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Truman Wheeler Account Book

1764-1772

1 volume (0.1 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 618 bd



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[Credo digital](#)

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One of twelve children of Obadiah and Agnes (Tuttle) Wheeler, Truman Wheeler was born in Southbury, Conn., on Nov. 26, 1741. After completing his education, reportedly at Yale, Wheeler moved north to Great Barrington, Mass., in the spring of 1764. Acquiring property about a mile south of the center of town, he soon established himself as a general merchant trading in silk, fabrics, and a variety of domestic goods.

The Wheeler account book represents the initial years of a thriving, late colonial mercantile business in far western Massachusetts. Beginning in June 1764, not long after Wheeler set up shop in Great Barrington, the account book includes meticulous records of sales of domestic goods ranging from cloth (linen, silks, and osnabrig) to buttons, ribbons, and pins, snuff boxes, a "small bible," "jews harps," and tobacco. Among the prominent names that appear as clients are members of the Burghardt and Sedgwick families.

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Background on Truman Wheeler

One of twelve children of Obadiah and Agnes (Tuttle) Wheeler, Truman Wheeler was born in Southbury, Conn., on Nov. 26, 1741. After completing his education, reportedly at Yale, Wheeler moved north to Great Barrington, Mass., in the spring of 1764 to build a life and livelihood. Acquiring property about a mile south of the center of town, he soon established himself as a general merchant trading in silk, fabrics, and a variety of domestic goods. A man of "genial and social disposition," Wheeler was said to be held in high esteem by the residents of Great Barrington. Prospering in his trade, he married Huldah Caldwell (1751-1799) on Oct. 2, 1771, purchasing an extensive farm on which he built a new house. The couple prospered in other ways, too, raising a family of twelve.

Active in the patriot cause during the revolutionary agitation of the 1770s, Wheeler participated in the Stockbridge Convention in July 1774 opposing the Intolerable Acts. Serving as county muster master and as a charter member of the Great Barrington Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety, he was called to muster during the Bennington alarm in 1777 and was present there during the battle. During later years, he held several town offices, including Justice of the Peace and Treasurer from 1776-1782 and representative to the General Court (1796). Wheeler died in Great Barrington on April 9, 1815, at the age of 74. The house he built in 1771 is now owned by the Great Barrington Historical Society.

Scope of collection

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Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Dan Casavant, September 1999.

Related Material

SCUA also holds an account book of Truman Wheeler, Jr. (MS 036 bd).

Processing Information

Processed by Dex Haven, August 2009.

Bibliography

For more on Wheeler, see Charles J. Taylor, *History of Great Barrington, (Berkshire County,) Massachusetts* Great Barrington: Clark W. Bryan, 1882.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

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Search terms

Subjects

Great Barrington (Mass.)--Economic conditions--18th century.
Merchants--Massachusetts--Great Barrington.

Contributors

Wheeler, Truman. [main entry]
Wheeler, Truman, 1741-1815.

Genres and formats

Account books.

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