

## Benjamin Heywood Daybooks

1784-1807

17 volumes, 1 envelope (0.25 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 239



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Harvard educated and a veteran of the American Revolution, Benjamin Heywood was a jurist and prosperous farmer from Worcester, Mass.

Includes documentation of civic and farming activities, such as which animals were put to pasture on what date, which pastures were leased to others, the names and terms of indentured laborers, and the sale/exchange of agricultural products to customers such as Isaiah Thomas, William Eaton, Nathaniel Stowell, Ithamar Smith, and Jonathan Rice. Also contains references to family members.

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## Background on Benjamin Heywood

Born on Oct. 25, 1746, Benjamin Heywood was the son of Phineas Heywood, a prominent farmer from Shrewsbury, Mass., and his wife Elizabeth. Benjamin served an apprenticeship to a housewright and worked briefly as a carpenter before deciding to prepare himself for Harvard in 1771. At university, he excelled in math, but the rising tensions with British authorities soon took equal prominence in his life. Having joined the university's first military organization, the Marti-Mercurian Band, he reportedly took part in fighting the British during the Lexington and Concord crisis on April 19, 1775.

After graduating from Harvard in 1775, Heywood joined the Continental Army, rising to the rank of Captain in 1776 and earning an appointment as paymaster attached to Col. Nixon's regiment. At the war's end, he was appointed to a committee with General Henry Knox and Col. Brooks to recommend measures to appease soldiers disgruntled by postponements in receiving pay, and also on a committee to adjust the accounts of Massachusetts officers and enlisted men.

After the war, Heywood returned home to Worcester and married Mehitable Goddard, adopted daughter of Nathaniel Moore, an early settler of Worcester. William Lincoln notes in his 1862 *History of Worcester* that Heywood's "activity of disposition and facility in business enabled him, in addition to the management of a farm, to devote much time to the concerns of his neighbors and to public affairs. The reliance on his integrity and good judgement was testified by frequent selection as arbitrator, executor, and guardian." In 1786, for example, Heywood took the deposition of Clark Parker for Col. Eben Lovel; on June 18, 1789 he was appointed for the Reference between Marshall and Harrington; on October 4, 1803, he appraised David Stowell's estate for Nathaniel Stowell.

Heywood was appointed Judge in the Court of Common Pleas in 1802, serving until 1811 when seats in that tribunal were vacated by judicial reorganization. He was also an acting county magistrate, a member of the Board of Trustees of Leicester Academy, twice an elector of the President and Vice President of the United States, a trustee of the Hassanamisset Indians, and an officer in several charitable and religious associations. Heywood died in December 1816, at the age of 70.

## Scope of collection

The seventeen small daybooks document the civic and farming activities of Benjamin Heywood during the years after the American Revolution. These books include notes on pasturage of animals; leasing of pasture lands; the names and terms of indentured laborers; the dates when skins were sent to Palmer Goulding for tanning; and the sale/exchange of agricultural products. Heywood's more frequent customers included the noted printer Isaiah Thomas, William Eaton, Nathaniel Stowell, Ithamar Smith, and Jonathan Rice. There are also indications that Heywood owned land in Sutton and Westminster in Massachusetts, and in Ohio, the latter possibly stemming from his wartime service.

The daybooks include references to Heywood's brothers Phineas, Timothy, and Seth, as well as Heywood's son, Nathaniel Moore Heywood, and Doctor John Green. Two of Green's daughters married Heywood's son, Benjamin Franklin Heywood, in succession.

## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Acquired from dealer, March 1989

### Processing Information

Processed by Linda Seidman, 1989.

### Language:

English

### Acknowledgments

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## Search terms

### Subjects

Farmers--Massachusetts--Shrewsbury

Heywood, Benjamin

Shrewsbury (Mass.)--Economic conditions--18th century

### Contributors

Heywood, Benjamin, 1746-1816 [main entry]

### Genres and formats

Daybooks

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