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Asa Culver-Asa Culver Jr. Account Book

1820-1876

1 volume (0.25 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 350



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Farmers who provided services (such as putting up fences, shingling, butchering, and cutting brush) for townspeople. 70-page book of business transactions, and miscellaneous papers including mortgage payments, highway building surveyor assessments, and poems.

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Background on Asa Culver

Asa Culver (b. 1793 in Massachusetts) was a farmer in Blandford, Massachusetts, and lived in Chester for a brief period of time.

Scope of collection

Asa Culver begins this account of his transactions in 1822 at the age of 29. The 70-page book contains business transactions between Asa Culver and his neighbors, many of whom were regular customers and/or prominent townspeople. Squire Reuben Boies was a large landholder and a man of position and influence in the town of Blandford. Duty Underwood was a bartender who sold rum at the Baird House in Blandford, and Robinson and Brigum were also regular customers who received hemlock bark from the Culvers. Mr. Culver, along with his son Asa Jr., provided Reuben Boies such services as putting up fences, shingling, butchering and cutting brush. Boies paid in cash or with goods. Asa Culver gained an average income not only by selling his services and those of his son, but also by selling products (vinegar, brandy, apples, corn, hemlock bark, cider and potatoes). He also allowed some of his customers to "put their horse, cow and one yoak of cattle in his paster." Asa Jr. appears to have taken over the farm labor tasks for his father in 1856, which suggests early retirement for Asa Sr.

Although Asa had the help of his son, he also required the aid of female workers in his home. A woman named Delila Stewart(?) came to work for the Culvers in 1843. Margaret Donahue was employed at the Culvers in 1851. Catherine McClear began work for the Culvers in 1859. And Widow Mary Dwight began her work for the Culvers in 1861. It is not clear what these women did for the Culvers, but they were each paid \$1.25 a week, except for Ms. McClear, who was paid \$1.00 a week.

While Asa needed the services of these women in his home, some female farmers needed the use of male workers to help them tend their farmland. In 1825 Margaret Tompson, who was probably a farmer/worker, had Asa Culver do work for her: "thrashing bushels of corn, laying a plowshare, washing and shearing seven sheep and making stable doors."

The 1870 Massachusetts Census lists 6 household members in the Culver home, including Asa Culver. Although Eunice Culver was not in residence at the time, she may have been an older daughter who married and moved away from home. Included among the numerous miscellaneous papers found in this account book is a piece of scrap paper with tabulations on it that says "Be neat and smart in all things Eunice Culver" hidden among the figures.

The miscellaneous papers included mortgage payments, highway building surveyor assessments, and poems. Asa Jr. may have written the poem called "Little Sadie" about the death of a little girl and the sorrow that is felt by all those who loved her. Sadie Culver may have been the daughter of Asa Jr. and his wife.

Administrative information

Provenance

Purchased for SCUA by Robert W. Hugo for the Friends of the Library.

Additional Information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Cite as: Asa Culver-Asa Culver Jr. Account Book (MS 350). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Denise Henry, 2003.

Language:

English

Acknowledgments

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Culver, Asa

Culver, Asa, b. 1793

Farm management--Massachusetts--Blandford--Records and correspondence

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Contributors

Culver, Asa, b. 1793 [main entry]

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