

Short, William, Papers

William Short Papers

1785-1921



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1957.002

Unit Date

1785-1921

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The collection contains correspondence of diplomat William Short with Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, George Tucker and Ben Stoddart, together with other selected materials relating to Short. It also includes microfilm, photostatic copies and typed transcripts. Much of this material was copied from the holdings of the Library of Congress.

Creator

Shackelford, George Green, 1921-2010

Extent

0.5 Cubic Feet 1 box

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The William Short Papers were donated to Newman Library in 1957.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the William Short Papers commenced and was completed in November 2004.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], William Short Papers, Ms1957-002, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note - William Short

William Short was born in 1759 in Surry County, Virginia. He graduated in 1779 from the College of William and Mary, where he founded the Phi Beta Kappa fraternity. He was elected to the Virginia Executive Council of State at the age of 24.

Today considered America's first career diplomat, Short acted as Thomas Jefferson's private secretary when he accompanied Jefferson to France in 1784. His first important task was to exchange drafts of the U.S.-Prussian Treaty with the Prussian minister at The Hague. Short was made Charge d'affairs at Paris in 1789 and continued Jefferson's policy of seeking liberation of French domestic and colonial commerce in favor of the United States. Short's capabilities and social skills came to be widely appreciated in French diplomatic and social circles.

Short served as the fiscal agent of the United States from 1790 to 1792. He was Minister of The Hague in 1792 and then of Madrid in 1793. He returned to France in 1795 and lived there until 1810. He then returned to the United States and devoted himself to private affairs. Short was elected to the American Philosophical Society in 1804 in recognition of his distinguished achievements as a scholar, diplomat and financier. He died in 1849.

Biographical Note - George Green Shackelford

George Green Shackelford was a professor of history at Virginia Tech. He also was a historical preservation expert and specialist in the age of Washington and Jefferson in Virginia history. In 1985, he received an award from the Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture in historic preservation.

Shackelford attended the Woodberry Forest School, Columbia University, and then the University of Virginia for his Ph.D. He also earned certificates from the Attingham Summer School and Institute of Historical and Archival Management. In 1942, Shackelford received his commission in the Naval Reserve and served in anti-submarine warfare in the Atlantic and Pacific. He was a Lieutenant by the end of his service.

Before Shackelford taught at Virginia Tech from 1954 to 1986, he taught at Birmingham Southern College from 1948 to 1949 and worked as a research fellow at the Virginia Historical Society. From 1963 to 1964, Shackelford spearheaded the restoration of Smithfield Plantation. In 1967, he worked as a historical consultant to the Westmoreland David Memorial Foundation for Morven Park in Leesburg, Virginia.

Shackelford was also a prolific author. He wrote five books, including *Jefferson's Adoptive Son: The Life of William Short, 1759-1849* and *Thomas Jefferson's Travels in Europe, 1784-1789*. He also wrote many articles and was the co-editor of the *Virginia Social Sciences Journal*.

Scope and Content

This collection contains materials collected by George Green Shackelford preparatory to his 1958 article "William Short : Diplomat in Revolutionary France, 1785-1793." Much of this material was copied from the holdings of the Library of Congress.

A large portion of the collection consists of correspondence arising from Short's position as private secretary to Thomas Jefferson, and also as a diplomat holding office with the U. S. government in various parts of Europe. Ranging in date from 1791 to 1813, the correspondence includes letters of Jefferson during his tenure as secretary of state, as well as selected correspondence between Short and such figures as James Monroe, George Tucker, Ben Stoddart and Gen. J. H. Cocke. Apart from the letters themselves, the collection also contains records and summaries, maintained by Short, of his own correspondence.

The collection also contains copies of government documents, dated 1791 to 1792, mostly consisting of statements regarding Dutch and French loans to the United States. Also included is a statement of Short's personal accounts (1799-1803)--mentioning such names as Price, Lively, Haden Terril, Shackelford, Spiers and Reynolds--and sketches of Short's property in Albemarle County, Virginia.

A miscellaneous folder contains copies of various personal items, such as the Short family coat of arms, maps of Spain and Surry County, Virginia, landscape sketches and some printed material, including an excerpt from Sidney Fay's *Origins of the World War*. These are followed by photographs and negatives of portraits and miniatures of William Short, Peyton Short, Rosalie (wife of Duc de la Rochefoucauld), and Charles IV.

A set of microfilm reels, containing account summaries and Short's correspondence, completes the collection.

Keywords

Short, William, 1759-1849

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Existence and Location of Originals

Much of this material was copied from the holdings of the Library of Congress. The originals are likely part of the William Short papers, 1778-1853, MSS39891, in the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged by subject matter, and within that, chronologically, with the paper copies preceding the microfilm copies.

Description of Subordinate Components

Thomas Jefferson Letters

Unit Date 1795-1806

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Correspondence (William Short, James Monroe, Ben Stoddart, Gen. Cocke)

Unit Date 1785-1826

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

List of Short's Correspondence

Unit Date 1792-1812

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Summaries of Short's Correspondence

Unit Date 1797-1810

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Short's Personal Accounts and Property Maps

Unit Date 1795-1805

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Portraits of William Short, Charles IV's miniature and Rosalie's miniature [prints and negatives]

Unit Date n. d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Government Documents

Unit Date 1791-1792

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Miscellaneous

Unit Date 1779-1921

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Account Summaries and Correspondence [microfilm]

Unit Date 1785-1792

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Excerpts from the papers of William Short [microfilm]

Unit Date 1791-1824

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Unit Date 1790-1792

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Unit Date 1792-1794

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Unit Date 1794-1795

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Unit Date 1795-1797

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Unit Date 1798-1805

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

Unit Date 1807-1813

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 16 (folder)

Summary of papers on William Short [microfilm]

Unit Date n. d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 17 (folder)