



NEW JERSEY STATE ARCHIVES COLLECTION GUIDE

Record Group: Ebenezer Cowell (1716-1799)
Series: Papers, 1728-1801
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Biographical Note

Ebenezer Cowell was a blacksmith, gunsmith, surveyor, and prominent landowner in West Jersey. Born 7 December 1716, Cowell was the son of Joseph and Martha (Fales) Cowell, and the brother of David Cowell, first pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Trenton. He migrated to the Trenton area in 1761, and established a successful blacksmithing business. Between 1765 and 1775, Cowell acquired large tracts of land and a proprietary share in West Jersey. From 1770 until 1799, he served the West Jersey Proprietors as deputy to Surveyor General Daniel Smith. During the Revolutionary War, Cowell assisted the American forces by repairing weapons and by advancing large sums of money to the American cause. Cowell's offices were ransacked by the British during their occupation of Trenton.

Ebenezer Cowell and his wife Sarah (d. 1774), had eight children: David, Ebenezer, Joseph, Sarah (Cowell) Bowsby, Lois and Eunice (twins), Robert, and John. Ebenezer (Jr.) became a prominent attorney; John and David both practiced medicine in the Trenton area. At his death on the 4th of May, 1799, Ebenezer Cowell (Sr.) left three houses and an orchard lot in Trenton, and a house in Philadelphia, to his children. The remainder of his landholdings were sold, and the proceeds distributed among the heirs.

Bibliography

- Hall, John. *History of the Presbyterian Church in Trenton, New Jersey...* New York, NY: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1859.
- Pomfret, John. *The New Jersey Proprietors and Their Lands.* Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1964.
- Stryker, William, ed. *Documents Relating to the Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey, Vol. I: Extracts from American Newspapers, 1776-1777.* [New Jersey Archives, Second Series, Vol. I.] Trenton, NJ: The John L. Murphy Publishing Co., 1901.
- Trenton Historical Society. *A History of Trenton, 1679-1929.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1929.

Content Note

The records in this series generally relate to Cowell's activities in land speculation and as deputy surveyor for the West Jersey Proprietors. The papers have been subdivided into the following sections:

<u>Type of document</u>	<u>Box</u>
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Financial records, 1761-1790	1
Surveyor's field books, 1765-1789	1
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Warrants for surveys	3
Bounds of lands, extracts of deeds, etc.	3
Miscellaneous	3

The first four sections are arranged chronologically. The correspondence relates most specifically to Cowell's activities as a land speculator, addressing such issues as land sales, land boundaries, and illegal lumbering of Cowell's privately owned land by squatters. Letters dated after Cowell's death are to and from his daughter and executrix, Eunice. The financial records also deal with Cowell's activities as a land speculator, as well as routine financial considerations such as the the sale and/or purchase of goods and services. The surveyor's field books contain sketches of surveys performed by Cowell in his role as deputy surveyor for the West Jersey Proprietors. The deeds generally document Cowell's own land transactions.

The next four sections in this series are arranged alphabetically. The drafts and returns of surveys are sketches, showing metes and bounds of land surveyed by Cowell for others and for himself, on behalf of the West Jersey Proprietors. Anti-proprietary sentiment is sharply revealed in a copy of a warrant to arrest Joseph Barton for assaulting Cowell while surveying land (on the reverse side of a draft for William Shippen). The warrants to survey are simply orders issued by the proprietors for land to be surveyed for an applicant. The bounds of land series describe the physical dimensions and boundaries of individual land purchases. The final series, miscellaneous, has no apparent order, and contains fragments of records.

Contents - Box 1

Correspondence, 1758-1801:

1. Joseph DeCow to Daniel Smith Jr., 27 July 1758.
2. [Richard?] Gardiner to Martin Ryerson, 11 December 1762.
3. Daniel Ellis to Clement Biddle, 9 September 1782.
4. Richard Westcoat to Ebenezer Cowell, 17 November 1784.
5. Richard Edwards to Ebenezer Cowell, 3 October 1787.
6. J. McCollum to Ebenezer Cowell, 18 December 1793.
7. Draft letter, 3 February [1797?].
8. Ebenezer Cowell to [?], 13 June 1797 [2 letters, drafts].
9. [Ebenezer Cowell?] to John Smith, 7 August 1798 [draft].
10. John Smith to Ebenezer Cowell, 12 February 1799.
11. John Smith to Ebenezer Cowell, 12 March 1799.
12. John Smith to [Eunice Cowell], 24 July 1799; Eunice Cowell to John Smith, 7 August 1799.
13. John Smith to Eunice Cowell, 27 May 1800.
14. John Smith to Eunice Cowell, 27 January 1801.

15. John Smith to Eunice Cowell, 9 February 1801; [Eunice Cowell] to [John Smith], 19 February 1801.
16. John Smith to Eunice Cowell, 2 April 1801.
17. John Smith to Eunice Cowell, 22 May 1801.
18. Eunice Cowell to John Smith, 8 June 1801.
19. [?] to Ebenezer Cowell, [no date].

Financial Records, 1761-1790:

20. Accounts of Ebenezer Cowell, 1761-1763 [3 items].
21. Account of Martin Ryerson with Ebenezer Cowell, 1762.
22. Account of Ebenezer Cowell with Daniel Smith Jr., 1765-1767.
- 23a. Receipt of Jasper Smith to Ebenezer Cowell, 2 June 1768.
- 23b. Account of Ebenezer Cowell with Daniel Ellis, May 1772.
24. Promissory note of Vincent Bishop to Ebenezer Cowell, 20 March 1775.
25. Bond of Josiah Foster to Ebenezer Cowell, 1 August 1775.
26. Account of John Stewart with Ebenezer Cowell, 29 May - [June?] 1778.
27. a) Bills and receipts in payment for taxes in Galloway Township, Gloucester County, 1779-1790 [7 items].
b) Bills and receipts in payment for taxes, 1781-1790 [14 items].
28. Account of Ebenezer Cowell with Josiah Foster, 1783.
29. Promissory note of Ebenezer Cowell to Martin Ryerson, 4 October 1783.
30. Promissory note of James Edsall to Ebenezer Cowell, 5 May 1784.
31. Account of Ebenezer Cowell with Richard Edwards, 1787.
32. Receipt of Robert Smith to Charles Coxe and Ebenezer Cowell, [no date].

Surveyor's field books, 1763-1789:

33. Surveyor's field book, 7 June 1763 [fragment].
34. Surveyor's field book, [1764-1768] [fragment].
35. Surveyor's field book, 1768-1774.
36. Surveyor's field book, 3 June 1769 - 27 November 1769.
37. Surveyor's field book, 4 May 1772 - 16 April 1773.
38. Surveyor's field book, 8 May 1773 - 25 July 1774.
39. Surveyor's field book, 15 November 1774 - 29 September 1775; 1779-1783.
40. Surveyor's field book, 1774-1775; 1779.
41. Surveyor's field book, 17 April 1774 - April 1775; 1779; 1783.
42. Surveyor's field book, 1783-1785.

Box 2

Deeds, 1728-1790:

1. Deed, James and Mary Trent to Henry Carter for land in Trenton Township, Hunterdon County, 29 August 1728 [unrecorded].
2. Deed, Benjamin Smith to David Cowell for land in Trenton Township, Hunterdon County, 30 March 1739.
3. Deed, William Hewlings and Daniel Smith Jr. to William Wiggins, for 200 acres of unappropriated land, 21 June 1760 [unrecorded].
4. Deed, Martin Ryerson to Ebenezer Cowell for 200 acres of right, 4 September 1764 [unrecorded].
5. Mortgage, Ebenezer Cowell to Thomas Smith for land in Trenton Township, Hunterdon County, 25 September 1766 [unrecorded].
6. Deed, Jonathan Bullen to Richard Rounsavell Jr. for 285 acres of right, 3 December 1771 [unrecorded].
7. Deed, John Watson to Ebenezer Cowell for 354 acres of unappropriated land, 12 August 1772 [unrecorded].
8. Deed, Richard Rounsavell to Ebenezer Cowell for unappropriated land, 19 March 1774 [unrecorded].
9. Deed, James Brown to Ebenezer Cowell for land in Knowlton Township, Sussex County, 20 July 1774 [unrecorded].
10. Deed, James Lawrence, executor of Jonathan Thomas, and John Monrow to Ebenezer Cowell Jr. for 192 acres on a branch of the Delaware River called Paulins Kiln, Morris County, 3 August 1775 [unrecorded].
11. Deed, Daniel Ellis to Samuel Meredith for 1666 and 2/3 acres of unappropriated land, 2 December [1778?] [unrecorded].
12. Release, Benjamin Guston to Ebenezer Cowell for land in Newton, Sussex County, 2 November 1780.
13. Deed, John Dewitt to Ebenezer Cowell for land in Newton, Sussex County, 23 July 1781.
14. Deed, John Trent to Ebenezer Cowell for land in Trenton, Hunterdon County, 28 September 1789 [unrecorded]; agreement of sale, 21 September 1789.
15. Deed, Samuel Meredith to Ebenezer Cowell for land in Sussex County, 1790 [unrecorded].

Drafts of surveys:

16. Drafts of surveys of land of John Alford, Nathan Allen, Joseph Pancoat Brown, John Eastough, and Lves Kickendole.
17. Draft of surveys of land of Enock Andrus, Robert Eaton, William Emly, John Lambert, Thomas Lambert, [Robert] Schooley, and Joshua Wright.
18. Draft of a survey of land of William [Annetes's?].
19. Drafts of surveys of land of John Armstrong, Peter Countryman, Jonathan Hampton, John Hendershut, and James Kinsey.
20. Draft of surveys of land of James Atkinson, Thomas Bowlby, Joseph Hull, and the Oxford Furnace Company.
21. Draft of a survey of land of Peter Berrian and Rolof Vandyke.
22. Draft of a survey of land of John Black.
23. Draft of a survey of land of William Burnet, and Robert Morse and David and Thomas Clark.
24. Draft of a survey of land of William Burnet and part of the land of David Clark, Hugh McCollum, and Richard Westcott.
25. Draft of a survey of land of Colonel Thomas Byerly and Henry Ketcham.

26. Draft of a survey of land of Ebenezer Cowell.
27. Draft of a survey of land of Ebenezer Cowell and William Coxe.
28. Draft of a survey of the lines between land of Ebenezer Cowell and [Abraham] Hewling.
29. Draft of a survey of land of Joseph Cowell, April 1773.
30. Drafts of a survey of land of Daniel Coxe [2 items].
31. Draft of a survey of land of Colonel [Daniel?] Coxe and Amos Shettle.
32. Drafts of surveys of land of William Coxe [3 items].
33. Draft of a survey of land of William Coxe, sold to Abraham Brokaw and Peter Vanness.
34. Draft of a survey of land of [?] Coxe.
35. Draft of a survey of land of John Croke and Joseph Kirkbride.
36. Draft of surveys of land of Thomas Cortis and Isaac Hutchinson.
37. Draft of surveys of land of Joseph Decow, John Reading, and Martin Ryerson.
38. Draft of a survey of land of Benjamin Depew.
39. Draft of a survey of land of Captain Hendrick Emmons.
40. Draft of a survey of land of George Emott.
41. Drafts of surveys of land of William Fish and Joseph Jay, and Chris[topher] Wetherwill.
42. Draft of Great Egg Island, surveyed for John Hind.
43. Draft of a survey of "Great Rough Meadow."
44. Draft of surveys of land of George Green, Thomas Lambert and John Watson.
45. Draft of a survey of land of John Hacket.
46. Draft of a survey of land of Captain [?] Harker, Titus Hixon, Joshua Opdike, and Levi Silver.
47. Draft of a survey of land of Abraham Hewling, Lemuel Washborn, and S[amuel] Stevenson.
48. Draft of a survey of land of Joseph Hilby.
49. Draft of a survey of an island of marsh of John Hind.
50. Draft of a survey of land of J[ohn] Henshaw.
51. Drafts of surveys of land of John Hinshaw, John Honeywell, Thomas Houten, John Rockhill, Thomas Rodman, and Henry Smith.
52. Draft of a survey of land of Joseph Jay and Elijah Parr.
53. Draft of a survey of land of Stephen Jones.
54. Draft of a survey of land of Thomas Lambert and Nathan Wright.
- 54a. Draft of a survey of land of Thomas Lawrence.
55. Draft of a survey of the "Small Tract" of the London Company.
56. Draft of a survey of land of Hugh McCollum and Evi Smith.
57. Drafts of surveys of land of Isaac Pearson [2 items].
58. Draft of a survey of land of Israel Pemberton and Richard Price.

59. Drafts of surveys of land of William Plumstead [2 items].
60. Draft of a survey of land of Martin Ryerson.
61. Draft of a survey of land of Richard Salter.
62. Draft of a survey of land of Robert Schooley and Joshua Wright; bounds of land of Alexander Adams and Joseph Higbee.
63. Draft of a survey of land of James Seacord.
64. Drafts of a survey of land of Dr. William Shippens' land [2 items]; warrant to arrest Joseph Barton for assaulting Cowell while surveying land, 31 December 1774.
65. Draft of a survey of land of Daniel Smith; receipt for payment of Surveyor General's fee.
66. Draft of a survey of land of Isaac Van East.
67. Draft of a survey of land of John Van Eck.
68. Draft of a survey of land of John Van Est.
69. Draft of a survey of land of William Vangarden.
70. Draft of a survey of land of Cornelius Westbrook.

Box 3

Returns of Surveys:

1. Return of survey of land of James Brown, 12 April 1774.
2. Return of surveys of land of John Budd and William Penn, [1714-1716].
3. Return of survey of land of Jabez Collver, 19 January 1781.
4. Return of survey of land of Ebenezer Cowell, 20 July 1770.
5. Return of survey of land of Ebenezer Cowell, 10 September 1790 [original].
6. Return of survey of land of Ebenezer Cowell, 20 March 1794 [original].
7. Return of survey of land of Charles Coxe, 21 January 1775.
8. Return of survey of land of George Clymer and Samuel Meredith, 29 November 1783.
9. Return of survey of land of William Hewlings, 11 November 1764.
10. Return of survey of land of Henry Hill, 5 November 1783.
11. Return of survey of land of the London Land Company, 7 February 1766.
12. Return of survey of land of Samuel Nevill, 28 October 1754.
13. Return of survey of land of Dr. William Shippen, 29 May 1765.
14. Return of survey of land of Dr. William Shippen, 6 November 1767; account of Dr. William Shippen's land rights.
15. Return of survey of land of John Snowden Jr., 25 May 1713.

Warrants for surveys:

16. Warrant to survey land for Andrew Bray, 27 December 1774.
17. Warrant to resurvey land of Ebenezer Cowell in Sussex County, 10 May 1765.

18. Warrant to survey land for Ebenezer Cowell, 5 April 1790.
19. Warrant to survey land for Ralph Hart, 5 February 1722/3.
20. Warrant to survey land for Benjamin and Samuel Hart, 2 May 1758.
21. Warrant to survey land for the heir of Robert Pearson, 8 November 1766.
22. Warrant to resurvey land of John Little and Richard Price in Gloucester County, 4 February 1774.
23. Warrant to resurvey land of Henry Scott in Sussex County, 2 February 1774.
24. Warrant to resurvey land for William Smith, 5 May 1782.
25. Warrant to resurvey land of the heirs of Amos Strettle, 7 November 1782.
26. Warrant to resurvey land of William Thornill, 3 November 1774.

Bounds of land, extracts of deeds, etc.:

27. Bounds of land leased to Elijah Bond to Looe Baker.
28. Bounds of lands surveyed for Robert Chambers, Thomas Frampton, Joshua Knight, [William?] Schooley, and Mahlon Wright.
29. Bounds of land surveyed for Charles Coxe, Daniel Coxe, John Coxe, William Coxe, and Dr. William Shippen.
30. Bounds of lands surveyed for Charles Coxe, William Cutter, and Jonathan Robeson, Jr.
31. Bounds of land surveyed for Jacob Davis, Johathan Davis, Jacob [Freese?], Isa[iah] Sharp, and Jos[eph] Sharp.
32. Bounds of lands for J[ohn] Estough, Henry Snauper, and William Keaton.
33. Bounds of land of Jeremiah Fisher.
34. Bounds of land surveyed for George Green.
35. Bounds of lands surveyed for John Goldy and John Hinds.
36. Bounds of land surveyed for James Harker.
37. Extract of a deed, James Haywood to John Haywood, 10 February 1767 [unrecorded].
38. Bounds of lands surveyed for John Honeywell and Rebecca Honeywell.
39. Bounds of land surveyed for Ralph Loftus.
40. Bounds of land surveyed for William Lorance.
41. Bounds of land surveyed for John Marlatt.
42. Bounds of land surveyed for Mary Pearson.
43. Bounds of land surveyed for Robert Pearson and Nathaniel Pope.
44. Bounds of land surveyed for Dr. William Shippen.
45. Bounds of land of Benjamin Smith.
46. Bounds of land surveyed for Henry Snauper.
47. Bounds of Rolof Vandyke's part of Captain Emmon's farm.
48. Bounds of land of Harmon Vansant.
49. Bounds of land resurveyed for Isa[iah?] Watson.

- 50. Survey of land of Cornelius Westbrook.

Miscellaneous:

- 51. "Daniel and Thomas Reading sundries levied on by the sheriff," [no date].
- 52. Survey of road to Bond's and Forman's wharf.
- 53. Extracts of Isaac Watson's will and William Watson's will.
- 54. William Pidgeon's directions to Ebenezer Cowell.
- 55. Miscellaneous.
- 56. Fragments.

Reel Listing - EBENEZER COWELL

Reel	Contents	Explanatory Notes
1	Papers, 1728-1801 Box 1 [See Guide]	GSU Reel #1023869
2	Papers, 1742-1817 Boxes 2 & 3 [See Guide]	GSU Reel #1023870

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