



Rural Massachusetts Imprints Collection

1797-1893

51 items (3 linear feet)

Call no.: RB 012

Collection overview

Although printing requires a substantial capital investment in equipment before any hope of profitability can be entertained, there have been numerous attempts over the years to set up printing houses in communities with astonishingly small population bases. In even the most remote Massachusetts towns, people like John Metcalf (Wendell), Ezekiel Terry (Palmer), and John and Solomon Howe (Enfield and Greenwich) operated as printers during the nineteenth century, specializing in a quotidian array of broadsides, song sheets, almanacs, toy books, and printed forms, hoping to supplement, or provide, a decent living.

This small, but growing collection consists of materials printed prior to the twentieth century in small Massachusetts towns, defined as towns with populations less than about 2,500. Although few of these houses survived for long, they were important sources for rural communities. Typically simple in typography, design, and binding, even crude, the output of such printers provides an important gauge of the interests and tastes of New England's smallest and often poorest communities.

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Background

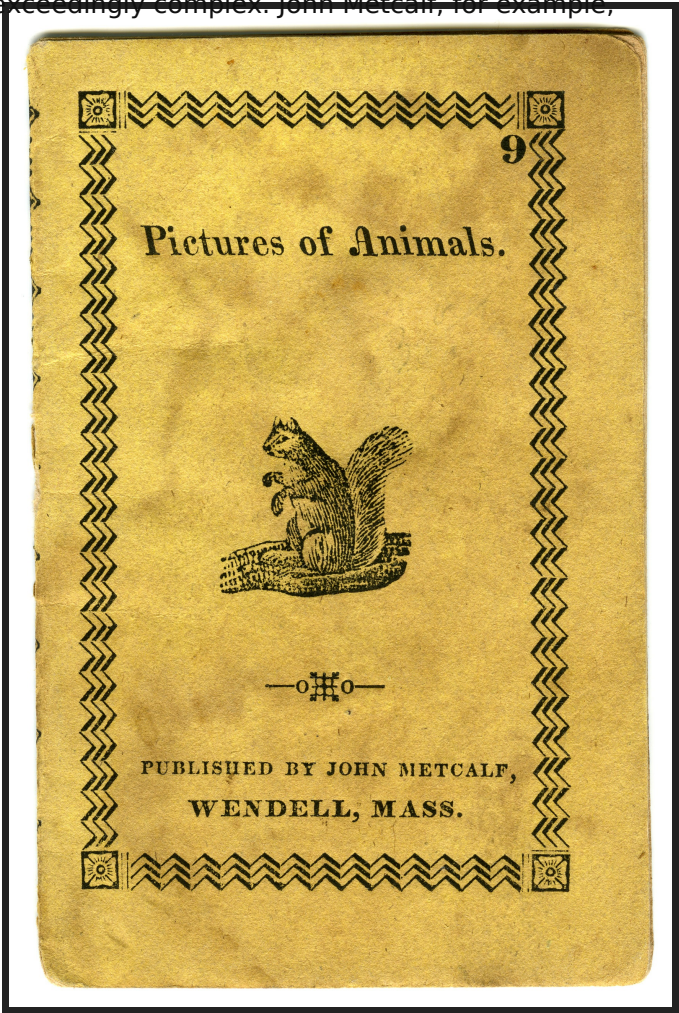
Operating a capital-intensive business like a printer's shop in a rural setting is not an obvious route to financial success. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, a number of printers tried their hand at printing in rural communities, attempting to make, or supplement, their living by meeting local demand for reading matter.

In many ways, the output of rural printing shops is unlike that of more cosmopolitan printing centers, and is typically restricted to the more popular forms of literature and relatively easy to produce works like broadsides, song sheets, commemorative poems, almanacs, toy books, and, in all likelihood, printed forms. Produced simply, even crudely, with respect to typography, design, and binding, the output of such printers provides an important gauge of the interests and tastes of New England's smallest and poorest communities.

In some cases, the printing history of rural shops can be exceedingly complex. John Metcalf, for example, operated in the tiny town of Wendell between 1812 and 1832, where he specialized in the simplest children's books illustrated chaotically with illustrations derived from sets of woodblocks apparently purchased from an unnamed wholesaler -- the same printing blocks used by his contemporary Ansel Phelps of Greenfield. Metcalf also printed almanacs and one or two larger books. He continued as a printer after moving to Northampton in 1833 and his company remained in business for over a century following his death in 1864.

Scope of collection

This small, but growing collection consists of books, pamphlets, and broadsides printed prior to the twentieth century in small Massachusetts towns, arbitrarily defined as towns with populations less than about 2,500. Although few of these shops survived for long, they were important resources for rural communities.



John Metcalf's Pictures of animals

Among the printers represented in the collection are well-known firms such as the Howes of the Quabbin region, John Metcalf of Wendell, and Ezekiel Terry of Palmer. For comparative purposes, we have included a few works by printers such as the Merriams of Brookfield, a small town which was nevertheless well connected to a larger market by being situated on a major thoroughfare.

Inventory

Adams, J. S. and C. (Amherst)		1843	
Second Congregational Church (Hadley, Mass.): <i>The confession of faith, and covenant, and regulations of the Second Church in Hadley.</i> Amherst [Mass.]: J. S. and C. Adams, Printers		1843	Rural Mass. BX7255 .H25 S4 1843
Andrews, Ferdinand and Joseph (Lancaster)		1828	

Thayer, Nathaniel, 1769-1840: <i>The characteristics of Christian preaching.: A discourse, delivered at Littleton, Massachusetts, at the ordination of Reverend William Hunt White, January 2, 1828. . . . Lancaster, Mass.: Printed by Ferdinand and Joseph Andrews</i>	1828	Rural Mass. BX7232 .T43 C43 1828
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Belden, Joshua (Whately)

1820

Belden, Joshua, 1766-1849: <i>The angel's book</i> . Whately: For sale by Joshua Belden	1820	Rural Mass. BF1101 .B45 1820
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Carter, Simeon (Baldwinville)

1893

Carter, Simeon, 1824-: <i>Poems and aphorisms: a woodsman's musings</i> . Baldwinville, Mass.: Published and for sale by the author	1893	Rural Mass. PS1262 .C4 P6
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Denio, John (Greenfield)

1805-1818

Burroughs, Stephen, 1765-1840: <i>Sketch of the life of the notorious Stephen Burroughs . . . : Containing the most interesting events of his life</i> . Greenfield, Mass.: Printed by John Denio	1812	Rural Mass. CT275 . B8 A3 1812
Field, Joseph, 1772-1866: <i>The benevolence of the gospel ministry: illustrated in a sermon, preached at Heath, December 26, 1804, at the ordination of Rev. Moses Miller, A. M.</i> . Greenfield, Mass.: Printed by John Denio	1805	Rural Mass. BX7239 . O7 F54 1805
Strong, Titus, 1787-1855: <i>The common reader: consisting of a variety of pieces, original and selected, intended for the use of schools and particularly calculated for the improvement of scholars of the first and second classes in the art of reading</i> . Greenfield, Mass.: Denio and Phelps	1818	Rural Mass. PE1120 . S78 1818x

Forman, George (New York, N.Y.)

1809

Emmons, Nathanael, 1745-1840: <i>A sermon preached at the ordination of the Rev. Edwards Whipple to the pastoral care of the First Congregational Church in Charlton, January 25, 1804, 2nd ed.</i> . New York: Printed by George Forman for C. Davis	1809	Rural Mass. BX7239 .O7 E66 1809
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Gray, Edward (West Springfield)

1797

Rogers, Timothy, 1589-1650?: <i>The righteous man's evidence for heaven: or, A treaties [sic] shewing how every one, while he lives here, may certainly know what shall become of him after his departure out of this life. / By Timothy Rogers. Preacher of God's word in Essex. West-Springfield [Mass.]: Printed by Edward Gray, for Nathaniel Patten</i>	1797	Rural Mass. BT845 .R63 1797
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Howe, Solomon and John (Enfield and Greenwich)

1803-1844

Allen, Alonzo G. (Alonzo Giles), 1811-1872: <i>Alonzo and Melissa: illustrating the changes of fortune and triumph of virtue.</i> [Enfield, Mass.]: [Printed by S. Howe]	1844	Rural Mass. PS1029 . A45 A5 1844
Dunn, Samuel, 1746-1843: <i>An elegy on the death of Mr. Harfield Lyndsey, aged 26 years.</i> [Enfield, Mass.]: S. Howe	1838	Rural Mass. Broadside 2
<i>An eulogium on rum [on verso] Lines composed on the prevailing malignant cholera and Apostrophe to the shade of Mina.</i> [Enfield, Mass.]: Solomon Howe?	1839	Rural Mass. [filed with Broadside and Poster Collection]
<i>Gray mare, or, Johnny the miller, and beautiful Kate.</i> [Enfield, Mass.]?: S. Howe?	1838	Rural Mass. M1628.3 . G73 1838
Contents: There is a second copy of Gray Mare on the back of which is printed the pair: Lines composed on the prevailing malignant cholera and Apostrophe to the shade of Mina.		
<i>The history of Capt. Thomas Parismas: containing a particular account of the cruel and barbarous treatment of a young lady, who was the wife of Mr. James Negotio, a merchant, in the East Indies.</i> Greenwich [Mass.]: Printed and sold by John Howe	1812	Rural Mass. PS475 . H5 1812
Howe, John, 1783-1845: <i>The Christian's pocket-companion: being a choice collection of devotional hymns for the use of Christians, in public worship and private devotion, without distinction of denomination.</i> Enfield, Mass.: John Howe	1826	Rural Mass. BV459 . H69 1826
<i>Howe's almanac, for the year of our Lord.</i> Greenwich, Mass.: [J. Howe]	1804-1809	Rural Mass. AY201 . G9 F8
<i>Howe's almanac, for the year of our Lord 1808.</i> Greenwich, Mass.: [J. Howe]	1808	Rural Mass. AY201 . G9 F8
<i>Howe's genuine almanac for the year of our Lord.</i> Greenwich, [Mass.]: [publisher not identified]	1810-1825	Rural Mass. AY201 . G9 F8
<i>Invitation hymn.</i> [Enfield, Mass.]?: S. Howe?	1838	Rural Mass. Broadside 1
Mason, Mrs. : <i>Ellegiac poems, sacred to friendship.</i> Greenwich, Mass.: J. Howe	1803	Rural Mass. PS804 . M3 E44 1803
<i>New Catherine Ogee.</i> [Enfield, Mass.]?: S. Howe?	ca.1835	Rural Mass. M1628.3 . N49 1830z

White, N. (Noah): <i>An easy guide to the art of spelling: constructed on an easy and regular plan, for the use of schools: proposing, and recommending a new scheme of an alphabet, and a regular mode of spelling: calculated to remove the difficulties complained of, in the present mode of spelling.</i> Enfield, Mass.: Printed for the author, John Howe, printer	1819	Rural Mass. PE1144 . W55 1819
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Merriam, E. and G. (Brookfield)		1802-1829
Cooke, Parsons, 1800-1864: <i>An address delivered at the laying of the corner stone of the meeting house of the First Calvinistic Society in Hardwick, Mass. , Sept. 1828 .</i> Brookfield, Mass.: E. and G. Merriam	1828	Rural Mass. BX9426 . C66 1828
Emmons, Nathanael, 1745-1840: <i>A sermon preached at the ordination of the Rev. Edwards Whipple: to the pastoral care of the First Congregational Church in Charlton, January 25, 1804.</i> Brookfield, Mass.: E. Merriam and Co.	1804	Rural Mass. BX7239 . O7 E66 1804
Prentiss, Charles, 1774-1820: <i>The life of the late Gen. William Eaton;: several years an officer in the United States' army, consul at the Regency of Tunis on the coast of Barbary, and commander of the Christian and other forces that marched from Egypt through the Desert of Barca, in 1805, and conquered the city of Derne, which let to the treaty of peace between the United States and the Regency of Tripoli. Principally collected from his correspondence and other manuscripts .</i> Brookfield, Mass.: E. Merriam and Co.	1813	Rural Mass. DT264. 3 . E3 R6 1813
Sherwood, Mary Martha, 1775-1851: <i>The little woodman, and his dog Caesar.</i> Brookfield, Mass.: E. and G. Merriam	1829	Rural Mass. PR5449 . S4 L45 1829
Ward, Ephraim, 1741-1818: <i>A sermon, preached in Barre, October 3, 1801: at the interment, of the Rev. Josiah Dana. . . .</i> Brookfield, Mass.: E. Merriam and Co.	1802	Rural Mass. BX7260 . D25 W37 1802

Metcalf, John (Wendell)		1820-1832
Blair, Hugh, 1718-1800: <i>An abridgment of lectures on rhetoric.</i> Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf	1823	Rural Mass. PE1402 .B72 1823c
<i>Advice to sabbath school children.</i> Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf	1828	Rural Mass. BJ1631 .A38 1828
Harding, Alpheus, 1790-1869: <i>Address delivered in Greenfield, June 25, 5832, before the "Franklin R. A. Chapter," and a collection of companions and brethren of the Masonic family,: in commemoration of the birth of John the Baptist .</i> Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf	1832	Rural Mass. HS445 .M4 H37
<i>History of the Holy Bible {title vignette with caption: Luke ii. 27. 38}.</i> Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf	1825	Rural Mass. BS539 .H5 1825

<i>Little rhymes for little readers.</i> Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf	1832	Rural Mass. BJ1571 .L58 1832
<i>Little verses, for good children.</i> Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf	1831	Rural Mass. PZ6 .H6244 1831
<i>Pictures of animals.</i> Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf	1832	Rural Mass. QL49 .P538 1832
<i>Spring flowers, or, easy lessons for young children.</i> Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf	1831	
<i>The stray lamb.</i> Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf	1828	Rural Mass. BV4571 .S77 1828
Wild, Nathan: <i>Improved New England almanac.</i> Wendell, Mass.: J. Metcalf	1820-1829	Rural Mass. AY81 .F3 F395
Mirick, Charles A. (Greenfield) 1863		
Beckwith, E. (Ebenezer), 1796-: <i>Various poems: for the perusal of young and old.</i> Greenfield, Mass.: Charles A. Mirick	1863	Rural Mass. PS1083 .B45 V37
Pearce, B. W. (Pawtucket, R. I.) 1844		
Lecraw, J. B. : <i>A Sketch of the life, travels, and sufferings of a reformed man: showing the misery to which intemperance brought him, and the means he would resort to procure the inebriating draught; and also showing the strength of this ferocious appetite for alcoholic drinks, when once fastened upon our system.</i> Pawtucket [Mass.]: B. W. Pearce	1844	Rural Mass. HV5070 .I4 1844
Phelps, Ansel (Greenfield) 1840-1844		
<i>Robert and William, or, the beauties of nature.</i> Greenfield, Mass.: A. Phelps	1844	Rural Mass. QH48 .R63 1844
<i>A soldier turned farmer.</i> Greenfield, Mass.: A. Phelps	ca.1840	
Prentiss, Charles (Leominster) 1797		
Cave, William, 1637-1713: <i>The lives of the holy evangelists and apostles: with their martyrdoms, for preaching the gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.</i> Leominster, (Massachusetts): By Charles Prentiss	1797	Rural Mass. BS2440 .C32 1797

Dodsley, Robert, 1703-1764: <i>The economy of human life / translated from an Indian manuscript, written by an antient Bramin ; to which is prefixed an account of the manner in which the said manuscript was discovered, if [i. e. in] a letter, from an English gentleman residing in China, to his friend in England.</i> Leominster, (Massachusetts): By Charles Prentiss	1797	Rural Mass. BJ1561 .D6 1797
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Prentiss, John (Leominster)	1797
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Stearns, Charles, 1753-1826: <i>The ladies' philosophy of love: a poem, in four cantos.</i> Leominster, Mass.: Printed by John Prentiss, and Co. for the author	1797	Rural Mass. PS843 .S7 L3 1797
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Prentiss, J. and J. W. (Kenne, N.H.)	1824
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<i>Farmer's, mechanics and gentleman's almanack.</i> Keene, N. H.: J. and J. W. Prentiss	1820-1824	Rural Mass. AY81 . F3 F395
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Smith, Eunice (Greenfield)	1798
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Smith, Eunice, of Ashfield: <i>Some motives to engage those who have professed the name of the Lord Jesus to depart from all iniquity and study a close walk with God: to which are affixed a number of songs presented to those who love the Lord.</i> Greenfield, Mass.: Printed for the proprietor	1798	Rural Mass. BV4510 . A2 S64 1798
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Smith, H. W. (Greenwich)	1885
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Yeaw, Juliette: <i>The word: inspirational discourse / delivered by Mrs. Juliette Yeaw, in the Independent Liberal Church at Greenwich, Mass. ; stenographically reported by W. B. Wright.</i> Greenwich, Mass.: H. W. Smith	ca.1885	Rural Mass. BR560 ,G7556 Y52 1880z
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Terry, Ezekiel (Palmer)	1826-1829
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Davison, Phinehas, 1743-1826: <i>Evangelical poems; in two books. The first book: being the husbandman's companion: showing how his business may assist him in spiritual meditation.</i> Palmer, Mass.: E. Terry	1810?	Rural Mass. PS1524 . D16 E8 1810
Terry, Ezekiel, 1775-1829: <i>Memoirs of the life and character of the late Rev. George Atwell.</i> Palmer, Mass.: Ezekiel Terry	1815	Rural Mass. BX495 . A69 T4

Ward, Frank W. (Winchendon)	1865
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Bullock, Alexander H. (Alexander Hamilton), 1816-1882: <i>A commemorative address at Royalston. August 23rd, 1865: the hundredth anniversary of its incorporation.</i> Winchendon, Mass.: Frank W. Ward	1865	Rural Mass. F74 . R92 B9 1865
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Whitman, Ephraim (Williamsburgh)		1818	
Macgowan, John, 1726-1780: <i>The life of Joseph, the son of Israel.: In eight books. Chiefly designed to allure young minds to a love of the sacred scriptures</i> . Williamsburgh, Mass.: Ephraim Whitman		1818	Rural Mass. BS580 . J6 M3 1818
Wilder, Salmon (Leominster)		1805	
Gibbon, Edward, 1737-1794: <i>The life of Mahomet: with sketches of the reigns of his successors Abubeker, Omar, Othman, and Ali: from The decline and fall of the Roman Empire</i> . Leominster, Mass.: Printed by Salmon Wilder for John Whiting of Lancaster		1805	Rural Mass. BP75 . G54 1805
Unidentified (Enfield)		1897-1938	
<i>Budget of rhymes for Enfield and Greenwich Plains, Mass., for 1882.</i> [Enfield, Mass.]: [publisher not identified]		1882	Rural Mass. [filed with Broadside and Poster Collection]
Quabbin Club, Enfield, Mass. : <i>Calendar and Quabbin Elegy.</i> [Enfield, Mass.]: [publisher not identified]		1897-1938	Rural Mass. F74 . E5 Q3

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired variously.

Related Material

Works by other rural printers can be found elsewhere in SCUA's collections, especially the **Early Children's Literature Collection**(RB 017).

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Search terms

Subjects

- Children's books--Massachusetts
- Printers--Massachusetts

Contributors

- Metcalf, John, 1788-1854
- Howe, John, 1783-1845
- Howe, Solomon, 1750-1835
- Terry, Ezekiel, 1775-1829

Genres and formats

- Almanacs
- Broad­sides

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