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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of John Nicholson is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1757</td>
<td>Born in Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782</td>
<td>Appointed controller general by Pennsylvania legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Appointed escheator general of Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Joined the South Carolina Yazoo Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>Organized firm of Morris &amp; Nicholson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Arrested for debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800, Dec. 5</td>
<td>Died</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Diary, 1796-1797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Business records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>1786-1831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(10 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 2</td>
<td>1832-1868, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 2</td>
<td>Printed matter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>