

HARRIS FAMILY PAPERS

PAPERS OF JAMES HARRIS AND OF HIS SON, JAMES DUNLOP HARRIS

These papers, the gift of John S. Sommerville, Esq., came to the Division of Public Records in 1950. They embrace chiefly papers of Mr. Sommerville's Great-Grandfather James Harris (1775-1826), and of his Grandfather James Dunlop Harris (1797-1842). The former was, with his father-in-law Colonel James Dunlop, the co-founder in 1795 of the town of Bellefonte, Centre County, and the latter was a Principal Engineer upon first the West Branch Division and later upon the North Branch Division of the Pennsylvania Canal. Numbered also among the papers are a few items pertaining to the parents of James Harris: John Harris (1723-1794) and his wife Jane. This John Harris was an early settler on the Swatara in Lancaster, (now Dauphin) County, and founder in 1790 of Mifflintown on the Juniata. The most striking of these papers is an inventory of the estate of Jane Harris (d. 1807) which includes initially a list of the books which had belonged to her husband. The list shows a theological and historical library of very considerable dimensions and quality for a pioneer family in 18th Century Pennsylvania.

The papers are grouped in three sections, A, B, and C.

Section A embraces:

- A-1. One folder of biographical notes identifying members of the Harris family and John Mitchell (1781-1849), Pennsylvania Canal Commissioner.
- A-2. A folder of printed articles on the history of Bellefonte and the iron industries of Centre County.
- A-3. Deed, 1785, to James Harris for a tract of land on Clearfield Creek, in then Bedford County.
- A-4. Releases, 1830, to John Patton, signed by four sons of James Harris: John, James D., William and Andrew D.
- A-5. Dr. John Harris' (-1881) Recipes for drug compounds 1831-1836.
- A-6. R. Miller, Jr. to Mrs. Mary Ann Harris (widow of James D. Harris), January 16, 1845.
- A-7. An envelope containing Jeffries' (1849) "Pantheon of American History" and a transcript of Wilson's survey on Bald Eagle Creek, 1794.

James Harris House, 10 drawings

See: Historic Amer. Buildings Survey No. 330
 Top W.C. 6A Room 221

Section B. includes 14 folders and 10 envelopes of the papers and correspondence of James Harris (1755-1826), embracing

Folders

- B-1. Miscellaneous correspondence, 1802-1826
- B-2. A plan of Mifflintown (1790) 1814
- B-3. James Harris' tract on Logan's Branch of Spring Creek, 1792
- B-4. Agreement between J. H. and James Burnside, 1794
- B-5. James Cummins vs. Robert Woods, 1803
- B-6. Inventory of the Estate of Mrs. Jane Harris, widow of John Harris, founder of Mifflintown, 1807
- B-7. Receipt Book of William Harris and James Harris, 1803-1813
- B-8. Deeds for Lots in Bellefonte, 1807 and 1809
- B-9. Agreements between James Harris and others, 1803, 1813, 1826
- B-10. Miscellaneous Accounts
- B-11. Petition of Isabella Crozier, 1794-1812
- B-12. Tract of James Sterritt on the Frankstown Branch, 1768, 1820
- B-13. Bond of William Bell, and his correspondence with James Harris, 1813-1826
- B-14. Administrative account of the Estate of William Harris, 1826

Envelopes

- B-15. Notebook, journal, notes, etc., in re surveying expeditions, between the Forks of Conemaugh and, across the divide, Chest and Clearfield Creeks, 1784; and between Clearfield and Moshannon Creeks. Notifications of J. H.'s appointment, 1787, to lay out a highway between the Frankstown Branch and the Conemaugh.

- B-16. Field Notes, 1787, of a road from Frankstown to Conemaugh
- B-17. Book of Acreages, with Journal of Surveys 1786 and 1787 on the Conemaugh, the Sinnemahoning and other Creeks.
- B-18. Field Notes on Surveys, 1792-1806
- B-19. James Harris' Book: Ledger, 1793-1801; Estate of Jane Harris, 1807; Estate of William Harris, 1807
- B-20. Plot for Bellefonte
- B-21. Day Book for the Estates of John Harris and William Harris, 1800-1826. Store Book, 1804-1806.
- B-22. Account Book, 1810-1815
- B-23. Ledger, 1811-1819
- B-24. Issues of the Harrisburg Chronicle, 1825-1827, on the eve of the building of the Pennsylvania Canal

Section C includes 35 folders and 4 envelopes of the papers and correspondence of James Dunlop Harris (1797-1842), Canal Engineer, embracing

Folders C-1 to C-35

- C-1. Lead pencil copies and notations in re J. D. H., Canal Engineer drawn from the Canal Papers, Pennsylvania Land Office.
- C-2. Deed, 1831, Adam Reigart to James D. Harris
- C-3. Correspondence, 1826-1828, with Engineers and Canal Commissioners
- C-4. Correspondence, 1827-1841, in original form and by way of photostats, and containing a letter to John Mitchell, Box 2 September 1, 1833, describing a riot between canal laborers and boatmen, and an account to Wm. F. Packer for the expenses of troops led by Captain S. H. Wilson to quell the disturbance.
- C-5,6,7,8,9. Correspondence, 1829-1831, with Canal Commissioners, Canal Engineers, Contractors, and the like during the period between J. D. H's ouster from the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal to his appointment to serve on the West Branch Division

- C-10,11,12,13,14. Correspondence with Contractors, Engineers, Canal Commissioners, Canal Superintendents, and others, 1832-1834, during the period of J. D. H's principal engineership on the West Branch Division.
- C-15,16. Correspondence, 1833-1834, with James and Simon Cameron, in re J. D. H's taking an engineer's position on the Portsmouth and Lancaster Railroad, etc.
- C-17. Correspondence, 1835, including letters from Thomas Burnside, of the Bald Eagle and Spring Creek Navigation Company, and Abner Lacock, President of the Pennsylvania-Ohio Cross-Cut Canal.
- C-18. Correspondence, 1835-1836, during J. D. H's employment as Principal Engineer on the Pennsylvania-Ohio Cross-Cut Canal.
- C-19,20. Correspondence, 1831-1841, with William B. Foster, Jr. his assistant, friend, and successor in canal appointments. Box 3 C-20
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- C-21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28. Correspondence 1836-1838, during his term as Principal Engineer on the North Branch Division of the Pennsylvania Canal: with the Canal Board; with members of the Canal Board, including Thaddeus Stevens; with other engineers; and with his assistant engineers and friends.
- C-29. Long hand copy by J. D. H. of his Report on the Survey of the Columbia and Philadelphia Railroad, 1838
- C-30. Correspondence, 1839-1841, with Canal Board, assistant engineers, etc.
- C-31. Plans and Drawings for canal features
- C-32. Miscellaneous Accounts
- C-33. Miscellaneous Articles of Agreement
- C-34. M. Stevenson vs. J. D. H. for Damages, 1834
- C-35. H. H. Speise to J. D. H.
- Envelopes C-36 to C-39
- C-36. Memoranda on Canal Techniques and Canal Problems.
- C-37. Notes by J. M. Nesbit, on two surveys in 1837 along Penn's Creek, one for a railroad, one for a canal, both under directions of J. D. H.

- C-38. Copy of the Report of J. D. H. on the Union Canal,
relative to the enlargement of that waterway, 1839.
- C-39. Field Notes of J. D. H. 1841-1842, on the eve of
his death.
Photostats