

**Gibson County, Patient Account Ledger of Dr. George C. Kendle,
September 1881–January 1890**

by K. L. Combs

The Indiana Historical Society’s William Henry Smith Memorial Library contains within its collections a number of items pertaining to Gibson County. This article features one of three patient account ledgers found in George C. Kendle, Medical Materials, 1877–1911 (Collection M0918). Dr. George C. (Cyrus) Kendle practiced medicine in the city of Princeton, Gibson County, Indiana, for approximately fifty years, from September 1881 until the early 1930s.¹ Born in Posey County on October 22, 1853, to James M. Kendle (b. ca. 1821 in Indiana, d. October 1868) and Josephine Louise Embree (b. March 23, 1832, in Indiana, d. April 1861), Kendle attended Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York City and graduated in 1879.² Following graduation Kendle married Louise E. Smyth (b. November 1856, d. after 1931) on November 11, 1879, in Gibson County and relocated to Abilene, Kansas, to begin his medical practice. In 1881 Kendle moved his practice to Princeton, Indiana, where he would remain until his death. The Kendles had two sons—Ralph B. Kendle (b. September 1880, d. after 1931), who married Mary E. Nelson; and Richard S. Kendle (b. December 1885, d. January 31, 1919), who married Mary Adith Cruthers. George died February 23, 1932, in Princeton, Indiana.³

The patient account ledger examined for this article is a cloth-bound book measuring approximately 8 inches by 12-9/16 inches. The ledger contains a tabbed alphabetized index, designated page numbers, and ruled and lined pages whereupon Kendle kept handwritten records pertaining to his patients.

Notations by Kendle within the ledger frequently include the full name of the individual responsible for the account if abbreviated or omitted in the index, the ailment being treated, the treatment recommended for remedy, the fee charged for Kendle’s services, and how the patient paid the bill. Kendle generally noted the marital status of female patients by writing “Mrs.” or “Miss” before their names. For African American patients Kendle used the designation “Col.” or “Colored” in parentheses following the name of the individual in the index or the ledger.

Kendle's ledger provides genealogists and historians with clues regarding the inhabitants of Princeton and surrounding Gibson County, as well as nearby Kentucky and Illinois, from late 1881 to early 1894. Patients' accounts mention family or household members whom Kendle treated by their first name or familial relationship to the account holder, such as "wife." In some instances, Kendle notes where the individual resided, to whom he/she was related, or his/her occupation. Entries within each account include both debits and credits made by or assigned to the individual responsible for the account. Notations for charges against the account often are abbreviated. "Med." presumably refers to Kendle providing either medicine or medical treatment to a household member. Some notations state a specific medical treatment, such as delivering babies or assisting another doctor with a medical procedure. While cash was the standard form of payment, individuals occasionally paid in produce, livestock, or labor. Sometimes others made partial payments to an account on behalf of the individual.

Some of the ledger's accounts deal with matters apart from the medical treatment of Gibson County individuals and their households. Kendle lists charges to the Board of Princeton for his salary as health officer as well as charges to the county for treating individuals at both the children's home and poor house. Entries setting out charges to specific insurance companies for an individual's life policy examination are of particular interest. Some life insurance companies Kendle mentions, such as Aetna Life, New York Life, and Mutual Life of New York, are recognized still today. Finally, the ledger contains Kendle's personal expenditures for house and barn, yearly office expenditures and receipts, and instructions for preparing medicinal prescriptions.

Listed below are the names recorded in the index at the front of Kendle's patient account ledger for the years 1881 to 1894 along with the page number(s) upon which each individual's account was written. Any errors regarding page numbers can be attributed to Kendle himself. Due to Kendle's sometimes illegible handwriting, brackets around letters or names indicate doubt regarding spelling. If Kendle did not write "(Col.)" beside a name in the index but wrote it following the name in the account itself, then "African American" has been added in brackets following the individual's name. Occasionally Kendle only wrote a person's surname in the index. Therefore, when possible the first name has been taken from the account and appears italicized in brackets following the surname.

Notes

1. 1900 U.S. census, Patoka Township, Gibson County, Indiana, roll T623, enumeration district 14, page 20A, family number 409, George C. Kendle; George C. Kendle, *Medical Materials, 1877–1911*, M0918, Biographical Sketch, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, http://www.indianahistory.org/library/manuscripts/collection_guides/M0918.html; Gil R. Stormont, *History of Gibson County Indiana: Her People Industries and Institutions* (1914; repr., Evansville, IN: Unigraphic, Inc., 1977), 178, 181.
2. Charles Roll, *Indiana: One Hundred and Fifty Years of American Development* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1931), 4:398; *General Alumni Catalogue of New York University, 1833–1907: Medical Alumni* (New York: General Alumni Society, 1908), 269, 667, online at Google Book Search.
3. Roll, *Indiana: One Hundred and Fifty Years of American Development*, 4:398; Stormont, *History of Gibson County*, 181; “Deaths,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 98, no. 14 (April 2, 1932): 1203.

Patient Account Ledger of G. C. Kendle

The names of individuals Kendle treated or examined for either the Gibson County children's home and poor house or the various insurance companies are not listed in the ledger's index. The index also does not include listed names dedicated to Kendle's annual receipts and expenditures.

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