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Thayer Family Industries Ledger

1847-1855

1 volume

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The Thayer family operated a small manufacturing complex on the Deerfield River in Charlemont, Massachusetts. Businesses included a sawmill, a foundry, a shop for the manufacture of axes and edged tools, and a tannery. Ledger documents their businesses and reflects the exchange economy of rural Massachusetts.

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Scope of collection

The Thayer family operated a small manufacturing complex on the Deerfield River in Charlemont, Massachusetts. Ruel Thayer, Sr., born in 1785, built a shallow dam on the Deerfield and ran a canal stream which gave power to run a saw mill, a foundry, a shop for the manufacture of axes and edged tools, and a tannery. By 1850, the sawmill and foundry were in the hands of his sons, Alonzo (age 32), David (27), and Ruel, Jr. (25). Alonzo was listed in the census as a farmer, David a sawyer, and Ruel a tinsmith. Boarding with the family was Edmond Kingsley, a millwright, who may have also been employed in the Thayer businesses. The two elder brothers were married; Ruel, Sr., lived with Alonzo; Ruel, Jr. and Kingsley with David.

The ledger documents the activities of the Thayer businesses between 1847 and 1855, but the bulk of the entries cover only 1848 to 1851. Their accounts reflect the exchange economy of rural Massachusetts. The brothers accepted iron, wood, textiles, farm produce, and labor, in addition to cash in the settlement of accounts. The brothers also exchanged work with several of the other local businesses, including Cudworth & McCullough (tanners), David Crittendon (shinglemaker), Whitman & Upton (wagonmakers), H. A. Chambers (filemaker), and Nathaniel Lampson (cutlery manufacturer). Ironically, the Thayer businesses do not show up in the 1850 or the 1860 manufacturing censuses. Nor do they appear in the 1853 Massachusetts Directory.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Processing Information

Processed by Ken Fones-Wolf.

Language:

English

Acknowledgments

Encoding funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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Cite as: Thayer Family Industries Ledger (MS 238). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

Axe industry--Massachusetts--Charlemont--History--19th century--Sources.

Barter--Massachusetts--Charlemont--History--19th century--Sources.

Charlemont (Mass.)--Economic conditions--19th century--Sources.

Charlemont (Mass.)--Rural conditions--19th century--Sources.

Foundries--Massachusetts--Charlemont--History--19th century--Sources.

Kingsley, Edmond.

Manufacturing industries--Massachusetts--Charlemont--History--19th century--Sources.

Sawmills--Massachusetts--Charlemont--History--19th century--Sources.

Tanneries--Massachusetts--Charlemont--History--19th century--Sources.

Thayer, Alonzo, b. 1817.

Thayer, David, b. 1822.

Thayer, Ruel, b. 1785.

Thayer, Ruel, b. 1824.

Tinsmiths--Massachusetts--Charlemont--History--19th century--Sources.

Contributors

Thayer family [\[main entry\]](#)

Thayer, Ruel, b. 1785.

Thayer, Alonzo, b. 1817.

Thayer, David, b. 1822.

Thayer, David, b. 1822.

Genres and formats

Account books.

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