

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

Name of collection:

American Political Society (Worcester, Mass.),
Records, 1773-1776

Location:

Octavo volumes "A"

Size of collection:

2 octavo volumes

N.U.C.M.C. number:

RLIN id:

Sources of information on collection:

For further information concerning the American Political Society, see Charles Nutt, History of Worcester and Its People (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1919), vol. 1, pp. 523-33.

Source of collection:

Source unknown

Collection description:

The American Political Society was established in 1773 in Worcester, Massachusetts, by Col. Timothy Bigelow (1739-1790) as an extension of the Committee of Correspondence. It was a secret society of 71 Worcester Whigs who organized for the purpose of debating "upon ... our rights and liberties" and determining "methods to be pursued" in securing them. The Society held monthly meetings at a public house, usually the inn of Asa Ward (1748-1818), and eventually assumed control of town meetings and instructed the moderator and the representative to the General Court. The organization became a potent means of defeating the influence of Worcester Loyalists. The Society apparently disbanded due to internal frictions and the more immediate demands of revolutionary resistance.

The volume of American Political Society Records for the period 27 December 1773 to 20 May 1776 includes a statement of purpose, rules and regulations, a list of members, and minutes of each meeting. The minutes detail such activities as boycott agreements following enactment of the Boston Port Bill in 1774; the provision of two pounds of gunpowder for each member; the assumption of fines levied by the British against any member for his "resistance" activities; and organized protest against Peter Oliver (1713-1791) as Chief Justice of the Superior Court.

The second volume is a typed transcript of the records which was prepared by Professor Charles W. Estus in 1984.

April 24, 1978
revised June 12, 1997