

**Vigo County, List of Names in J. B. Jenckes's
Justice of the Peace Ledger, 1832–1843**

Karen M. Wood

Vigo County, Indiana, is situated in the western part of the state bordering Illinois to the west, Sullivan County to the south, Clay County to the east, and Vermillion and Parke counties to the north. The county's Lost Creek Township received its name because of the peculiar flow of a creek running through the township; it spread "over the sand prairies on leaving this township and having no outlet to the river" formed a swamp, creating a hazardous environment for the inhabitants. A ditch was built to redirect the flow of the creek and stop it from spilling onto the sand prairies. This change affected the environmental landscape of the prairie, producing the best farmland in the county.¹

Housed at the Indiana Historical Society are the Jenckes Family Papers, 1829–1841. The collection includes two folders—one with personal letters, the other with loose papers removed from within the ledger—and a ledger dated from 1832 until 1843. Jerathmel B. Jenckes (signed J. B. Jenckes in the ledger) was the first justice of the peace for Lost Creek Township, and his case records are in the ledger. Personal notes are contained in the second folder of the collection.²

The Jenckes family settled in Lost Creek Township in the 1820s. The personal letters indicate that the Jenckes brothers borrowed money to buy available farmland in Indiana from Nicholas Brown in Rhode Island, from where the Jenckes family likely migrated. In a letter dated May 10, 1830, Jerathmel B. Jenckes wrote to Brown informing him of the need to borrow \$200 more for agricultural purposes, helping them with their investment in the grain and whiskey businesses. He also informed Brown that his brother Joseph would be in Rhode Island that following summer, alluding to the possibility that the Jenckes family still had ties to their former home.³

Jenckes owned at least eighty acres in 1830, and by 1840, he had a family, including a wife and two young children under the age of five. Considering the trades of his brothers, he may have been a farmer as well as a judge.⁴ In the nineteenth-century United States, a justice of the peace was a judge whose authority extended over local jurisdictions such as a township or county. State laws gave justices of the peace the authority to oversee civil court cases and few criminal cases, maintaining their status as “Keepers of the Peace.”⁵

J. B. Jenckes's ledger is over one hundred pages long and ranges in date from 1832 to 1843. On the inside cover of the ledger and onto the first page, Jenckes attempted to arrange an index numbering the cases by using the surnames titled in each case. The first fifty pages of the ledger were examined, and the names recorded are displayed below in alphabetical order. The list includes names of plaintiffs, defendants, and others mentioned in an entry. The cases within the ledger consist mainly of civil cases regarding debt owed by the defendant to the plaintiff, or as Jenckes found on occasion, vice versa. Costs include the debt and the cost of the filed suit. In some instances, Jenckes lists the mathematical explanation of how much the suit costs beneath the case record, detailing the cost of summons, judgment, and execution; the constable and his traveling expenses; and the witness and his or her traveling expenses. A few interesting cases that Jenckes presided over include horse stealing and the beating of a “man of color” on the public highway.

Many of the names reappear throughout the ledger. Joel Reeves, for example, appears in approximately fifteen cases in just the first fifty pages. Most of the names usually appear two or three times, but several others including Reeves spent a good amount of time with Jenckes.⁶ Some of the people named in the cases, such as Thomas Patterson, Samuel Dickerson, and David Swalls, were also mentioned in the biographical sketches within Beckwith's *History of Vigo and Parke Counties*.⁷

Notes

1. Hiram W. Beckwith, *History of Vigo and Parke Counties: Together with Historic Notes on the Wabash Valley, Gleaned from Early Authors, Old Maps and Manuscripts, Private and Official Correspondence, and Other Authentic ... Sources* (1880; repr., Evansville, IN: Unigraphic, Inc., 1974), map insert, 386.

2. Jenckes Family Papers, 1829–1841, William H. Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society; Beckwith, *History of Vigo and Parke Counties*, 388.
3. Letter from John Jenckes to Nicholas Brown, esq., March 2, 1829, Folder 1, Jenckes Family Papers; Letter from Jerathmel Jenckes to Nicholas Brown, esq., May 10, 1830, Folder 1, Jenckes Family Papers.
4. Henry C. Bradsby, *History of Vigo County, Indiana: with Biographical Selections*, (1891; repr., Evansville, IN: Unigraphic, 1969), 217, 225, 227, 228; “Jerathmel B. Jenckes, December 2, 1830,” IN0040__297, United States. Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records (<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov>); 1840 U.S. census, Vigo County, Indiana, Lost Creek Township, pages 813–14, J. S. Jenckes, NARA microfilm M704, roll 424.
5. Samuel Bayard, *An Abstract of Those Laws of the United States which Relate Chiefly to the Duties and Authority of the Judges of the Inferior State Courts, and the Justices of the Peace, throughout the Union; Illustrated by Extracts from English Law Books : to Which is Added, an Appendix, Containing a Variety of Useful Precedents* (New York: Printed for the author, 1804), 2, 11–12, 17.
6. Ledger, Jenckes Family Papers.
7. Beckwith, *History of Vigo and Parke Counties*, 386, 395, 400.

List of Names in J. B. Jenckes's Justice of the Peace Ledger, 1832–1841

A

Alliston, Joseph
Anderson, David
Anderson, Jacob
Anderson, M. G. [could be same as Mathew]
Anderson, M. S. [could also be Mathew]
Anderson, Mathew G.
Anderson, Nathan

B

Barker, Ira
Barnett, _____
Baxter, F.
Blake, John
Blakesl[e]y, J.
Bly__[k]ing, Simon
Bradford, J. C.
Britton, John
Brock, Harvey
Brotherton, T[rue]man
Barnett, William P.
Burgett, Peter

C

Campbell, Alexander
Carrico, Charles
Caverly, Peter [T.]
Chandler, Isaac
Chappel, Phillip
Clark, Ephraim
Clark, Isaac
Clark, John A.
Clark, Samuel
Clark, W. G.
Cochran, C.
Condit, D. D.
Conner, Anthony B.
Conard, Jesse
Cooper, Martin S.
Cox, Joel
Cox, William
Cunningham, Richard

D

Davidson, Peter
Davis, Joshua
Davis, Pallas P.
Dickerson, _____
Dickerson, John
Dickerson, S. B.
Dickerson, Samuel
Dickerson, Stephen

Dickerson, W.
Dowling, _____
Downs, _____
Duncan, Gr[ee]r B.
Dyer, Samuel

E

Ellingsworth, William
Ellis, Stephen
Evans, George
Eversole, Noah

F

Forkner, William H.

G

Gardner, Jacop
Garner, John
Garthwait[h], Jacob
Goddard, Elizabeth*
Goddard, W[illia]m
Godwin, Nathan
Goodrich, Jacob
Graham, John L.
Gray/Grey, M.
Guenther, Daniel

H

Hamilton, John
Hamilton, John Jr.
Hamilton, Peter
Hamilton, William
Harpole, A.
Hatfield, Aaron
Hauley, Stephen
Hays, C.
Hays, Henry
Henderson, Joseph
Hogue, William
Hoskins, Joseph
Huff, John
Huffmann, John
Huffman, William
Hunt, _____

J

Jackson, Jacob
Jackson, Joel
Jackson, John R.
Jackson, Sam[ue]l

Jenckes, Joseph S.
Johnson, Luke
Jones, W[illia]m

K

Kelly, James
King, Edward
King, John F.
Knox, Enock

L

Lance, John
Lang, James
Lathom, George
Lee, J.
Little, Jonas
Lovall/Loveall, Aaron
Luttrell, Jos.
Lybyher, Daniel S. P.

M

McAvoy, James
McGranahan, David
MacKie, John
McKie, John Jr.
Mann, John
Martin, Jacob
Martin, Lewis
Mills, Nicholas
Mit[z]gar, Joseph
Moffatt, James T.
Montgomery, E.
Montgomery, Evelin
Montgomery, Hart
Moore, Clark
Moore, L./Levi
Moore, Zebulon

N

Nevins, Andrew
Nichols, Peter
Noble, C. T.

P

Parker, Greene
Patterson, H. W.
Patterson, Thomas B.
Peck, Charles
Pegg, Alfred
Perkins, Flecher R.
Perkins, Solomon
Phillips, W[illia]m
Price, Israel
Price, Jeremiah

Price, Michael
Price, Silas

R

Rector, Alfred M.
Reeve, Elias
Reeves, D. G.
Reeves, Daniel
Reeves, Jonas
Reeves, Joel
Reeves, L.
Reeves, Zadoc
Richards, Louis
Ripley, Sylvenus
Rogers, Parker
Roberts, Hezekiah
Roberts, Kinchen
Robertson, Jonas
Robinson, Stephen
Ryckman, Bethuel

S

Sal[l], Abner
Scha[m]mer[h]orn, Charles
Scroggins, Benj[amin]
Sedam, M.W.
Shelp, Christopher
Shelp, D.C.
Shelp, Harry
Sheppard, Hiram
Sheppard, Louis
Shull, Louis
Simarl, Samuel
Simarl, William
Simeral, William
Slaven[s], Samuel
Smith, David
Smith, James
Solomon, John
Stewart, Tarwel
Story, Oliver A.
Swalls, David

T

Tarvin, Elisha
[Tobeye], Eleazer
Turner, John
Turner, Levi
Turner, Nelson

V

Vest, Thos.
Van Metre, E.

W

Warth, Abraham
Watkins, W.
Watson, John H.
West, D./Daniel
Westfall, J.
Wheeler, Edwin C.
Wilgis, R.
Williams, John
Wines, Leonard
Wines, William
Winningham, B.
Wood, John
Wood, Robert

Y

Yocum, George P.

* Elizabeth Goddard was the only woman named as the defendant or plaintiff for the first 50 pages of the ledger. Although most women did not involve themselves in civil court disputes, this woman's name imprinted in the ledger signifies that some women did.

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