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Manuscripts and Archives Division**

Guide to the

Zebulon Cooper ledger

1796-1861 (bulk 1805-1817)

MssCol 18775

Compiled by Philip Heslip, November 2012

Summary

Creator: Cooper, Zebulon

Title: Zebulon Cooper ledger, 1796-1861 (bulk 1805-1817)

Size: .21 linear foot (1 box)

Source: Purchased from Dan Casavant Rare Books, 2012

Abstract: The Zebulon Cooper ledger (1805-1817) documents Cooper's tannery and general store business in Southampton, Long Island. The volume also contains several loose account fragments spanning 1796 to 1861. The ledger details Cooper's commercial interactions with members of his local community, including women, Shinnecock Indians, and African Americans. The volume also reveals the economic workings of the early republic, where material goods were often exchanged for other commodities and labor.

Access: Advance notice required. Apply at <http://www.nypl.org/mssref>.

Preferred citation: Zebulon Cooper ledger, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Loose fragments, comprising miscellaneous accounts and notes that were stored in the volume, have been placed in folders in order to protect the spine of the ledger. The folder labels note the fragments' original locations within the volume.

Creator history

Zebulon Cooper was a craftsman and general store owner who was active in Southampton, Long Island, between 1805 and 1819. Cooper made and repaired shoes, tanned hides, and sold goods such as cloth and food.

Scope and content note

The Zebulon Cooper ledger (1805-1819) documents Cooper's business dealings as a tanner, shoemaker, and general store owner in Southampton, Long Island. In addition the accounts for Cooper's goods and services, the ledger also contains details on his cash on hand, bank records, investments, and prices for hides (horse, calf, marten, sheep, dog, and hog skins).

The volume is organized in three sections, each with their own page numbering systems: accounts

spanning 1805-1808 (98 pages), accounts spanning 1810-1817 (164 pages), and an alphabetical name index for the 1810-1817 accounts (24 pages). Many entries refer to "the other book," referencing Cooper's previous ledgers or corresponding day books. Also present are loose notes and accounts fragments scattered throughout the volume and spanning 1796 to 1861.

Entries document Cooper's dealings with diverse local populations from Southampton and Westhampton, Long Island, including accounts with African American laborers and merchants, such as the sea captain Paul Cuffee; with Native Americans David Waucus and James Bunn, among others; and with many women. Other Cooper family members represented in the ledger are Abraham, Apollas, Broom, Caleb, Edgar, John, Nathan, Obadiah, and William Cooper. Cooper frequently traded shoes and other goods for commodities (coal, nails, wood, and food) and for domestic and agricultural services. Types of manual labor included butchering, carting dung, chopping wood, planting seeds, harvesting crops, and house work.

Key terms

Subjects

Barter
Shinnecock Indians

Places

New York (State) -- History -- 1775-1865
Southampton (N.Y.)

Names

Cooper, Zebulon
Cuffe, Paul, 1759-1817

Special formats

Account books