

# THOMAS POSEY COLLECTION, 1776-1839

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**Collection #s**

M 0228

OM 0074

F 0278

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Processed By:  
Paul Brockman  
24 July 1997

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

<b>VOLUME OF COLLECTION:</b>	1 box, 2 oversize folders, 1 reel microfilm
<b>COLLECTION DATES:</b>	1776-1839
<b>PROVENANCE:</b>	Acquired from several sources including: Marvin N. Posey, Henderson, KY, May, 1972; Adah Jackson, Newburg, IN, 1 August 1972; John T. Posey, Buffalo Grove, IL, 24 September 1990.
<b>RESTRICTIONS:</b>	None
<b>REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:</b>	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.
<b>ALTERNATE FORMATS:</b>	None
<b>RELATED HOLDINGS:</b>	Posey, John Thornton, <i>General Thomas Posey: Son of the American Revolution</i> (E 207, .P74, P67, 1992); William H. English Papers, ( M 98).
<b>ACCESSION NUMBERS:</b>	1949.1120, 1952.0312, 1956.0802, 1957.0308, 1962.0907, 1965.0202, 1972.0514, 1972.0619, 1972.0808, 1990.0587.

## NOTES:

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### HISTORICAL SKETCH

Thomas Posey (1750-1818) was born in Fairfax County, Virginia, and received little formal education. At the age of 19 he went to the Virginia frontier where he enlisted in that state's militia and fought the Indians beyond the western frontier in 1774. During the American Revolution he enlisted as a captain and was later promoted to major in the 7th Virginia Regiment seeing action at the Battle of Saratoga and against the Indians on the Pennsylvania. In 1782 he was promoted to lieutenant colonel. Posey remained in the military after the war and in 1793 he became a brigadier general serving with Anthony Wayne in the campaign against the Indians of the Northwest. In 1794 Posey resigned his commission and moved to Kentucky where he was elected to the state Senate and became lieutenant governor in 1806. When British and French involvement in the west became a threat in 1809 he returned to military service with the rank of major general in command of the Kentucky volunteers. Posey moved to Louisiana where he served as a U. S. Senator from 1812-1813, and in February, 1813, he was appointed governor of the Indiana Territory succeeding William Henry Harrison. Posey remained territorial governor until Indiana became a state in December, 1816. (During his term as governor he resided in Jeffersonville rather than in Corydon because of poor health which resulted in some criticism from the legislature for his inaccessibility.) Posey was defeated by Jonathan Jennings in Indiana's first gubernatorial election and was also defeated by Thomas Hendricks in his bid for a U.S. Congressional seat from Indiana in 1817. From 1816 until his death Posey served as agent for Indian Affairs in the Illinois Territory. Posey was married to Mary Matthews from 1772 until her death in 1778, and they had one son who lived to adulthood. In 1784 he married Mary (Alexander) Thornton and produced nine children.

Mary Alexander Thornton Posey (1754-1837), the daughter of Virginia aristocrat John Alexander, was born and educated on the family's estate in Stafford County, Virginia. In 1773 she married George Thornton, a well to do businessman and landowner in Fredericksburg, Virginia. George Thornton died in April, 1781, while serving in the state militia. The Thorntons had three children, the youngest of which, Lucy, was born seven months after her father's death.

#### Sources:

*Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. 8, pp. 111-112.

*General Thomas Posey: Son of the American Revolution*.

*A Guide to the Manuscript Collections of the Indiana Historical Society and Indiana State Library*, p. 152.  
*Information in Collection*.

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### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection includes letters written by Posey regarding his service in the American Revolution as well as with the American army in the 1790s and as governor of Indiana Territory, 1776-1816. Other items in the collection include his Revolutionary War journal, 1776-1777; an autobiographical sketch, n.d.; and his commissions and appointments, 1792-1816. The collection also contains several letters of Mary (Alexander) Thornton Posey to her children, 1814-1815; a funeral oration delivered by John Dunbar of Corydon, April, 1818; and letters of Posey's sons regarding his Revolutionary War pension, 1820-1839. There is also one reel of microfilm containing a portion of the collection, 1776-1839.

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### BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

**BOX 1: *Correspondence and Papers, 1776-1839***

## FOLDER CONTENTS

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| 1  | Short Biography (Original Copy), n.d.                    |
| 2  | Short Biography (Photocopy)                              |
| 3  | Biographical Information, n.d.                           |
| 4  | Correspondence and Papers, 1776-1782                     |
| 5  | Correspondence and Papers, 1792-1799 (also OM 0074)      |
| 6  | Correspondence and Papers, 1808-1814 (also OM 0074)      |
| 7  | Correspondence and Papers, 1815-1820 (also OM 0074)      |
| 8  | Correspondence, 1833-1839                                |
| 9  | Revolutionary War Journal, 1776-1783                     |
| 10 | Revolutionary War Journal, Typescript                    |
| 11 | Letter, 22 August 1814 (Photostat)                       |
| 12 | "Letter to My Children & Grandchildren, n.d. (Photostat) |
| 13 | (F 0278) Microfilm of Collection (Partial)               |

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## CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's [online catalog](#)
2. Click on the "Local Catalog" icon.
3. Search for the collection by its call number, using the letter or letters designation and **four** digits (e.g., M 0715, SC 2234).
4. When you find the collection, go to the "Holdings" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.

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