

**U DX251**

**Account books of John Hudson of Howsham**

**1799**

**Biographical Background:**

John Hudson of Howsham, a Scarborough merchant and farmer, was probably born in 1756 and died in 1808. He married an Elizabeth Ruston and had seven children, including two daughters and five sons. His youngest son, George Hudson, later became known as 'The Railway King'.

George Hudson was born in March 1800 and died on 14 December 1871. He became famous as a English railway financier, earning the nickname "The Railway King". He initially apprenticed as a draper at Bell and Nicholson in York. In 1820 he was taken on by the firm as a tradesman and given a share of the business. By 1827 it was the largest business in York. Also in 1827, he inherited £30,000 from his great uncle. Hudson played a major part in establishing the York Union Banking Company and he first became Lord Mayor in York in 1837. He was Lord Mayor three times as well as deputy-lieutenant for Durham and Conservative Member of Parliament for Sunderland from August 1845 until 1859.

Hudson was instrumental in the expansion of the railways across England and in the Railway Clearing House (1842). He amalgamated the North Midland, the Midland Counties Railway and the Birmingham & Derby Junction Railway in 1844 to become the Midland Railway. He initiated the Newcastle and Darlington line in 1841 and with George Stephenson, planned and carried out the extension of the York & North Midland Railway to Newcastle. By 1844 he had control of over a thousand miles of railway. The mania for railway speculation was at its height, and no man was more courted than the "railway king".

He was suddenly ruined by the disclosure of fraud in the Eastern Railway, along with the discovery of his bribery of MPs and other misdemeanors. His later life was chiefly spent on the continent.

**Custodial history:**

Donated by Adrienne Bevan, via Gillian Brooke, Hull, 17 December 1997

**Description:**

This small collection contains two volumes compiled by John Hudson, a Scarborough merchant, relating to his trading business.

**Extent:** 2 volumes

**Related material:**

Copy. Will of John Ruston. Bequests include some to son in law John Hudson of Howsham [U DDSY/66/313]

Other repositories:

Abstract of Will of John Hudson, Gentleman of Howsham [IR 26/431/301] (The National Archives)

**Access conditions:** Access will be granted to any accredited reader

Hull History Centre: Account books of John Hudson of Howsham

- |           |   |                      |
|-----------|---|----------------------|
| U DX251/1 | <p>Waste book<br/>Includes an inventory of his ready money, his goods and the debts owed to him as of January 1799. Entries mention the trading of wines, fabrics, tobacco and other goods. Trading mentioned with Amsterdam and Lisbon. Includes the purchase of the ship 'James' from James Allen on 2 March 1799.<br/>1 volume</p> | 1 Jan-<br>2 Apr 1799 |
| U DX251/2 | <p>Ledger<br/>Ledger of John Hudson. Includes a cash book in one section and an index at the front of the volume. Entries are given under commodity or customer's name, with 'per contra' entries on the opposite page.<br/>1 volume</p>  | Jan-<br>Feb 1799     |