

John Glassford and Company Records
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Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2000

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Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms998016>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

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Collection Summary

Title: John Glassford and Company Records

Inclusive Dates: 1743-1886

Bulk Dates: 1760-1820

ID No.: MSS22939

Creator: John Glassford and Company

Extent: 228 volumes

Extent: 228 containers

Extent: 62 linear feet

Extent: 71 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78022939>

Summary: Mercantile firm. Ledgers, journals, daybooks, inventories, cashbooks, and letterbooks of the various mercantile firms in Maryland and Virginia representing or succeeding the Glasgow, Scotland, firm of John Glassford and Company in the Chesapeake tobacco trade.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Bayles, William.

Byrd, William, III, 1728-1777.

Campbell, John, active 1796.

Carter, Landon, 1710-1778.

Fairfax, George William, 1741-1809.

Fergusson, Robert, fl. 1779-1817.

Fitzhugh, William, 1741-1809.

Glassford, Henry, 1764-1819.

Glassford, John, 1715-1783. John Glassford papers.

Gordon, James, active 1760.

Hamilton, Alexander, -1799.

Henderson, Archibald, active 1766.

Jamieson, Neil.

Lee, Henry, 1756-1818.

Lee, Richard Henry, 1732-1794.

Mason, George, 1725-1792.

Plater, George, 1735-1792.

Riddell, Henry, active 1760-1783.

Ross, Hector.

Washington, George, 1732-1799.

Washington, Lawrence (of Chotank), 1728-approximately 1813.

Organizations

Boyle, Scott & Co.

Findlay, Hopkins & Co.

Glassford, Gordon, Monteath & Co.

Glassford, Henderson & Co.

Henderson, Fergusson & Gibson.

James Brown & Co. (Glasgow, Scotland)

James Gordon & Co.

Jamieson, Johnstone & Co.

John Glassford and Company.
Shortridge, Gordon & Co.
Thompson, Edelen & Company.
Vincent & Fergusson.

Subjects

Merchants--Maryland.
Merchants--Scotland--Glasgow.
Merchants--Virginia.
Tobacco industry--Maryland.
Tobacco industry--Scotland--Glasgow.
Tobacco industry--Virginia.

Places

Alexandria (Va.)--Commerce.
Baltimore (Md.)--Commerce.
Bladensburg (Md.)--Commerce.
Chaptico (Md.)--Commerce.
Colchester (Va.)--Commerce.
Dumfries (Va.)--Commerce.
Georgetown (Washington, D.C.)--Commerce.
Glasgow (Scotland)--Commerce.
Leonardtown (Md.)--Commerce.
Lower Marlboro (Md.)--Commerce.
Maryland--Commerce.
Newport (Md.)--Commerce.
Norfolk (Va.)--Commerce.
Nottingham (Md.)--Commerce.
Piscataway (Md.)--Commerce.
Port Tobacco (Md.)--Commerce.
Scotland--Commerce.
Upper Marlboro (Md.)--Commerce.
Virginia--Commerce.

Acquisition Information

The records of the Scottish mercantile firm of John Glassford and Company were purchased by the Library of Congress in 1899.

Processing History

The records of John Glassford and Company were processed in 1983 by John Francis Hackett. The collection description was revised in 2000 by Harry G. Heiss and Mary A. Lacy.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The records of John Glassford and Company 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.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of these papers is available on seventy-one reels. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: John Glassford and Company Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The records of John Glassford and Company span the years 1743-1846, but bulk largest in the period 1760-1820. They include ledgers, journals, daybooks, inventories, cashbooks, and letterbooks for the various mercantile firms which represented or succeeded John Glassford and Company in Maryland and Virginia. The records are organized geographically into two series: [Maryland](#) and [Virginia](#).

John Glassford (1715-1783) was one of the most prominent and prosperous of the Scottish "tobacco lords." Glassford, an original member of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures, was a leading force in the establishment of Glasgow, Scotland, as an international trading center. By the latter part of the eighteenth century, he controlled a major portion of the Chesapeake tobacco trade, despite having never travelled to America. Represented by agents or factors, Glassford established a system of branch stores along the Potomac River for the purpose of purchasing tobacco directly from planters. By this method of direct purchase, Glassford and his associates were able to pay higher prices for tobacco than English consignment merchants. While higher prices brought the Scottish firm new customers, its ability to extend credit and provide planters with consumer goods helped to insure its domination of the Chesapeake tobacco trade. The sale of goods such as hardware, rum, wine, sugar, salt, and slaves became a major source of revenue for the branch stores.

This collection reflects the daily transactions normally carried on in the branch stores. The transactions were often recorded in rough form on throw sheets and then carefully recorded in the store's journal (or daybook) and ledger (or account book). Accounts were maintained for each individual or firm trading with the store and for various types of produce or goods collected for export or resale. Numerous names of slaves appear in both the daybooks and account books. A major portion of the collection deals with the Revolutionary War era. The letterbooks of Alexander Hamilton, factor for Piscataway, Maryland, and Robert Fergusson, factor for Georgetown, Maryland, reveal the difficulty Glassford and Company and subsequent firms encountered when collecting pre-war debts. Inventories for the schooners *Felicity* and *Plato* also appear in the collection.

Under the firm name of Glassford and Company, Glassford operated stores in Maryland at Baltimore, Benedict, Bladensburg, Chaptico, Georgetown (later part of Washington, D.C.), Leonardtown, Llewellyn's Warehouse, Lower Marlboro, Newport, Nottingham, Piscataway, Port Tobacco, and Upper Marlboro. John Glassford and Archibald Henderson under the firm of Glassford, Henderson & Company operated stores in Virginia at Alexandria, Colchester, and other sites; and with associates James Gordon and Walter Montearth, Glassford operated Glassford, Gordon, Montearth & Company at Quantico, Dumfries, and Norfolk.

With the death of John Glassford in 1783, the surviving members of Glassford and Company, Henry Glassford, James Gordon, Henry Riddell, John Campbell, and Archibald Henderson, presented the power of attorney for the company to Robert Fergusson, factor for Georgetown. It is unclear when the company passed out of the hands of the Scottish merchants and into the control of local owners. From 1800 to 1816 the firm of Vincent & Fergusson carried on the bulk of the

business. From 1816 to 1834 the firm was called Thompson, Edelen & Company. In Glassford and Company's most successful years, those prior to the American Revolution, the company owned a fleet of twenty-five ships and imported ten percent of all tobacco received by Great Britain. The value of Glassford's yearly imports over this period has been estimated to be in excess of £500,000.

The collection includes records of the following firms: Glassford and Company; Glassford, Henderson & Company; Glassford, Gordon, Monteath & Company; Henderson, Fergusson & Gibson; Findlay, Hopkins & Company; James Brown & Company; Boyle, Scott & Company; Jamieson, Johnstone & Company; Shortridge, Gordon & Company; James Gordon & Company; Vincent & Fergusson; and Thompson, Edelen & Company. Prominent names found in the collection include William Bayles, William Byrd (1728-1777), Landon Carter, George William Fairfax, William Fitzhugh, Neil Jamieson, Henry Lee, Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, George Plater, Hector Ross, George Washington, and Lawrence Washington of Chotank.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in two series:

- [Maryland, 1743-1846](#)
- [Virginia, 1758-1830](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-162 REEL 1-51

Series

Maryland, 1743-1846

Cashbooks, daybooks, inventories, invoice books, journals, ledgers, letterbooks, lists of debts, lists of shipped tobacco, salesbooks, ship charges, and ship invoices for the various firms which represented or succeeded John Glassford and Company in Maryland. Arranged alphabetically by name of town and grouped chronologically therein.

BOX 163-227 REEL
52-71

Virginia, 1758-1830

Cashbooks, cash receipts, firm accounts, journals, ledgers, and lists of debts for the various firms which represented or succeeded John Glassford and Company in Virginia. Arranged alphabetically by name of town and grouped chronologically therein. Microfilm reels are normally frame numbered starting with 0 for each reel. The frame numbers for volumes 163-226 diverge from this pattern and are herewith listed to avoid confusion.

Container List

Microfilm edition available. Shelf no. 18,978

Container	Contents
BOX 1-162 REEL 1-51	Maryland, 1743-1846 Cashbooks, daybooks, inventories, invoice books, journals, ledgers, letterbooks, lists of debts, lists of shipped tobacco, salesbooks, ship charges, and ship invoices for the various firms which represented or succeeded John Glassford and Company in Maryland. Arranged alphabetically by name of town and grouped chronologically therein.
BOX 1 REEL 1	Baltimore Salesbook, 1795-1799, 1826-1829
BOX 2 REEL 1	Journal, 1826, 1831-1835
BOX 3 REEL 1	Bladensburg Ledger 1753-1754
BOX 4 REEL 1	1766, pt. 1
BOX 5 REEL 2	1766-1767, pt. 2
BOX 6 REEL 2	1767-1768, pt. 1
BOX 7 REEL 2	1767-1768, pt. 2
BOX 8 REEL 3	Journal, 1775-1777, 1784-1789
BOX 9 REEL 3	Chaptico Daybook 1761, pt. 1 (Pagan & Co.)
BOX 10 REEL 3	1761-1762, pt. 2
BOX 11 REEL 3	Charles County Ledger, 1829-1836, 1845-1846
BOX 12 REEL 4	Leonardtwn Ledger 1759
BOX 13 REEL 4	1769, pt. 1
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BOX 15 REEL 5	Inventories and firm accounts, 1792-1795, 1811-1814
BOX 16 REEL 5	Llewelin's Warehouse Ledger 1790-1792, pt. 1
BOX 17 REEL 5	1790-1796, pt. 2
BOX 18 REEL 6	Lower Marlboro Daybook, 1772-1773
BOX 19 REEL 6	Ledger, 1772-1776, 1785
BOX 20 REEL 6	Newport Daybook, 1755
BOX 21 REEL 7	Journal, 1768-1776 (and Port Tobacco)
BOX 22 REEL 7	Nottingham Journal, 1760-1761

Maryland, 1743-1846

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BOX 23 REEL 7	Piscataway Journal, 1766
BOX 24 REEL 8	Ledger 1766-1767
BOX 25 REEL 9	1767, pt. 1
BOX 26 REEL 9	1767, pt. 2
BOX 27 REEL 10	Journal 1767-1768
BOX 28 REEL 10	1768, May 2-Sept. 22
BOX 29 REEL 10	1768, Sept. 23-Dec. 31
BOX 30 REEL 11	Ledger 1768, pt. 1
BOX 31 REEL 11	1768, pt. 2
BOX 32 REEL 12	Daybook, 1769
BOX 33 REEL 12	Journal, 1769
BOX 34 REEL 13	Ledger 1769-1770, pt. 1
BOX 35 REEL 13	1769-1770, pt. 2
BOX 36 REEL 14	Inventory, 1771-1772
BOX 37 REEL 14	Ship invoice and inventory, 1771-1772
BOX 38 REEL 14	Daybook, 1772, Jan. 2-Sept. 26
BOX 39 REEL 15	Ledger 1772, pt. 1
BOX 40 REEL 15	1772, pt. 2
BOX 41 REEL 15	1773, pt. 1
BOX 42 REEL 16	1773, pt. 2
BOX 43 REEL 16	Journal, 1773-1774
BOX 44 REEL 16	Letterbook, 1773-1776, 1784-1790
BOX 45 REEL 16	Ledger 1774, pt. 1
BOX 46 REEL 17	1774, pt. 2
BOX 47 REEL 17	1775, pt. 1
BOX 48 REEL 17	1775-1776, 1784
BOX 49 REEL 18	Index to ledger, 1776, 1784
BOX 50 REEL 18	Invoice book, 1788-1793, 1816-1822
BOX 51 REEL 18	Ledger 1790-1791, pt. 1
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BOX 53 REEL 19	Journal, 1794, 1811-1817
BOX 54 REEL 19	Ledger 1795, pt. 1
BOX 55 REEL 20	1795, pt. 2
BOX 56 REEL 20	Port Tobacco Ledger 1760-1764
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Maryland, 1743-1846

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BOX 62 REEL 22	(Piscataway) Inventory, 1772-1776; letterbook, 1787-1788
BOX 63 REEL 23	Journal, 1784
BOX 64 REEL 23	Ledger 1773, pt. 1
BOX 65 REEL 24	1793, pt. 2
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BOX 74 REEL 27	Journal, 1798-1819, 1838
BOX 75 REEL 28	Ledger 1798-1802
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BOX 79 REEL 29	Journal 1800-1801
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BOX 83 REEL 31	Daybook, 1801
BOX 84 REEL 31	Ledger 1801
BOX 85 REEL 32	1802-1803
BOX 86 REEL 32	Daybook, 1802-1803
BOX 87 REEL 33	Ledger, 1802-1803
BOX 88 REEL 33	Daybook 1803
BOX 89 REEL 33	1803
BOX 90 REEL 34	Daybook, 1803-1812, 1816
BOX 91 REEL 34	Ledger, 1803
BOX 92 REEL 34	Journal, 1804
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BOX 94 REEL 35	1804, pt. 2
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Maryland, 1743-1846

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BOX 100 REEL 37	Ledger 1805-1812
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BOX 117 REEL 42	1818-1819
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Maryland, 1743-1846

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BOX 147 REEL 49	Rock Creek (Georgetown) Invoice book, 1771-1775; letterbook, 1808-1812
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BOX 156 REEL 51	Miscellany List of shipped tobacco, 1760-1773
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Virginia, 1758-1830

Container	Contents
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Microfilm reels are normally frame numbered starting with 0 for each reel. The frame numbers for volumes 163-226 diverge from this pattern and are herewith listed to avoid confusion.

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BOX 167 REEL 53 FRAME 0-423	1767-1768
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BOX 175 REEL 56 FRAME 0-252	1773-1774, pt. 1
BOX 176 REEL 56 FRAME 253-494	1773-1774, pt. 2
BOX 177 REEL 56 FRAME 280-517	1774-1775, pt. 1
BOX 178 REEL 57 FRAME 518-753	1774-1775, pt. 2
BOX 179 REEL 57 FRAME 0-386	1775-1776
BOX 180 REEL 57 FRAME 387-722	Cabin Point Ledger, 1772-1773
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Virginia, 1758-1830

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BOX 188 REEL 60 FRAME 250-500	1767-1768, pt. 2
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BOX 191 REEL 61 FRAME 0-273	1767-1768, pt. 2
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BOX 205 REEL 65 FRAME 512-734	1765-1766, pt. 1

Virginia, 1758-1830

Container	Contents
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BOX 208 REEL 66 FRAME 617-880	1767-1768, pt. 1
BOX 209 REEL 66 FRAME 0-272	1767-1768, pt. 2
BOX 210 REEL 67 FRAME 585-826	1768-1769, 1776
BOX 211 REEL 67 FRAME 0-230	1768-1769
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BOX 213 REEL 67 FRAME 231-618	1771-1772, pt. 1
BOX 214 REEL 68 FRAME 619-6	1771-1772, pt. 2
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BOX 216 REEL 68 FRAME 551-834	1773-1774, pt. 2
BOX 217 REEL 68 FRAME 495-789	1774-1775, pt. 1
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BOX 222 REEL 70 FRAME 615-651	Miscellany Journal, 1775 Norfolk, Elizabeth River, Va.; Staten Island, N.Y.
BOX 223 REEL 70 FRAME 0-268	Journal and ledger and list of debts, 1776-1804 Boyd's Hole, Alexandria, Colchester, and Dumfries
BOX 224 REEL 70 FRAME 467-615	Unidentified Cash receipts, 1791-1794
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BOX 227 REEL 71	Firm accounts, 1802-1817

Appendix

In the course of preparing this material for a microfilm edition, various volumes were assigned new container numbers. This appendix supplies the correlation of the numbers.

Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
1	3	21	26	41	81	61	111	81	56	101	95
2	8	22	30	42	82	62	112	82	59	102	96
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4	9	24	34	44	85	64	115	84	57	104	100
5	10	25	35	45	86	65	116	85	58	105	102
6	68	26	49	46	88	66	117	86	63	106	101
7	69	27	51	47	89	67	118	87	64	107	110
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9	13	29	54	49	92	69	120	89	66	109	121
10	14	30	55	50	93	70	123	90	67	110	125
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Old volumes 184 and 216 were combined to form new volume 182; 216 occurs first.