

A Guide to the Records of the Public Foundry at Westham, 1776-1789.

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1776-1789.

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Author: Paige Neal

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

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Unit Date

1776-1789.

Creator

Public Foundry.

Extent

6 volumes and .2 cubic feet.

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Use microfilm when available.

Acquisition Information

Acquired prior to 1905.

Preferred Citation

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Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Historical Information

On May 22, 1776, the fifth revolutionary convention approved a petition that had been submitted by John Ballendine and John Reveley proposing to construct a cannon foundry and a blast furnace for the manufacture of ordnance. A site at Westham, near Richmond, was purchased and construction began immediately. When it was completed, the foundry complex included eight blast furnaces, a boring mill, and the foundry, besides all the buildings necessary to house workers and store supplies. The buildings were burned by Lt. Col. John G. Simcoe and his troops on January 5, 1781, in association with Benedict Arnold's raid on Richmond. The foundry functioned intermittently until the war ended, when operations ceased altogether.

Scope and Content

Public Foundry at Westham records include: Account book of John Reveley, 1779-1781 and account papers, 1776-1789; Journal, 1779-1781; and Ledgers (3), 1776-1781, with an Index, 1779-1781.

Journals and ledgers record cash disbursements for foundry supplies (iron, coal, gunpowder), building materials and work, provisions for workers, wages and the hiring of wagons and enslaved individuals. Ledgers include accounts with individuals as well as separate account headings for Boring Mill, Bricklayer Work, Buckingham Furnace, Cannon, Carpentry, Coal, Fire Bricks, Gunpowder, Negroes (p. 42), Pitt Coal, Provisions, Shoemaking, Wages, and Waggonage.

For additional records see the Governor's Executive Papers for this time period; and Public Foundry at Westham records of the Auditor of Public Accounts, 1771-1792 (APA 662).

Other Descriptive Data

These records are part of the Revolutionary War / Government record group (R.G. 2)

Contents List

Account book of John Reveley and account papers, 1776-1789.

Extent

Extent: 1 volume and .2 cubic feet

Scope and Content

Account book of John Reveley, 1779 Mar-1781 Mar, includes entries for individual accounts. Account papers, 1776-1789 and undated, include loose accounts and receipts related to Foundry operations. Included are the purchase of supplies, such as pig iron, coal, and blankets for workers, and delivery of andirons and smith's anvils. Also includes several items documenting the hiring of enslaved individuals to work at the Foundry, including the names of the enslaved individuals as well as the name of the enslaver. Tobacco is often used as currency in the transactions and as payment for enslaved labor.

Account book of John Reveley, 1779 Mar-1781 Mar.

Box 1

Accounts, 1776.

Box 1

Folder 1

Accounts, 1777.

Box 1
Folder 2

Accounts, 1778.

Box 1
Folder 3

Accounts, 1779.

Box 1
Folder 4

Accounts, 1780.

Box 1
Folder 5

Accounts, 1781.

Box 1
Folder 6

Accounts, 1782.

Box 1
Folder 7

Accounts, 1783.

Box 1
Folder 8

Accounts, 1784.

Box 1
Folder 9

Accounts, 1785.

Box 1
Folder 10

Accounts, 1786.

Box 1
Folder 11

Accounts, 1789.

Box 1
Folder 12

Accounts, undated.

Box 1
Folder 13

Journal, 1779 Feb 1-1781 May 9.

Extent

Extent: 1 v.

Scope and Content

Journal, 1779 Feb 1-1781 June 19, provides a daily, chronological recording of cash disbursements, with notations to ledgers. The volume contains entries for supplies purchased for the operation of the foundry,

including food, rum, and wagon boxes. Also listed are the annual wages for some of the workers including enslaved laborers.

Also available on Miscellaneous Reel 638.

Ledgers, 1776-1781.

Extent

Extent: 4 volumes.

Scope and Content

Ledgers (3 v.) provide a record of cash disbursements by individual account. Individual accounts are in no discernable order. There is some overlapping of dates among the volumes. Index (1 v.)

Ledger, 1776 July 15-1779 Jan.

Ledger, 1776 July 15-1781 Nov 19.

Ledger, 1779 Feb 1-1781 June 19.

Ledger - Index, 1779-1781.