

Snow Hill Cloister, Pennsylvania

Manuscripts

1. MANN, EMANUEL M. Snow Hill Society Account Book, 1878-1896. "E.M. Mann Snow Hill Franklin Co. Pa" on flyleaf. Some entries in German. Approx. 60 pp. 8vo. Contemp. calf backed marbled boards. A few loose receipts. Ink, some pencil, with a few pages loose, pin marks, lightly browned, some edges stained.

Emanuel Mann and members of his family; David Mann, Jacob Mann, and George Mann appear in the accounts which include income and expenses. Typical entries are for farm accounts and expenses for the grist mill--to mowing hay, flour, bran sold, etc. In 1897 Mann listed "received from Harvey Kitzmuler 1.74 bush 7 27 lb at 70 cents per bush paid \$12.94". "Credit on husking corn to Mrs. Moats 8.51". Other names mentioned are A. Snowberger, George Keagey, Mrs. M. Bumbaugh, Harry T. Stoner, Jacob Decker, and Jacob Ritter. Contemporary handwritten translations are included for the German entries which show purchases of "obium" (?), rents paid, and expenses for Heinrich Bauman's funeral, May 22, 1878, of \$4.50.

2. Snow Hill Society Ledger, 1875-92. "Ledger B" on flyleaf. Flyleaf scribbled in pencil. 165 pp. Tall folio with lined, numbered pages, contemp. calf spine, marbled boards. Loose receipts (8) include billheads of Whitman & Barnes Mfg. Co. and C.E. Beard in Waynesboro, PA. Tabbed index in front. Ink, some pencil, with a few pages torn, loose, missing, browned, some edges frayed.

Names occurring frequently in this account ledger include Emmanuel, James A., Rebeckah and Joseph Mann. other names include Charles Miller, Jacob Ritter, William Verdier, and Levi D. Hefner. The society accounts include farming expenses and income, foodstuffs, and expenses and labor at the mill. Typical accounts: July 4, 1891: "to one pare of shues 2.00, to 1 pare of overhalls .75, to one pond of butter .12, to 1 sack of flower .65, to 2 lemen .6". A few deaths are noted in the ledger; "E.M. Mann paid on T.C. Stepner shrouding \$6.25 April 17, 1884. In 1885 payments were made on the estate of Jacob and Margaret Mann, deceased. In June of 1887, \$40.46 was received from the estate of Arther Calined (?) at Mont Alto. An interesting entry appears in April and May of 1899 for "Boarding at a Love Feast". This feast was a special Communion meal held twice a year, in the spring and fall. Attendees included Mis (sic) Robinson, Mis Patterson, Mis Misner, among many others. Expenses for the ladies' meals ranged from 5 cents to 30 cents. In 1895 (on p. 307 many pages blank) Emmanuel Mann made a note that the Snow Hill Society owed him 417.84 for grain and labor. On the last page of this ledger is a "Nunry Pain Drops Receite" which calls for opium, safron, cloves, anniseed and one quart of old rye whiskey. "Maserate for 12 days in the Sun or near a hot stove then add four ounces eather. Dose from 1 drop to 30 drops." By the end of this ledger, fewer than eight families were left in the commune. Rare example of day to day accounts from this dwindling religious society.

3. Snow Hill Society Ledger. 1830-1838, 1891-1896. 80 pp. Tall folio, contemp. calf backed paper covered boards, some pages torn, no loss. Ink & pencil. Flyleaf "This book was Bought in Chambersburg the 5th day of November 1830. Price .75. Samuel Snowberger." With copies of two W.H. Richardson photos from 1899 showing some residents of the Miller House at the Society.

At its height, the Society had over 40 celibate brothers and sisters. The last member, Obed Snowberger (the Snowberger name figures large in the origins of the Society) died in 1896. Since

then the buildings and meeting house have been maintained and used by the Snow Hill German Seventh Day Baptist congregation. The first name in these accounts is David Snowberger. His accounts show income (apparently for the whole society) from farming (harrowing, planting, hauling) and expenses such as bureaus, whiskey, oak, iron, nails, etc. Catherine Snowberger's name is at the head of p. 2 and many of the expenses listed are sewing and food related; cloth, yarn, transfer iron and sugar, coffee, salt, etc. On December 5, 1830 it is noted that Andrew Snowberger, Jr. (widow ? Elizabeth) died and money was spent for "the lone of a creature to Baltimore" to carry the coffin? An index in the back shows the accounts of the house "built by the heirs of A.S. decd.". Other Snowbergers are Lydia, Susanna, Sarah, David, and John. Income was produced by Lydia by sewing a pair of pantaloons (.40) and making shirts (.25). Welsh and Gonder (Michael Gonder), ironworkers, were a firm the Society did business with buying augers and steel implements. Page 11 contains an agreement between Jacob Middour of Quincy and Jonathan Ritter wherein Jacob leases a farm for one year to Jonathan that belonged to the late Dinah Mann. He will farm it and return half the produce in payment. Selesta/Celesta Mann is still able to live on the property. The book was reused beginning in 1891 and extensive lists of names are included of Society members and others (?) including Emmanuel Mann, George Keag, Solly Knepper, Sam Fitz, Jacob Null, James Bumbaugh, Joe Kauffman, etc.

4. Snow Hill Society Ledger. 1848-1891. 160 pp. Tall folio, contemp. calf & marbled boards. Sticker "Sold by W.V. Davis. Chambersb'g". Ink, some pencil, with a few pages torn or missing.

The Ephrata tradition of choral singing was carried on at Snow Hill, as was the art of illuminating manuscripts in *Fraktur* style. At its height, the Society had over 40 celibate brothers and sisters. The last member, Obed Snowberger (the Snowberger name figures large in the origins of the Society) died in 1896. Since then the buildings and meeting house have been maintained and used by the Snow Hill German Seventh Day Baptist congregation. This ledger records the name of the member and the goods purchased, usually foodstuffs including corn, flour, rye, and wheat. Typical entries: "Fredrick Hawff 50 lb of flour \$1.25" and "David Snowberger 3 bushels of shorts .42". Names are mainly of German origin; Jonathan Mentzer, Henry Beckner, Abraham Burger, Adam Stesinger, Peter Bowman. Many other names appear in the accounts as well; John Welsh, John S. Seecrist, Samuel Toms, James. L. Lawn, George C. Cochran, to name a few. Jacob Specht's name appears on p. 47. He was defended by Thaddeus Stevens in 1846 in a case involving a violation of the state's Sunday labor law but ultimately lost before the state supreme court. In 1848, some in the congregation lost property and others were thrown in jail over the issue.

5. [SNOWBERGER, BARBARA]. Manuscript Songbook, Quincy Township, Pennsylvania, 1838. Oblong 8vo. 110 pp. Handsome plain stamped contemp. tree calf, spine a little chipped & cracked. Blue & brown inks.

This manuscript songbook is thought to have belonged to John Snowberger, one of the first trustees of the Snow Hill Cloister in Quincy Township, Franklin County, Pennsylvania. It is likely to be in the hand of Barbara Snowberger, who was the first and most distinctive illuminator of the original Snow Hill manuscript hymnals. (It was examined by Clarence Kulp, Jr., in May 2002.) Barbara Snowberger was especially well known for her use of green, gold, and black ink in decorating her books. She died in 1851 at the age of 83. This book, entirely in German, contains notation and lyrics for dozens of hymns.

In 1834, when Snow Hill was incorporated, John Snowberger became its official financial recorder. Prior to this he had been its treasurer. Early in 1839, he died.

Rather than *Cloister*, it is perhaps more appropriate to refer to Snow Hill as a *Commune* since members of the Society, brothers and sisters, all worked in a familial manner on what was a working and productive farm, as well as in the mill and other testaments to the community's industry. The extreme asceticism of Ephrata does not seem to have been imitated at Snow Hill. Instead, long, comfortable lives of moderation were the norm. The members lived and ate together in a brick common house that was originally built in 1814. After three large additions were made to the building between 1835 and 1843, the double-winged structure reached a total length of 150 feet.

At most times, the Snow Hill Society and community were unobtrusive in their religious and spiritual practices. Many of those unaware of the true nature of the Cloister mistook it for a Catholic nunnery. The group prospered, and its diverse economic activities included the production and sale of grain, textiles, barrels, brooms, furniture, and pottery. The Ephrata tradition of choral singing was carried on at Snow Hill, as was the art of illuminating manuscripts in *Fraktur* style. Strictly speaking, *fraktur* is an ornate type of written or printed German, similar to Gothic lettering in English. Pennsylvania Dutch *Geburts und Taufscheins* --- birth and baptismal certificates --- and other such documents often employ *fraktur* lettering. Often, the documents themselves are called "frakturs," even if they have no *fraktur* lettering at all. The congregation at Snow Hill continued the choral music originated at Ephrata. Introduced by a musician named Ludwig Blum, the style was then built up by Conrad Beissel. It was a most unusual and inspiring form of harmony, using the tones of the Aeolian harp as the primary inspiration and standard. This music was written in four, six and seven parts. The lead part was sung by the strongest female voice. It was in committing this music to paper that the members of the Snow Hill Cloister most often exercised their skill in *fraktur* lettering. A very rare manuscript tune book and a fine example of Pennsylvania German musical history.