

# Guide to Mason family manuscript account book C0214

Mason family manuscript account book  
1792-1820



## Title Statement

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**Subtitle:** Mason family manuscript account book

**Author:** Jordan Patty

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speccoll@gmu.edu  
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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

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**Unit Date**

1792-1820

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**Abstract**

Manuscript account book documenting the business, professional, family, and personal accounts of Stevens Thomson Mason (1760-1803) and Armistead Thomson Mason (1787-1819). The account book includes records of the people they enslaved, on whom their finances and wealth depended. The two men were father and son and the nephew and grandnephew of George Mason IV, the namesake of George Mason University.

**Creator**

Mason, Armistead Thomson, 1787-1819

**Creator**

Mason, Stevens Thomson, 1760-1803

**Extent**

0.25 Linear Feet 1 volume, 344 pages

**Physical Location**

R46, C1, S5

## Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

# Administrative Information

## Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

## Use Restrictions

No known copyright. The Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries believes that this collection is not restricted by copyright or related rights, but a conclusive determination could not be made. (See <https://rightsstatements.org/page/NKC/1.0/?language=en>)

## Acquisition Information

Purchased in 2012.

## Processing Information

Processed in July 2012 by Jordan Patty. Abstract, Biographical Note, Scope and Content, and Bibliography edited/added by Elizabeth Beckman in April 2022. EAD markup completed in 2012 by Jordan Patty.

## Preferred Citation

Mason family manuscript account book, C0214, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries.

# Biographical Note

Stevens Thomson Mason (1760-1803) was the nephew of George Mason IV, the George Mason University namesake. As highlighted by the Enslaved Children of George Mason project, Stevens's father, Thomson Mason, was an active participant in the trade of enslaved people kidnapped from West Africa (Alexis Bracey, "Family Connections to the Slave Trade"). Stevens Mason inherited Raspberry Plain Farm, from his father in 1785 (Raspberry Plain Manor, "Raspberry Plain Manor History"). According to the Loudoun County Clerk of the Circuit Court Historic Records and Deed Research, Mason enslaved 69 people listed in his will at the time of his death in 1803 (Loudoun County Clerk of the Circuit Court Historic Records And Deeds Research, "Enslaved Issues: Fiduciary References"). Mason served as a colonel in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War, an aide to General George Washington at the Battle of Yorktown, and a Republican Senator from Virginia (1794-1803), succeeding James Monroe. He was a delegate to the Virginia ratification of the United States Constitution in 1788, and a graduate of William and Mary College.

Armistead Thomson Mason (1787-1819) was the son of Stevens Thomson Mason and a grandnephew of George Mason IV. He was given land that had been part of Raspberry Plain Farm in 1808, on which he built Selma (Selma Mansion, "Families of Selma"). At his death in 1819, he enslaved 71 people who were listed in his will (Loudoun County Clerk of the Circuit Court Historic Records and Deed Research, "Enslaved Issues: Fiduciary References"). He served as a United States Senator from Virginia (1816-1817), and he also graduated from William and Mary College. He was appointed to Brigadier General of the Virginia Militia during the War of 1812. He was killed by his cousin, John M. McCarty, in an infamous duel over a disputed election.

# Scope and Content

Manuscript account book documenting the business, professional, family, and personal accounts of Stevens Thomson Mason (1760-1803) and Armistead Thomson Mason (1787-1819). The two men were father and son and the nephew and grandnephew of George Mason IV, the namesake of George Mason University. Included in the accounting are extensive records for the operation of Raspberry Plain Farm (which once belonged to George Mason IV) near Leesburg (Loudoun County), Virginia. The account book includes records of the people the Masons enslaved, on whom their finances and wealth depended.

Stevens Thomson Mason wrote the accounts from 1792 until his death in 1803. Financial information about his legal practice and fees appear on pages 52-54, 68-90, and intermittent throughout. There is also information on expenses and other transactions connected with Raspberry Plain Farm in Leesburg, Virginia. After the death of Stevens Thomson, it remained in possession of his widow but was operated by Armistead Thomson Mason. Included are general expenses for goods and services, such as hauling and plowing, information on the hire or purchase of enslaved people, and overseers' wages. Much of the information on enslavement appears on pages 11-51, 55-67, and 91-92. There are also miscellaneous personal and family accounts throughout.

Armistead Thomson Mason wrote the accounts from 1810 until his death in 1819. Expenses and other transactions connected both with his own farm (Selma) and with Raspberry Plain Farm, including enslaved people hired, owned, bought and sold, and overseers' wages. Much of this information appears on pages 96-101 and 103-104. The descriptions of enslavement at Raspberry Plain Farm continue on pages 105-108 in the accounts with his sister, Mary Mason, with whom he operated Raspberry Plain Farm. Some of the descriptions of enslavement include names and incidents such as an expense "for apprehending their negro man John Tebbs ...Joe ran away in August...has never been heard of since..." on pages 153-155.

The accounts also include descriptions of land transactions and other business. An account with his older brother John Thomson Mason relating to lands in Kentucky and to purchase of his interest in Raspberry Plain Farm on page 151. Armistead Thomson worked as the executor of the estate of General Hugh Douglas. An extensive record of this account appears on pages 112, 133-148, 161-163, 171, and 178-179. Douglas, the son of Loudoun County Sheriff William Douglas, served in American Revolution and the War of 1812, and he died in 1815. He also managed an account as trustee of his father's estate as noted on pages 157-159. Page 157 includes a reference to "General Washington's Executors."

Although Stevens Thomson and Armistead Thomson authored most of the account entries, William Temple Thomson Mason also contributed a number of entries including the account of the estate of Armistead Thomson Mason on pages 184-186. Other entries in hand of William Temple can be found on pages 129, 150, 159, and 164. He was the half-brother of Stevens Thomson and the uncle of Armistead Thomson. Other Mason family members represented in the accounts include John Thomson Mason (1765-1824) on page 47, John Thomson Mason (1787-1850) on page 151, Stevens Thomson Mason, Jr. (1789-1815) on pages 96-101, Mary Mason on pages 105-108, Robert Armistead on page 111, and Elizabeth and Mary Armistead on pages 153-155.

# Related Materials

The Special Collections Research Center also holds the [Elizabeth Fairfax cookbook](#) and other materials on the greater Mason family.

The [Enslaved Children of George Mason Project](#) "seeks to reconstruct the 18th-century experiences of enslaved children and adults on the Gunston Hall Plantation. The purpose of [their] research is to raise awareness that the namesake of George Mason University sought the benefits of slavery and believed that the people he owned were property without free will or basic rights."

## Keywords

Agriculture -- Virginia  
Plantations -- Virginia  
Slavery -- United States  
Manuscripts  
Account books  
Virginia  
Northern Virginia  
Virginia, Northern  
Virginia, Northern -- History  
Mason

## Alternative Form Available

A digital version of the account book is available [here](#).

## Bibliography

Bracey, Alexis. "Family Connections to the Slave Trade." Enslaved Children of George Mason. Accessed April 22, 2022. <https://ecgm.omeka.net/exhibits/show/family-connections-to-the-slav/family-connections-to-the-slav>

Loudoun County Clerk of the Circuit Court Historic Records and Deed Research, "Enslaved Issues: Fiduciary References," accessed April 23, 2022. <https://lfportal.loudoun.gov/LFPortalInternet/0/edoc/549076/Slave%20Issues%20Fiduciary%20References%20formatted%20for%20website.pdf>.

Raspberry Plain Manor. "Raspberry Plain Manor History." Accessed April 22, 2022. <https://www.raspberryplainmanor.com/history>

Selma Mansion. "Families of Selma." Accessed April 22, 2022. <https://selmamansionrebirth.com/selma-in-history/families-of-selma/>

## Custodial History

L & T Respass purchased the account book from a bookseller in Boston who had (at the time of their purchase, in 2010) acquired it from one of his regular scouts, at a local (i.e., somewhere in New England) estate sale.

The book itself has ownership notes inside the front cover: "This book, once the property of Carlton Shafer, is given to A. Piatt Andrew by his cousin and friend, Sara Andrew Shafer, March 1910. Her husband's name [i.e. Carlton Shafer] will always be remembered as Cadet Captain of Co. B. Virginia Military Institute, Lexington Virginia, 1861-1864 -- which he commanded at the Battle of New Market, May 15th 1864, the only battle recorded in history which was won by school boys."

Shafer was born in 1844 near Leesburg, Virginia, which is in Loudoun County, location of the farm documented by the account book.

## Arrangement

The account book is organized chronologically with an index of names in the first part of the book.

## Description of Subordinate Components

### Account book

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/82276

**Unit Date** 1792-1820

**Text** 1 (box)

### Account book discs

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/82277

**Unit Date** 2013

**computer\_disks\_/tapes** 2 (box)