Slicing and dicing 19th century account books

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Accounting

1. Debits/Credits
2. Payments
3. Settlements
4. Daily
5. By person

Photos from New Bedford Whaling Museum and Westport Historical Society collections
Food in

1. Old terms
2. Unexpected terms

Photos from Westport Historical Society collections
Food out

1. Product subscriptions
2. Individual purchasing
3. Whaling voyages

Photos from New Bedford Whaling Museum, Westport Historical Society and Mattapoisett Historical Society collections
Potential Issues

1. Previous books
2. Missing or ripped pages
3. Water staining
4. Fading
5. Insect damage

Photos from New Bedford Whaling Museum and Westport Historical Society collections.
Standards

1. “Sundries”
2. Non-specific amounts
3. Spelling
4. Names
5. Dates

Photos from Westport Historical Society collections

Photo from New Bedford Whaling Museum collections
Penmanship

1. Long “S”
2. Numbers
3. Superscript
4. Script

Photo from New Bedford Whaling Museum collections
Additional uses

❖ Who’s in the area
❖ Interactions
❖ What are they buying and using

Photos from Westport Historical Society and New Bedford Whaling Museum collections
Local information

1. Genealogy
2. Census
3. Cemeteries
4. Vital Records
5. Directories

1820 census

1850 census

1845 New Bedford city directory

Rochester Vital Records to 1850
Conclusions

❖ Lines of Commerce
❖ Area Information
❖ Historical Connections