

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Tilghman was born on August 13th, 1756 on his father's estate on the Eastern shore of Maryland. In 1762, his family moved to Philadelphia. There William Tilghman studied law under the direction of Benjamin Chew at the College of Philadelphia and in 1783 was admitted to the bar in Maryland.

Starting in 1788 and for a number of succeeding years Tilghman held a seat as an elected representative to the Legislature of Maryland. In 1793 he returned to Philadelphia to renew his law practice. He remained in Philadelphia and practiced law until 1801 when John Adams, then President, appointed him Chief Justice of the Circuit Court of the United States for the Philadelphia area.

After the dissolution of the circuit courts in early 1805 he was appointed President of the first district's Court of Common Pleas. He held this post until the death of Justice Shippen, at which time he was commissioned Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court by Governor McKean. He held this position for twenty-one years, until his death on April 30, 1827.

During his life William Tilghman was active in many of the popular philosophical organizations of the day. Two of the more important organizations were the American Philosophical Society and the Philadelphia Athenaeum. Tilghman was president of both of these organizations for a number of years.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists of four items relating to William Tilghman, measures .25 linear inches, and falls in the date range of 1794-1828. The items appear to have been brought together at an auction and purchased for the Kirby Museum at Lafayette College.

William Tilghman's court docket for the May term of 1794 lists the court cases he was involved in and the judgments that were handed out. This docket, along with a letter to Mrs. Greenleaf concerning his daughter, are the only items written by Tilghman himself in the collection. The other two items were produced by the executors of William Tilghman's estate over a year after he died.

INVENTORY

Box 1

Folder

- 1 May 1794 judicial docket
- 2 Letter from W. Tilghman to Mrs. Greenleaf at Allen House: July 3, 1801
- 3 Check for \$100.00 to Horace Binney from E.S. Burd and B. Chew: May 2, 1828
- 4 Receipt of fees for legal services from E.S. Burd by William Rawle, Jr.: June 19, 1828