Next year Gomez Mill House will celebrate the 290th anniversary of the establishment of a business here by Luis Gomez.

As a child his parents had left Spain and moved to France to leave religious persecution behind. His grandparents were trading from Europe to the islands in the Caribbean. When Louis XIV revoked the Treaty of Nantes, Luis left the old world and followed this trade route to the Caribbean and then later to New York - about 1700.

In April 1704 he purchased a certificate of denization from Queen Anne, giving him the rights of a citizen of the English domain. This document, this exciting treasure—was donated in 1998 by the Jesselson family—and is on display here at Gomez Mill House.

How great it is to be able to tell the Gomez story using this document! In fact, when you get right down to it, the basic tools to teach and to illustrate the history in house museums are the buildings, collection and the documents. These artifacts—an object made by human work—are used by our docents to make the story of Gomez Mill House come alive.

How gifted and talented the owner/occupants of Mill House were! Artisans in stain and leaded glass, and paper makers, and writers and publishers. Artifacts that tell of their religion, their country, their business, their family, and their lives are needed to continue to tell their stories.

Our many student visitors are working with a system called Document Based Questions or DBQs. This is a major focus in schools today. Students must be adept at analyzing and synthesizing the information provided in documents. A great way to comply is to see real records. The premise is not to depend on someone else’s interpretation of a document. They are taught “read it yourself and draw your own conclusions.”

A logical place to see and experience examples are with a hands on visit to historic houses—like our Gomez Mill House.

When our students visit, we provide each grade level with DBQs to experience here and copies for teachers to take back to school with them. We would like more historic documents pertaining to Mill House to share with our young (and older) visitors.
**Benjamin Gomez—First Jewish Bookseller in NYC**

By Charles G. Poore

Today the books that have the faded mark “Printed by Benjamin Gomez” are almost as scarce as knowledge about the young man who in the second decade after the Revolution offered these hostages to oblivion. And yet, he must have been fairly well known in the New York that was steadily pushing its streets northward into the wide salt marshes and farming lands of Manhattan Island. Aaron Burr could hardly have avoided stopping in Maiden Lane to look over the new books Benjamin Gomez had received by the latest sailing ships from Europe. Occasionally that fiery duelist might encounter in the Gomez bookshop the gentleman he was later to refer to as “My friend Hamilton, whom I shot.” Some of the periwigged merchants who were gathered under a buttonwood tree on Wall Street to form the first stock exchange undoubtedly had that taste in fine editions best satisfied by the elaborately solvent. Benjamin Gomez was conveniently at hand to sell them books. He was also there to supply the literary wants of a Mr. Fitch, who was making quite a spectacle of himself at the time by navigating an affair he was pleased to call a steamboat, on the doomed waters of the Collect Pond. And there were many other patrons in the growing seaport for a bookseller who could offer the new novels from abroad and the seasoned classics, a wide variety of travel and history books and an appalling number of Baedekers to redemption.

“Benjamin Gomez, Bookseller and Stationer, No. 32, Maiden Lane, near the Flymarket,” they would note in the public prints of the town, “has received by the late arrivals from Europe, and by the Union, Capt. Snow, late from Dublin, an addition to his former assortment of books, amongst which are...” Then they would go around to No. 32 to see whether they wanted to buy any of the new books...

For the advertisement gave only a very hurried and compressed list of what the literary minded New Yorker of the late eighteenth century might choose to read. There were volumes of sermons by Whitfield, Blair, Swift, Muir, “and a number of religious books too tedious to mention.”

He belonged to the fourth generation of his family in America when he was born here in 1769, and he was, so far as I can find, the first Jewish bookseller in New York. His great-grandfather was Lewis Moses Gomez, who came to the Colonial town that had caused so much trouble for the Duke of York at the turn of the eighteenth century. Benjamin’s father was Matthias, and his mother was Rachel Gomez. The male line of that family ended when Benjamin’s son, Matthias, was killed in a duel in New Orleans, in 1833, but the name has come down through the descendants of his great-uncles...

To Be Continued....

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**A Few of the Books Published by Benjamin Gomez**

- 1792: *The Christian Economy*
- 1794: *Pilgrim’s Progress*
- 1795: *Captain Cook’s Third and Last Voyage.*
- Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*
- Benj. Keach’s *The Travels of True Godliness from the beginning of the World to this present Day*
- Edward Ward’s *Female Policy or the Arts of a Designing Woman*
- 1796: *Cook’s A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*
- 1797: *The Visions of John Bunyan*
- John Ely’s *The Child’s Instructor*
- W. James’ *The Letters of Charlotte*
- 1798: Robert Gibson’s *A Treatise of Practical Surveying*
- And Many More.................
The Earliest Children’s Book by an American Jew

**Selections of a Father for the Use of His Children.** In prose and verse. New York: Southwick and Pelsue, 1820. 408pp. Original calf, spine re-laid, hinges reinforced.


Isaac Gomez (1783-1831) was prominent in Jewish communal affairs. This volume was intended to entertain and educate young children and contains selections on astronomy, geology, literature, zoology, anatomy, and moral guidance.

Gift of—
the Galberd Family

Published in 1770 in Holland. Purchased by the Gomez Foundation

The Gomez Collection: From Right to Left open on the shelf in the Nan Boas Library — Gomez Family Prayer book, Isaac Gomez’s “Selection of a Father,” David Levi’s “Answer to Dr. Joseph Priestley’s Letter to The Jews...” In the background is a history of Benjamin and a newspaper front page with a copy of his store advertisement on Maiden Lane in NYC.
Dard Hunter (1883-1966) was an American Renaissance Man. He was not only a designer in the Arts & Crafts Movement in the early decades of this century, but also a private press printer, paper historian and author, collector and museum director.

Dard and his wife Edith (or “Bunny”) lived at Mill House from 1912 to 1918. Dard built the straw thatched “Devonshire” mill powered by the waters of “Jews Creek” and began to experiment with the different ways to make paper.

Dard Hunter & the Art of the Handmade Book
In the second decade of the twentieth century, the machine was considered the critical element to progress. In 1915 in defiance of the mechanical age, Dard Hunter (1883-1966) created the world's first "one-man" book by hand. In his own words,

The consistent book will be a personality because it will be made by few men; that is, few hands and minds will construct the volume, all working together with but one aim. But, better still, the book should be the work of one man alone. In this way, and only this, will the volume be truly his. There must be a better understanding between the three arts [papermaking, type founding, printing] and when this better understanding exists we will produce the much talked of, but seldom seen, book harmonious. *

*Hunter's first "book harmonious" was The Etching of Figures by William A. Bradley, published by the Chicago Society of Etchers as their 1915 end-of-the-year gift to associate members. This one-man book for which Hunter made the paper and the metal type by hand and then printed the book with a hand-operated press was both the culmination of years of research and experimentation, and the harbinger of Hunter's future as author and private press printer.


Dard Hunter Books We Would Like To Have

The Etching of Figures:
[United States] 1915
first edition, limited to 250 copies, first publication of Dard Hunter's private press at The Mill and the first of only two books printed on Hunter's Washington hand press; small quarto.
Publisher: Marlborough-on-Hudson: Dard Hunter for the Chicago Society of Etchers, 1915,

Correspondence to Bertha E. Jacques of the Society of Etchers in Chicago:

The Life Work of Dard Hunter; A Progressive Illustrated Assemblage of His Works as Artist, Craftsman, Author, Papermaker, and Printer.
Gift of Dard Hunter III

1940 Folio Cambridge, MA Paper Museum Press. (5) ff. One of 100 copies. Specimen of a face designed, cut, and hand-cast by Hunter, a discussion of type design and Hunter's methods, and an illustration of his tools. The first appearance of Dard Junior's type, printed on his father's paper with the Lime Rock Mill watermark.

These books and collections are of primary interest to us because of the direct connection with Gomez Mill House. These were recently found available for sale on the Internet.
Through Ralph M. Pearson and Bertha Jacques, the Chicago Society of Etchers learned of Hunter's exciting efforts to revive fifteenth century book crafts, and in March 1915 he was contracted to print the Society's end-of-the-year keepsake, a monograph by William Aspenwall Bradley titled, The Etching of Figures. Hunter was thrilled to put into practice his ideas about the "book harmonious" which had just been published in his first scholarly article, "The Lost Art of Making Books" in The Miscellany 2, no. 1 (March 1915): 36.

He immediately ordered a pair of antique laid moulds from England, 16.5 x 23.5 inches, even though the Great War was waging in Europe. While waiting for their arrival, he finished cutting the punches and justified the matrices. Running out of time, Hunter decided not to complete the entire font and did not cut punches for the uppercase Q X and Z. Instead he scoured his type specimen books for a typeface which would match his. Ivanhoe, 18-point, made by the Keystone Type Foundry was selected. With gravers Hunter altered just enough pieces of type needed to complete the book. To print it Hunter bought a R. Hoe Washington press. Operated by hand, this press was never satisfactory to Hunter, and eventually he gave it to Pearson.

Due to problems other than the war, the new moulds did not arrive until October. With barely three months left to complete the project, Hunter requested and received a three-month extension. When printing was finally completed, Hunter sent the books to his ex-Roycroft friends, Sterling Lord and Peter Franck, The Oakwood Binders, for binding.

Finally in March 1916 the books were sent to Jacques who immediately commissioned Hunter to print a second book, due at the end of that year. This was authored by Frank Weitenkampf and titled, The Etching of Contemporary Life. Using the same techniques employed for the Bradley's book, Hunter had no trouble meeting the deadline.

For the 1917 keepsake Hunter was again contracted to print a small folio commemorating the work of J. C. Vondrouš. These three publications are still considered the first to be done by the labor of one man with the exception of the binding.

By 1917 Hunter realized that his papermaking, type founding, and printing operations were beyond the experimental stages. If he was to print more books, he would have to enlarge the facilities and hire workers. Other events prevented this from happening, however. America entered the war in April 1917, and his first son, Dard Jr., was born a month later. Mill House was sold in 1918. Hunter enlisted in the army, but just before he was to leave, peace was declared. The Spanish flu epidemic prevented the Hunters from returning to Chillicothe, and in February 1919 their second son, Cornell Choate, was born in their Newburgh, NY apartment.

The Gomez Foundation restored Hunter's Mill in 1984 and replaced the dam and has since connected the wheel to Hunter's beater. Once again at Mill House, paper making is taught and demonstrated the way Hunter did here ninety years ago.

A Thank You to the Friend's of Dard Hunter and their web site at www.friendsofdardhunter.org
America entered the war in April 1917, and the Hunter’s first son, Dard Jr., was born a month later. Thinking he was going into the service, Hunter sold Mill House in 1918. Hunter wrote in his autobiography that the house was sold to a representative of the Russian government and used as a school for children of all races. He really sold to Ms. Helen Boardman and Ms. Martha Gruening who tried to establish a Libertarian School at Mill House.

The Libertarian School policy, as reported in The Messenger, is to educate, together, all races and all sexes. The school will have Negro, Jewish, German, American, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, Hindu, and all races of children, educated side by side. ...We will also advise any parent, white or colored; having children whom he desires to educate with modern training, free from this American caste, to write to Mill House, Marlborough, NY.

Until the first of November this year, our knowledge of the Libertarian school was about all that is included in the side bar. When we asked experts of the period about the school, the answer was, “It is a searchable project.” This is the same answer I remember receiving when my professor didn’t know the answer.

Since then we have done the research on our own and now know a lot more about Martha and Helen, the whole Gruening family, the early years of the NAACP, Black Theater, WPA Writer’s project, NBLA, Smith College-class of 1909 (and Bryn Mawr and then NYU Law), The Nation magazine, book and magazine reviews and critics pre-WWII, personal data like adopting a black child and the numerous times she was arrested while working for various causes, most always summarized as, People’s Rights.

The tranquil image of Gomez Mill House is really shaken during the Libertarian school period. Let’s look at Martha’s life and what we have learned about her.

Dr. Emil and Phoebe Gruening had five children. Mrs. G or Phebe is from a farm family in Bergen County, NJ. The eldest child was son, Ernest, who followed his father in medicine to get his medical degree and then branched into other careers. He was editor of The Nation magazine, The Post, and FDR asked him to become the governor of the Alaska territory. Later he became a senator and is widely remembered for his “No!” vote on the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. Not a shabby family.

Not gaining the national acclaim like Ernest, the ladies had each distinguished themselves. There were four sisters, our subject Martha, and Clara, Mary and Rose. All deserve chapters in our house and certainly in the rights movement in American history.

She was a Smith College graduate (class of 1909) and came from a well-known family; her father was an eminent physician and her brother would eventually become a prominent public official. Gruening herself was writing for and helping to edit a short-lived pacifist magazine, The Dawn, in Greenwich Village, at the time of her arrest. She held a law degree from New York University (awarded 1914). From 1911 to 1914 and again in 1917 and 1918, Gruening served as an assistant secretary to the National Board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); she and the prominent African American co-founder of the NAACP, W. E. B. Du Bois, were appointed by the NAACP to investigate a race riot that broke out in East St. Louis, Illinois, on July 2, 1917. In August 1917, she traveled to Houston, Texas, to report on the race riot there that involved members of the all-black Twenty-fourth Infantry.

Then she came to Gomez Mill House!

Martha encouraged tolerance and the rights of all people. We certainly want to know more about her work - especially here.
In tabulating this study, Martha Gruening and Helen Boardman combed the files of newspapers for three decades. One section of the study, "The Story of One Hundred Lynchings," described...

...objected to the employment of Negroes in a plant that held government contracts. Martha Gruening and Dr. Du Bois were sent to the scene to gather facts for the NAACP...

A major contribution to awakening the national conscience regarding lynching was the publication in 1919 of the findings of an exhaustive review of lynching records. This startling study was entitled Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918.

The NAACP sent Martha Gruening, a white writer, to the scene of the Houston riots; her findings were reported in The Crisis. The entire Negro press...

...The close link between the abolitionist and the woman's rights movement is effectively described in the following article. Martha Gruening provides the historical background to the twentieth-century struggle for woman's suffrage. What are the similarities between the plight of the blacks and the woman's struggle? Are there any significant differences to note? How do the goals of the suffrage movement in the twentieth century compare with the pre-Civil War woman's rights movement? ...

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MARTHA GRUENING INDICTED.

New York Suffragist Accused of Inciting Philadelphia Strikers to Riot.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 10.—Miss Martha Gruening of New York, a young Smith College graduate and a leader in the woman's suffrage movement, was indicted by a Grand Jury here to-day on the charge of inciting to riot. She was arrested on this charge during the recent strike of the shirtwaist operators.

True bills were found against fourteen of the strikers and their sympathizers.

The Gruening home in this city is at 36 East Fifty-seventh Street. Miss Mary Gruening, a daughter, speaking for the family last night, said that she had nothing to add to the statement of her sister, already printed in The Times.

"My sister," she said, "did not incite any one to riot, and if she has been indicted for doing so then she has been indicted on a false charge.

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GRUENING ESTATE $393,972.

Widow Gets $100,000 Home and Life Interest in Residue.

Dr. Emil Gruening left a net estate of $393,972 when he died, on May 30, 1914, according to the appraisal filed in the office of the State Controller yesterday.

The widow, Mrs. Phoebe Gruening, receives a life estate in the home, at 36 East Fifty-seventh Street, which is appraised at $100,000, and a life estate in the residue, which is given a valuation of $174,800. The children, Rose B., Gruening, a sister of the testator, receives a life income from $20,000. The children, Rose B., Martha, and Elizabeth, and Mrs. Clara G. Stillman each receive $20,000 outright and one-fourth remainder interests in the estate.

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To Be Continued!!!

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 Funeral private.

1937
An entry in the diary of Isaac Gomez, Jr. cousin of Benjamin, pays a tribute to Benjamin Gomez that has the true grace of sincerity:

1828, August 14, My Cousin, Mr. Benjamin Gomez died. He was taken sick on the Thursday previous with what the Doctor called the Dengue Fever but I considered it to be the Typhus. He had been attacked once or twice before...He was buried in the Chatham Street Burial Ground about 7 o’clock of the same day... I wrote the following which I feel confident he deserved:

He has the debt of nature paid,
In the grave I’ve seen him laid;
Fifty-nine years was just his age,
I therefore mark it on this page.

He was good to everyone.

He finished life as he begun,
In friendship, honor, and being just
In God alone he placed his trust.

As a husband, father, friend,
None were superior, you may depend
In all his actions—He was the same
Which has procured him a good name.

The Armstrong family are noted as painters, writers and poets as well as makers of stain glass windows.

William Henry (Uncle Harry) Armstrong’s (here 1862—1904), talented younger brother, David Maitland Armstrong, painted his child in front of the fireplace at the family’s grand house down the road at the Danskammer.

Our “Harry” and Mattie lost their five year old child, Emily, in a drowning accident here at Mill House. In the children’s room, in front of the fireplace, we too, have a pull horse and Dutch delft tile. We don’t have a picture of Emily and we felt that her first cousin in the painting must resemble her. Our visiting children liked this tribute to Emily.

Then we learned that this is not of cousin Helen or Margaret, but a portrait of his son, Edward!

This is an “occasional” publication. At Gomez Mill House we want to share the rich heritage and traditions that our owner/occupants have contributed to the Hudson Valley and to America. One way to do this is through passing on their art, their books and their written thoughts.

Our next “issue” could be on the furniture, the denization, or a complete description of the buildings that make up our site. Come visit and give us your thoughts and ideas.

cfwm—12/1/03