

Charles Thomson Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Karen Linn Femia



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2009

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

**Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress
Manuscript Division, 2009**

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms008139>

Collection Summary

Title: Charles Thomson Papers

Span Dates: 1765-1888

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1765-1818)

ID No.: MSS42861

Creator: Thomson, Charles, 1729-1824

Extent: 360 items; 4 containers; 1.0 linear feet; 1 microfilm reel

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Secretary of Continental Congress, biblical translator, and merchant. Correspondence relating to the official business of the Continental Congress and the American Revolution, scientific and scholarly matters, personal affairs, and including petitions, notes on debates, and translations of portions of the New Testament from Greek to English.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Personal Names

Adams, John, 1735-1826--Correspondence.

Coxe, Tench, 1755-1824--Correspondence.

Debrett, John, d 1822--Correspondence.

Dickinson, John, 1732-1808--Correspondence.

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790--Correspondence.

Jay, John, 1745-1829--Correspondence.

Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826--Correspondence.

Laurens, Henry, 1724-1792--Correspondence.

Madison, James, 1751-1836--Correspondence.

Monroe, James, 1758-1831--Correspondence.

Morris, Gouverneur, 1752-1816--Correspondence.

Thomson, Charles, 1729-1824.

Washington, George, 1732-1799--Correspondence.

Winthrop, James, 1752-1821.

Organizations

United States. Continental Congress.

Subjects

Bible.

Bible. English.

Locations

Northwest, Old.

United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783.

Occupations

Merchants.

Public officials.

Translators.

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers of Charles Thomson, secretary of the Continental Congress, biblical translator, and merchant, were given to the Library of Congress by Thomas Ewing in 1930 and acquired by purchase, 1899-1985, and by transfer, 1955.

Processing History:

The papers of Charles Thomson were arranged and described in 1999. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Additional Guides:

The papers have been described in *Manuscript Sources in the Library of Congress for Research on the American Revolution* published by the Library of Congress in 1975.

Copyright Status:

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Charles Thomson 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 part of these papers is available on one reel. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

Preferred Citation:

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Charles Thomson, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1729, Nov. 29	Born, Maghera, County Londonderry, Ireland
1739	Immigrated to America
1774-1789	Secretary, Continental Congress
1824, Aug. 16	Died, Lower Merion Township, Pa.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Charles Thomson (1729-1824) span the years 1765-1888, with the bulk of the material dating from 1765 to 1818. A majority of the papers consists of correspondence during Thomson's tenure as secretary to the Continental Congress from 1774 to 1789. Thomson corresponded frequently over the years with both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. Many of these letters pertain to foreign affairs or reflect Thomson's scientific and scholarly interests. His letters from John Jay reveal Thomson's role as the key recipient of information on the events of the Revolutionary era. The papers also include Henry Laurens's charges against Thomson made before Congress in September 1779 ranging from incompetence to haughtiness, and Thomson's ten-page defense. There are notes on Charles Pinckney's speech of 10 August 1786, notes on

debates in Congress in July 1777, a copy of a published 1787 ordinance concerning territory northwest of the Ohio River, and financial material. Correspondents include John Adams, Tench Coxe, John Debrett, John Dickinson, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, Henry Laurens, James Madison, James Monroe, Gouverneur Morris, and George Washington.

The papers also include two volumes concerning Thomson's interest in biblical translations, one a translation and one a critique of a translation. Although the biblical translation was previously identified as Thomson's translation of the Septuagint, and remains so identified on the microfilm copy, it is actually from the New Testament, Romans (beginning with chapter 2), 1 Peter, and the first two chapters of 2 Peter.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material.

Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 15,821

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Chronological file
REEL 1	
BOX 1	1769, Jan. 21-1784, Jan. 12
REEL 1	
BOX 2	1784, Jan. 23-1787, Sept. 20
REEL 1	
BOX 3	1788, Mar. 26-1845, July 16, undated
REEL 1	
BOX 4	Notes on debates in Congress, 1777, July 24-26
REEL 1	
BOX 4	"Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States, North West of the River Ohio,"
REEL 1	1787, July 13
BOX 4	Translation of New Testament books of Romans, 1 Peter and 2 Peter, incomplete, undated
REEL 1	
BOX 4	"Criticism by Charles Thomson on James Winthrop's Attempt to Translate the Apocalypse," undated
not filmed	