Butler, Mills, Smith, and Barker Daybook
1837-1845
1 volume
Call no.: MS 183

Contents of Collection
This daybook lists transactions made by a small woolen manufactory in Williamstown, Massachusetts. The two most active partners were Henry Mills (b. 1810 in Williamstown) and Silas Butler (d. 1841); Asa Barker and Ebenezer Smith also appear to have been involved, although the accounts do not make clear to what extent. Toward the rear of the volume, there are memoranda of wool purchases by two different combinations of partners-Butler, Mills and Barker, and Butler, Smith, and Mills. The first fifty pages reflect principally the expenses incurred by the partners. Among the expenses were charges for freight, soap, oil, wool, repairs on a regulator, potash, boarding for weavers, use of horses and wagons, labor, glue, and wood, as well as foodstuffs. Although it is not clear that personal and business expenses were kept separately, the accounts provide much information concerning the cost of commodities, labor, and boarding in the town.

Unlike the neighboring towns of Adams and North Adams, Williamstown never became a manufacturing center. In 1837, the town had two woolen mills (presumably one of which was that of Butler and Mills) employing 22 workers and producing 43,370 yards of cloth. By 1845, after the Butler, Mills, Smith and Barker partnership had dissolved, the town had only one woolen mill employing 10 and producing but 16,000 yards of satinet. However, the daybook does demonstrate the impact of even a small manufacturer on the local economy. A number of local residents added to their income by selling soap, oil, and wool to the mill, by boarding its workers, by taking in weaving, or by hauling freight for the business.

Provenance
Acquired from Charles Apfelbaum, 1986.