

A Guide to the Allen Family Account Book, 1721-1754

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Author: Jessica Tyree

History

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A Guide to the Allen Family Account Book, 1721-1754

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2013-11-21 Converted to schema conforming EAD by dtd2schema.vh.xsl.

Descriptive Summary

Accession Number

43393

Language

English

Creator

Allen family

Extent

1 volume (912 pages) and 1 reel of microfilm

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Please serve microfilm copy.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Purchased from The Book Press, Ltd., Williamsburg, Virginia, 18 December 2006.

Preferred Citation

Allen Family Account Book, 1721-1754. Accession 43393. Business records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Custodial History

The account book was taken from one of the Allen family's properties on the James River by Captain Arnold Harris of the United States gunboat *Massachusetts* in 1861, and brought to Buffalo, New York.

Biographical Information

The Allen family was one of the wealthiest in the Virginia Colony. Seated in Surry County, first building and residing at "Bacon's Castle," then moving to "Claremont," the family possessed substantial property throughout eastern Virginia. This particular account book first belonged to John Allen (ca. 1684-1741 or 2). He was the son of Arthur Allen II (ca. 1652-1710) and his wife, Katherine Baker. Arthur was the owner of the house that gained fame by being occupied by Bacon's rebels in 1676, which incident led to its being dubbed "Bacon's Castle."

John Allen married Elizabeth Bassett (1697-1738), daughter of William Bassett of Eltham in New Kent County, and Joanna Burwell. This marriage allied Allen with several families with representatives on the Governor's Council. Allen's own career included work as a surveyor, clerk of Surry County, colonial militia colonel, and member of the House of Burgesses. By the time of his death, Allen had increased the approximately 1,300 acres inherited from his father to some 24,000 acres in Brunswick, Isle of Wight, Nansemond, and Surry Counties.

Having no surviving children, John Allen named nephew William Allen (1734-1793), a minor at the time of John's death, as heir. The younger Allen first married Clara Walker (1737-ca. 1764), having with her one son, John Allen (ca. 1760-1793). After Clara's death, he married Mary Lightfoot (1750-1789), with whom he had eight children. William Allen built Claremont Manor, in Surry County, on Upper Chippokes land inherited from his uncle.

For more information on the Allen family, see the Eve S. Gregory book *Claremont Manor: A History*.

Scope and Content

Account book, 1721-1754, of the Allen family of Surry County, Virginia, chiefly containing mercantile and personal accounts of John Allen (ca. 1684-1741 or 2). The accounts begin in 1721 and are carried on, irregularly, by an unspecified successor after Allen's death. In addition to Surry County, there are references to residents of and holdings in other localities, including Williamsburg. The book is a resource on topics including the tobacco business; slavery and indentured servitude; plantation life; the settlement of debts by barter of goods and labor as well as cash; and how overseers were paid, both with cash and in shares of crops. In addition there are references to the construction of various buildings, frequently mills or tobacco barns, giving dimensions and outlining how the properties were to be finished, and to repairs, including chimney work, making windows, and replastering. As well as highlighting the daily activities and business of the community, the book contains information of use to family historians. Familial connections are noted both in the accounts and in the identification of debtors, including mention of marriages of individuals with whom Allen had dealings. Also of interest are identifications of tobacco marks used by various growers, and notations about patents, the reissuing of patents in other names, surveys, and sales of rights. Notable names that appear in the book include Sir William Gooch (1681-1751).

Contents List

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Miscellaneous Reel 5329 (reel)

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Access Restriction

For preservation purposes, patrons must use the microfilm copy.

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