

Oliver Edwards & Sons Papers, 1815-1888
S 658.87 E26e Manuscript
(8 boxes)

The Edwards family lived in Chesterfield, Massachusetts since Captain Oliver Edwards (1755-1829) moved there after the Revolutionary War. His descendants would run a general store in the town for most of the 19th century. This collection begins with Captain Edwards' son, also named Oliver. **Oliver Edwards (1790-1874)** was the son of Captain Oliver and his wife Rachel Parsons. He married Laura Starkweather (1792-1869) and had eight children, four sons and four daughters. Oliver ran a general store located at the corner of North Street and Main Road until his death in 1874. After his death, his son Oliver Jr. continued the store. Oliver also served as Justice of the Peace for Chesterfield. The Boston College Law Library currently holds his ledger books for this job. Of his four sons, Franklin, Oscar, and Oliver Jr. survived to adulthood and joined the business with their father. The youngest son, Alonzo, died as a toddler.

Franklin Edwards (1819-1841) was the oldest son of Oliver and Laura. He briefly worked with his father in the family store before forming a partnership with John Clarke of Northampton for a general store in 1840. He worked with Clarke until his death a year later.

Oscar Edwards (1821-1907) was the second son of Oliver and Laura. He too worked as a merchant with his father. He served as Postmaster for Chesterfield from 1849-1852. He later became a Trustee of the Forbes Library in Northampton in the 1880s and 1890s. A photograph of Oscar is located in the Forbes Library.

Oliver Edwards (1823-1892) was the third son of Oliver and Laura. He married twice and had seven children. He served as Postmaster for Chesterfield in 1852-1853, 1854, and again in 1881. Oliver inherited the Starkweather house of his mother's family on Main Street. He worked as a merchant with his father and briefly with a partner, William Baker. Oliver was the last of his family to be a merchant, as his sons did not continue the family business.

The majority of the materials in the collection relate to the time Oliver Sr. was running the general store. Day books, invoice books, bills, and receipts makeup the bulk of the collection, which spans the period 1815-1888. The day books contain entries for butter, tea, hardware, cloth, books, spices, foodstuffs, etc. The earliest years of the collection were the time Oliver Sr. was running the store alone, and starting around the late 1830s his sons began working and/or running the store with him. All records after 1874 seem to be the work of Oliver Jr.

Container List:

Box 1: Day books for general store

Day book, April 19, 1815-August 9, 1816

Day book, Nov. 6, 1817- Dec. 1, 1818

Day book, March 30, 1819-May 1, 1820

Box 2: Day books for general store

Day book, May, 1820-August 1821

Day book, Dec. 14, 1822-March 8, 1824

Day book, Dec. 29, 1830-Oct. 8, 1832

Box 3: Day book, Invoice books, Inventories, Etc.

Day book, Feb. 16, 1847-May 27, 1848

Invoice book, 1831-1842—contains a list of items purchased by Edwards for his store, mostly from Boston, New York, and Northampton

Invoice book, 1845-1846—contains a list of items purchased by Edwards for his store, mostly from Boston and New York

Inventory of the store, March 1826

Inventory of the store, March 1830, with an Inventory of Notes, 1849 at end of book.

Balance of accounts, March 24, 1832

Balance of accounts, February 1, 1849

Bank account book of Oliver Edwards (1823-1892) with First National Bank of Northampton, 1879-1881.

Accounts of Franklin Edwards, 1836-1840, mostly with John Clarke of Northampton.

Accounts of Franklin Edwards, 1840-1841, contains very few entries as Franklin dies after a few entries.

Box 4: Bills and Receipts, 1830-1854 (12 folders)

Box 5: Bills and Receipts, 1855-1873 (11 folders)

Box 6: Bills and Receipts, 1874-1880 (10 folders)

Box 7: Bills and Receipts, 1881-1883 (8 folders)

Box 8: Bills and Receipts, 1883-1888, undated, Misc. material (7 folders)

Misc. materials include Oliver Edwards Jr. correspondence, personal receipts and papers unrelated to the general store.