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Karl Finison Connecticut River Valley History Collection

1803-1912
2 boxes (1 linear ft.)
Call no.: MS 1226

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Read collection overview

Karl S. Finison was an undergraduate (class of 1975) and then graduate student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, studying Anthropology and local agricultural history. His 1979 master's thesis "Energy Flow on a Nineteenth Century Farm," was a part of a Anthropology Department research series on the ecological anthropology of the Middle Connecticut River Valley, studying demographic and other trends from 1650 to 1900 in the area. Part of this work was supported in 1970s by the Connecticut Valley Population Ecology Project. While doing this work, Finison also began to collect agricultural journals, books, and original manuscripts about the ecological history of Upper and Middle Connecticut River Valley.

This collection consists of five original accounting logs and ledgers from western Massachusetts and southern Vermont, offering insight into the commerce and community in these areas in the 19th-century and early 20th-century: 1) An 1803-1826 account book covers agricultural and business transactions in the Middle Connecticut River Valley, including in such Massachusetts towns as Chester, Granby, Northampton, Northfield, and Shelburne. 2) A ledger of the accounts of E. F. Reed and Co. (Dummerston, VT) from 1883-1894, is the only volume with a known authorial origin. 3) A mixed-use logbook includes 1845-1846 worker logs (lumber industry) in Ashfield, MA; 1849 diary and expense entries from Shelburne Falls, MA; diary entries from 1851, ca. 1855, and 1878; and undated "little sermons." 4) An account book of unknown origin, 1881-1905, mainly transactions regarding shoes, boots, and harnesses. 5) A "Time Book," tracking the labor of agricultural workers at an unknown location in summer 1912.

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Background on Karl Finison

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Massachusetts Amherst, studying Anthropology and local agricultural history. His 1979 master's thesis "[Energy Flow on a Nineteenth Century Farm](#)," was a part of a Anthropology Department research series on the ecological anthropology of the Middle Connecticut River Valley, studying demographic and other trends from 1650 to 1900 in the area. Part of this work was supported in 1970s by the Connecticut Valley Population Ecology Project. While doing this work, Finison also began to collect agricultural journals, books, and original manuscripts about the ecological history of Upper and Middle Connecticut River Valley.

Scope of collection

This collection consists of five original accounting logs and ledgers from western Massachusetts and southern Vermont, offering insight into the commerce and community in these areas in the 19th-century and early 20th-century:

- 1. An 1803-1826 account book covers agricultural and business transactions in the Middle Connecticut River Valley, including in such Massachusetts towns as Chester, Granby, Northampton, Northfield, and Shelburne.
- 2. A ledger of the accounts of E. F. Reed and Co. (Dummerston, VT) from 1883-1894, is the only volume with a known authorial origin. Edward F. Reed owned a Slab Hollow Mill in Dummerston, listed as a saw, shingle, and planning mill, which additionally made oak rims for baby carriage and cider. This account book begins a year after extensive repairs on the sawmill in 1822, including a new shingle machine with a circular saw, a new 88 foot dam, penstock, flume and patent water-wheel, and space for cider making.
- 3. A mixed-use logbook includes 1845-1846 worker logs (lumber industry) in Ashfield, MA; 1849 diary and expense entries from Shelburne Falls, MA; diary entries from 1851, ca. 1855, and 1878; and undated "little sermons."
- 4. An account book of unknown origin, 1881-1905, mainly transactions regarding shoes, boots, and harnesses.
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Inventory

Account and Purchases, Connecticut River Valley
1803-1826
Box 2
Ledger Accounts, E. F. Reed ad Co., Dummerston, VT
1883-1894
Box 1
Worker Log, Ashfield, MA
1845-1878
Box 1
Account book (shoes, boots, harnesses)
1881-1905
Box 1
Time Book
1912 Apr-Jun
Box 2

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Karl Finison, 2024.

Bibliography

Dummerston Historical Society. Dummerston : An "Equivalent Lands" Town, 1753-1986. Edited by Alice Crosby Loomis and Frances Walker Manix, The Dummerston Historical Society, 1990.

Processing Information

Processed by Blake Spitz, June 2024.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use ([More information](#))

Cite as: Karl Finison Connecticut River Valley History Collection (MS 1226). Robert S. Cox Special Collections and University Archives Research Center, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Agricultural laborers--Connecticut River Valley
- Agriculture--Economic aspects--Connecticut River Valley
- Connecticut River Valley--Economic conditions--19th century
- Dummerston (Vt.)--Economic conditions--19th century
- Industries--Connecticut River Valley
- Massachusetts--Economic conditions--19th century
- Shoe industry--Connecticut River Valley
- Vermont--Economic conditions--19th century

Genres and formats

- Account books
- Daybooks

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