

Gish family farm ledger 3998

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

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Summary Information

Repository	The Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Creator	Gish, John
Title	Gish family farm ledger
Date	1807-1848
Extent	0.1 Linear feet ; 1 volume
Language	English
Text [Volume]	1

Preferred citation

[Indicate cited item or series here], Gish family farm ledger (Collection 3998), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Abstract

Based on the inscriptions found here and the frequency with which the Gish surname is scrawled throughout, it appears that this ledger belonged to the farm facilitated by the Gish family operating in the early 1800s (with various text inscriptions dating up till 1848). Though the volume is attributed to John Gish and/or the Gish family of Lancaster, it is unclear exactly who owned it. Besides John Gish, other names that appear in it include Henry Hopkins, Henry F. Fortnose, and Henry Gish. The volumes contains listings on what was produced and sold by the farm, such as wheat, cider, butter, wood, animal stock, corn, gin, and whiskey. Customer resolved accounts either paid with "cash in full", by bank note, or bartered, or with labor. Such cases of barter include accepting "120 Gallons of Gin," or with "18 yards of carpeting." Some of those who paid with their labor did some kind of work on the farm including "five days loading dung," "making and work at the barn," or "splitting rails." Interestingly, hats appear frequently throughout the transactions, indicating that some workers on the farm produced them regularly for customers.

The Gish family's legacy in Lancaster County can be traced back to the county's pioneering settlers. According to the family's history as documented in the *Biographical Annals of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; containing biographical and genealogical sketches of prominent and representative citizens and many of the early settlers*, the progenitor is denominated Abraham Gish. He had seven children, including Jacob (1767-1846), Abraham (b. 1770), Catherine (b. 1771), **John (1774-1871)**, Christian (b. 1775), David (b. 1777), George (1779-1851), Elizabeth (1781-1861), Susan (b. 1784), and Mathias (b. 1788). The Gishes were an industrious family. They had managed to carve out a space for themselves in Lancaster County despite the influx and development of Scotch-Irish settlements scattered from Chester County in eastern Pennsylvania to Dauphin and Cumberland Counties in the central part of the state. In Lancaster County they owned lands in Mt. Joy and West Donegal Townships. A John Gish is listed in tax records in 1776; however, he was likely one of the other relatives that immigrated here along with Abraham. (This may have been the John Gish who also assists John and Jacob Engles in founding The River Brethern congregation, a Mennonite Church, in the late 18th century.)

The Gish clan were farmers, but they were also involved in other industries that developed along the Conoy and Conewago creeks in the county. The Gish grist mill was built around 1845 on the Conoy, operated by John S. Gish (Abraham's grandson) until 1860 when it was taken over by his son Henry B. Gish. Jacob Gish, father of John S., served in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, elected consecutively from 1805 to 1809, and once more in 1824. Other family members noted in the county's history is Addison Gish who served during the Civil War (1861-1864) and Corporal Henry Gish (1862). As well, Abraham, Jacob, and John Gish were among the managers of the Falmouth and Elizabethtown Turnpike Company, which was an attempt to construct a turnpike to improve upon trade in that part of the county. The turnpike project was abandoned as trade in the country declined. County histories also show the Gish's marriages into other industrious and wealthy old families in the county. Perhaps explains the presence of the account with such persons as those of the Brenemans, the Longeukers, and the "Neealas" [or Nissleys].

Administrative Information

Publication Information

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania , July 2016.

Restrictions

This collection is available for research.

Provenance

Purchased, 2003.

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Lancaster County (Pa.)

Subject(s)

- Farming--Labor--19th century.
 - Merchants--Hats--19th century
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Bibliography

Ellis, Franklin, and Samuel Evans. History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania: With Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men. Evansville, Ind.: Unigraphic, 1974.

Harris, Alex. A Biographical History of Lancaster County: Being a History of Early Settlers and Eminent Men of the County as also much other Unpublished Historical Information, Chiefly of a Local Character. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1974.

Holstein, Joanne. Old Order River Brethren. <https://guidedbiblestudies.com/?p=2785>.

Meginness, John Franklin. Biographical Annals of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; containing biographical and genealogical sketches of prominent and representative citizens and many of the early settlers. Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1903.