



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Hugh Gainé receipt book

1767-1799

MssCol 1102

Digitization was made possible by a lead gift from The Polonsky Foundation.

Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2015

Summary

Creator: Gainé, Hugh, 1726 or 1727-1807

Title: Hugh Gainé receipt book

Date: 1767-1799

Size: .2 linear feet (1 volume)

Source: Purchased from Anderson Galleries, 1919

Abstract: Hugh Gainé (1726 or 1727-1807) was a prominent American printer, bookseller and newspaper publisher who maintained a flourishing shop in New York City from 1752 to 1804. From 1752 to 1783 he printed and published the *New-York Mercury*, later the *New-York Gazette*, and the *Weekly Mercury*. The Hugh Gainé receipt book, dated 1767 to 1799, contains entries written and signed by recipients of money from Hugh Gainé for expenses relating to his printing and bookselling business, his real estate holdings and, to a lesser extent, his personal and family life.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Hugh Gainé receipt book, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note: Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2015

Related Materials:

Hugh Gainé papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

Creator History

Hugh Gainé (1726 or 1727-1807) was a prominent American printer, bookseller, and newspaper publisher who maintained a flourishing shop in New York City from 1752 to 1804. From 1752 to 1783 he printed and published the *New-York Mercury*, later the *New-York Gazette*, and the *Weekly Mercury*. Gainé acquired additional wealth through his real estate holdings in Manhattan and upstate New York, and was a founding partner of the Onderdonk paper mill on Long Island, New York in 1773. Although he

supported American interests throughout most of the year 1776, his decision to continue publishing his newspaper as a Loyalist during the British occupation of New York tainted his reputation among patriot contemporaries.

Hugh Gaine was a native of Portglenone in the Parish of Ahogill, County Antrim, Ireland. Beginning in 1740 he was an apprentice to Samuel Wilson and James Magee, printers in Belfast. After their partnership dissolved in 1744, he emigrated to New York and worked for James Parker, a printer. In 1752 he established his own printing and bookshop, settling at Hanover Square in 1757. Gaine carried a broad stock at the sign of the "Bible and Crown," including almanacs, Bibles, instructional books, medical and law books, and literature. He also sold stationery, lottery and theater tickets, and a selection of general merchandise. Hugh Gaine was an active supporter of theater in New York throughout his career.

When British forces captured New York in September 1776, Gaine fled to Newark, New Jersey. He printed the *New-York Gazette, and the Weekly Mercury* there in support of American interests, while British authorities used his shop press to publish a paper under the same name. Unable to succeed due to the unsettled conditions in New Jersey, Gaine returned to New York and resumed printing at his Hanover Square shop in early November. Although he ceased publication of his newspaper in late 1783, he continued his usual business operations, now at the sign of "the Bible."

Prior to the American Revolution, Gaine was an official printer for the Province of New York and the City of New York, and he resumed such work after the war. With paper always in short supply, in 1773 Gaine invested in a paper mill at Hempstead Harbor, Long Island with Hendrick Onderdonk and Henry Remsen, while acquiring paper from other parties as well.

In the 1790's Gaine moved his shop to 148 Pearl Street, and by the end of the decade he was advertising under the partnership of Gaine & Ten Eyck. Hugh Gaine ceased printing in 1800, although the bookshop continued to operate into 1804. According to newspaper notices in November of that year, the firm had recently dissolved and the shop's stock was sold. Also during this time Gaine promoted the formation of professional book trade associations and book fairs.

Hugh Gaine remained active in business affairs until shortly before his death. Over the years Gaine amassed real estate holdings in Manhattan and acquired land in upstate New York. At one time he served as a tax assessor for the City. Gaine attended St. Paul's Chapel and Trinity Church, and supported various civic and philanthropic organizations, including the New York Society Library and New York Hospital. Hugh Gaine was married twice, to Sarah Robbins in 1759, and to Cornelia Wallace in 1769, and had five children.

Scope and Content Note

The Hugh Gaine receipt book, dated 1767 to 1799, contains entries written and signed by recipients of money from Hugh Gaine for expenses relating to his printing and bookselling business, his real estate holdings and, to a lesser extent, his personal and family life.

Brief entries from 1767 November 16 to 1799 November 12 identify the services, goods, and settlement of accounts for which payment was received. There are no entries between 1776 June 16 and 1777 February 8, during which time Gaine left the City for Newark and returned. On 1772 May 4 and 1784 April 24, Hugh Gaine signed his name to acknowledge settlement of accounts.

Hugh Gaine's business activities are shown in freight charges for shipments from England, some

handled by John Harris Cruger, and dealings with members of notable New York families, such as the Bleecker, Verplanck, Duyckinck, Van Dam, Ten Eyck, Colden and Lenox families. Transactions with those notably connected with the printing or publishing trades include Mathew Carey (on his own account and for others in Philadelphia), James Parker's widow Mary Parker, William Young, Peter R. Maverick, Ebenezer Larkin for Isaiah Thomas, and Jedidiah Morse. The name of British cartographer Bernard Ratzer also appears in the volume. There are payments for merchandise purchased by or consigned to Gaine, such as beaver hats, instruments and, in 1776, drums and fifes from the father of John Falkenhan.

There are numerous entries for the purchase, freight or sale of paper signed by various parties, and dealings with Hendrick and Andrew Onderdonk and Henry Remsen regarding the paper mill on Long Island. Services for labor are represented in payments for salaried staff, newspaper carriers and domestic workers, and in payments for the labor of African-Americans, presumably to slave owners. There are many payments for masonry and other services relating to his properties, especially during the postwar period.

The receipt book also documents the ownership or rental of various properties in Manhattan, the purchase of land in upstate New York, and other investments. Notably, rental charges paid by Gaine for a playhouse and adjoining land on John Street (the John Street Theatre) are listed from 1768 through the early 1790s.

Personal items include occasional payments by Gaine for pew rentals and donations to St. Paul's Chapel and Trinity Church, a subscription to the New York Society Library, his personal grooming (shaving and the purchase of wigs), and expenses such as tutoring, board and medical care for his son John.

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

account books

Receipts (financial records)

Subjects

Booksellers and bookselling -- New York (State) -- New York

Papermakers -- New York (State)

Printers -- New York (State) -- New York

Publishers and publishing -- New York (State) -- New York

Real property -- New York (State)

Real property -- New York (State) -- New York

Geographic Names

New York (N.Y.) -- History -- 1775-1865

New York (N.Y.) -- History -- Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775