

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Smith Family, Papers, 1812-1873

LOCATION(S):

Octavo vols. "S"
Folio vols. "S"
Misc. mss. boxes "S"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

2 octavo volumes; 1 folio volume (264 pp.); 1 folder (75 items)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

For records of individuals, see *Leicester, Massachusetts Vital Records to 1850*.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

James & John Adams Smith account book, purchased from Jean's Book Service, 1995. The source of the remainder of the collection is unknown.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

John Adams Smith (1787-1860), the son of Benoni and Mehitabel Smith, was born in Rutland, Mass., on 24 September 1787. He married, on 9 November 1820, Sally Sargent (1797-1849), the daughter of John and Sally Sargent, of Leicester, Mass. They had four children: John Sargent (1821-); William Adison (1824-); Sarah Jane (1826-); and Mary Denny (1830-).

Smith, along with James Smith (-), Alpheus Smith (-), and Rufus Smith (1792-1818), were merchants in Leicester. Together they purchased a shop from John Woodcock (1776-1814) that manufactured cards for the textile industry. It became known as Woodcock, Smith & Company.

This collection contains business documents, account books, and letters of the Smith family primarily concerning their carding machine. Included are real estate inventories, land and pew deeds, receipts, bonds, and warrants, in addition to deeds of shares in the company, a bill of sale for one-third interest, and the articles of partnership, 1817. The collection also contains the dissolution of the partnership of Alpheus Smith, letters to John Adams Smith relative to the settling of debts held by the company, several fire insurance policies, e.g., Worcester Fire Insurance Company, and the signatures of subscribers to the Leicester League, 1864.

One volume is a cashbook for the Woodcock, Smith & Company. In it are recorded income and expenditures for the business for the period 1812 to 1824. In addition to unspecified accounts involving

companies and individuals, the volume refers to expenses for card settings, postage, needles, wine, cloth, and traveling.

The John Adams Smith daybook, for the period 1828 to 1820, contains brief entries listing his employees, their salaries and dates of work performed, and his personal accounts, as well as those of his business, including accounts with Isaiah Thomas (1749-1831).

The James and John Adams Smith account book, for the period 1822 to 1823, lists accounts the firm established with local men and women for the "putting out" of card clothing. In addition to Leicester families, the firm recruited workers from Spencer, Rutland, Paxton, Charlton, and the Brookfields.

Under the "putting out" system, workers took home the materials required to set the cards, completed the work, and then returned the finished cards to the firm. They were apparently paid in cash. The accounts were balanced with "cards to sett" versus "cards returned".

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American Antiquarian Society
MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT

SMITH FAMILY, PAPERS, 1812-1873
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OCTAVO

VOLUME

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- 2 John Adams Smith, Daybook, 1828-1830

FOLIO

VOLUME

James and John Adams Smith, Account Book, 1822-1823