

Joseph Desha and John R. Desha Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2007

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm77018333>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007093>

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Revised by Donna Ellis

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Collection Summary

Title: Joseph Desha and John R. Desha Papers

Span Dates: 1773-1871

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1800-1855)

ID No.: MSS18333

Creator: Desha, Joseph, 1768-1842

Creator: Desha, John R., 1804-1878

Extent: 1,900 items

Extent: 5 containers

Extent: 1.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm77018333>

Summary: Soldier and politician (Joseph Desha) and physician (John R. Desha). Correspondence, contracts, land records, wills, receipted bills, and newspapers dealing with the War of 1812, Kentucky politics, and national affairs.

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

Calhoun, John C. (John Caldwell), 1782-1850--Correspondence.

Desha, John R., 1804-1878. Joseph Desha and John R. Desha papers. 1773-1871.

Desha, Joseph, 1768-1842.

Harrison, William Henry, 1773-1841--Correspondence.

Harrison, William Henry, 1773-1841.

Johnson, Richard M. (Richard Mentor), 1780-1850--Correspondence.

Kendall, Amos, 1789-1869--Correspondence.

Poinsett, Joel Roberts, 1779-1851--Correspondence.

Organizations

United States. Congress.

Subjects

Agriculture--Arkansas.

Deeds.

Medicine--Kentucky.

Presidents--United States--Election--1816.

Slavery--United States.

Surveys.

Wills.

Places

Arkansas--Economic conditions.

Kentucky--Politics and government--1792-1865.

South America--Description and travel.

United States--History--War of 1812.

United States--Politics and government--1783-1865.

Washington (D.C.)--History--Capture by the British, 1814.

Titles

John R. Desha papers

Joseph Desha papers

Occupations

Governors--Kentucky.

Physicians.

Representatives, U.S. Congress--Kentucky.

Provenance

The papers of Joseph and John R. Desha were given to the Library of Congress by Desha Breckinridge in 1921. Additional material was purchased between 1929 and 1979.

Processing History

The papers of Joseph and John R. Desha were arranged and described in 1970. The collection was reprocessed and the finding aid revised in 2007.

Additional Guides

Notice of the original gift was made in the *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress*, 1921.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Joseph and John R. Desha 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, Joseph Desha and John R. Desha Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Joseph Desha

Date	Event
1768, Dec. 9	Born, Monroe County, Pa.
1784-1789	Fought against Indians in Tennessee
1789	Married Margaret Bledsoe
1794-1795	Fought against Indians under Gen. Anthony Wayne and William Henry Harrison
1797	Member, Kentucky House of Representatives, also served in 1799-1802
1802-1807	Member, Kentucky State Senate
1806	Commissioned major general, Kentucky militia
1807-1819	Member, United States House of Representatives
1813	Fought at Battle of Thames River, Ontario, Canada

1824-1828	Governor of Kentucky
1842, Oct. 12	Died, Georgetown, Ky.

John R. Desha

Date	Event
1804, June 24	Born, Mason Co., Ky.
circa 1821-circa 1825	Attended Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky.
1825-1878	Practiced medicine in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Kentucky
1838	Married Mary Curry
1878, July 27	Died, Georgetown, Ky.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Joseph Desha (1768-1848) and John R. Desha (1804-1878) span the years 1773-1871, with the bulk of the material dating between 1800 and 1855. The collection consists of correspondence, indentures, contracts, deeds, wills, surveyors' notes, bills and receipts, and newspapers. Some correspondence and legal records, primarily of Joseph Desha, have been bound in two volumes.

The papers illustrate the activities of a soldier-politician in Kentucky in the early nineteenth century and of his physician son. The correspondence covers the subjects of military affairs during the War of 1812, including the fall of Washington, D.C., and the conduct of William Henry Harrison, Kentucky politics, and national politics, notably the 1816 presidential election. Other topics include descriptions of South American cities, and agricultural and economic affairs in Arkansas. The receipts contain many slavery bills of sale.

Prominent correspondents include William Henry Harrison, John C. Calhoun, Amos Kendall, Joel R. Poinsett, and Richard M. Johnson.

Arrangement of the Papers

The bound material is arranged chronologically. The unbound material is arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Bound
BOX 1	Vol. 1, 1783-1831
BOX 2	Vol. 2, 1832-1850
BOX 3	Unbound
BOX 3	Bills and receipts
BOX 3	Desha, John R., 1825, 1836-1857, undated (2 folders)
BOX 3	Desha, Joseph
BOX 3	1795-1818 (5 folders)
BOX 4	1819-1856, undated (7 folders)
BOX 5	Correspondence, 1794-1871, undated (4 folders)
BOX 5	Legal records, 1797-1855 (2 folders)
BOX 5	Miscellany, 1773, 1841-1856, undated
BOX 5	Newspapers, 1818, 1831-1835, 1855 (2 folders)