

DEMUTH'S

1770



The History of a
Lancaster Tradition



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Being a Brief History of
the Demuth Tobacco Shop
which was Founded at Lan-
caster in the Province of
Pennsylvania in the Year
of our Lord 1770



Written and Compiled by HENRY C. DEMUTH

1925



CHRISTOPHER DEMUTH, FOUNDER
1770-1814

It is rarely that a business is conducted without interruption over a period of a century and a half. It is even more impressive that a business should be carried on under the same name and by the lineal descendants of the founder for an equal period. The Demuth Tobacco Shop of Lancaster has been in existence for 165 years and over that span of time has been conducted by Christopher Demuth and the three succeeding generations of Demuths on the same spot as the original store. It is without doubt the oldest tobacco store in America. Few, indeed, are the commercial establishments in the United States that can lay claim to such an honorable record or such a fine family tradition.

THE FIRST GENERATION

THE Demuth Tobacco Shop was established in 1770 by Christopher Demuth, the paternal great-grandfather of the present proprietor. This was in the days of cocked hats and powdered wigs, when snuff-taking was not only a consolation of the poor but a cherished foible of the rich and blue-blooded. So that when Christopher Demuth opened his little shop in Lancaster, snuff was undoubtedly his most popular article for sale. According to the records, he was a manufacturer and vendor of both snuff and cigars. He carried on the business most successfully for 44 years and in 1814, having earned for



THE FIRST STORE

himself a sufficient competence, and finding himself drawing near the sunset of life, he sold his business to his son, Jacob Demuth.

Christopher Demuth had an honorable military record, serving as a private in Capt. Jacob Krug's Company, of Colonel Matthias Slauch's Battalion, Lancaster County Riflemen, in 1777.

It is worthy of note that the founder of the business, Christopher Demuth, started the business during the rule of King George III and maintained it through the stirring days of the Revolution. His period of ownership saw the successful conclusion of the Revolutionary War, the birth of the United States and a greater part of the second war with Great Britain.

OLD LANCASTER COURT HOUSE



The old Court House was erected 1784-1787 and stood in the center of the Square. The State Legislature met here from 1799 to 1812 when Lancaster was the capital of Pennsylvania. The building was replaced in 1852 by the present Court House standing at Duke and East King streets.

Notes.....	\$16....	3 P. d.
W. B. Brantburner.....	136	1/2 -
Lawrence.....	24....	1 =
Muskingum.....	10....	10 "
Mer. Smith.....	50.....	
Beaver.....	50.....	
Brownsville.....	10.....	
Allegheny & Mathews.....	25.....	
Union & Washington.....	45.....	
Pittsburg.....	30.....	
Amelia & Washington.....	130.....	
Bellfont.....	10.....	
Gettysburg.....	10.....	4 -
Green Castle.....	10.....	5/2 -
Columbia Bridge.....	30.....	2 -
Marietta.....	30.....	6 -
Steubenville.....	15.....	Returned
	<u>581</u>	<u>500</u>

7 P. d.

The above is a fac-simile of part of a receipt sent to Jacob Demuth by Tunis & Way, Philadelphia brokerage house. Here are listed the bank notes received and after each is written the discount it bore. There was no stabilized currency at that time and very little par money. The Steubenville note was returned because the bank was "unchartered and no good." This gives some idea of the difficulty of transacting business during that period.

THE SECOND GENERATION

Jacob Demuth assumed proprietorship of the business and conducted it just as his father had conducted it before him. He continued to operate the store and the factory up to the time of his death in 1842—a period of 28 years. He had assumed ownership just as the War of 1812 was being concluded. Other significant historical events during his proprietorship were the Southern Indian Wars, the beginning of the anti-slavery movement, the Black Hawk Indian War, the annexation of Texas and the beginning of our dispute with Mexico.



JACOB, SON OF CHRISTOPHER
1814-1842



LAWRENCE I. DEMUTH, SON OF JACOB
1843-1853



THE SECOND STORE

Jacob Demuth

Respected Friend

Philad. Oct. 16th 1816

Your 2^d favor of Oct. 8th & 14th are duly recd. & according to your request have selected 3 Hds. Tob. which are tolerably ready for delivery to your order. We should have procured for you a German Girl but there were no good ones for sale, next week we expect there will be some & if Mr. Flood will call upon us we will get it with him when he comes to town we will go with him & procure 2 for you, say one for your father the other for yourself. The pipes & bottles we will purchase for you & have ready when you send for the tobacco. We expect by Mr. Flood's way you will receive the pearl ash, as he promised

The above letter was written to Jacob Demuth by Tunis & Way, a Philadelphia brokerage firm dealing in everything from tobacco to sperm oil. The comment about "a German girl" is significant, referring to the fact that at that time immigrant girls were bartered like a commodity. They passed from one owner to another at an agreed price, much like livestock is sold today. There was a market price on immigrant girls which fluctuated as the demand and supply varied.

THE THIRD GENERATION



EMMANUEL, SON OF JACOB
1842-1843 and 1853-1864

Emmanuel E. Demuth, oldest son of Jacob, succeeded to the business on the death of his father. But after operating it for about one year, he sold it to his brother Lawrence I. Demuth. In 1853 Lawrence resold the property and business to Emmanuel and the latter continued in proprietorship until 1864. At that date, the business was purchased by a younger brother, Henry C. Demuth, who continued in business until his death, which occurred in 1906. This generation witnessed the Mexican War, the Civil War, the reconstruction of the South and the Spanish-American War.

Respected friend Philad. March 10. 1819
Jacob Demuth

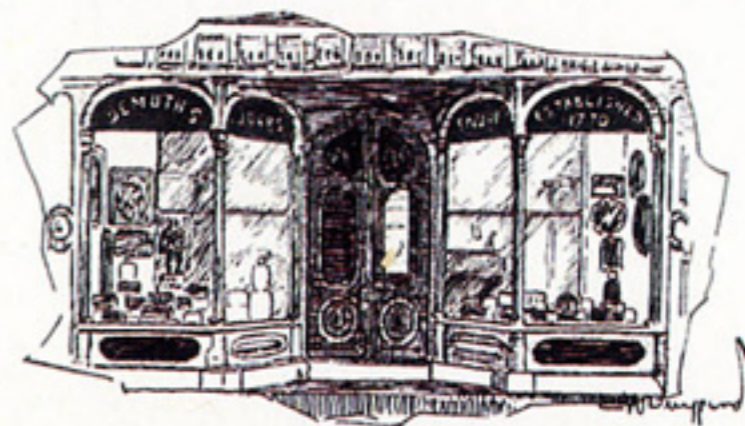
The segay orders from Maryland & the Spanish Tobacco are ready but we have not succeeded in procuring a conveyance for them by a Waggoner that we are acquainted with -

If any of the Waggoners known by you are coming to town you had better give an order for them - We received by your letter of 23 February last one hundred & fifty dollars for which we paid five dollars fifty cents disct. leaving 144.50 at your credit. Tobacco are very scarce with us at this time - Kentucky 10 to 12 1/2 - Virginias 12 @ 15 new - and the old about same price - we expect it will be lower in the course of a few weeks more especially when the Kentucky begins to come to Market in May next -

Your friends

Annexed we send your acct as Requested. Tunis & Way

This letter was written to Jacob Demuth by Tunis & Way, of Philadelphia, and illustrates the difficulties of transportation in the early nineteenth century. Merchants in Philadelphia who sold their goods to out-of-town customers had to depend on the slow and rather irregular movements of "Waggoners" for delivery of their wares.



THE THIRD STORE

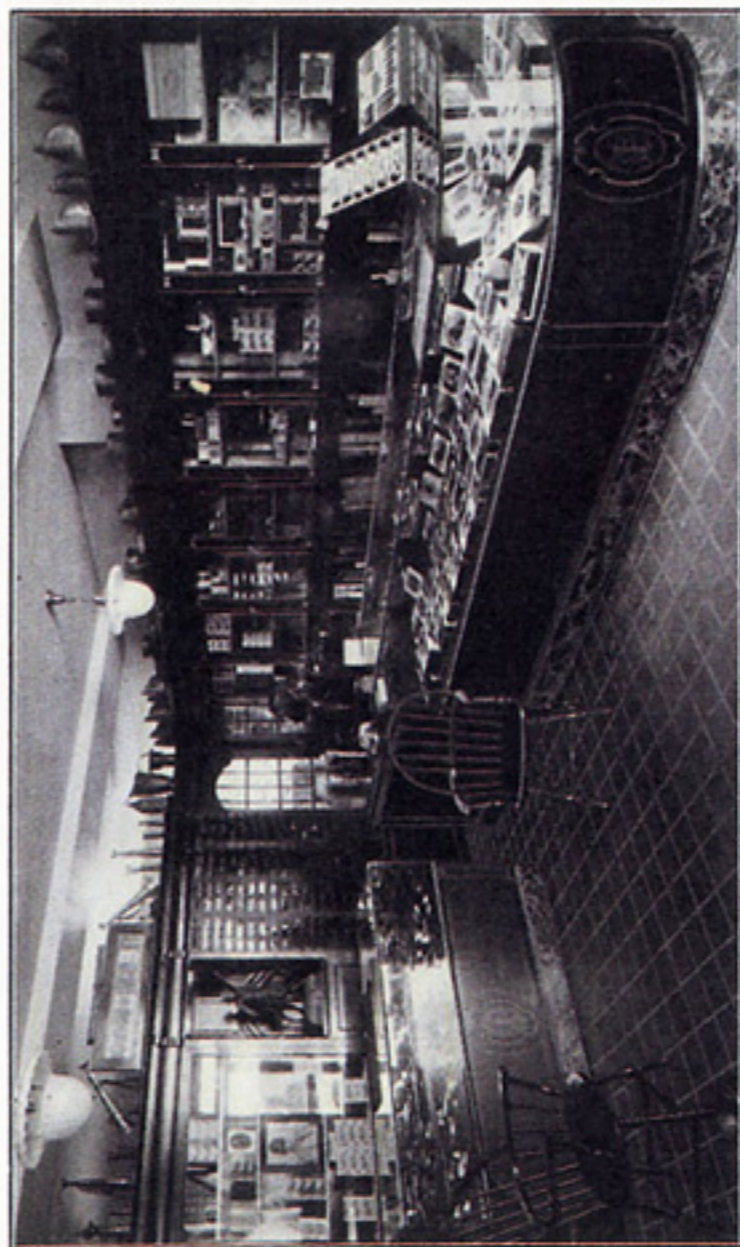


HENRY C., SON OF JACOB
1864-1906



One of the most treasured possessions of the Demuth Store is the original sign, a carved and painted wooden figure made in 1770. It is said to be one of the finest examples of Colonial carving in existence, portraying a typical gentleman of pre-Revolutionary days. It now stands in an honored niche in the present store.

DEMUTHS
ON THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY



114 EAST KING STREET, LANCASTER, PA.
OLDEST TOBACCO SHOP IN THE UNITED STATES



HENRY C., SON OF HENRY C.
Present Proprietor

THE DEMUTH SHOP AND LANCASTER

The Demuth shop has been much more to the community than a tobacco shop for years past. It has drawn across its threshold representative men of the city who there enjoyed many hours of pleasant social intercourse.

From time immemorial, the Demuth shop has been, after the old fashion that changeth not, much more than an ordinary snuff counter and tobacco box. It has been the resort of a notable clientele. In years gone by, the aristocrats of an earlier day, soldiers and statesmen, wits and beaux, lawyers, doctors and nearly always at least one smoke-perfumed clergyman, delighted in gathering there and discussing matters of large and small concern. Affairs of

state and of society, of funds and finance, law and literature, politics and picnics were touched upon with equal gravity and in the friendly atmosphere of tobacco smoke.

Here Justice Jasper Yeates, of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, bought his Rappee. Here President James Buchanan, laid in his stock of fine cigars for guests at "Wheatland."

Today, the present Demuth Tobacco Shop, more imposing than any of the preceding stores stands as a monument to a worthy family tradition being carried on in a worthy manner, a tradition that has few parallels in American history.



CHRISTOPHER, SON OF HENRY C.

Who served in the Rainbow Division and in the Army of Occupation during the Great War. He is now active in the operation of the business.

THE FOURTH GENERATION

Upon the death of Henry C. Demuth the business passed into the hands of his sons Ferdinand A. and Henry C. These brothers formed a partnership, which marked the first time in the history of the business that it had been under joint ownership. It seemed that the famous old tobacco shop was fated to be operated under single control, however, for five years later, on January 26, 1911, Ferdinand A. Demuth died. This left the business to the management of Henry, and he purchased his brother's interest from the estate. Since that time, H. C. Demuth has been conducting the time-honored business under his own name.



FERDINAND A., SON OF HENRY C.
1906-1911

THE BUSINESS TODAY

While the establishment at 114 East King Street is conducted as a retail store and has the appearance of a modern tobacco shop, the manufacturing end has never been discontinued. Mr. Demuth still makes several brands of Maccabey and Rappee Snuffs and scrap tobaccos. Demuth's "Golden Lion" and "Mia Querida" cigars have been manufactured for many years and enjoy a wide popularity, not only in the city of Lancaster but outside the boundaries of the state.



THE STORE TODAY