



The Historical
Society of
Pennsylvania

Am .2536

Thomas Cheyney
Docket

1779-1806

1 box, 0.2 lin. feet

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Restrictions: None

Thomas Cheyney (b. 1731)

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Background note

Thomas Cheyney (b. 1731) was the son of John and Ann (Hickman) Cheyney of Thornbury Township in Chester County, Pennsylvania. He married twice, first to Mary Taylor, who died in 1766. In 1769 Cheyney married Mary (Bennett), the widow of Abraham Vernon. Cheyney had eight children: Ann, Lucy, Richard, Mary, John, Alice, Elizabeth, and William. Though principally a farmer, Cheyney was also a justice of the peace in Chester County. As a justice, he was responsible for administering oaths, recommending cases to higher courts, performing marriages, and making judgments in minor cases. Cheyney, a supporter of the colonial cause during the Revolution, went on to serve as a delegate to the Pennsylvania Convention and voted to ratify the United States Constitution in 1787. He died in 1811.

Scope & content

The docket consists of two parts: one small volume containing entries from 1779-1780, and a larger volume with entries dating from 1784-1786. Most entries are simply brief summaries of cases, usually followed by a short statement of the judgment or settlement. Most of the entries refer to routine cases regarding debt and apprenticeship, and there are many entries concerning marriage certification. Scattered throughout the volume, however, are entries concerning conflicts between masters and indentured servants (including one servant who feared "unreasonable beating and abuse," and another case regarding the abuse of and neglect to clothe and school a female child bound in servitude), accusations of high treason (1779), marriages, fornication and bastardy, theft, assault and threatening, "rescuing" from jail, the fitness of a mother to care for her daughter, rape (a man convicted and sentenced to be hanged in 1786), and some debt cases. Marriages of local African-Americans were recorded in the 1790s. The volume consists of large sections that may have been bound together at a later date; the chronology is sometimes out of order.

Also included is one page of minutes of the court of oyer and terminer, 1786.

Administrative Information

Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Acquisition information

Provenance unknown.

Preferred citation

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Processing note

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