



The Historical  
Society of  
Pennsylvania

Collection 3134

**Wallis family business papers**

**Creator: Wallis family**

**1796-1859**

**1 box, 15 volumes, 1.4 linear feet**

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**Restrictions:** None

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### Abstract

The Wallis family was a major land-holding family in the early settlement of Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. This collection primarily documents the business affairs of the brothers John and Samuel Hollingsworth Wallis and of Samuel's son, Cowden Wallis.

### Background note

The Wallis family was a major land-holding family in the early settlement of Lycoming County, Pennsylvania. Samuel Wallis (1730-1798) was born of Quaker origins in Harford County, Maryland, and moved to Philadelphia when he was of age. In 1768 he began acquiring more than 7,000 acres of land. He married Lydia Hollingsworth of Philadelphia on March 1, 1770, making them two of the early settlers of the Muncy area. Their children included Mary (1771-1809), John (1775-1810), Cassandra (b. 1776), Sarah (1778-1833), Hannah (1781-1859), and Samuel Hollingsworth (1784-1832). Samuel was quite business savvy and became one of the area's chief land speculators. According to John Meginness (1892), "[s]o vast was his [Samuel Wallis's] business, and so great his speculations that at one time he owned or controlled nearly every acre of ground lying along the [Susquehanna] river except a few tracts . . . ." This great stretch of land came to be known as Muncy Farms.

After a visit to North Carolina in 1798, Samuel Wallis fell ill from yellow fever and died in Philadelphia. The family was then in line to inherit his estate, which consisted primarily of land; however, it was discovered that his debts exceeded the value of his estate. The debts were largely the result of the business venture with his half brother Joseph Jacob Wallis. As a result, Samuel's "heirs realized nothing and his widow died penniless."<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Hollingsworth Wallis, the younger son, studied medicine, became a physician, and moved to Wilkes-Barre at the age of twenty-two. In 1807, he married Elizabeth Cowden; she gave birth to two children, Cowden (in 1808) and Mary (in 1813). Cowden Smith Wallis became the treasurer of the Lycoming Mutual Insurance Company as well

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<sup>1</sup> See Lycoming County Genealogy Project website: <http://www.usgennet.org/usa/pa/county/lycoming/history/Chapter-04.html>.

as a general store merchant. He married a Mary of Washington County and they had eight children together. Very little is known of the eldest son, John Wallis, except that he did not marry.

### **Scope & content**

The Wallis family records contain fifteen volumes and primarily document the business affairs of John (one volume), Samuel Hollingsworth (three volumes), and Cowden Wallis (eleven volumes). Included here are ledgers, daybooks, and one case book. One box contains loose items – primarily receipts, handwritten notes, one letter, and other scraps of paper – that were removed from the volumes.

Volume One is the case book that once belonged to John Wallis. The book is dated 1796 and inscribed with the following: “Many useful Precedents of Special Pleadings Writs V.” It appears that John copied many court cases into the book from several counties regarding cases of trespass and money owed to various persons. Some of the counties represented are Philadelphia, Chester, Middlesex, Lancaster, Cumberland, Allegheny, Berks, York, and New Castle. Dates are recorded for very few of the cases but the oldest is 1705. Copied in the rear of the book are four letters from Samuel Hollingsworth Wallis to his son, Cowden. Only one letter is dated, 1735, which is three years after Samuel’s death.

Volumes Two (1820-1821), Three (1821-1825), and Four (1825-1829) are Samuel Hollingsworth’s day books from his medical practice in the Muncy area. They record the cost of his visits, where his patients lived, and the balances owed to him. There are notes inscribed in Volume Two. The notes are based on lectures given by Benjamin Rush about medical symptoms and procedures and other topics.

Cowden’s eleven volumes include day books, cash books, and a ledger, and span the years from 1836 to 1859. These records document the purchases of various customers and patrons and report monies owed or paid.

## Separation report

None.

## Related materials

None.

## Bibliography

Harvey, O. J. and E. G. Smith. *A History of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania*.  
Wilkes-Barre, Pa: Raeder Press, 1909-1930.

Meginness, J. F. *Otzinachson: A History of the West Branch Valley of the Susquehanna*.  
Williamsport, Pa.: Gazette and Bulletin Printing House, 1889.

## Subjects

Lycoming County (Pa.)

Wallis, Cowden Smith, 1810-1862

Wallis, John, 1775-1810

Wallis, Samuel Hollingsworth, 1784-1832

## **Administrative Information**

### **Restrictions**

The collection is open for research.

### **Acquisition information**

Purchased, 2002.

Accession number 2002.046.

### **Preferred citation**

Cite as: [Indicate cited item or series here], Wallis family business papers (Collection 3134), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

## Box and folder listing

Box or volume number	Brief description	Approximate date range
Vol. 1	John Wallis Case Book	1796
Vol. 2	Samuel Hollingsworth Wallis Day Book	1820 – 1821
Vol. 3	Samuel Hollingsworth Wallis Day Book	1821 – 1825
Vol. 4	Samuel Hollingsworth Wallis Day Book	1825 – 1829
Vol. 5	Cowden Smith Wallis Day Book	1836 – 1859
Vol. 6	Cowden Smith Wallis Day Book	1836 – 1837
Vol. 7	Cowden Smith Wallis Day Book	1837 – 1838
Vol. 8	Cowden Smith Wallis Day Book	1838
Vol. 9	Cowden Smith Wallis Day Book	1838
Vol. 10	Cowden Smith Wallis Day Book	1838 – 1839
Vol. 11	Cowden Smith Wallis Day Book	1839
Vol. 12	Cowden Smith Wallis Day Book	1839 – 1841
Vol. 13	Cowden Smith Wallis Cash Book	1840 – 1848
Vol. 14	Cowden Smith Wallis Ledger	1845 – 1859
Box 1	<i>Items Removed From Volume 2</i>	1831, n.d.
Box 1	<i>Items Removed From Volume 3</i>	n.d.
Box 1	<i>Items Removed From Volume 4</i>	n.d.
Box 1	<i>Items Removed From Volume 5</i>	1838 – 1845
Box 1	<i>Items Removed From Volume 13</i>	n.d.
Box 1	<i>Items Removed From Volume 14</i>	1844, n.d.