

"Trade & Business is beginning to loom up & I hope the great panic of 1873 is about to end"—6 May 1877

Highly detailed combination manuscript diary and household expense account book, **1876 to 1879**, meticulously kept by farmer JOHN ALONZO FRENGER of Staunton, Augusta County, Virginia. For reasons outlined below, Frenger's notably thoughtful volume offers excellent insights into the cheerful fortitude and slow economic progress of a well-educated Northern Virginia farmer during this difficult era.

John Frenger wrote highly distilled entries in his diary (which totals 71 pages) two or three times each month, generally detailing each period's seasonal farm and business rounds, *i.e.*: the planting, harvesting, and selling of crops; frequent trips to several towns in surrounding counties to purchase specified supplies and household goods or to visit friends; his purchase and sale of farm and timber land; stages in his improvement of his farm and home; and the gradual improvement in his economic position over the course of these four years. Frenger also here chronicled health complaints, his cheerfulness and religious faith, his neighbors' funerals and marriages, salient weather events and trends, and his frequent attendance at several different local churches including that of the Dunkards. Frenger—evidently a Hayes Republican!—also *mentions* a goodly number of political events, gruesome train wrecks, Yellow Fever incidents, and news tidbits about several family members, including WILLIAM H. H. FRENGER, editor & proprietor of *The Allegany Tribune* of Covington, Virginia. From these wide-ranging entries we also learn that John Frenger worked part-time as a Federal Internal Revenue agent at a local distillery, enjoyed berrying in the mountains, and traveled by train to Winchester to participate in "*the Floral Decoration of C.S. Dead Heroes [amidst] the largest crowd I ever saw in Winchester.*"

Frenger's equally detailed, equally distilled farm and household \$ accounts (totaling 109 pages) include his precise monthly listings of all manner of expenditures and receipts. Expenses *include* farm labor (*e.g.*, "*Negroe for mowing half day, 25¢*"), tobacco, medicines, whiskey, farm tools and their repair, travel, land, livestock, fertilizer, legal work, toys and books for children, household goods bought "*at Levy's,*" and charitable donations including "*to the church at camp meeting.*" Receipts include Frenger's sales of various specified farm produce, land, his Internal Revenue Service agent's salary, and interest collected on notes.

Small folio, calf-backed boards, 180 PAGES, *i.e.*, 71 pages of diary entries + 109 pages of \$ accounts. Binding worn, back cover detached but present; contents very good, clean, and legible. ~~_____~~