

The Bee Book
1846-1854
Mss.630.4.B43

American Philosophical Society
2003
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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Benbow, John, Jr.
Title	The Bee Book
Date [inclusive]	1846-1854
Call number	Mss.630.4.B43
Extent	1.0 Volume(s) 258 p.
Location	LH-MV-E-16
Language	English
Container	1
Abstract	<p>John Benbow, Jr., of Cowley Hall Mills, Middlesex, England, was an avid amateur beekeeper in the 1840s and 1850s. His "Bee Book" is a small (16mo) copiously illustrated treatise and journal of beekeeping. Divided into three parts -- "Other people's experiments," "Our own experiments," and an annual log (1846-1854) -- the book includes information on hive construction, seasonal management, the cleaning of hives, and other miscellaneous information culled both from printed sources and personal "experiments." The 44 pen and ink drawings include technical drawings of hives and beekeeping apparatus, along with humorous sketches of the activities of an "amateur apiarian."</p>
Preferred Citation	Cite as: John Benbow, The Bee Book, American Philosophical Society.

Background note

John Benbow, Jr., of Cowley Hall Mills, Middlesex, England, was an avid amateur beekeeper in the 1840s and 1850s.

Scope & content

John Benbow's "Bee Book" is a small (16mo) copiously illustrated treatise and journal of beekeeping, kept by an "amateur apiarist" in early Victorian England. Divided into three parts -- "Other people's experiments," "Our own experiments," and an annual log (1846-1854) -- the Bee Book includes information on hive construction, seasonal management, the cleaning of hives, and other miscellaneous information culled both from printed sources and personal "experiments."

Benbow jokingly records that his expenditures and pains (sometimes literal) resulted in no profits at all despite the increasing scope of his activities, but he notes proudly that he had introduced several innovations in hive design. The volume is enlivened with 44 illustrations that include technical drawings of hives and beekeeping apparatus, along with humorous sketches of the trials and tribulations of an "amateur apiarian." Three of these sketches, apparently unfinished, are in pencil, the rest in pen and ink.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society 2003

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Acquired from Bimelson, March 23, 1970 (accn. no. 1970-559ms).

Processing Information

Recatalogued by rsc, 2003.

Related Materials

Related Material

In addition to a number of 19th century books on bee keeping, the APS Library houses the papers of the American apiarist Lorenzo L. Langstroth, 1885-1895 (call no. B L265).

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Art
- Diaries
- Manuscript Essays
- Pen works
- Sketchbooks

Subject(s)

- Bee culture--Great Britain
- Beyond Early America

Other Descriptive Information

The “Bee Book” is a small, pocket-sized notebook kept by John Benbow, an amateur beekeeper. The journal is handwritten and has extensive and detailed sketches of beehives and beekeeping. The 250 page volume details beekeeping practices, customs, and stories. It contains a log of Benbow's practice from 1846-1854. The book is intended to be not only a guide to beekeeping, but also a source of entertainment and is filled with amusing anecdotes and sketches.

Index of illustrations

Collection Inventory

Index of illustrations

Bee Book, cover.

Bee Book, cover.

[\[http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:4520\]](http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:4520)

Bee hive p. 0

Bee hive.

[\[http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:4519\]](http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:4519)

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"Floor boards" p. 6

"Collateral hives and boxes" p. 9

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A swarm rises -- and is treated to the usual 'musical honours'	
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