

ALBANY INSTITUTE  
OF HISTORY & ART

A Guide to the  
**James La Grange Sloop Account Book**

**Collection Summary**

**Collection Title:** James La Grange Sloop Account Book

**Call Number:** MSBND 00032

**Creator:** Emily Vorce

**Inclusive Dates:**

April 6<sup>th</sup> 1799- January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1855

**Abstract:**

This work is a record of expenses and profits of a sloop by James La Grange used from 1799-1855. The Hudson River sloop of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the most famous sailing vessel to ply the waters of the Hudson River. This hybrid craft evolved from its early European ancestors, built by the Dutch and the English, into a ship specifically suited to the demands and quirks of the namesake waterway. The sloop was the forerunner in the establishment of the vast commerce on the Hudson. This vessel played an important part in the development and growth of the State of New York. The Dutch settlers of New Netherland, as well as the English and French, saw the advantages of the sloop rig for the commerce on the river and the Sound.

**Scope and content:**

This work contains the accounts of many key persons in Albany history from 1799-1855. Including:

**Henry Yates** (1770-1854) lawyer; treasurer of Union College, 1806-33; mem., N.Y. Senate, 1810-14 and 1818-22; mem., Council of Appointment, 1812 and 1818; mayor of Schenectady, N.Y., 1817.

**Gerrit A. Lansing**, an Albany County merchant who married Albany native Machtel Beekman in January 1738. In 1727, he was appointed constable for the second ward. The next year, he was named high constable. Lansing died in November 1789 at the age of eighty-four.

**Rev. Eliphalet Nott** (June 25, 1773 - January 25, 1866) was a famed Presbyterian minister, inventor, educational pioneer who was the first president of Union College in Schenectady, NY 1804-1866. Nott was also president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute from 1829-1845. Around 1802 he was called to the Presbyterian Church at Albany, where he took a prominent position as a preacher, and was listened to by large congregations. Among his successful pulpit efforts while at Albany, was a sermon on the death of Alexander Hamilton. As a scientist he studied heat and obtained some thirty or more patents for applications of heat to steam engines, but was best known in his day as the inventor of the first stove for anthracite coal, which was named for him. He died on January 25, 1866 in Schenectady, New York.

**William Staats** was born in 1736. Living first in his father's first ward home, William Staats started out as a frontier trader. He travelled to Niagara in 1761 and traded across Indian territories. By the end of the decade, he had returned home to become a Hudson River skipper. Among his regular clients was Sir William Johnson, for whom he carried cargoes and dispatches on his Albany-based sloop. In partnership with his younger brother, merchant Henry Staats, William began to acquire Albany property in the heart of the city that included the original Schuyler house.

He married Anna Yates in May 1771. Over the next two decades, their nine children were baptized at the Albany Dutch church where he was a member and church officer. Captain William Staats served as a constable, inspector, and tax collector. He contributed to the revolutionary cause and was awarded a bounty right in conjunction with the first regiment of the Albany County militia. Over the next thirty years, his family resided in a growing Staats-owned complex of buildings located south and east of State and Pearl Streets respectively. His first ward household was large and included seven slaves in 1800. In his mid-sixties, official records then identified him as a "mariner." By 1813, his family was smaller and he moved to a more modest home on Hudson Street. City directories identify him as the "collector of taxes." William Staats died in 1825 and was buried from his residence at 77 Hudson Street.

**Abraham Jackson**, Bassett, was a householder identified as a person of color in the 1815 "Fry's Directory". The federal census of 1800 listed him as owner of lots located in the remote part of the first ward. Valued at \$140, his South End lot equaled the lowest assessment applied to any city real estate. His personal property valued at three dollars was the smallest amount specified on the entire citywide tax list. The assessment of personal property as well as real estate meant that the location, even though no building was noted, was Abraham Jackson's place of residence. In 1800, 14 free persons of color (or almost 10 per cent of the city's free black population of 157) were living in three Jackson-named households near the northern and southern borders of the city of Albany. Before 1800, Abraham Jackson had married Diana, the former slave of a city merchant, and had taken up residence on his own property on Bassett Street. By 1809, he was renting dock space on Quay Street where he could barter and peddle produce and goods. He also earned additional income loading and unloading cargoes and helping out the boatman and ferryman, many of whom were also identified in the city directory as "free

people of color." All three of his Bassett Street neighbors: Bristol or Bristow Johnson, John Johnson, and Patrick Cole were free black watermen and were listed in the city directory. Jack Jackson was raising his family around the corner from Bassett Street on South Pearl, a few doors away from the home of Captain Samuel Schuyler and in the same neighborhood as a number of other free black households.

**Quantity:**

1 Rectangular brown narrow, leather book.  
116 p. with accounts, 53 empty pages, and writing on last page.

Includes ephemeral pieces in book:

1 scrap of paper with likely Japanese writing on it. Red paper with a red stamp. Signature of James Lagrange on the back and mathematical equations.

1 half of ticket for Consolidated Lottery of the State of New York. 1830. Calligraphy writing 25,000. The logo of Yates & McIntyre, lottery management firm, appears on the left hand side. Mathematical equations are on the backside.

1 scrap of paper with names James Auchampach, Jeremiah Olin, Widow Warwick, Joseph Wetsill, David Warwick and corresponding numbers.

Other pieces of paper with names and mathematical equations. 1 scrap of paper with years and correlating number for each.

1 half of a check from New-York State Bank with equations on the back. Year left blank, 18-.

<b>Administrative Information</b>
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**Custodial History:** Gift of George H. Blakeslee Jr. and family. Brought to the museum by Carol White (Pruyn) a member of the Blakeslee Family, 38 Timber Trace, Malta, NY 518-884-4963

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## Restrictions

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## Index Term

### Persons

Nott, Eliphalet, 1773-1866.

Yates, Henry, 1770-1854.

McCrea, James.

### Subjects

Business & finance--New York (State)--Albany--1799-1855.

Dutch--New York (State)--Schenectady--History.

Sloops--Hudson River (N.Y. and N.J.)--History.

### Places

Albany Co., N.Y.--History--Sources.

Hudson River, (N.Y.)—History—Sources.

Schenectady Co., N.Y.—History—Sources.

### Document Types

Account books—N.Y.—History.

Primary sources (Historical sources).

### Titles

Sloop Cash and Carry Book of Expenses and Profits / Petty Ledger.

## Biography/History of

Work written by James (Jacobus) La Grange, who was born in January 1763 and baptized at the Schoharie Lutheran church. He was the first child born to Albany residents Arie and Maria Van Antwerpen La Grange. James was a boat captain or skipper - probably starting out by running his father's sloop on the Hudson.

In February 1784, he married Anna Visscher who gave birth to five children before her death in 1793. In February 1796, he married Maria Mc Crea, with whom he had nine more children. He was a member and an officer of the Albany Dutch church. Later, he was involved in the operations of the Second (South) Reformed church. He also seems to have belonged to the Albany Presbyterian church.

In April 1780, Arie La Grange posted a bond on behalf of James with the Albany Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies. That guarantee was required for those expecting to sail on the Hudson during the latter years of the war. A few years later, James served as a fire master and chimney viewer. However, he did not achieve the political prominence of his father.

By 1788 and 1790, his growing family had settled into a house in the second ward. Within a decade, he would relocate to the first ward (probably to his father's house after Arie's death in 1798), and become a mainstay at 68 Hudson Street.

Captain James La Grange died in February 1827 at the age of sixty-four. An obituary in the *Albany Gazette* called him "one of the oldest inhabitants of Albany."

### **Scope and Contents of the Records/Papers/Collection**

Lists individuals and what goods they bought at what time and for how much money. Includes spirits, wheat, salt, tea, limes, milk, codfish, flannel, boards, and other food and household items.

### **Organization of the Records/Papers/Collection**

Work is organized chronologically. Handwriting in this work seems to have changed in 1826.

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