Abstract

Joseph W. Estey was the owner of a farm in Greenwich, Massachusetts with a grist and sawmill. The account book (started in Springfield and Ludlow, Massachusetts with his business partner Abner Putnam) documents business dealings, hired male and female help, personal and farm expenses (hiring tanners and blacksmiths), and a deed.

Background on Joseph W. Estey

Greenwich was among the Western Massachusetts towns abolished in 1938 to allow the Swift River Valley to be flooded, thereby creating the Quabbin Reservoir to provide Boston with water.

Contents of Collection

Joseph W. Estey began this account book in Springfield and Ludlow, Massachusetts in 1809 when he bought a tavern and farm with a grist and saw mill. The mill was held in partnership with Abner Putnam who split expenses; hence Estey kept track of his expenses to be attributed to the business as well as his personal and farm expenses.

By 1811 he had bought a farm with grist and sawmills in Greenwich, Massachusetts. The majority of the 292 pages are about the Greenwich property. Only pp. 1-20 refer to Springfield and Ludlow, although references to Ludlow appear later in the book.

The Greenwich accounts were of Estey’s grist and sawmill dealings, but also accounts of his hired male and female help. They usually lived with him, but took care of their own clothes and obtained their own spirits. Among his early 19th century workers were "Sam Lane’s Negro" (p. 11), and "Lewis a Negro" or Lewis, Negro. Hired men were not paid for half-days taken off for military training.

The book is of personal as well as business dealings and so gives a graphic picture of rural life. Estey hires his mowing done, his tanning, his blacksmithing, and his pond cleaning. He occasionally puts his animals in others’ pastures for a fee. He sells lumber for sizable construction projects which could be traced.

Some of the people, businesses, and places mentioned are:

- Parson Clapp Tavern
- Gideon Howe, Greenwich
- Edward Howe
- Lewis, a Negro (p. 71)
- John Warner, blacksmith
- Benjamin Lincoln

Access

The collection is open for research.

Language:

English
Collection inventory

Deed, Eleazar W. Estey from estate of Joseph W. Estey--Pew and Horse Shed  Nov. 2, 1859  Box 1

Account Book, Joseph W. Estey, Springfield, Ludlow, Greenwich  1809-1827  Box 2

Administrative information

Provenance

Acquired from Donald W. Howe, 1960.

Processing Information

Processed by Ruth Owen Jones, October 1985.

Acknowledgments

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Search terms

Subjects

- Agricultural laborers--Massachusetts--Greenwich
- Domestics--Massachusetts--Greenwich
- Farmers--Massachusetts--Greenwich--Economic conditions--19th century

Names

- Barnard, Elihu
- Estey, Joseph W.
- Howe, Edward
- Howe, Gideon
- Greenwich (Mass.)--Economic conditions--19th century
- Ludlow (Mass.)--Economic conditions--19th century
- Mills and mill-work--Massachusetts--Greenwich
- Quabbin Reservoir Region (Mass.)--Economic conditions--19th century
- Springfield (Mass.)--Economic conditions--19th century
- Lewis, Negro
- Lincoln, Benjamin
- Marcy, Laban
- Oaks, John
- Parson Clapp Tavern
- Putnam, Abner
- Putnam, W. A.
- Vaughan, Josiah
- Ware Manufacturing Co. (Ware, Mass.)
- Warner, John, Blacksmith

**Genre Terms**

- Account books