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Lewis Smith Account Book

1784-1828

2 folders (0.25 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 085b



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A resident of Northampton, Mass., directly across the Connecticut River from South Hadley, Lewis Smith ran a substantial farm during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Settling in the village of Smith's Ferry shortly after service in the American Revolution, Smith owned a part stake in a sawmill and produced and traded in an array of farm products, from grains and vegetables to grain, beef, and pork. A producer of apples and owner of his own mill, he produced large quantities of cider and vinegar.

In a standard double-column account book kept somewhat erratically, Lewis Smith recorded an extensive exchange of goods and services befitting a prosperous Northamptonite. Smith sold an array of goods he produced, from apples to dairy products, grain,

beef, lard, and tallow, with cider from his mill (and briefly brandy) being the most consistent producer of revenue.

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Background on Lewis Smith

Lewis Smith was born in West Springfield, Mass., on Feb. 7, 1763, the son of David Smith and Joanna (Bodurtha). Still a teenager at the onset of the American Revolution, Smith enlisted in a New York militia regiment and served seven tours on the Continental Line, according to records in the Daughters of the American Revolution.

After leaving the military, Smith returned home to marry Eunice Judd of Northampton on Nov. 3, 1785. The couple settled at Smith's Ferry in the southernmost section of Northampton (later annexed by the city of Holyoke in 1909), situated on the Connecticut River directly across from South Hadley. On their substantial land holdings, the Smiths raised a large family of eleven children, many of whom remained close by well into adulthood. As early as 1790, Smith held part ownership in a sawmill and had an active farm, dealing a wide range of local goods from rye flour, barley, and wheat to beef, shad, turnips, vinegar, and apples. One of his steadiest commodities was cider produced in his own mill, and on at least occasion, he let out his mill for others to use, and for a brief period it appears that he may have distilled brandy.

Smith died in Northampton on March 15, 1838, and is buried at the Smiths Ferry Cemetery in Holyoke. The inscription on his marker reads simply "Continental Line."

Scope of collection

In a standard double-column account book kept somewhat erratically, Lewis Smith recorded an extensive exchange of goods and services befitting a prosperous Northamptonite. Smith sold an array of goods he produced, from apples to dairy products, grain, beef, lard, and tallow, with cider from his mill (and briefly brandy) being the most consistent producer of revenue. In exchange, he took in services such as mending shoes, manual labor, or providing food for his workers. Loose slips of paper that had been laid into the ledger, mostly receipts and notes, are retained in a separate folders.

The identity of the Lewis Smith represented by this volume is not absolutely certain, and although it was originally attributed to a resident of South Hadley, internal clues suggest that it is more likely the product of the Revolutionary veteran and resident of Smith's Ferry -- which not coincidentally faces South Hadley across the Connecticut River. Among the key pieces of supporting information are the names of people with whom Smith conducted business, and in particular, Smith's name appears in the 1820 federal census for Northampton on the same page as several men named in the accounts, including Adolphus Alvord, Justin Wait, Johnathan White, Ebenezer Wait, Rufus Pomeroy, and Phoebus Pomeroy.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Donald W. Howe, 1960..

Processing Information

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Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

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