LaGrange County, Account Book from Mongo, Indiana, 1839

Karen M. Wood

The village of Mongo, Indiana, is situated in Springfield Township in the eastern part of LaGrange County. Among the manuscript collections of the William H. Smith Memorial Library at the Indiana Historical Society is a store account book from Mongo (BV 112) containing entries from January to August 1839.

The name of this account book’s owner may have been inscribed on the inside cover of this daybook, but because no cover now exists, we cannot know for certain. A man by the name of Drusius/Drusus Nichols ran a grist mill, distillery, and store as early as 1836. From 1844–1846, he exported over one thousand barrels of flour per year out of Mongo. County history reports that Nichols died in 1848, and that Robert Dykes, a merchant living in nearby Lima Township, took possession of the store after Nichols’s death. However, the 1850 U.S. census demonstrates that a Drusus Nichols was very much alive in Springfield Township and lists his occupation as a mill owner. By 1860 Robert Dykes and family were living in Springfield Township. It is therefore possible that Nichols may have died sometime after 1850 and before 1860.

The account book consists of four hundred pages of daily accounts for goods. Information about customers listed on the first twenty-six pages has been obscured by newspaper clippings glued to the pages. The clippings include local events (marriages and deaths), recipes, fictional serials, and poetry. From page twenty-seven on, the account book provides the date, the customer’s name, and the list and cost of their goods. Items bought from the store include whiskey, brandy, or wine (by the gallon, half-gallon, or pint), butter, flour, sugar, salt, coffee, wheat, corn, eggs, buttons, ribbons, gimlets, hides, lumber, door handles, cloth, and much more.

The names of Springfield Township’s founders (John B. Clark, Jesse Huntsman, Joseph and Benjamin Foos, William Seaburn, Benjamin Jones, and William S. Prentiss) appear in the
account book, suggesting they lived in or near Mongo. Other frequently listed names include
Samuel Wellever, Thomas Elliston, Robert Wade, Otis Shephardson, Justus Hall, B. F. Sheldon,
William Legg, Harvey Omstead/Olmstead, George Donaldson, and Edwin Davis.⁵

Housed with the bound volume is a typed transcript of the names by page number as well
as a typed master name index (there is no record of who transcribed these names). With the
exception of page fifteen, which is still legible, the first twenty-six pages were not included in
the transcript. In an attempt to create a new master index, names in the typed transcript were
verified against the account book. If a name appeared in more than one way, both spellings,
separated by a slash mark (/), are provided here. First names abbreviated in the account book
have been spelled out.

Notes

1. Ira Ford, et al., ed., *History of Northeast Indiana: LaGrange, Steuben, Noble and DeKalb
2. As “Drusus” in Ford, *History of Northeast Indiana*, 175–176, and in the 1850 U.S. census,
   LaGrange County, Indiana, Springfield Township, page 72 [stamped], dwelling 955, family,
   961, Drusus Nichols household, NARA microfilm M432, roll 157; as “Drusius” in the 1840
   U.S. census, LaGrange County, Indiana, Springfield Township, page 314, NARA microfilm
   M704, roll 163; *Counties of LaGrange and Noble, Indiana: Historical and Biographical*
   (Chicago: F. A. Battey & Co., 1882), 201–02; 1850 U.S. census, LaGrange County, Indiana,
   East Lima Township, page 190 [written], dwelling 1294, family 1301, Robert Dykes
   household, NARA microfilm M432, roll 157.
3. On a still-living Nichols, see 1850 U.S. census, LaGrange County, Indiana, Springfield
   Township, page 72 [stamped], Drusus Nichols household; on the Dykes family, see 1860
   U.S. census, LaGrange County, Indiana, Springfield Township, page 62, dwelling 462, family
   454, Robert Dykes household, NARA microfilm M653, roll 274.
4. Daybook, January–August, 1839, Mongo, Indiana (BV 112), Indiana Historical Society, 121–
   22, 125–27, 132, 135, 216.
5. Ford, *History of Northeast Indiana*, 173, 175; Daybook, January–August, 1839, Mongo,
   Indiana.
# Name Index for LaGrange County, Account Book from Mongo, Indiana, 1839

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| Austin, John W. |  |
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| Brundage, Abner |  |
| Brundage, Allen |  |
| Bunnell, Samuell |  |
| Bunnell, Thomas |  |
| **C** | **Daicinb[er]y/Deusenbury/Dewsenbury, John**  
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**Dallas, Gordon**  
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| Canfield, [ ] |  |
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| Case, Andrew P. |  |
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| Caswell, Joseph |  |
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| Champlain, Widow |  |
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| Chapman, Moses S. |  |
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| Curtis, Alanson |  |
| **D** | **© 2010 Indiana Historical Society Press. All rights reserved.** |
Davidson, Joseph
Davis, Abner
Davis, Brinkley
Davis, Daniel
Davis, Edwin
Davis, Harrison
Davis, John
De[pu?], Levi
Deal, Coonrod/Conrod
Diggins, Luke
Dingman, William
Donaldson, George
Donaldson, Joseph
Dunbar, Arthur M.
Dunham, Mrs. ———
Dunham, Widow William
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Dunn, Daniel
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Dyer, Norman
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Eastlick, Jacob/Ja’c
Ellis, ———
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Emerson, Avery
Emerson, Hannah
Emerson, Jane
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V
Vanantwert/Vanantwerp, Daniel
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Vanantwerp/Vanantwerp, E., Estate of,
Vance, Lewis
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Wallace, Seth
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Wolcott, George
Wolgamott, Isaac
Wood, Harvey W.
Wood, Robert
Wright, Edward
Wright, Jeptha
Wright, Joel
Wright, Samuel H.
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