by heirs to regain the properties that their father had lost. Much of the correspondence from the period was written by the junior Nicholson to his attorney, Edward Livingston of Louisiana. Printed matter in the collection includes legal decisions, business circulars, and a pamphlet of a Union Canal Convention at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1838.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| BOX 1 | Diary, 1796-1797 |
| BOX 1 | Business records |
| BOX 1 | 1786-1831 (10 folders) |
| BOX 2 | 1832-1868, undated (9 folders) |
| BOX 2 | Printed matter |