

Provincial Tax Minutes 1756-1778

Mike Bertram

Recently the Chester County Archives made abstracts of the Provincial Tax Minutes from 1756 to 1778 available online. The Minutes provide useful insights into the townships during that period. They mainly discuss appeals of tax ratings and typical reasons for discounts were: overrated; poor; under age; paid in another tax district; and ran away, absconded, or not found [I wish it was as easy to get away from taxes these days!]. Looking through the minutes you realize how much movement of people (those generally not owning land) there was during that time period. The constables and tax assessors are also listed as they were excluded for their service. Other reasons given for reviewing Easttown & Tredyffrin residents' taxes include:

Gone, "the hill" – Thomas Watkins (1770, T)
Poor & overcharged – Widow Scringer (1768, T)
Poor & Lamé – John David (1764, T)
Sickly – Thomas Davis (1775, T)
Broke leg – Joseph Mitchell (1771, T) [Builder of mills]
Blind – James Bailey (1771, T)
Delirious – Peter Caldwell (1764, T)
Unsettled person – John Taylor (1757, E)
Bankrupt – Nathaniel Claypoole (1758, E)
Insolvent – James Pursley (1769, T)
Died insolvent – Peter Elliot (1759, E)
Broke & all being seized – Jonathan Hugh (1757, E)
Fled from Indians* – David Waugh (1759, E) [He absconded the next year]
In the King's Service* – Thomas Bradley (1758, E), Richard Kelley (1758, T)
Enlisted* - Matthew Morrison (1758, E)
Taken by the enemy and made his escape* – Alexander McDowell (1759, T)
Seafaring Man – William Miller (1759, E)
In Jail – Morris Edwards (1756, E), Henry Phillips (1772, T)
Maintains his ancient parents – John John (1759, T)
Neglected or refused to pay tax – Nicholas Cook (1762, T), Thomas Thomas (1765, E), James Porter (1765, E)
Worthless indigent fellow – Joseph Parry (1769, T)

T = Tredyffrin; E = Easttown

The tax discount records from 1785 to 1823 are also online, but generally have less interesting information. One exception is the record for Thomas Davis in 1812 with the comment 'no gentleman.'

* - relates to the French & Indian War, 1756 – 1763. The war essentially concluded in North America with the capture of Montreal in 1760.