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## Luther Mosely Daybook

1842-1846

1 volume (0.25 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 249



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Homeopathic physician from Arlington, Vermont. Daybook contains patients' names, including many women, identification of some cases (such as vaccination, extraction of teeth, treatment of swellings, fractures, and burns, and the delivery of babies), methods of treatment (such as purges, bleeding, cupping, and the use of blistering ointments), prices for his services, and method and form of payment (including goods such as fruits, vegetables, meats, clothes, and services such as butchering and timbering). Also contains personal entries and notation of goods he sold such as poultry, leathers, and fabrics.

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## Background on Luther Mosely

Luther Mosely was born in Vermont in 1807. There is little information about his early years, but by 1838 he had established a medical practice in Arlington, Vermont. Mosely and his wife Sarah (b.1820) had three children: Georgiana (b.1839), Luther Jr. (b.1845), and Sarah (b.1849). Luther Jr. also became a doctor, and father and son may have worked together. The senior Mosely made a comfortable living from medicine. By 1870 he owned \$3000 in personal property. He also owned \$6000 in Arlington real estate, including two lots on Main Street. Mosely continued his practice in the town until 1876, when he either moved away or died.

## Scope of collection

His single-volume account book covers the years 1842-1846. As one of three doctors for a town of 1000, he built up an extensive practice by 1842. The volume is a daybook, with final accounts totaled elsewhere. The pages are numbered in the top corners, from 2-543. Most pages are headed with a date, as are each day's entries. The volume is two-column, for debits and credits. There are some loose papers, such as a tuition bill (1859) and a bill for hauling. There are also a few personal notations, including trips to the Vermont capitol of Montpelier and his son's birth in 1845.

Many of the entries are simply debits "to travel, visit and medicine" for a patient, who is usually named. By the end of the volume, these entries were so common that Mosely began abbreviating to "T.V.M." Other entries are more detailed. Frequent cases included vaccinating, extracting teeth, and treating swellings, fractures, and burns. Mosely also performed operations and amputations. Some of his operations and cases were complex, suggesting an academic background rather than just an apprenticeship in medicine. He belonged to the homeopathic school of medicine, which was dominant in this period. He frequently used emetics, purges, bleeding ("venesection"), blistering ointments ("epispastics") and cupping (extraction of blood by a vacuum). Mosely prescribed a wide range of medicines, including acetate lead, arsenic, cream of tartar, iodine, morphine, and opium. His prices varied, apparently according to the patient's financial circumstances, or if the case was a difficult one. For example, he generally charged \$3.50 to deliver a baby. But some patients were only charged \$1.50, others \$4.00. The basic "travel, visit and medicine" charge varied if Mosely had to go out in bad weather, or late at night.

Mosely's practice included many women. Some are listed under their husbands' names, but many seem to be independent. Mosely probably had some training in obstetrics and gynecology. In addition to delivering babies, he prescribed and fitted pessaries (a device used for uterine support, but in the 19th century it was a contraceptive). Though the entries do not detail why pessaries were used, they raise interesting questions about women's lives in the 1800s. Mosely also sold at least one "Female syringe," which could again be a type of contraceptive.

A variety of goods and services were accepted as credits, including fruits and vegetables, meats, clothes, butchering, and timbering. In addition to medicine, Mosely also made money from selling poultry, leathers, and fabrics. He did not record how he acquired these goods, just when he sold them.

His patients included the Canfield family, the most prominent and numerous in Arlington. Hards, Mattesons, Milligans, Oatmans, and Purdys were also frequent patients.

## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Acquired from Charles Apfelbaum, 1987.

### Processing Information

Processed by Lisa May, June 1989.

### Language:

English

### Acknowledgments

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## Search terms

### Subjects

Arlington (Vt.)--Social conditions--19th century--Sources.  
Contraception--Vermont--Arlington--History--19th century--Sources.  
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Medicine--Practice--Vermont--History--19th century--Sources.  
Mosely, Luther, b. 1807.  
Pessaries.  
Women--Medical care--Vermont--Arlington--History--19th century--Sources.

### Contributors

Mosely, Luther, b. 1807 [main entry]

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