

Harry Innes Papers

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Prepared by Audrey Walker

Collection Summary

Title: Harry Innes Papers

Span Dates: 1754-1900

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1780-1850)

ID No.: MSS27201

Creator: Innes, Harry, 1752-1816

Extent: 3,000 items ; 11 containers ; 4.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Lawyer and jurist. Correspondence, financial, business and legal papers, biographical and genealogical material, printed matter, and other papers relating chiefly to Innes's work as a lawyer and judge handling land claims and surveys.

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.

People

Aylett, John--Correspondence.

Brown, John, 1757-1837--Correspondence.

Cary, Wilson Miles, 1734-1817--Correspondence.

Clay, Henry, 1777-1852--Correspondence.

Daveiss, Joseph Hamilton, 1774-1811--Correspondence.

Davies, William, active 1775-1781--Correspondence.

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

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

Innes, Ann Shields.

Innes, Harry, 1752-1816.

Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826--Correspondence.

Knox, Henry, 1750-1806--Correspondence.

Lee, Henry, 1756-1818--Correspondence.

Madison, James, 1751-1836--Correspondence.

Marshall, Humphrey, 1760-1841--Correspondence.

May, John, 1748-1812--Correspondence.

Nicholas, George, 1754?-1799--Correspondence.

Pendleton, Edmund, 1721-1803--Correspondence.

Pringle, Elizabeth--Correspondence.

Randolph, Beverley, 1754-1797--Correspondence.

Sebastian, Benjamin, 1745-1834--Correspondence.

Short, Peyton, 1761-1825--Correspondence.

Taylor, John, 1753-1824--Correspondence.

Todd family.

Todd, Thomas, 1765-1826.

Wilkinson, James, 1757-1825--Correspondence.

Wills, Peachey--Correspondence.

Subjects

Burr Conspiracy, 1805-1807.

Courts--Kentucky.

Land tenure--Kentucky.

Practice of law--Kentucky.

Places

Kentucky--History--1792-1865.
Kentucky--History--To 1792.
Kentucky--Manufactures.
Kentucky--Surveys.
Virginia--History--Revolution, 1775-1783.

Occupations

Jurists.
Lawyers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Harry Innes, lawyer and jurist, were given to the Library of Congress in 1908 by Innes's grandson, George D. Todd.

Processing History

The papers of Harry Innes were arranged and described in 1985. The finding aid was revised in 2010.

Other Repositories

Other collections of Harry Innes papers are located in the Filson Club Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky; the Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfurt, Kentucky; and the University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Harry Innes 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, Harry Innes Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1752, Jan. 4	Born, Caroline Co., Va.
1773-1776	Practiced law, Bedford County, Va.
[1776]	Married Elizabeth Calloway (died 1791)
1776-1777	Administered powder mills and lead mines in Virginia under the Virginia Committee of Safety
1779	Appointed by Virginia legislature to determine claims to unpatented lands in district around Abingdon, Va. Appointed escheator, Bedford County, Va.
1781	Appointed commissioner of the specific tax, Bedford Co., Va.

1782-1783	Superintendent over commissioners of the specific tax of six Virginia counties
1784	Appointed to succeed Walker Daniel as attorney general for the western district of Virginia
1785	Moved to Kentucky
1785-1792	Member, board of trustees, Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky.
1789	Member, Kentucky Manufacturing Society, which established a cotton factory, Danville, Ky., in 1790
1789-1816	Judge, United States District Court for Kentucky
1792	Married Ann Shields
1816, Sept. 20	Died, Frankfort, Ky.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Harry Innes (1752-1816) cover the years 1754-1900, with most concentrated in the period 1780-1850. The collection includes papers of his second wife, Ann, and a small group of papers of members of the Thomas Todd family. The close association between the Todd and Innes families began in 1786 when Harry Innes provided a home for the young Thomas Todd, a cousin, whose inheritance had been lost through mismanagement by his guardian. Later, one of Todd's sons, John, married Maria, Innes's youngest daughter. The papers are organized into four series: [General Correspondence](#), [Financial and Business Papers](#), [Legal File](#), and [Miscellany](#).

The largest group of papers belongs to Harry Innes and spans the years 1766-1816. The early manuscripts relate to his life in Virginia where he had served as escheator for Bedford County in 1779 and as commissioner of specific tax during the later years of the Revolutionary War. Records of grain, cattle, and other produce collected in Bedford County and in the other six counties for which he was responsible are found in the commissary papers in the [Financial and Business Papers](#) series.

In the spring of 1785 Innes moved to the Kentucky district of Virginia, and the remainder of his papers illustrate issues important to life on the frontier, such as statehood for Kentucky, protection from the Indians, navigation of the Mississippi River, effects of United States congressional acts on Kentucky, and development of industry within the state. However, most of his papers relate in some manner to land claims. He represented clients, many of whom were residents of other states or were absent from Kentucky, in registering and investigating land claims, collecting debts involving mortgaged lands, overseeing property, and in litigation over land surveys. Many of the cases coming before him as judge of the United States district court of Kentucky concerned debts accruing from land ownership and the settlement of estates in which there were outstanding obligations involving lands in Kentucky. In several instances clients, some of whom were attorneys, gave him all their pertinent correspondence and documents relating to their cases. These papers are located in the clients' papers segment of the [Legal File](#).

Of the more personal matters found in the Innes Papers, one concerns the attempt to implicate him with James Wilkinson and Benjamin Sebastian in the Aaron Burr conspiracy to separate Kentucky from the union. Most of the correspondence for 1808 relates to Innes's effort to refute these charges and includes the draft of his letter of November 18, 1808, to the speaker of the House of Representatives to which he attached many of the depositions and interrogatories he had assembled in his defense. The [Legal File](#) contains documents pertaining to the Burr conspiracy, including the charges against Sebastian, *United States v. Blennerhassett*, and the libel cases which Innes brought against Joseph M. Street and Humphrey Marshall emanating from their accusations against him. A printed account of the land fraud charges against Humphrey Marshall is included in the [Miscellany](#) series.

The papers also reflect Innes's interest in developing a manufacturing industry within Kentucky. Several letters and financial papers are concerned with the operation and management of a cotton factory at Danville sponsored by the Kentucky Manufacturing Society. The enterprise was underwritten by subscriptions and included John Brown, senator from Kentucky, and James Wilkinson among its supporters.

There is very little family correspondence in the collection except for a few letters from his brother and sister-in-law, James and Elizabeth, his uncle, Hugh Innes, and his nephew, Robert Innes.

The papers of Ann Shields Innes fall chiefly within the years 1816-1851 and consist of financial and business records relating to household expenses and to the administration of the estates of Harry Innes and her first husband, Hugh Shields. In addition to business matters, her correspondence includes family letters from the Innes children and her grandchildren.

Most of the Todd family papers belong to John H. Todd. His papers cover the years 1815-1823, and include several letters from Joseph Smith pertaining to shipments of supplies for a dry goods store. Other letters concern legal matters mainly involving land claims. A few papers show Todd's interest in local politics. The only items belonging to Thomas Todd are three letters to his son Charles, who was with the Northwestern Army in 1812, enclosing letters from John H. Todd regarding the illness and eventual death of Harry Innes Todd, two other letters, and some miscellaneous accounts. The remaining Todd papers are those of George D. Todd and Charles H. Todd, grandsons of Harry Innes and Thomas Todd. Their papers concern family history and genealogy and other information about the Harry Innes Papers. George D. Todd probably incorporated the transcripts of several letters of James and Harry Innes found in the George Washington Papers and typescripts of letters of John Brown and other miscellaneous documents into the Innes collection.

The collection was arranged subjectively in scrapbooks numbered 16 and 18 through 32 when received by the Library. Volumes preceding that, consisting of ledgers, journals, memoranda books, and a volume of United States district court decisions, are held by the Kentucky Historical Society.

Innes maintained a correspondence with many government officials, particularly in Virginia, and there are letters in the collection from Henry Clay, Joseph Hamilton Daveiss, Benjamin Harrison, William Henry Harrison, Thomas Jefferson, Henry Knox, Henry Lee, James Madison, Edmund Pendleton, Beverley Randolph, Benjamin Sebastian, and John Taylor. More frequent correspondents, many of whom were clients, include John Aylett, John Brown, Wilson Miles Carey, William Davies, Humphrey Marshall, John May, George Nicholas, Elizabeth Pringle, Peyton Short, James Wilkinson, and Peachey Wills.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- [General Correspondence, 1754-1896](#)
- [Financial and Business Papers, 1766-1850](#)
- [Legal File, 1767-1823](#)
- [Miscellany, 1787-1900](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-3	<u>General Correspondence, 1754-1896</u> Letters received, drafts of letters sent, and enclosures. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 3-6	<u>Financial and Business Papers, 1766-1850</u> Accounts, promissory notes, receipts, survey reports and plats, and military returns. Arranged by name of family member and therein chronologically or by type of material.
BOX 6-10	<u>Legal File, 1767-1823</u> Agreements, clients' papers, correspondence, depositions, indentures, interrogatories, notes and memoranda, opinions, powers of attorney, subpoenas, trial transcript, and printed matter. Arranged by name of family member or by type of material.
BOX 11	<u>Miscellany, 1787-1900</u> Biographical and genealogical data, memorial, notes, resolutions of the Democratic Society, will, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by name of person, topic, or type of material .

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