

John Nicholson Family Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm80034710>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms016016>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2016

Collection Summary

Title: John Nicholson Family Papers

Span Dates: 1786-1868

ID No.: MSS34710

Creator: Nicholson, John, 1757-1800

Extent: 800 items

Extent: 2 containers

Extent: .8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm80034710>

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 LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

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.

Nicholson, John, Jr., between 1782 and 1790--Correspondence.

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

Organizations

Asylum Company.

Pennsylvania Land Company.

Union Canal Convention (1838 : Harrisburg, Pa.)

Subjects

Land speculation--Northwest, Old.

Land speculation--Pennsylvania.

Land speculation--Washington (D.C.)

Titles

Nicholson family papers

Occupations

Financiers.

Land speculators.

Public officials.

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

Date	Event
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

Container	Contents
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