

Timothy Cushing Account Books

1764-1845 (*Bulk: 1789-1806*)

2 volumes (0.25 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 485bd

Read collection overview [Collection overview](#)

A carpenter by trade and a farmer, Timothy Cushing lived in Cohasset, Massachusetts, throughout most of his adult life. Born on Feb 2, 1738, the eighth child of Samuel Cushing, a selectman and Justice of the Peace from the second district in Hingham (now Cohasset), Cushing married Desire Jenkins (b. 1745) on June 4, 1765, and raised a considerable family of eleven children. During the Revolutionary War, he served for a brief period in companies raised in Cohasset, but otherwise remained at home, at work, until his death on December 26, 1806.

Cushing's accounts offer a fine record of the activities of a workaday carpenter during the first decades of the early American republic, reflecting both his remarkable industry and the flexibility with which he approached earning a living. The work undertaken by Cushing centers on two areas of activity -- carpentry and farm work -- but within those areas, the range of activities is quite broad. As a carpenter, Cushing set glass in windows, hung shutters, made coffins, hog troughs, and window seats; he worked on horse carts and sleds, barn doors, pulled down houses and framed them, made "a little chair" and a table, painted sashes, hewed timber, made shingles, and worked on a dam. As a farm worker, he was regularly called upon to butcher calves and bullocks, to garden, mow hay, plow, make cider, and perform many other tasks, including making goose quill pens. The crops he records reflect the near-coastal setting: primarily flax, carrots, turnips, corn, and potatoes, with references throughout to cattle and sheep. During some periods, Cushing records selling fresh fish, including haddock and eels.

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Background on Timothy Cushing

A carpenter by trade and a farmer, Timothy Cushing lived in Cohasset, Massachusetts, throughout most of his adult life. Born on Feb 2, 1738, the eighth child of Samuel Cushing, a selectman and Justice of the Peace from the second district in Hingham (now Cohasset), Cushing married Desire Jenkins (b. 1745) on June 4, 1765, and raised a considerable family of eleven children. During the Revolutionary War, he served on the Committee of Safety and, for a brief period, in military companies raised in Cohasset, but otherwise remained at home, at work, until his death on December 26, 1806.

Scope of collection

Cushing's accounts offer a fine record of the activities of a workaday carpenter during the first decades of the early American republic, reflecting both his remarkable industry and the flexibility with which he approached earning a living. The work undertaken by Cushing centers on two areas of activity -- carpentry and farm work -- but within those areas, the range of activities is quite broad. As a carpenter, Cushing set glass in windows, hung shutters, made coffins, hog troughs, and window seats; he worked on horse carts and sleds, barn doors, pulled down houses and framed them, made "a little chair" and a table, painted sashes, hewed timber, made shingles, and worked on a dam. As a farm worker, he was regularly called upon to butcher calves and bullocks, to garden, mow hay, plow, make cider, and perform many other tasks, including making goose quill pens. The crops he records reflect the near-coastal setting: primarily flax, carrots, turnips, corn, and potatoes, with references throughout to cattle and sheep. During some periods, Cushing records selling fresh fish, including haddock and eels.

Both volumes are standard single column account books overlapping somewhat in date, with the second volume (only 22p. filled in) covering the latter years of Cushing's life, 1800-1806. Both volumes include records with creditors as well as debtors: John Wheelwright tanned calf and sheep skin for Cushing, while Adam Stowel and David Nichols kept Cushing with a regular supply of rum, sugar, and molasses.

Laid into the first volume are seventeen miscellaneous slips of paper containing accounts, manuscript pages from a surveying exercise book, and a small set of accounts, 1832-1833, recording labor performed by an unidentified member of a later generation. Several accounts in this sheaf are with members of the Sampson family, who were connected to the Cushings by marriage, however the identity of the record keeper remains uncertain. The second volume includes a small number of entries from 1844-1845, including poetical remembrances from Isaac (the youngest son of Timothy's son David) and his wife Rebecca (Whitney) Cushing of Ashby, Mass., to "sister Clara."

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Dan Casavant, 1999.

Processing Information

Processed by Dex Haven, August 2009.

Related Material

SCUA also houses an account book of Job Cushing of Cohasset (MS 207bd), who is probably a nephew of Timothy's, through Timothy's brother Job.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: Timothy Cushing Account Books (MS 485bd). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

- Agricultural laborers--Massachusetts--Cohasset--18th century.
- Carpenters--Massachusetts--Cohasset--18th century.
- Cohasset (Mass.)--Economic conditions--18th century.
- Cohasset (Mass.)--Economic conditions--

-19th century.

Names

- Cushing, Isaac, 1813-1891.
- Cushing, Timothy, 1738-1806.

Genre terms

- Account books.

Link to similar SCUA collections

Farming and rural life

Massachusetts (East)

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