



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the William C. Kost Farm Records

NMAH.AC.0481

Franklin A. Robinson, Jr.

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Archives Center, National Museum of American History

P.O. Box 37012

Suite 1100, MRC 601

Washington, D.C. 20013-7012

archivescenter@si.edu

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	William C. Kost Farm Records
Date:	1939-1989
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0481
Creator:	Kost, William Elvidge Kost, William Cassell, 1917-1989 (farmer) (Creator)
Source:	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Extent:	17.66 Cubic feet (53 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	The records of the Kost family farm, Vermont, Illinois. The farm consisted of 120 acres where small grains, hay, and cattle were raised.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated to the National Museum of American History, Archives Center by William E. Kost in 1993.

Related Materials

Division of Work and Industry and the Division of Home and Community Life (now Division of Cultural 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

William C. Kost Farm Records, 1939-1989, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Contact the Archives Center for information at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270.

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Biographical / Historical

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 Contents

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:

National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Places:

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

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Series 2: Maryland Farm, 1946

Box 1 Farm Account Book, 1946

Box 1 Farm Accounting Record, 1946

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

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