Guide to the William C. Kost Farm Records

MNAH.AC.0481

by Franklin A. Robinson, Jr.

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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Creators: Kost, William Cassell, (farmer), 1917-1989
Kost, William Elvidge
Title: William C. Kost Farm Records
Dates: 1939-1989
Quantity: 17.66 cubic feet, 53 boxes
Abstract: The records of the Kost family farm, Vermont, Illinois. The farm consisted of 120 acres where small grains, hay, and cattle were raised.
Language: Collection is in English.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Related Material
Division of Work and Industry and the Division of Home and Community Life holds artifacts related to this collection.

Processing Information
Processed by Franklin A. Robinson, Jr., volunteer, 1994; supervised by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, archivist. Finding aid revised in June 2014.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions on Access
Collection is open for research. Gloves must be worn when handling unprotected photographs, negatives, and slides.

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Biographical Note

William Cassel Kost (1917-1989) acquired land and began farming in Vermont, Illinois in 1946. The farm consisted of 120 acres where Kost raised small grains, hay, and cattle. Prior to this time, Kost had been a bookkeeper for local taverns and a tenant farmer. Over the next fifty-three years, Kost worked his own farm as well as occasionally renting land, the Maryland Farm and others. In the 1950s, Kost secured a position with Hemp & Company, later known as the King-Sealey Thermos Factory, first in a part-time capacity then as a full-time employee, retiring on disability in 1975. He continued to farm until his death in August 1989. He was married to Maxine Elvidge (1916-1987) and had one son, William Elvidge Kost (1941-).

Scope and Content Note

The William C. Kost Farm Records is an exhaustive collection of bills, receipts, pay-stubs, and other financial records relating to the business of a small, mid-western family farm. Beginning with Kost's employment as a bookkeeper in 1942 for local Vermont, Illinois area taverns, the financial records intensely cover the period until the year before his death in 1989. The collection is a complete financial picture of a typical mid-western farm during the post WWII period, through the agricultural boom days of the 1950s and 1960s, and into the trying agricultural times of the late 1970s and 1980s. These financial records reconstruct a day to day, week to week, and month to month, financial portrait of the Kost farm. The limited amount of correspondence found in this collection complements the financial record. Tax returns, medical, and personal expense records are all included within the collection. Kost and his wife ran the farm operation with occasional hired help. Kost also took a job off the farm to supplement the farm income.

Arrangement

The collection is organized into three series.

Series 1, Tavern Accounts, 1939-1945

Series 2, Maryland Farm, 1946

Series 3, William C. Kost Farm, 1946-1989

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
- Agriculture--1940-1990--Illinois
- Beef cattle
- Corn
- Family farms--1940-1990
- Family records--1940-1990
Farm buildings--1940-1990
Farm equipment--1940-1990
Farm management--1940-1990
Farmers--1940-1990
Farms--1940-1990--Illinois
Hay
Livestock
Rural families--1940-1990
Soybean
Swine
Wheat
Work and family--1940-1990

Types of Materials:
   Housebooks--1940-1990
   Receipts--20th century.

Names:
   Agriculture and Natural Resources, Division of (NMAH, SI).

Geographic Names:
   Illinois--1940-1990
   Vermont (Ill.)--1940-1990
Container Listing

Series 1: Tavern Accounts, 1939-1945

Box 1, Folder 1  Tavern Ledger, 1943-1944
Box 1, Folder 2  Accounts, Ebberts Tavern, (Ebbert, Floyd), 1942-1945
Box 1, Folder 3  Accounts, Groveland Tavern, 1942-1945
Box 1, Folder 4  Accounts, Liquor Store, 1942-1944
Box 1, Folder 5  Accounts, Minnie's Place, 1944-1945
Box 1, Folder 6  Accounts, Officers Club, 1944-1945
Box 1, Folder 7  Accounts, Ed's Tavern, 1945
Box 1, Folder 8  Accounts, Pleasant Inn, (Kraus, Gladys), 1945
Box 1, Folder 9  Receipts and Correspondence, 1939
Box 53, Folder 1  Receipts and Correspondence, 1943
Box 53, Folder 2  Receipts and Correspondence, 1944
Box 1, Folder 10 Receipts, 1942
Box 1, Folder 11 Receipts, 1943
Box 1, Folder 12 Receipts, 1944
Box 1, Folder 13 Receipts, 1945
Series 2: Maryland Farm, 1946

Box 1  Farm Account Book, 1946
Box 1  Farm Accounting Record, 1946
Series 3: William C. Kost Farm, 1946-1989

Box 2  Receipts and Correspondence, 1946
Box 2  Checking Account, 1946

Checking Account, 1946

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