

Archives and Special Collections

Dickinson College

Carlisle, PA

COLLECTION REGISTER

Name: **Irvine, William (1741-1804)** **MC 2001.2**

Material: Family Papers (1785-1811)

Volume: 0.25 linear feet (1 Document Box)

Donation: Gift of Boyd Lee Spahr

Usage: These materials have been donated without restrictions on usage.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Irvine was born on 3 November 1741 in Fermanagh County, Ulster Province, Ireland to a family of Scottish descent. He attended Enniskillen Common School before attending and graduating from Trinity College, Dublin.

During the French and Indian War, Irvine served aboard a British vessel as ship's surgeon. After resigning his commission in 1763, he moved to Carlisle, Pennsylvania where he met and married Anne Callender, the daughter of Captain Robert Callender. Irvine practiced medicine in Carlisle until the start of the Revolutionary War.

An advocate of colonial rights, Irvine served as a member of the provincial convention in Philadelphia in July 1774. On 6 January 1776, William Irvine was commissioned a colonel and charged with the task of raising a regiment from the Cumberland County. The 6th Pennsylvania Regiment marched to Canada in June under the command of General Thompson. In the Battle of Three Rivers, Colonel William Irvine was among 200 American soldiers captured. He was released on parole on 3 August 1776, but not formally exchanged until 21 April 1778. Irvine then served under the command of General Wayne, with the 2nd Pennsylvania Brigade, and participated in the Battle of Monmouth on 28 June 1778. Irvine received a promotion to Brigadier General on 12 May 1779. In September 1781, the Continental Congress, on recommendation from General Washington, ordered Irvine to take command of the Western Department, headquartered at Fort Pitt. He held this strategic post until October 1783.

After the war, Irvine commenced a career in public service. He served as delegate in 1787 to the Continental Congress, delegate to the Pennsylvania State Constitutional Convention, and as Representative from the Cumberland District in the 3rd United States Congress. In 1797, Irvine served as a representative to the Electoral College, and under President Jefferson, Irvine was appointed as Superintendent of Military Stores in Philadelphia. William Irvine held this post until his death on 29 July 1804.

Beyond his public duties, William Irvine was an active member of the Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati (serving as President from 1801 to 1804) and was a member of the Board of Trustees of Dickinson College from its founding (serving from 1783 to 1803). He died in Philadelphia on July 29, 1804.

William and Anne Irvine had eleven children, of whom Callender Irvine was the eldest. Callender Irvine was born on January 24, 1775 near Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He attended Dickinson College as a member of the class of 1794. After briefly reading law with Jared Ingersoll of Philadelphia, Callender decided not to become a lawyer. Instead he spent a season traveling with his father as a surveyor's assistant, helping to lay out such western Pennsylvania towns as Warren.

In 1797 William Irvine granted a tract of western Pennsylvania land to his son. Callender and a freed-slave named Tom started Brokenstraw Farm. Callender Irvine then received a commission as captain of artillery in the United States Army in June of 1798. He spent his brief time in the army mainly at Carlisle while suffering from an illness. Callender resigned from the army on May 20, 1801.

On December 22, 1801, Callender Irvine married Patience Elliott and moved to Erie, Pennsylvania where Callender had received a commission as an Indian agent to the Six Nations. While serving in Erie, Callender also administered his father's reserve, granted to William Irvine for service during the Revolutionary War. Callender then earned an additional post, becoming Surveyor of the Customs for the Port of Buffalo Creek (later Buffalo, New York). During this time, Callender's only child, William Armstrong Irvine was born on September 28, 1803.

After his father's death in 1804, Callender was appointed to succeed his father as Superintendent of the Military Stores of Philadelphia. Then during the War of 1812, Callender Irvine was appointed Commissary General of the United States Army, a post he held until his death in 1841.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The William Irvine Collection is housed in one document box and has been arranged into two sections: Correspondence, and Legal and Financial Papers. The collection includes papers from both William Irvine and his son, Callender. This collection was donated by Boyd Lee Spahr.

The Correspondence section contains letters and notes divided into four sections: Anne Callender (Mrs. William Irvine), Robert Callender, Callender Irvine, and William Irvine. The letters are further divided into letters sent and letters received, and then arranged chronologically. Of note within the Correspondence section are letters to General John Armstrong, General Wilkins, and a set of General Orders to Carlisle.

The Legal and Financial Papers section contains two legal contracts, one proposed contract, a folder of receipts and two pages of accounts. These materials are arranged in chronological order. One of the account pages is for Robert Gilmore, a student at Dickinson College, under the care of Colonel Henry Lee.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

BOX 1 - MC 2001.2

CORRESPONDENCE

- Callender, Anne (Mrs. William Irvine) - Letters Sent
Folder 01) To William Nichols – undated
- Callender, Robert - Letters Received
Folder 02) From George Morgan - Aug. 14, 1796
- Irvine, Callender - Letters Sent
Folder 03) To [Andrew Ellicott] - Aug. 8, 1796
To Charles Wollstoncraft - Apr. 17, 1799
To Charles Wollstoncraft - May 6, 1799
To William Simmons - May, 27, 1799
To William Simmons - June 4, 1799
To Alexander Hamilton - June 24, 1799
To Alexander Hamilton - Mar. 30, 1800
- Irvine, Callender - Letters Received
Folder 04) From unknown - undated
From John Bannister Gibson - Feb. 10
From James McHenry - July 5, 1798
From James Trimble - Oct. 28, 1803
From James Wilkinson - Sep. 28, 1808
From John Bannister Gibson - Mar. 22, 1809
From James Wilkinson - Feb. 6, 1811
From Adam Seybert - Dec. 10, 1811
- Irvine, William - Letters Sent
Folder 05) To unknown (regarding sale of land to Mr. Duncan) - undated
To unknown (regarding pay of salary during war) - undated
To William Duer - June 13
To Callender Irvine - Sept. 6
To John Armstrong - Nov. 1, 1785
To John Armstrong - July 18, 1786
To Bradford and Wilson - Feb. 14, 1788
Folder 06) To John Nixon - Oct. 2, 1788
To General Orders for Carlisle - Oct. 12, 1794
To Thomas Mifflin - May 12, 1795
To General Wilkins - Nov. 18, 1799
To Henry Voigt - Apr. 15, 1802
To Nathan Paul - Mar. 15, 1803
- Irvine, William - Letters Received
Folder 07) From Rufus King - May 5, 1786
From Thomas Craig - Feb. 10, 1787
From S. Bayard - May 6, 1789

BOX 1 - MC 2001.2 (cont.)

LEGAL AND FINANCIAL PAPERS

- Folder 08) Account with General Wilkins - undated
- Folder 09) Receipts issued to General Irvine - 1772
- Folder 10) Agreement with David Johnston - May 1, 1784
- Folder 11) Proposed agreement with John McDaniel - July 6, 1787
- Folder 12) Account for Robert Gilmor at Dickinson College - 1791-1793
- Folder 13) Agreement with Casper Kroph - Sept. 17, 1794

This collection register was prepared by LeAnn Fawver, February 2001.