

Edward Shippen letters and papers, 1727-1781
1727-1781
Mss.B.Sh62

American Philosophical Society
105 South Fifth Street
Philadelphia, PA, 19106
215-440-3400
manuscripts@amphilsoc.org

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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Shippen, Edward, ca. 1703-1781
Title	Edward Shippen letters and papers, 1727-1781
Date [inclusive]	1727-1781
Call number	Mss.B.Sh62
Extent	10.0 Volume(s) Ca. 190 items; 10 volumes
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Location	LH-MV-B-1; LH-MV-E-6; LH-SB-Black Case-29 (OS: Riv Susq, Port of Pitts)
Language	English
Container	1
Container	1-10
Abstract	These letters and papers include ten small volumes of letterbooks (1752-1781), and ca. 100 pieces of correspondence with Joseph Shippen (1750-1778). Topics discussed are business in Philadelphia and Lancaster, provincial politics, army supply in the French and Indian War, land purchases and speculation, housebuilding, and family affairs.

Background note

The Shippen family was one of the most industrious and illustrious of Philadelphia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They were active in government, the military, and in their various businesses: land acquisition and speculation, housebuilding, etc.

Edward Shippen was a merchant, and was elected to the American Philosophical Society in 1768.

Scope & content

The activities of Joseph Shippen, Jr., while with the army under Colonel Burd during the French and Indian war, are well documented in this collection.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Presented by The Philip and A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, 1952.

Processing Information

Only maps and scanned items are noted.

Indexing Terms

Family Name(s)

- Brockden, Charles.
- Burd, Edward.
- Shippen, Edward, -- Jr.

Genre(s)

- Business Records and Accounts
- Family Correspondence
- General Correspondence
- Letterbooks.
- Maps and Surveys
- Military Records
- Political Correspondence
- Travel Narratives and Journals

Geographic Name(s)

- Pennsylvania -- Politics and government -- To 1775.
- United States -- History -- French and Indian War, 1755-1763.

Personal Name(s)

- Allen, William, 1704-1780
- Alricks, Harmanus
- Armstrong, John
- Bouquet, Henry, 1719-1765
- Burd, James, 1726-1793
- Chew, Benjamin, 1722-1810
- Coleman, William, 1704-1769
- Croghan, George, d.1782
- Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790
- Galloway, Joseph, 1731-1803
- Hamilton, James, 1710-1783
- Harris, John, 1726-1791
- Jameson, David
- Lawrence, Thomas, 1744-1823
- Logan, William
- Morris, Robert Hunter, 1713-1764
- Penn, John, 1729-1795
- Peters, Richard, 1704-1776
- Shippen, Joseph, 1732-1810.
- Shippen, William, 1712-1801
- Willing, Charles

Subject(s)

- American Revolution
- Americans Abroad
- Business and politics -- Pennsylvania.
- Business and Skilled Trades
- Colonial Politics
- Education
- International Travel
- Marriage and Family Life
- Military History

- Military supplies.
- Pennsylvania History
- Philadelphia History
- Real property -- Pennsylvania.
- Seven Years' War
- Social Life and Custom
- Surveying and Maps
- Trade
- Travel

Other Descriptive Information

The Edward Shippen Collection is composed of two discrete sections: two boxes of manuscripts and ten letter books. What follows is an overview of some of the most notable documents and themes in the correspondence.

Two boxes of letters compose the first section. The correspondence is often from Edward Shippen to his son Joseph Shippen and spans the period from 1750-1778. As the dates indicate, the letters often provide insight on a range of important events happening in Pennsylvania during the Seven Years' War, imperial crisis, and American Revolution. They also reflect the maturation and career of Joseph Shippen, with the correspondence beginning in 1750 when Joseph was attending school in Philadelphia and follow his life through his service in the Seven Years' War, his post-war trip to Rome, and ends in 1778, by which time Joseph had taken up prominent positions in the business and political worlds of Philadelphia. Edward Shippen writes most of the letters and provides the perspective of a father.

For Edward, his letters often reveal details of the world he inhabited, including personal account of his interactions with prominent figures and his role in various events. There is a series of letters from Edward Shippen surrounding the events of the Paxton Boys. In one long letter, Shippen defends his actions. There are a couple of letters that touch on Shippen's opposition to the Stamp Act and one that includes his reactions to pamphlets published about the tax.

The Shippens were an extraordinarily well-connected and active family, with prominent roles in Pennsylvania business, the military, and politics. These letters shed insight on this family's involvement in these areas. The letters also provide a window into their family life and relations. Among the family affairs discussed is the death of a young child. With ties to both Lancaster and Philadelphia, the letters provide accounts of events happening in both locations as well as the myriad of ties between the country and city. Discussions include the conveyance of trade goods, spirits books, and individuals between the two locations.

The Seven Years' War portion of the collection is particularly strong. In addition to numerous letters recounting events in Pennsylvania and beyond, Joseph Shippen's orderly book is included in the collection, which records daily activities of his and other companies, including those of Washington and Bouquet. Also of note are a series of surveys and maps of western Pennsylvania done during the Seven Years War.

The second box contains a range of correspondence. The bulk of the documents related to the military history of Pennsylvania during the Seven Years' War and touch upon Joseph Shippen's service during it. The collection includes many official reports and returns, which offers a chronicle of various forts and militia units within Pennsylvania. There also are a series of surveys of forts and rivers in this box.

Ten bound letterbooks of Edward Shippen compose the second part of the Shippen Family Collection. This portion of the collection provides far more insight into the daily life of Edward Shippen, with letters touching on a wide range of subjects and sent to a wide array of people. The letters begin in 1753 and end in 1781, spanning the Seven Years' War, the imperial crisis, and much of the American Revolution. The early letters often deal with various landed interests Shippen had throughout the colony, especially plantations in Lancaster County and houses in Philadelphia. The letters from the Seven Years' War do touch on political and military topics, and often relay information about the situation in Lancaster County and beyond. The letters from the later periods are notable for generally avoiding talk of politics or major events, but instead focus on a variety of more quotidian concerns.

In addition, Edward Shippen regularly wrote letters addressed to his children, which provide great insight into their family life – and also contain wonderful anecdotes that capture the culture of the colony.

Collection Inventory

to Edward Shippen.	1755 July 31	3.0 p.
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to Edward Shippen. , 1755 July 31

[\[http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/text:2608\]](http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/text:2608)

Shippen, Joseph, 1732-1810.

1757 January 26

2 pieces, 31.1

A draught of the west branch of Susquehanna
and part of the Ohio River

x 48.3 cm

Other Finding Aids

Realms of Gold, 45 (1).

Physical & technical details

Oversized.

Shippen, Joseph,1732-1810.

1758 January

1 map, 38.7 x

Draught of part of the River Susquehanna

47 cm

Other Finding Aids

Realms of Gold, 45 (2).

Physical & technical details

Oversized.

Shippen, Joseph,1732-1810.	1759 November	1 map, 2
Rough draught of the Monongahela River from Fort Burd to the confluence of Muddy and Cheat Rivers		pieces, 64.8 x 21 cm

Other Finding Aids

Realms of Gold, 45 (3).

Physical & technical details

Oversized.

Shippen, Joseph,1732-1810.

Circa 1763

1 map, 30.8 x

Plan of the English fort at Pittsburgh

38.7 cm

Other Finding Aids

Realms of Gold, 45 (4).

Physical & technical details

Oversized.

Patterson, Captain

1769 April 1

1 map, 21 x

Draught of the west branch of Susquehanna,
taken from Captain Patterson

30.5 cm

Other Finding Aids

Realms of Gold, 45 (5).

Physical & technical details

Oversized.
