
A Philadelphia Jewish Merchant's Day-Book, 1755-1761

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NOTES.

"SIX FRENCH MEN-OF-WAR FULL OF JEWS AT LOUISBURG."

Fort Fredericks¹ was erected in 1729 as an English outpost to protect the scattered settlers of the New England colonies against French and Indian attack. Colonel David Dunbar under orders from the king claimed jurisdiction from his headquarters at Fort Fredericks from the Kenebec to the St. Croix River. As Surveyor-General of the Woods, etc., in America, reporting to Mr. Secretary Popple of the Board of Trade,² Colonel Dunbar wrote:

FREDERICKS FORT August ye 25th 1732.

... the small addition to the party from Governour Phillips' Regiment, promised me by Colonel Armstrong, in April last is not yet arrived, and as they were ordered from Canso, it is possible that they may be Countermanded upon a report from thence of Six french men of Warr at Lewisburg on the Island of Cape Britton, full of Jews to settle the Island of St. John's in Bay Verte on the back of the bottome of the Bay of Fundy,³ which Bay is already planted onely with french who will supply and Maintain this new intended Settlem^t of St. Johns with bread, Corn, & live Cattle, if not prevented, ...

Investigation fails to disclose any basis for this threatened invasion of Jews, and it was probably only a groundless rumor.

LEE M. FRIEDMAN.

A PHILADELPHIA JEWISH MERCHANT'S DAY-BOOK, 1755-1761.

This book, a narrow folio, in vellum, containing 51 pages of entries headed Philadelphia and mainly covering the years 1755 and 1756, was acquired by the writer at auction and is now the property of the American Jewish Historical Society.⁴

¹ Now Penaquid, Maine.

² Public Record Office, "Board of Trade, Nova Scotia, vol. vii, E 29."

³ Probably Prince Edward's Island, although there was another smaller St. John's.

⁴ It was described by him at the Society's meeting in 1913 and an abridged account of his description appeared in *The Jewish Exponent*, February 21, 1913, p. 7. It is thought well to print here only some of the details there given, together with further data. Since the meeting the book has been referred to and commented on, from the published account, in the finely conceived and well executed work of William Vincent Byars, "B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798," Jefferson City, Mo., 1916, pp. 11, 81.

The name of the merchant does not appear directly in the book. That he was a Jew is seen from an entry in which the Hebrew for the word Passover occurs, which hardly would have been used by a non-Jew. This reads: "House Expences Dr. to Cash Pr. Mathias Bush for Pesach" (in Hebrew).

It was originally thought by the writer that the merchant was David Franks of Philadelphia, into whose counting-house Barnard Gratz is known to have gone in 1754, at about the age of seventeen. Mr. Byars is of opinion that the book contains a record of the transactions of Barnard Gratz as a "merchant venturer" in Philadelphia with Benjamin Moses Clava, while employed by Franks. This opinion is based upon a memorandum signed by Clava and Gratz, dated 1769, following the last entry in 1761. This memorandum can, by a comparison with other writings, be shown to be in Franks' hand. It reads:

Memorandum June 5, 1769. These accounts were then examined and it appears that there is the following balances due:

To Benjamin Moses Clava	£ 99.14.10
To Barnard Gratz	12.13.3
	BEN. MOS. CLAVA
	BARNARD GRATZ.

This is partly explained by a slip of paper, containing only figures, in another hand, pinned on the following page, showing debits against Clava of £366.14 and credits in his favor of £466.8.11, while Gratz's debits were £138.18.11 and his credits £151.11.9.

This slip, taken in connection with the memorandum, clearly indicates that the transactions in which Clava and Gratz were interested had been singled out from all the entries in the book. The reference to balances due must mean from some third person to Clava and Gratz on the transactions. The balance could not be due from one to the other. Mr. Byars gives¹ a copy of a bill of Gratz against Franks, dated June 2, 1769, showing a balance in Gratz's favor of about £500 on debit and credit transactions, which Gratz noted "never was settled yet," instead of the balance of £12.13.3 appearing in the memorandum three days later. The memorandum probably was made as a result of the bill and to state the account between Franks, Gratz and Clava. The absence of Franks' signature thereto indicates that he regarded the book as his, or the transactions, or some of them recorded therein, as having been made in his name and on his credit, though probably for the benefit of the signers.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

Franks' relation to Clava and Gratz is shown by the following entries:

David Franks Debtor to Barnard Gratz for a discount on board and wages; David Franks debtor to Benjamin Clava for 9 kegs of butter delivered to him by Bd. [Barnard]; David Franks to Profit and Loss for B. Gratz wages for 15 months—£ 15. sterling; David Franks to House Expenses for B. G. Board from May 6, 1755 to June 6, 1756, is 56 weeks at 8/—£ 22.08 sterling.

In the bill given by Mr. Byars there is a charge for "Board wages" from June 6, 1756, to August 1, 1758, 111 weeks at 7/6—£41.12.6, while Gratz's salary is given as from February 1, 1754, to August 1, 1758, at £21 per annum.

In the day-book also are the following entries, in a credit on the bill to Hannah Moses * of £68.2.11:

Profit and Loss for my board and lodging £12.15; Profit and Loss for sundry charges you [Hannah Moses] made against me for trifles, £3.10.11; Profit and Loss for Barnard's Board £1.1.6.

This last item, in the third person, while the others are in the first, appears to be in Franks' handwriting. In a number of months in 1755 and 1756 there are entries of cash paid for household expenses.

Clava is charged in May, 1756, with a bill of goods for £258.18.6½ and Gratz likewise in October, 1755, for £16.1. Both, in these two years, are charged for personal apparel and small cash items.

Clava's name is new to us. A relative probably was Moses Clava Levy, prominent in Charleston, South Carolina, after the Revolution.⁷

The names of the following Jews, with whom most of the transactions were had, occur in the book, in addition to the mention of Franks, Clava and Gratz:

Mathias Bush, John Franks, Michael Gratz, Mr. Hambroughman, Myer Hart, Solomon Henry of London, Levy Isaacs, Mordecai Isaacs, Moses and Lazarus Jacobs of London, Israel Joseph, Myer Josephson, Samson Lazarus & Co., Mrs. Levy, Benjamin Levy, Isaac Levy, Joseph Levy, Mr. Mendez, Sally Mitchell, Moses Mordecai, Hannah Moses, Michael Moses, Moses and Joseph (composed of Michael Moses and Israel Joseph), Myer Myers of New York, Mr. Palba, and Joseph Simons or Simon.

* The Moses family, according to "The Jewish Encyclopedia," s. v. Gratz, married into the Gratz family.

⁷ See *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, No. 19, p. 85. "Benjamin Moses Clava, a Jew" was naturalized at Lancaster, Pa., September 24, 1762, and "Barnard Gratz, a Jew" at Philadelphia, April 11, 1763. See *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd Series, vol. II, pp. 436, 441, 446; *Publications, supra*, No. 23, p. 1 et seq.; No. 25, pp. 113-4.

The wares dealt in were jewelry and optician's goods and small hardware, though a few articles of dry goods are charged in the bill to Clava. There are also some entries relating to racoon and muskrat skins and beeswax. Many of the entries refer to invoices by number and sales by letter. The transactions with Moses and Lazarus Jacobs of London related to bills of exchange which later grew into a law suit, mentioned in an entry in 1761. They are credited in 1756 with invoices 1, 5 and 7, amounting to about £300. One entry in the book refers to a venture in coffee, and another to a consignment for a voyage to Jamaica, while another is headed consignment to John Franks on a voyage to Halifax. In May, 1755, the following entries appear:

Profit and Loss for the charge that attended an entertainment given gentlemen from New York, £1.3; Ditto for Rum, Limes and Sundries, 4s. 2d.

On the cover and fly leaf of the book appear the name of Frank Marx Etting and the date 1854. At the reverse end in 12 pages is a list of autographs of prominent Americans, the collection of Etting, whose family was related to Barnard Gratz. More than half the pages of the book are unused.

SAMUEL OPPENHEIM.

FRANCOIS JOSEPH GRUND.

This forgotten journalist and politician was born of Jewish parents either in Vienna, Austria, or in the German-speaking section of Bohemia in 1803 or 1805. Between 1825 and 1830 he emigrated thence; in the latter year he is found settled at Boston, Mass. Subsequently he resided in the neighboring Cambridge, where he may have maintained some relation to Harvard University. For a short time in 1837 he was American consul at Antwerp, Belgium; in 1841 and 1842 Grund occupied the post of consul at Bremen, Germany, and from 1859 to 1861 the similar office at Havre, France. In the intervals between his visits abroad he was Washington correspondent for several Eastern and Southern newspapers and active in German-American political circles. He died at Philadelphia, Pa., September 29, 1862. He wrote German campaign biographies of Martin Van Buren and William Henry Harrison; "The Americans, In Their Moral, Social and Political Relations," 1837 (also in German); "Aristocracy in America," 1839; a German hand-book for immigrants to the United States and Texas, then a separate republic; and "Thoughts and Reflections on the