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Ebenezer Pope Ledger

1810-1821

1 volume (0.25 linear ft.)

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Blacksmith who was prominent in the town affairs of Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Includes debit and credit entries, the method and form of customer payment (cash, services, labor, and goods such as corn, potatoes, wheat, cider brandy, hog, veal, sheep, lambs, and an ox), and an entry noting the building of the Great Barrington and Alford Turnpike in 1812. Also includes documentation of seamstress activity and of African American customers.

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Scope of collection

The ledger kept by Ebenezer Pope from 1810-1821 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts records the transactions transferred from the daybook of his blacksmithing business. Ebenezer Pope, originally from Lebanon, Connecticut, was considered one of the more prominent men active in town affairs from 1810-1830. Although little information on Pope and his family appears in the

Great Barrington published vital statistics and town histories, there is an abundance of information concerning many of his customers.

Debit transactions included cash, services, and goods; as did credit transactions. On both debit and credit, labor services were frequently used. Pope hired out his temporary workers to several of his customers for special projects/tasks, and vice versa -- in many instances customers settled their outstanding bills with their own labor. There are several entries detailing this type of transaction, as well as entries of Pope hiring someone for a long period (i.e. - one year, 4 months) at a set wage. One example is entry #27 -- customer Aaron Wilcox, who began work for one year on Feb. 20, 1811 at the rate of \$95. Among Wilcox's debits were: one pair of boots, coat and trim at (Reuben) Bacon's, paying Miss (Anna M.) Palmer for making pantaloons and jacket; and paying Mr. (Stephen) Sibley.

The more frequent debit entries included shoeing horse, hooping wagon wheel, fixing whippetree, sharpening ploughshare, hoes, scythes, axes, his horse to various places, and cash. As was previously mentioned the credit entries included cash, services, labor, and goods. Amongst the goods were several sundry items including bushels of corn, potatoes, and wheat; cider brandy; hog; veal; salt; turnip; oats; lbs. of tallow; candles; sheepskin; calfskin; molasses; Ingeon meal; as well as 14 old sheep, 3 lambs, and an ox. What is interesting about these particular credit items is that they rarely showed up on the debit side. It is possible that Pope either kept a separate ledger for such items or that he used a portion of them for personal consumption.

There is mention of four women and 2 or 3 black persons. The three women who are just briefly mentioned are Lucinda Woodworth, Miss Baldwin, and Ethel Jones (of Stockbridge). Lucinda Woodworth appears in the Great Barrington marriage census and is possibly the daughter of Major Dudley Woodworth, who also appears in the ledger, and sister of Edward P. Woodworth, Esq.

The fourth woman, who has quite an extensive ledger account, is Anna M. Palmer. Judging from her debit and credit transactions, as well as from the entries of other people in this ledger, we can assume that Ms. Palmer did quite a bit of seamstress work -- sewing pantaloons and jacket, etc. She also worked for Pope for 23 weeks at \$1.00/wk.

The only definite account of a black person is entry #72 -- George Negro. It is a short account with debits of an ox, molasses, peck of Ingeon meal, and bushel of potatoes, for a total of \$2.01, and paid off with 5 days worth of his labor. There are also several accounts in other people's entries of a "Negro" providing labor either from or for Pope.

Two other pertinent entries include Pope's notes on the 1812 building of the Great Barrington and Alford Turnpike (entry #109) and the notations of a couple of different persons boarding Miss Baldwin, who may have been a school teacher or who may have just lived in the building in which the school was housed. There is indication that this boarding may have been a temporary arrangement as work was being done on the school house.

Among the prominent/frequent names which appear both in the ledger and in Great Barrington histories are:

Arnold, Elias; Jacob; Timothy
Bacon, Reuben
Barstow, Dr. Samuel
Bradley, Dimon; Zalmon; Zebe
Dewey, Justin
Ford, Eaton; Enos; Jonathan; William
Griswold, Rev. Samuel
Henderson, Deacon Allen
Hopkins, Capt. Charles
Ives, John; Samuel
Jones, Jabez
King, Lucius
Leavenworth, Isaac
Olds, Aaron; Ephraim
Osborne, Joseph
Pixley, John
Pynchon, George
Riley, Samuel
Rossiter, Samuel
Seeley, Isaac
Sibley, Stephen
Stone, Eber; Ezekiel
Sprague, Barnabas
Turner, Elijah; Jabez; Timothy; William

Van Deusen, Isaac; Jacob; John
Whiting, Capt. William
Woodworth, Dudley

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

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English

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George, Negro.
Great Barrington (Mass.)--History--19th century--Sources.
Great Barrington and Alford Turnpike (Mass.)--History--Sources.
Palmer, Anna M.
Pope, Ebenezer blacksmith.
Toll roads--Massachusetts--History--19th century--Sources.
Wages--Men--Massachusetts--Great Barrington--History--19th century--Sources.
Wages--Women--Massachusetts--Great Barrington--History--19th century--Sources.
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Contributors

Pope, Ebenezer [main entry]

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