

Hall & Sellers shop book, 1767-1769
1767-1769
Mss.B.H142

American Philosophical Society
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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Title	Hall & Sellers shop book, 1767-1769
Date [inclusive]	1767-1769
Call number	Mss.B.H142
Extent	1.0 Volume(s) 1 volume, 95 p.
Extent	1 volume, 95 p.
Location	LH-MV-E-2
Language	English
Container	1
Abstract	This volume is a daily record of purchases of books, paper, quills, ink, and other stationer's supplies. Customers include prominent Philadelphians.

Background note

Hall and Sellers was a Philadelphia printing company. David Hall (1714-1772, APS, 1772). Printer and business partner of Benjamin Franklin. Scottish journeyman printer invited by Benjamin Franklin in 1743 to Philadelphia to join his printing firm. Subsequently, he entered into partnership with Franklin in 1748. Hall ran Franklin's newspaper, the Pennsylvania Gazette so successfully, that in 1766, he bought out Franklin and formed the new printing firm of Hall and Sellers.

Hall was born in Westfield, Scotland in 1714, just outside of Edinburgh. At the age of fifteen he was apprenticed for five years to the Scottish printing firm of John Mosman and William Brown. In a letter dated January 17, 1743 Hall's friend William Strahan inquired on his behalf to an American correspondent James Read of Philadelphia about openings for printers in the colonies. He recommended Hall, who he described as "obliging, discreet, industrious and honest." Read showed the letter to his brother-in-law Benjamin Franklin, who was looking for a journeyman printer; and on July 10, Franklin invited him to come to Philadelphia. Franklin acquired not only a competent journeyman printer, but also a reliable correspondent and agent, who could supply British publications for sale in the Philadelphia printing office. In 1748, Franklin, busy with other interests and public affairs, made Hall a partner. Afterward Hall maintained the printing business for the firm of Franklin & Hall, also editing and publishing Franklin's newspaper the Pennsylvania Gazette. In February 1766 Franklin sold his share in the business to Hall. Later in May of that year, Hall brought William Sellers, who had been his journeyman printer, into the business to establish the partnership of Hall & Sellers. The new firm carried on government printing, including paper money for the Province of Pennsylvania. Hall also had a bookselling and stationery shop related to his printing shop.

Hall quickly acclimated to his new city of Philadelphia. On January 7, 1748 he married Mary Leacock/Laycock in Christ Church. The couple had four children. Hall was a founding member of the St. Andrews Society of which he was an active member, printing its constitution, rules, and membership roll in 1769. He was also a member of the Union Library Company, later absorbed by the Library Company of Philadelphia. He was a Mason and in 1762 was Master of his lodge No. 2 in Philadelphia. He was also a contributor to the Pennsylvania Hospital, the Silk Society and to the College of Philadelphia. Although elected to the American Philosophical Society on March 8, 1768, he showed little interest in the Society and appears never to have attended a meeting. Nevertheless, Hall was selected for a committee in 1771 to determine the selling price for the first volume of the Transactions, which was published that year. Hall died in Philadelphia on December 24, 1772, and was buried in the Christ Church cemetery.

Scope & content

Contains entries for material sold to B. Franklin.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Purchased and accessioned, 1939 (1939 82484). Purchased from the Brick Row Book Shop.

Indexing Terms

Corporate Name(s)

- Union Library Company (New Brunswick, N.J.)

Family Name(s)

- Fooks, Paul.

Genre(s)

- Business Records and Accounts

Personal Name(s)

- Barton, Thomas, 1730-1780
- Biddle, James, 1731-1797
- Coombe, Thomas, 1747-1822
- Dickinson, John, 1732-1808
- Duche#, Jacob, 1738-1798

- Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790
- Glentworth, George
- Græme, Thomas
- Johnson, Caleb
- Penn, Thomas, 1702-1775.
- Peters, Richard, 1704-1776
- Redman, John, 1722-1808
- Smith, William, 1727-1803
- Thomson, Charles, 1729-1824

Subject(s)

- Business and Skilled Trades
- Printing and Publishing
- Stationery trade -- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia -- Accounting.

Other Descriptive Information

For an account of this Book, cf. Report of the Committee on the Library, A.P.S. Yearbook, 1939,p.132.
Microfilmed - Film No. 54.

Other Descriptive Information

This single volume records the daily sales of Hall and Sellers from 1767 to 1769. Records include single sales to individuals along with bulk sales to booksellers, some that came from Baltimore and Lancaster. This account book along with the David Hall collection provides a picture of the business history of this prominent Philadelphia printing house. The collection is one of many at the APS that chronicles the early history of the printing industry in Philadelphia.