

Coates family. Account books, etc., 1678-1817
1678-1817
Mss.B.C632.1

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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Title	Coates family. Account books, etc., 1678-1817
Date [inclusive]	1678-1817
Call number	Mss.B.C632.1
Extent	6.0 Volume(s)
Location	LH-MV-E-14 (B C632.1a,-b,-c,-f); LH-MV-E-1 (B C632.1d)
Language	English
Container	1-6
Abstract	This collection consists of six ms. books kept by members of the Coates family of Philadelphia, including two bank books, a day book, a receipt book, an account book, and a commonlace book.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Business Records and Accounts

Subject(s)

- Business and Skilled Trades
- Law
- Philadelphia History
- Trade

Other Descriptive Information

The Coates Family Collection contains a variety of documents pertaining to this prominent Philadelphia family.

The Thomas Coates Collection contains a small but potentially rich diary. Thomas Coates was an early Quaker settler in Philadelphia. He arrived in 1683 and established himself as a merchant by the 1690s; journal entries indicate that Coates also worked as a tailor. The small, pocket size journal includes a variety of daily events and transactions that this early Philadelphia settler made. It is bound with a British Merlin almanac for the year 1683. Coates' daily comings and goings and purchases offer interesting insight into early Philadelphia's social, economic, and material life. The diary recounts Coates' return to England in 1683. The financial accounts are generally from the 1690s and include Coates' purchases for a variety of items, ranging from fabric and flax to nails to butter. There are also records of contracts Coates entered into with fellow Philadelphians, which often involve Coates loaning money to others.

The Samuel Coates Collection consists largely of business records of Samuel Coates, a prominent Philadelphia merchant. Coates' large account book for 1803-1830 contains a range of financial transactions both personal and professional that may lend insight into business and trade in early

nineteenth century Philadelphia. The collection also includes Coates' day book, which records day-to-day meetings, and two volumes of Coates' financial dealings with the Bank of North America between 1788 and 1798. Coates was he later elected a director of the Bank in 1800.

In addition to Coates' own material there is an account book of Deborah Morris, which contains a very detailed will and probate records. The will describes in detail how and to whom her belongings should be distributed and is more detailed than most wills.

The Maragret Coates Collection consists of a single, small volume that details the execution of her estate from 1770-1773. It is primarily a series of receipts. Margaret Langdale Coates was a prominent Quaker in Philadelphia. She married into the Coates' family, which traced its Philadelphia roots to 1684. She was also Samuel Coates' mother. Coates was a prominent Philadelphia businessman.

Volumes

Collection Inventory

Volumes

Coates, Samuel, 1748-1830	Aug.31-Jan.3, 1791-1800	1.0
Mss.B.C632.1a Bank book		Volume(s) 7 1/2" x 4 1/2"
A.D. bound in brown calf 39 leaves.		

Coates, Samuel, 1748-1830	June 16 (?) - May 27, 1796-1816	1.0
Mss.B.C632.1b Day book		Volume(s) 7 1/2" x 5"
D. bd. in red leather 14,3 (and many blank) leaves.		

Coates, Margaret	Dec. 17-Sept. 21, 1770-1773	1.0
Mss.B.C632.1c Receipt book of Margaret Coates et al.		Volume(s) 1 vol., 20 pages 1 vol., 20 pages. 4" x 6 3/4"
D. bd. in brown leather 10 (and many blank) leaves. This receipt book of Margaret Coates, Beulah Coates, and Alice Langdale, executors of the estate of Mary Langdale Coates, contains receipts for payments to Thomas Bond, Samuel Coates, Benjamin Rush, Amos Strettell, and others. Among the receipts signed are: B. Rush, May 14, 1772; Thomas Bond, June 9, 1772.		

Background note

Margaret Coates, Beulah Coates, Alice Langdale, and Mary Langdale Coates were sisters and/or sisters-in-law of Philadelphia merchant and philanthropist Samuel Coates; Mary Langdale Coates was his mother.

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Acquisition Information

Gift from Arthur Bloch, 1953; accessioned, 1956 (1140ms).

Volumes

Coates, Samuel, 1748-1830	1793-1817	1.0
Mss.B.C632.1d Account book, probably kept by Samuel Coates		Volume(s) 13" x 8"

D. bd. in brown calf 40 leaves (and many blank). Contains also a transcript of will; March 16, 1793; inventory of estate; and memos concerning estate. Estate of Deborah Morris.

Background note

Samuel Coates (1748-1830) was a prominent Quaker merchant, who was Treasurer of the Library Company of Philadelphia (1784-1793), Secretary and later President of the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital (1786-1825), a member of the Overseers of the Public Schools of Philadelphia. (1812-1823) and a director of the original Bank of the United States (1800-1812). Coates was born in Philadelphia on August 24, 1748, the son of Samuel Coates and Mary Langdale. His grandfather Thomas Coates had emigrated to Pennsylvania from Leicestershire, England in 1684. He lost both of his parents at an early age, but was placed under the care of John Reynell, a merchant, who married into the Coates family. Under Reynell's guardianship Coates received a good classical and business education. In 1767 at the age of nineteen Coates was put in charge of a small commercial business in order to give him practical experience. This first business endeavor lasted until May 31, 1771, when he became a partner of his uncle John Reynell. In January, 1775 Coates married Lydia Saunders, daughter of Joseph and Hannah Saunders. The couple had four children, John Reynell, Hannah, Joseph Saunders and Lydia, all of whom survived their father. His wife Lydia died in 1789. Coates remarried at the end of 1791 to Amy Horner, daughter of Benjamin Horner, a Market Street merchant. She bore him three children, Samuel Horner, Benjamin Horner and Reynell. The American Revolution was the first major event of Coates's life. As a Whig, he supported the boycott of British goods, but drew back from the prospect of revolution against King George the Third, for whom he had a personal and patriotic attachment. As a Quaker, he found revolution inimical to public morality, but also considered the prosperity of the American colonies best served by continued union with Great Britain. Although a man of Tory sympathies, Coates did not actively oppose the American Revolution. The commercial partnership of Reynell and Coates continued until early 1782, when his uncle retired. Coates revered his uncle John Reynell, and emulated many of his traits. Coates was noted for "strict and severe uprightness," thoroughness—especially in bookkeeping, prompt attendance to business, determination and a cheerful demeanor. In October, 1783 he entered a business partnership with his brother Josiah Langdale Coates, although it is not clear how long the association continued. With the adoption of the Constitution in 1787, Coates joined the Federalist Party. He rejoiced in the new peace and stability, and feared that the

presidency of Thomas Jefferson might again bring disunion and civil war. On September 3, 1791 he entered a new business with Messrs. Moses Brown and the Bartlet brothers of Newburyport, Massachusetts. Later he was associated with Messrs. James and John M. Atwood of Philadelphia. He was involved in commerce, and occasionally became interested in shipping, but not as a ship-owner. He pursued his commercial activities with vigor until the yellow fever epidemic of 1793 caused a general evacuation of the city. Under the circumstances Coates shifted his attention away from business and took a more active role in charitable affairs. Gradually, his business activities became irregular and eventually ceased altogether. Nevertheless, his means were sufficient to retire his debts and to provide for his family. Consequently, he was free to pursue philanthropic and other public commitments. Opportunities for public service abounded. In 1784 Coates was elected Treasurer of the Library Company of Philadelphia, an appointment that he held until 1793, when he took charge of the accounts of the Loganian Library. He faithfully administered its finances for nearly thirty-two years. Coates was better known for his work on the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital, a position to which he was elected on July 24, 1785. The Hospital had fallen into financial difficulties in the decade after the Revolutionary War, losing £10,000 through the circulation of paper money in the new Republic. Working on a committee with his fellow managers Andrew Doz, Reynold Keen, Nathaniel Falconer and Owen Jones, Coates helped draft a “plan of economy”. In May, 1786 he was elected Secretary of the Hospital’s Board of Managers and undertook more thorough financial reforms for the Hospital over the course of two years. These reforms, which included pursuing the proceeds of unclaimed shares of the Pennsylvania Land Company, free legal assistance in prosecuting the Hospital’s financial claims and the establishment regular charitable programs for its benefit put the institution’s finances on a much firmer footing. Much later in 1812, no doubt, in appreciation of his many services, Coates was unanimously elected President of the Pennsylvania Hospital’s Board of Managers. This was a position he held until the end of 1825, when failing eyesight and other infirmities caused his resignation. In addition to his forty-one years of service to the Pennsylvania Hospital, Coates was also a long-standing member of the board of Overseers of the Public Schools of the Town and County of Philadelphia. Nominated and appointed to this body on August 31, 1786, he served until 1823. Also, on January 6, 1800 Coates was elected a Director of the original Bank of the United States, and served until 1812, when the Bank wound up its operations. As a banker, he was a “steady” and “consistent” opponent of any extravagance and avoidable risk. As a result of these principles, the Bank was able to pay its stockholders first 70% on their investments at par , and after the payment of all outstanding debts, the amount of \$127.42 for every one hundred dollars they originally subscribed. A Federalist, Coates was quite suspicious of the influence of the French Revolution on the early American Republic. He was generally cheerful

Volumes

and fond of society. As he advanced in years, Coates became interested in local antiquarianism. He was regular in his attendance at religious worship services, but never extreme or harsh in his opinions. Generally healthy, he suffered little from diseases, although from the age of fifty-six he was diagnosed by Dr. Benjamin Rush with angina pectoris, pains extending across his chest, probably related to heart disease. He was temperate in eating and drinking, and, as a rule, always arose from a meal without eating his fill. Coates died at the age of eighty-one on June 4, 1830.

Coates, Samuel, 1748-1830	1788-1791	1.0
Mss.B.C632.1e Bank book		Volume(s) 6-1/

D. bd.in brown leather 34L. with 11 blank leaves.

Coates, Thomas	1695	1.0
Mss.B.C632.1f Commonplace book		Volume(s) 6-1/

D. 64 leaves in parchment cover. Bound with this is: 1683 almanac. British Merlin...by Cardanus Rider.

Background note

Thomas Coates (1659-1719) was a Quaker merchant, who came from Leicestershire, England to settle in the colony of Pennsylvania in 1683 at the age of twenty-three. Coates, if not his immediate family, was a convert to the teachings of George Fox. The young Quaker became a landholder in Philadelphia, then a merchant in Penn's colony.
