

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Manuscript Collections

<p>Name of collection:</p> <p>Worcester County, Mass. Washington Benevolent Society, Records, 1810-1836</p>	<p>Location:</p> <p>Octavo volumes "W" Misc. Mss. box "Worcester County"</p>
<p>Size of collection:</p> <p>2 octavo volumes; 5 folders in misc. records box "Worcester County"</p>	<p>N.U.C.M.C. number:</p> <p>N.A.</p>
	<p>RLIN id:</p>
<p>Finding aids:</p> <p>For information on Washington Benevolent Societies see: Fischer, David Hackett, <u>The Revolution of American Conservatism</u>. New York: Harper &amp; Row, 1965, pp. 110-128; and Massachusetts Historical Society, <u>Proceedings</u>, Oct. 1915-June 1916, Vol. XLIX, pp. 274-286.</p>	
<p>Source of collection:</p> <p>Source unknown</p>	
<p>Collection Description:</p> <p>The Washington Benevolent Society for the County of Worcester was formed in March 1812, an offshoot of the Hampshire Washington Benevolent Society of Northampton, Mass. One of the many Federalist fraternal organizations that were sprouting up in 1812, the Washington Benevolent Society for the County of Worcester, like all the other Washington Benevolent Societies, espoused a devotion to Washington, his administration, and his ideals. Members were sought whose political sympathies, and votes, were in concert with the Federalist cause. While publicly claiming to aid less fortunate members of the organization, in fact, fraternal beneficence was slight. Branches of the Washington Benevolent Society of the County of Worcester were actively established in Worcester County towns, and in March 1813 a county society was formed to improve support of and communication among the various town societies.</p> <p>The Washington Benevolent Society for the County of Worcester met regularly and frequently through the year 1814. Meetings and additions to the membership then became less frequent, and the last member appears to have been elected in 1815. By 1818, only one meeting per year was held, and this continued through 1820. Following a sixteen year gap in the records, the minutes of a meeting held in 1836 relate the decision of the organization to donate its remaining funds to the Worcester County Agricultural Society.</p> <p>The collection consists of a record book, 1812-1836, containing the constitution, initiation pledge, by-laws, and minutes of meetings; a volume containing the constitution and the signatures of 379 members of the society, all male; and 5 folders of miscellaneous records of the Worcester society and</p>	

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Collection Description (continued) Worcester County, Mass. Washington  
Benevolent Society, Records

branches in nearby towns, 1810-1836 (two 1810 receipts relate to the Worcester  
Central Committee, a possible precursor of the Washington Benevolent Society).  
See Contents List.

28 March 1978  
Rev. 22 August 1989

WORCESTER COUNTY, MASS. WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, RECORDS

Contents List

Misc. records box "Worcester County"

Folder

- 18 Records, 1810-1815; contains treasurer's accounts & receipts; memoranda; constitution for the society in Worcester County; minutes of a meeting, 1814
- 19 Records, 1815-1817, 1836; contains an address to the Worcester County Washington Benevolent Society, 1815; treasurer's accounts & receipts; and miscellaneous records
- 20 Washington Benevolent Societies of Athol and Barre; contains constitution and list of members of the society in Athol and list of society members in Barre, 1814
- 21 Washington Benevolent Societies of Lancaster & Sterling and Royalston; contains constitutions and lists of members, 1813-1816 and 1812-1816
- 22 Washington Benevolent Societies of Westminster & Princeton and Franklin County; contains constitutions and lists of members, 1814-1815 and 1812

Octavo volumes

- #1 Record book, 1812-1836
- #2 Constitution and signatures of members