

Deacon Orlando Sargent (Sargeant) Account Book

1753-1808

1 volume

Call no.: MS 139



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Prosperous, slave-owning farmer from Amesbury, Massachusetts, who also served as town warden, selectman, and representative. Includes details of the purchases of agricultural products (corn, potatoes, lamb, rye, hay, molasses, wood, cheese), and related services with some of the town's earliest settlers, widow's expenses, expenses in support of his grandmother, and family dates.

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Background on Orlando Sargent (Sargeant)

Deacon Orlando Sargent (he signed himself Sargeant) was born April 21, 1728 in West Amesbury, Massachusetts, where he farmed most of the time until his death on April 3, 1803. He began keeping an account book in 1753, the year his first child,

Abigail, was born (in January) and the year his wife of two years, Sarah Balch of Groveland, died (in December). In 1755 he married Betsy Barnard of West Amesbury, with whom he had 11 children.

Orlando Sargent was a prosperous farmer; he owned the second most valuable real estate in town in 1771. Primus Hale was his slave for a while, according to Joseph Merrill's *History of Amesbury and Merrimac Massachusetts* (Heritage Books, 1978). Mention is made of "Primas" in the account book in 1781.

Sargent was a leader in town affairs from the time he was chosen warden in 1762. He served as selectman in 1773-1774 and 1783, and as a representative in 1781-1783. It was his corn house in which the town's stock of ammunition and tools was stored in 1777, and where it remained for 25 years. In 1779 he served on the committee of correspondence to "regulate the prices of Inholders' labor and other things not particular regulated by the Convention in July last." In 1781, he served on the committee of safety and on another to appoint minutemen for the defense of the state if it were attacked. In 1786, he bought a marsh or pasture owned by the East parish with the proceeds from which the town could build a school house. He supervised and supplied materials for the rebuilding of the town pound in 1800.

Scope of collection

The account book includes some family dates on the inside front cover, and documents expenses for the support of Sargent's grandmother. At the end of the book, his widow's expenses are accounted for. The main body of accounts, which manages to be both chronological and by debtor, details the purchases of Sargent's agricultural products (corn, potatoes, lamb, rye, hay, molasses, wood, cheese) and occasional related services, by townspeople who bear the names of Amesbury's early settlers (Jonathan Hoyt, Daniel Bayley, Charles Weed, Isaac Bagley, Moses Currier, Philip Challis, Harvey Blasdell, and Timothy Colby). The accounts are frequently signed and settled, but if any exchange other than cash was made, it is seldom indicated.

Among the customers is Robert Rogers, although it is doubtful that this is the well-known loyalist. He went to England in 1780 and remained there until his death; some of the Robert Rogers accounts in this book post-date 1780.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from: Charles Apfelbaum, 1986.

Processing Information

Processed by Linda Seidman.

Language:

English

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Sargent, Orlando, 1728-1803.

Contributors

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