

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

THE INVENTORY OF DANIEL ELLIOTT OF ELLIOTT

Edited by CHARLES C. ARENSBERG

WE find little of the origin of Daniel Elliott, founder of the town bearing his name picturesquely situated on the hills above Steuben Street. Peter Lawrence, in his manuscript on the West End and Elliott at the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, thought he was a brother of William Elliott who came from Westmoreland County to operate a tavern at the vicinity of Fifth and Penn avenues and who named his place the Bullock Pens, from which he supplied beef for the soldiers at Fort Pitt.¹

We first hear of Daniel Elliott operating a gristmill at the mouth of Saw Mill Run and a ferry across the Ohio to Allegheny under rights granted to him by an act of 1784.² John Robert Shaw, a soldier of fortune out of Fort McIntosh, spoke of bringing provisions from

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1 Peter W. Lawrence, "The West End and Elliott: A Geographical History," 3.

2 Act of 11 Mar. 1784 (Carey and Bioren, 2 *Laws of Pennsylvania*): "An Act to establish a ferry over the Ohio river at the mouth of Saw-mill run. Sect. I. Whereas Daniel Elliot, of the county of Washington, by his petition, hath represented to this House the necessity of having a ferry established on the river Ohio, at the mouth of Saw-mill run, about one mile below Fort Pitt, from the land of the said Daniel Elliot at the mouth of the said run, on the south-west side of the said river, over to the north-east side thereof, into the reserved lands of this state, and praying the said ferry to be established in right of him, the said Daniel Elliot, his heirs and assigns; and this House being fully satisfied that a public ferry at the place aforesaid would be of public utility: Therefore, Sect. II. Be it enacted, and it is hereby enacted by the Representatives of the Freemen of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met, and by the authority of the same, That, from and after the passing of this act, it shall and may be lawful for the said Daniel Elliot his heirs and assigns, at his or their proper cost and charges, to make, or cause to be made, at or near the mouth of said run, a convenient landing-place, and shall keep and maintain the same in good order and repair fit for men, horses and carriages, to pass and repass from thence over the said river, into the tract reserved for the use of this state, and shall also provide and maintain a good and substantial boat or boats and capable ferrymen, who shall duly and constantly attend, as occasion may require, under and subject to such charges, rules and regulations, as to the legislature of this state hereafter shall seem meet."

Fort Pitt to Fort McIntosh in a flatboat "belonging to a certain Mr. Elliott." This was in August 1784. After arriving at Fort McIntosh, Shaw said, "we were then sent back with the boat, having on board Mr. Elliott himself as a passenger, and we were four days a towing and setting 35 miles and drinking a barrel of whiskey."³

After the commonwealth appropriated the lands of William and John Penn, one of the first patentees of such land outside Pittsburgh was Daniel Elliott. On April 20, 1785, the commonwealth granted him 640 acres consisting of two tracts of land called "Elliott's Design" and "Elliott's Delight." These tracts spread from what is now West Sheraden and Corks Run down to Saw Mill Run and the Ohio River and westward to the James Kearns property, north of what is now Greentree. Part of the land was thus along the old road west which became the Pittsburgh and Steubenville Turnpike in 1818.⁴

In addition to the gristmill ascribed to Elliott by John Robert Shaw in 1784, and the ferry he ran across the Ohio, he operated a sawnill and, as his inventory will show, a farm on the upper reaches of his property. "He brought rafts from up the Allegheny and advertised to saw on shares."⁵

Elliott married a daughter of Alexander Lowry and had four children, John, West, Mary, and William. West partitioned the property in Orphans Court in 1801 among the children. He continued the first mill and then conceived the idea of shipping the coal down the river in boats. He and a man named Silk loaded their first flat of coal in 1821, but the flat wrecked before it got to McKees Rocks and the coal was lost. West continued to farm and live in Elliott for the rest of his life, so that he is sometimes referred to erroneously as the founder of the town.⁶

Daniel Elliott probably died in 1790, though there is no record of it in the courthouse. We have only the inventory of his estate dated June 19, 1790, by Philip Ross and John Bell showing a grand total of 180 pounds, 17 shillings and nine pence. His real estate devolved to his heirs by operation of law in those days, without appraisal or tax.

Since he died without a will, his wife Elizabeth and his son William were appointed administrators. As was sometimes the custom

³ John W. Harpster, ed., *Pen Pictures of Early Western Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh, 1938), 163, 164.

⁴ Lawrence, "West End and Elliott," 3; "An Act authorizing the incorporation of the Pittsburgh and Steubenville Turnpike Road Company," approved Mar. 3, 1818.

⁵ Lawrence, "West End and Elliott," 30.

⁶ An Atlas of the West End Neighborhood of Pittsburgh (1977), Carnegie Library Pennsylvania Room.

in those days, separate accounts were filed by each administrator for the property received by them, respectively. William Elliott filed his account in 1801 showing receipt of 473 pounds and debts of 325 pounds, or a balance of 141 pounds, 1 shilling, 9½ pence. Among the debtors of the estate were Hugh Henry Brackenridge and General Arthur St. Clair. Steele Semple and James Ross were the lawyers, and received for their services 1 pound, 18 shillings, 9 pence and 9 pounds, respectively.

The account of Elizabeth Elliott, the coadministrator (account book 1, page 148), shows receipts of 447 pounds, 7 shillings, disbursements of 389 pounds, and a balance of 58 pounds, 3 shillings, 5 pence and 1 farthing. Among the receipts were wheat, rye, and Indian corn, 6 pounds, 7 shillings.

The account shows also an amount of 180 pounds, 13 shillings, 9 pence as "3 years rent from plantation in Perry Township, Lancaster County."

The roster of debtors of the estate contains the names of a great many early and famous Pittsburgh citizens, among them William Amberson, Jacob Haymaker, Hugh Ross, Hugh Blair, Samuel Riddle, John Scull, Nathaniel Bedford, Hugh H. Brackenridge, David Steel, and Alex Gilfillan.

The following is the appraisement as it appears on the records in the Register of Wills Office in Allegheny County.

BILL OF APPRAISEMENT OF THE PERSONAL ESTATE OF
DANIEL ELLIOTT DECEASED, ALLEGHENY COUNTY
THE 19TH OF JUNE 1790

	L	S	D
1 Bull Cow Red with a white face	3	10	1
1 Red Cow Cut horns	3	0	0
1 white Heifer, with Red Spots	3	0	0
1 dark Red Bull	2	10	0
1 Brindle Heifer	1	10	0
1 white Backt Heifer	1	0	0
1 Red yearling Steer	0	15	0
1 old Sorrill Horse	0	10	0
1 old Brown Mare	1	10	0
1 Brown Gilding	3	0	0
1 Sorrill mare Small Blaze	1	10	0
1 young Sorrill mare	6	0	0

4 Bands and two Gudgans ⁷ for Saw Mill	1	0	0
4 old waggon wheels	2	10	0
1 waggon	8	10	0
1 Plow & Harro	2	5	0
1 Sett of Swingle Trees ⁸	0	7	6
1 notch Clevis ⁹ & Small ditto with a link	0	9	0
1 Spread chain	0	5	0
1 Timber wheel Screw	2	0	0
1 Crow Barr	0	7	6
1 Sprouting hoe & two Old Shovels	0	8	0
1 Garden hoe & one Rake	0	7	6
1 dung fork & one Pitch fork	0	9	0
1 Grind Stone	0	10	0
2 Axes & two Iron wedges	0	13	0
3 old Collars & four old Brickbands	0	18	0
3 Pair of drawing chains & three Pair of harness	2	5	0
1 log chain & two Plow Bridles	1	10	0
1 Gun & two Pair of Stillards ¹⁰	1	17	6
1 Pair of Scales & weights & eleven Pewter Plates	1	1	0
4 Pewter Basons & three Pewter dishes	2	5	0
2 Candle Sticks & Snuffers five tin cups & one strainer	0	19	0
1 Cannester two Puddin Pans one Tin Quart & one old Bason	0	6	0
1 old Tin water Pott one Old Tea Kittle two Iron Potts & hooks	1	10	0
1 Grid Iron two Tin Kittles one frying Pan & one Scimmer	1	2	6
1 Copper lid one old Pewter Bason one Iron Tea Kittle & one Lantern	1	2	6
1 Bake Iron two Pott Racks one Brass Kittles two hoes & one Post ac	3	2	6
3 flat Irons one feather Bed two Pair of Blanketts one cover led one Sett of Camp Curtains two			

7 "Gudgans" might very well be "gudgeons." A gudgeon is a pivot of metal, usually let into a beam on which a wheel turns, or a bell swings, or the like.

8 This is a "Whippletree," "Whiffletree," or "Singletree," the pivoted bar by which a wagon is drawn.

9 Clevis is a U-shaped device used on the tongue of a plow or wagon to attach it to a bar or whiffletree.

10 "Stillards" are probably "Steel Yards," which were portable balances for weighing and were also called lever scales.

Pillows, Pillow Cases one Bolster & one Second Bottom Bedstead ¹¹	8	12	6
1 Feather bed, three blanketts, one quilt, one Sett of Callico Curtains, two Pillows, Pillow Cases one Bolster & One Second Bottom Bedstead	6	10	0
1 Feather Bed, one Blankitt, two Pillows, one Bolster, one Quilt, one Second Bottom Bedstead	4	10	0
1 Feather Bed, two Blankitts, two Pillows, one Bolster, one Second Bottom Bedstead, one Second Bottom ditto & one Quilt	3	16	0
2 pair of Sheets, two double Coverleds, two white Canister Pins & one Callico ditto	6	15	0
Silver Plate, two Punch Bowls one Tea Pott & one Butter Bowl	12	7	0
½ Dozen knives & forks & 2 Large Glass Tumblers	0	10	10
1 Tin Cannister, one Box ditto & one Cruett Stand	0	15	0
1 old Tea Pott, one Cup one sausser & two Snuff dishes	0	2	6
1 large Tea Cannister, one Case Bottle & four Table Cloths	0	13	6
14 Books Printed on different Subjects, one writing Desk & two Walnutt Tables	3	15	0
2 Stand Tables, Six chairs, Seven Hatchets, two Syths & one hand saw	5	10	0
Iron hoops. Sundry Old Iron, one drawing Knife, three Augars, & one spike gimblitt ¹² wheel	2	10	0
1 warming Pan, one Baskitt, one wooling wheel, one Reel & two linnen wheels & cotton wheel	3	15	0
1 Pair Saddle Bags, two old Twilled Bags, one Trunk & one old ditto	1	10	0
5 Remnants of Gause, 1½ Bolts of yellow Ribbon & 1½ bolts of Red ditto	4	16	9
8 dozen & four cutt. Knives, five Pen Knives			
2 dozen & five Shoe Knives & ten Pair of Snuffers, three Teaspoons. 30 Doz. shoe maker & sadlers awls	3	4	9

11 A "Second Bottom Bedstead" probably refers to the low bed that went under another bed and was used mostly for children. It may be the same thing as a trundle bed.

12 This is probably "gimlet," which is a kind of boring tool and also "a large shallow tub, used for salting bacon and other purposes" (*Webster's Second International Dictionary*).

12 Pair Knee Buckels, five Pair Shoe ditto, Eight Pair of Knee Buckels & Four Hinges	1	4	6
8 Pair Cubbert Hinges, thirteen dozen Baskett Buttons	1	1	0
7 door latches & eight Pair Small Shoe Buckels	0	18	0
2 nob door locks, three Plain ditto, seventeen sticks Mohair & ½ doz. fish hooks	2	4	0
2 Brass rings, four doz. & three Black horn Buttons	0	4	11
12 doz. Black Horn Buttons, & Eleven stock locks	1	12	6
15 Cubbert locks, twenty one Pair H. L. Hinges	2	6	6
15 window Hinges & two Pad locks	1	4	0
4 desk locks & Six Prospect ditto	0	9	0
17 Handles & three Scutchings Desk furniture	0	11	6
2 chest locks, & Bag of flints	0	13	0
4 Keys, thirteen Bags Paint & three Small Trunks	1	15	6
7 watch Seals, Six Keys 7 two Bags hair Buttons	1	5	0
3 doz. Black horn Buttons, & three Box Irons	0	18	0
9 Schimmers & fourteen doz. Baskitt Buttons	1	6	6
8 Pair Specks, two Pair wool Sheers	0	10	0
4 Chizels, thirteen Gouges, & two Trowels	1	0	0
4 Syth Stones, Buckrom, ¹³ & four Pair Shoe Buckels	0	18	0
2 Pair Stirrup Irons, three Pounds wampam ¹⁴	0	5	0
19 Horse Bolls one pair Bridle Bitts, 20 Pair Blue Kirzey ¹⁵ Breaches	6	18	9
6 Papers of needles, weaving apparrill, one Pair Boots & One Saddle	6	0	0
2 stacks hay	2	5	0
2 Looking glasses	3	0	0
2 Calves	1	0	0
1 hair Sive ¹⁶	0	4	0
1 old Sean ¹⁷	0	7	6
6 young Hogs	2	2	0
	180	13	9

¹³ "Buckrom" is of course "Buckram," which was a coarse cloth of linen or cotton.

¹⁴ "Wampam," properly "Wampum," is a Narraganset Indian word referring to beads commonly used for trading with the Indians.

¹⁵ "Kirzey" is probably "kersey," a ribbed woollen cloth for hose and work clothes, first used in medieval England (from a village in Suffolk, England).

¹⁶ "Hair Sive" (sieve) is a strainer with a hair bottom.

¹⁷ An "old Sean" is probably a "seine" or a fishing net.

We the Subscribers have appraised the within Goods and Chattles
Rights and Credits of Danl. Elliott Deceased to the best of our Skill
& Judgment Witness our hands

Philip Ross
John Bell

Sworn and Subscribed
before me June 19 1790
Sam Jones Reg