



Record Group: Batsto Iron and Glass Works
Series: Account Books (Arthur D. Pierce Collection), 1821-1881
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Institutional History

The Batsto Iron Works had its beginnings in 1766, when the colonial Assembly passed an act enabling Charles Read, Esq., to erect a dam over Batsto Creek for the purpose of establishing a bar iron works. To provide fuel for the furnace, Read and his partners acquired timber rights to 60,000 acres of land surrounding the site. In 1770, the business was purchased by John Cox, with Joseph Ball retained as manager. Ball operated the furnace during the Revolutionary War, at which time the Batsto works produced Howitzer cannons, gunshot, and cannonballs for the American forces.

In 1778, Cox sold the furnace to Thomas Mayberry, who in turn sold his interests the following year to Joseph Ball. Batsto's forge was erected in the summer of 1781 for shaping iron produced at the Batsto furnace. In 1784, William Richards (Ball's uncle), who had been associated with the furnace prior to the war, returned to Batsto and acquired full ownership of the works. During the next several decades, the Richards family built a sizeable iron industry in southern New Jersey, with ownership also of the Atsion, Weymouth, and Martha Furnaces in Burlington County, and the Washington Furnace in Monmouth County.

William Richards continued operation of the Batsto works until 1809, when he retired and turned over management of the business to his son, Jesse. During the War of 1812, the Batsto works again produced ball and shot for the American military effort. With the settlement of the estate of William Richards in 1824, Batsto furnace was sold at auction to Jesse's nephew, Thomas S. Richards. Jesse Richards, however, was retained as manager and, in 1829, he purchased half-interest in the works. That year, Jesse Richards also rebuilt the furnace. During the 1830s, two to three thousand boatloads of cargo were handled at Batsto. With the discovery of coal in the Allegheny Mountains, however, the Batsto furnace, which depended on vast supplies of timber for fuel, was destined to become obsolete.

In 1846, Jesse Richards purchased the remaining half-interest in the iron works from the estate of Thomas S. Richards. At this time, he inaugurated the manufacture of glass at Batsto by adding the first of two glass factories to the complex. Richards' glass business was entered into at first in partnership with James M. Brookfield, and concentrated on the production of window panes. The second glass factory at Batsto was completed by Richards in 1848. This same year, the furnace, which had been in operation for over eighty years, was permanently closed down (though some iron was produced as late as 1855 in a small "cupola" operation). During the next decade, the nationally-reputed southern New Jersey glass industry boomed. The Batsto glassworks thrived for several years, but by the time of Jesse Richards death in 1854, Batsto profits were threatened by competition from other nearby works (including those of Jesse's brother Thomas, and of his former employee, William Wescoat). Thomas H. Richards, Jesse's son, took over management of Batsto after his father's death. He operated the business until 1867, when possession of the works was turned over to Francis H. Holmes, the company's main creditor. The glasshouse fire went out for the last time on 15 June 1867.

Bibliography

- Boucher, Jack E. *Of Batsto and Bog Iron*. (Batsto, NJ: Batsto Citizens Committee, 1964).
- Ewing, Sarah W. R. *An Introduction to Batsto*. (Batsto, NJ: Batsto Citizens Committee, 1986).
- Ewing, Sarah W. R. *Batsto Lights: The Story of Batsto Glass and the Richards Dynasty*. (Batsto, NJ: Batsto Citizens Committee, 1988).
- Lippincott, Bertram. *An Historical Sketch of Batsto, New Jersey*. (Batsto, NJ: Batsto Citizens Committee, 1978 reprint of 1933 edition).

Content Note

This collection of account ledgers was purchased by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in March 1963 from Arthur D. Pierce, president of the Batsto Citizens Committee. Most of the items date from the latter part of Jesse Richards' management of the iron and glass works, 1821-1854. The material relates to the various operations and pursuits underway in the Richards family's Batsto Village, ranging from general business accounts to the company store records, time books, schooner freight books, and rent rolls for employee housing.

Contents

NOTE: The item descriptions below are rough at best. Extensive study and comparison of the account books in this collection has not been undertaken, and the contents list that follows may include some mis-identifications. The 1963 inventory numbers have been included in brackets following each description. Asterisked items have been foldered at the end of the collection.

Ledgers of Jesse Richards:

1. "Ledger A," 17 February 1840 - 1 February 1843 [#65].
2. "Ledger B," 1 January 1843 - 31 December 1851, and extra index [#32 & #38].
3. "Ledger C," 1 January 1852 - 30 April 1862 [#64].
4. "Ledger D," 1 May 1862 - 31 December 1869 [#69].

Main Day Books, Batsto Works:

5. "Day Book No. 2," 15 November 1827 - 6 May 1830 [#1].
6. 23 May 1846 - 31 December 1851 [#31].
7. 1 January 1852 - 31 December 1855 [#49].
8. 1 January 1856 - 30 June 1859 [#63].
9. 1 July 1859 - 30 December 1865 [#68].
10. 1 May 1867 - 9 October 1868 (also includes: account of store bills received of Thomas H. Richards, executor, 24 September 1858 - 18 January 1862, & 1 June 1867; accounts, May - August 1867; and accounts, 8 October 1878 - 5 November 1880) [#35].

Preliminary Day Books [some originally listed as "Memo. Accounts"]:

11. Iron works, 17 February 1840 - 18 October 1841 [#34].
12. "Memorandums," November 1846 - 22 August 1849 [#26].*
13. 1 July 1848 - 8 June 1849 [#27].*

14. 11 June 1849 - 19 October 1849, & 20 December 1852 [#45].*
15. "Waste Book," 25 October 1849 - November 1852 [#3].
16. 18 September 1851 - 6 August 1853 [#44].*
17. 1 August 1853 - 30 May 1857 [#62].
18. 1 July 1862 - 25 March 1871 [#50].

Day Books, Batsto Store:

19. 26 January 1852 - 28 December 1854 [#41].*
20. 5 April 1855 - 3 April 1858 [#43].*
21. "Iron Shipped Per Invoice (Memorandums)," 11 September 1835 - 27 November 1839; and day book, 23 April 1858 - 3 September 1860 [#42].

Statement of Accounts, Batsto Company:

22. 15 April 1843 - 18 June 1849 [#60].
23. "Statement Book, 1835," 1829 - 1 January 1835 [#56].*
24. "Statement Book, April 1837," April 1837 & 10 April 1839 - 8 January 1846 [#67].
25. 8 January 1846 - 7 April 1847 [#46].*
26. 20 May 1846 - 24 December 1847 [#47a].*
27. 12 February 1849 - 5 July 1850 [#47b].*
28. 18 June 1847 - 22 May 1851 [#28].*
29. "Statements of Accounts from Ledgers B & C, 1851," 19 February 1846 - 19 August 1854 [#52].

Statements of Accounts/[Furnace?] Diaries:

30. Batsto Store, 27 February 1839 - 8 February 1840, & 4 January 1858 - 1 September 1862 [#55].
31. Batsto Store, 22 February 1854 - 16 March 1858 [#54].
32. [Furnace diary?], March 1834 - March 1839 [#33].
33. "Jesse Richards, Batsto, Diary No. 1" [furnace diary?], 28 March 1840 - March 1842 [#48].

Cash Books, Batsto Company:

34. 22 February 1840 - 21 October 1848 [#36].
35. 25 October 1848 - 31 January 1861 [#53].
36. Cash/account book, 11 October 1845 - 28 June 1849 (account book only after 22 June 1848; includes accounts of Richards & Brookfield) [#10].*
37. "Cash Book, January 1st /56," 1 January 1856 - 31 January 1859 [#7].*

Account Books of Robert Stewart [store purchases and wages?]:

38. 16 October 1849 - 22 July 1850 [#58].*
39. 17 January 1851 - 14 December 1868 [#58].*
40. 14 February 1852 - 7 October 1852 [#58].*
41. 27 June 1853 - 2 December 1853 [#58].*
42. 9 March 1858 - 10 November 1858 [#58].*
43. 10 November 1858 - 4 July 1859 [#58].*
44. 13 April 1863 - 26 August 1864 [#58].*
45. 1 February 1870 - 12 February 1881 [#58].*

Time Books:

46. "Time Book, 1830," 1 January 1829 - 21 March 1834 [#37].
47. 13 February 1840 - 31 March 1843 [#2].
48. 1 April 1843 - 8 September 1855 [#4].

Schooner Books [see also item no. 74]:

49. Account book, schooner *Henry Clay*, 1 September 1838 - 25 May 1845 [#19].*
50. Freight book, schooner *John Wurts*, 11 March 1843 - 17 June 1853 [#17].*
51. Freight book, schooner *John Wurts*, 5 May 1853 - 31 March 1868 [#18].*
52. Account book, schooner *Theodore Frelinghuysen*, 19 November 1844 - 29 September 1849 [#20].*
53. Freight book, schooner *Swan*, 9 October 1850 - 6 December 1858 [#22].*
54. Freight book, schooner *Ida*, 26 April 1853 - July 1862, & 30 January 1864 [#21].*

Receipt Books:

55. 19 January 1821 - 8 March 1834, & 13 October 1848 [#51].
56. 28 May 1838 - 13 June 1846 [#13].
57. 16 June 1846 - 15 July 1851 [#39].
58. Receipt book, Thomas H. Richards, executor, 3 July 1854 - 29 December 1860 [#40].
59. 3 January 1861 - 25 June 1869 [#61].

Glass Works Books:

60. "Acct. of Window Glass Shipped, Commencing on September 25th, 1847," 7 September 1846 - 4 June 1852 [#16].*
61. "Memorandum Relating to Glass Works," 23 August 1847 - 1860 [#15].*
62. Glass works and sawmill accounts, 29 August 1848 - 1 August 1870 [#23].*
63. Glass works memorandum book, 27 October 1865 - 15 June 1867 [#14].*

Ore and Iron Castings Books [see also item no. 21]:

64. "Castings Shipped & Invoice & a/c of Foreign Ore Rec'd 1840, Jesse Richards, Batsto," 7 April 1840 - 15 January 1847 [#11].*
65. "Orders for Castings, Jesse Richards, Batsto, 1840," 31 March 1840 - 19 August 1854 [#5].*
66. "Castings & Pig Iron Shipped," 10 March 1845 - 1855 (includes wood shipped, 1850 - 7 May 1862); "Acct. of Ore Received in 1845, Ore Rec'd in 1846 & 7," 5 April 1845 - 13 December 1847 [#24].*

Coaling Books:

67. "Near Job Coaling, 1834," 1 February 1834 - 29 March 1839; "Far Job Coaling, 1834," 18 February 1834 - 11 April 1839 [#6]. *
68. "Near Job Coaling Book," 1838 & 5 January 1839 - August 1839; "Far Job Coaling Book" (includes wood cut), 1838 & 11 April 1839 - 19 December 1839 [#66].*

Wood Books [see also item nos. 62, 66 & 68]:

69. Wood ledger, etc., 21 February 1837 - 28 June 1838 [#30].*
70. "Wood Book, 1840, Jesse Richards," 20 March 1840 - 4 December 1847 [#12].*

Miscellaneous Volumes:

71. "Rent Roll of Batsto Houses, 1847," 1 January 1847 - 25 May 1871 [#25].*
72. "Shin Plaster Book," 5 June 1837 - 27 February 1840 [#57].*
73. Record of store purchases, 24 April 1846 - 14 December 1846 [#9].*

74. "Sawyer's Account, 1849," 1846-1860 (includes: account of Joseph Champion, 1 June 1846 - 1 May 1860; and accounts of the schooners *Henry Clay*, *John Wurts*, *Mary and Ida*, [1846?] - 21 October 1858) [#8].*
75. Account or time book, 1 February 1848 - 26 September [1849?] [#29].*
76. Loose account notes, ca. 1852-1855 [#1?].*
77. "Statement of Accounts" of Jesse Richards' children made by Thomas H. Richards, executor, 15 June 1840 - 31 March 1868 [#59].*

Ledgers. Accession #2002.015

1. Daybook, 1824 - 1827
2. Account of Orders on Store Issued to Hands, 1849 - 1867
3. Daybook, 1857 - 1863
4. Orders Drawn on Thomas Richards, 1829 – 1839 and Stephen Colwell, 1839 – 1840
- 5a. "No. of Inhabitants in Batsto on the 1st of May 1851. 340"
- 5b. "Rent Roll of Dwelling Houses on Batsto from 1st of Oct. 1869 to 1st July 69"
- 5c. Invoice Book, Thomas Richards, 1830 – 1839
- 5d. Memorandums of Glass Works, 1863 – 1867
- 5e. "Acct. of Foreign Ore Received AD 1837" (also includes 1838)
6. Receipt Book, 1832 – 1845
7. Receipt Book, Jesse Richards, 1851 – 1854
8. Statement Book, c.1839 – 1871, with index
9. Cash Book, 1861 – 1892

Reel Listing - BATSTO WORKS

Reel	Contents	Explanatory Notes
1	Account Books Ledgers, 1840-1851 [See Guide]	Ledgers of Jesse Richards Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 1 & 2
2	Account Books Ledgers, 1852-1869 [See Guide]	Ledgers of Jesse Richards Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 3 & 4
3	Account Books Main Day Books, 1827-1830 [See Guide]	Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Item 5
4	Account Books Main Day Books, 1846-1851 [See Guide]	Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Item 6
5	Account Books Main Day Books, 1852-1859 [See Guide]	Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 7 & 8
6	Account Books Main Day Books, 1859-1868 [See Guide]	Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 9 & 10
7	Account Books	Preliminary Day Books, 1840-1853 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 11 - 16

8	Account Books	Preliminary Day Books, 1853-1871 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 17 & 18
9	Account Books	Batsto Store Day Books, 1852-1860 Statements of Accounts, 1843-1849 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 19 - 22
10	Account Books	Statements of Accounts, 1829-1851 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 23 - 28
11	Account Books	Statements of Accounts, 1846-1858 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Item 29
12	Account Books	Statements of Accounts, 1839-1858 Furnace Diaries, 1834-1839 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 30 - 32
13	Account Books	Furnace Diaries [Jesse Richards], 1840-1842 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Item 33
14	Account Books	Cash Books, 1840-1861 & 1845-1859 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 34 - 37
15	Account Books	Accounts Books of Robert Stewart, 1849-1881 Time Books, 1830-1843 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 38 - 47
16	Account Books	Time Books, 1843-1855 Schooner Books, 1838-1864 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 48 - 54
17	Account Books Receipt Books, 1821-1846 [See Guide]	Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 55 & 56
18	Account Books Receipt Books, 1846-1860 [See Guide]	Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 57 & 58
19	Account Books	Receipt Books, 1861-1869 to Rent Roll of Batsto House, 1847-1871 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 59 - 71
20	Account Books	Miscellaneous Account Books, 1837-1868 Batsto Iron & Glass Works - Items 72 - 77
21	Account Books Daybooks - Items 1 & 3	Item 1: Daybook, 1824 - 1827 Item 3 : Daybook, 1857 – 1863

22	Account Books Items 2, 4, 5a - 5e and 8 [see guide]	
23	Account Books Items 6, 7 and 9	Item 6 : Receipt Book, 1832 – 1845 Item 7 : Receipt Book, Jesse Richards, 1851 – 1854 Item 9 : Cash Book, 1861 - 1892

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If you have any questions about the information in this collection guide, please contact njarchives@sos.state.nj.us