Ohio University
Robert E. and Jean R. Mahn Center for
Archives & Special Collections

Ewing-Vinton & Company Collection
MSS# 25

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Author: Thomas Ewing and Samuel Finley Vinton
Title: Ewing-Vinton & Company Collection
Date: 1831-1872
Abstract: 6 day books used to record transaction
Quantity: 1 cu. ft.

BIOGRAPHY OF Thomas Ewing

Thomas Ewing was born on December 28, 1789, near the town of West Liberty, Ohio county, Virginia (now West Virginia). In the spring of 1798, his family settled in what is new Ames Township, Athens County, Ohio. Ewing was taught to read by an elder sister, but he enjoyed little or no formal education. He entered the Athens Academy in 1809. His attendance was irregular. Mostly because he needed to earn the cost of his education, part of which was done by working at the salt works in Kanawha, near present day Charleston, West Virginia. In May of 1815, Ewing and a classmate, John Hunter, became graduates of the academy or the “Seminary.” The following September, the Ohio University board awarded both the Bachelor of Arts degree at a formal commencement.

After his graduation, he studied law in the office of General Philemon Beecher in Lancaster, Ohio, and was admitted to the bar in 1816. In 1823, he was defeated in his bid for a seat in the state legislature. He then twice served in the U.S. Senate; served under William Henry Harrison and John Tyler as Secretary of the Interior. After the Civil War, he was personal advisor to Andrew Johnson.

He married Maria Willis Boyle in 1820, and their marriage resulted in six children. On son, Thomas Ewing, Jr., would also go on to serve in Congress. Thomas Ewing died in 1871.
Co-founder Samuel Finley Vinton was born in 1792. He spent his entire youth in Massachusetts. He came to Gallipolis, Ohio in 1816 where he opened a law practice. Vinton was first elected to Congress in 1822, serving seven consecutive terms as an anti-Jacksonian Whig before retiring in 1837. He ran again in 1842 and was re-elected three more times before losing the election for Governor of Ohio in 1851. He was serving as advisor to President Lincoln over emancipation in the District of Columbia at the time of his death in 1862.

The Ewing-Vinton and Company was a thriving business for much of the 19th century and was a representative example of the second phase of the history of Ohio’s salt industry. The first salt works in Ohio were developed in the Scioto Salt Licks of modern Jackson County in 1798. For two decades, it was the leading producer of Ohio salt, but by 1818 stronger brine had been found elsewhere, including the lower part of Muskingum County (south of Zanesville), Leading Creek in Meigs County, and Hocking River valley region of Athens County. It was in this context of tapping new regions that a company such as Ewing-Vinton came to be, helped in part by the capital investments of wealthy East Coast business interests. The Ewing-Vinton and Company operation was located in Chauncy (Athens County), Ohio. Thomas Ewing was never involved in company affairs, but merely owned most of the company’s stock. Although chiefly concerned with selling and trading salt, the company also dealt in other products such as tobacco and flour.

**SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION**

The Ewing-Vinton & Company Collection contains six surviving day books used by the company to record transactions. Most of the books were used for listing the accounts of the company’s customers and the items they purchased. The sales records span from 1831 to 1872, with the heaviest concentration of available data for the period 1837 to 1841. Day book 5 kept a record of outgoing business letters to customers, stockholders, and other business associates, while the unused section was used for accounting records on company maintenance for the fiscal year 1840-1841. Day book 6 contains daily sales data for 1850-1851. The collection is contained in three boxes. In the first box are day books 1, 2, and 3. In the second, day books 4 and 5, and in the third, day book 6. Students of these records will find that while not complete, the books provide insight to where and with whom the company did business, as well as the use of Ohio’s canal system for transporting goods. Those interested in the histories of prominent residents of Gallia County will also find many of their names in the extant sales records.

**RELATED MATERIALS**
See Samuel B. Pruden Collection (MSS# 17)

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Restrictions: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Ohio University Libraries.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to cite the collection name, collection number, and the Ohio University Libraries, in all footnotes and bibliographical references.

Accession Number: Unknown

Provenance: The Ohio University Archives received the collection as a gift from Arthur Cherrington in 1952.

Property Rights: Ohio University retains all property rights to the collection.

Copyrights: Ohio University retains all copyrights unless retained by the donor, other correspondents, or other artists.

Photoduplication: Ohio University will entertain requests to photocopy reasonable amounts of material from the collection for the convenience of individual researchers.

Processing: Tarita Stokes processed the collection in May 1983, with additional updating and revision by Eric Paddon in June 1997.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the location and box numbers shown below.

CONTAINER LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box/Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 / 1</td>
<td>Day Book 1, 1831-1872; Contains the</td>
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record of products sold (tobacco, flour, salt, etc) and customer payments. Chiefly covers period 1831-1846 and 1853-1855.

2. Day Book 2, October 20, 1837-October 13, 1838; This records only the sale of salt.

3. Day Book 3, 1837-1841; Extensive sales and payment records to individual customers.

2 1. Day Book 4, December 7, 1840-August 31, 1841; Contains daily sales records of various products. First ten pages have been cut out.

2. Day Book 5, 1842-1846; Correspondence copies to business clientele and associates. Provides considerable information on the geographic scope of where the company did business, its use of the canal system for transporting goods. The back end of this book has also been used to record accounting data on company maintenance and upkeep for the fiscal year, 1840-1841.

3 1. Day Book 6, December 26, 1850-September 12, 1851; Records daily sales information of various products to customers.