

The collection includes six “**Letterbooks**” dating from 1772 to 1829, which discuss to a large degree business, but are also extremely valuable in the documentation of day-to-day events, especially in regards to the Revolutionary War. The first, **Volume 1**, dating from 1772 to 1780, concerns the sales of, ordering of, and shipment of tobacco. These letters talk about finding ways to ship tobacco in a safe and secure manner and circumventing the British warships which closed the Delaware River in 1772. These letters also discuss the news of the day, and include statements such as, “The people of Britain are very much mistaken if they think they can cram what Acts they please down our throats,” (December 3, 1774) and “we are fully of the opinion that Anarchy and Confusion will take place all over this continent in the course of a few months unless the people of Britain alter their mode of proceedings,” (April 17, 1775). Letters from 1776 contain news of events of national and personal nature, as Leiper served, at that time, as a trooper in the American Light Horse. While the vast majority of the volume consists of letters from 1771 to 1776, there are several letters that date until October 9, 1800. Tobacco sales include 500 dozen snuff bottles to be imported from Glasgow, Scotland, with sizes specified, and on a separate occasion, in July 1774, 1800 dozen of the London squares, 900 dozen octagon squares, 300 dozen London small squares. **Volume 2**, a letterbook regarding tobacco and snuff business, dating from 1776 to 1802 includes letters on prices, shipments, accounts payable, wholesalers, agents, etc. In October 1776, Leiper opened a second grinding mill for snuff and he averaged one hogshead of tobacco per day at the new mill. Also discussed in these letters are prices of tobacco, the rise in workmen’s wages, other potential businesses including a glass house, prices of other commodities, and the status of Continental money (which, according to Leach was up 750%). According to Ken Leach, Leiper was “a very hard, tough business man, [and] from this letterbook alone, one would think the war was won by tobacco and snuff instead of gunpowder.” To one customer alone, Leiper sold 15,653 (pounds (monetary)) of snuff from July 1777 to April 1780. Also during this period of time, Leiper rented a house from Thomas Jefferson, and he describes, in letters to Jefferson, some of the work being done to the house, and requests that Jefferson pay for some repairs. Throughout this volume, there is continued documentation of Leiper’s experience in the American Light Horse and his description of both General Washington’s talk on Peace and Liberty and General Howe’s talk of plundering Philadelphia. **Volume 3**, dating from 1803 to 1813 contains copies of letters sent by Leiper as a tobacco and snuff merchant and these letters document his personal business and contain long letters on transportation problems and the need for turnpikes and canals across Pennsylvania to the rivers of the south. These letters describe the tobacco industry prices, shipments, etc. Two letters to Thomas Jefferson, of a political nature, are included in this volume. **Volume 4**, dating from 1807 to 1831, contains copies of letters received and answered and contains largely, information regarding the property bought and owned by Leiper. Leiper owned much land in Pennsylvania including Venango, Warren, Green, Washington, and Delaware counties. The volume also includes copies of letters from the 1790s regarding the purchase of these lands. There are also several pages on lands of the Ohio Land Company. Also, of interest throughout these letters, are references to current events. From 1813 to 1829, Leiper’s letters, contained in the **Volume 5**, discuss the tobacco and snuff business, politics and Leiper’s many lands and properties. In regards to politics, Leiper wrote to President James Madison recommending John Barker as Postmaster in Philadelphia and regarding other issues; and to Thomas Jefferson. The final letterbook (**Volume 6**), dating from 1844, contains only a few letters which are very faded. These letters were not written by Leiper who died in 1825.

The “**Estate records**” are the records of the Leiper home, the name of which is uncertain. Records and accounts indicate that the home may have been called Avondale, Strath Haven or “Snuff Mill,” The “Estate records” are contained within 5 volumes dating from 1829 to 1847. All of these materials date