

**Shelby Family Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2011**

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78039669>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms013008>

Prepared by Frank Tusa

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## Collection Summary

**Title:** Shelby Family Papers

**Span Dates:** 1738-1916

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1757-1829)

**ID No.:** MSS39669

**Creator:** Shelby family

**Extent:** 2,315 items

**Extent:** 9 containers

**Extent:** 2 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

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

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78039669>

**Summary:** Correspondence, memoranda, legal and financial papers, military records, genealogical data, and memorabilia relating mainly to Evan Shelby, soldier and frontiersman, and to his son, Isaac Shelby, soldier and political leader, providing a record of frontier life and political and economic developments in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky.

## 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

Brown, John, 1757-1837--Correspondence.

Campbell, Arthur, 1742-1811--Correspondence.

Clay, Henry, 1777-1852--Correspondence.

Crittenden, John J. (John Jordan), 1787-1863--Correspondence.

Greenup, Christopher, 1750-1818--Correspondence.

Grigsby, John Warren, 1818-1877--Correspondence.

Grigsby, Susan Preston Shelby, 1830-1891--Correspondence.

Hardin, Martin D., 1780-1823--Correspondence.

Harrison, Benjamin, approximately 1726-1791--Correspondence.

Hart, Nathaniel, 1770-1844--Correspondence.

Irvine, Susan Hart McDowell, 1803-1834--Correspondence.

Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826--Correspondence.

Selby family.

Sevier, John, 1745-1815--Correspondence.

Shannon, Susan Hart Shelby, 1791-1868--Correspondence.

Shelby family.

Shelby, Alfred, 1804-1832--Correspondence.

Shelby, Evan, 1719-1794. Evan Shelby papers.

Shelby, Isaac, 1750-1826. Isaac Shelby papers.

Shelby, Thomas Hart, 1789-1869--Correspondence.

Shelby, Virginia Hart, 1809-1859--Correspondence.

Todd, Charles Stewart, 1791-1871--Correspondence.

Todd, Letitia Shelby, 1799-1868--Correspondence.

### Organizations

United States. Army.

United States. Continental Army.

### Subjects

Frontier and pioneer life--Kentucky.

Frontier and pioneer life--Maryland.

Frontier and pioneer life--North Carolina.  
Frontier and pioneer life--Pennsylvania.  
Frontier and pioneer life--Tennessee.  
Frontier and pioneer life--Virginia.  
Indians of North America--Wars.  
Land tenure--Kentucky.

### **Places**

Kentucky--Economic conditions.  
Kentucky--Politics and government.  
Maryland--Economic conditions.  
Maryland--Politics and government.  
North Carolina--Economic conditions.  
North Carolina--Politics and government.  
Pennsylvania--Economic conditions.  
Pennsylvania--Politics and government.  
Tennessee--Economic conditions.  
Tennessee--Politics and government.  
United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783.  
United States--History--War of 1812.  
United States--Politics and government--18th century.  
United States--Politics and government--19th century.  
Virginia--Economic conditions.  
Virginia--Politics and government.  
West (U.S.)--History, Military.

### **Occupations**

Frontiersmen.  
Governors--Kentucky.  
Politicians.  
Soldiers.

## **Provenance**

The papers of the Shelby family were given to the Library of Congress by Susanna Preston Shelby Grigsby, 1953-1956.

## **Processing History**

The Shelby Family Papers were processed in 1969. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

## **Copyright Status**

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

## **Access and Restrictions**

The papers of the Shelby 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, Shelby Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

### Evan Shelby

Date	Event
1719	Born, Tregaron, Cardiganshire, Wales
1734	Emigrated to America, settling in Franklin County, Pa.
1739	Moved to Frederick County, Md.
1744	Married Laetitia Cox
1755-1787	Served in various capacities in several military campaigns
1773	Moved to Fincastle County, Va. (later part of North Carolina and Tennessee)
1781	Elected to North Carolina senate
1787	Married Isabella Elliot
	Elected governor of the State of Franklin, but declined
1794, Dec. 4	Died, Fincastle County, Va.

### Isaac Shelby

Date	Event
1750, Dec. 11	Born, near North Mountain, Md.
1774-1781	Served in various capacities in several military campaigns
1779	Elected to Virginia legislature
1781-1782	Served in North Carolina assembly
1783	Moved to Kentucky
	Married Susannah Hart
1787-1789	Member of the three conventions that prepared the way for statehood
1787	Helped organize Kentucky Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge
1792	Member of the convention that framed the first constitution of Kentucky
	Elected the first governor of Kentucky
1817	Declined the position of secretary of war in President James Monroe's cabinet
1818	President of the first Kentucky Agricultural Society
1819	President of the first board of directors, Centre College, Danville, Ky.
1826, July 18	Died

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of the Shelby family span the years 1738-1916, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1757-1829. The papers center on the careers of Evan Shelby (1719-1794) and his son, Isaac Shelby (1750-1826).

Approximately half of the collection relates to Evan Shelby, a prominent eighteenth-century frontiersman, farmer, merchant, and soldier. This material includes receipts, bonds, notes, surveys, deeds, accounts, bills, quitrent payments, and occasional correspondence. It documents early frontier life and development in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky.

The material pertaining to Isaac Shelby, a Revolutionary War hero and the first governor of Kentucky, encompasses Shelby's varied public activities as well as his personal and business affairs. The correspondence is particularly valuable as a source of information concerning Shelby's personal and business concerns and includes numerous letters relating to state and national affairs. Prominent correspondents include John Brown, Arthur Campbell, Henry Clay, John J. Crittenden,

Christopher Greenup Martin D. Hardin, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Jefferson, and John Sevier. Shelby's land operations are documented in agreements, deeds, depositions, receipts, and other documents scattered throughout the collection. Shelby was involved in military activities throughout his adult life, and his papers include material relating to Indian wars, the Revolutionary War, and frontier defense in the years after the American Revolution. A memorandum book kept by Shelby in 1792-1794, during his service as the first governor of Kentucky, contains memoranda of his official correspondence, orders, nominations, and appointments.

The collection also contains a small amount of correspondence, clippings, and miscellaneous items pertaining to the descendants of Evan and Isaac Shelby. Family correspondents include John Warren Grigsby, Susan Preston Shelby Grigsby, Nathaniel Hart, Susan Hart McDowell Irvine, Susan Hart Shelby Shannon, Alfred, Shelby, Thomas Hart Shelby, Virginia Hart Shelby, Charles Stewart Todd, and Letitia Shelby Todd.

## **Arrangement of the Papers**

The collection consists of nine bound volumes, with most arranged chronologically by year and organized by type of material.

## Container List

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>BOX 1</b>	Accounts, receipts, bills, notes, surveys, deeds, military records, and occasional correspondence of Evan Shelby
<b>BOX 1</b>	1738-1779
<b>BOX 2</b>	1780-1793
<b>BOX 3</b>	Letters sent and received by Isaac Shelby, supplemented by accounts, notes, receipts, bills, military records, deeds, and documents relating to land claims
<b>BOX 3</b>	1794-1799
<b>BOX 4</b>	1800-1815
<b>BOX 5</b>	1816-1819
<b>BOX 6</b>	Letters sent and received by Isaac Shelby and Alfred Shelby, supplemented by accounts, notes, receipts, bills, military records, deeds, and documents relating to land claims, 1820-1829
<b>BOX 7</b>	Letters sent and received by Alfred Shelby, 1830-1862, and miscellaneous accounts, notes, receipts, bills, military records, deeds, and documents relating to land claims of Evan Shelby and Isaac Shelby, circa 1763-1862, undated
<b>BOX 8</b>	Miscellaneous correspondence, accounts, notes, receipts, bills and documents of Evan Shelby, Isaac Shelby, Alfred Shelby, and Susanna Preston Shelby Grigsby
<b>BOX 8</b>	circa 1741-1916
<b>BOX 9</b>	Undated
<b>BOX 9</b>	Isaac Shelby memorandum book containing memoranda of official correspondence, orders, nominations, and appointments, 1792-1794