

HIGH COST OF LIVING IN '36

Account Book of Mead & Arms

In dismantling the old F.M. Ladd store preparatory to putting in feed-grinding machinery, F.S. Hubbell made an interesting find a few days ago in the shape of what is probably the first day book kept in the village of Milford.

It was the property of Mead & Arms, and its first entries are memoranda made under the date of February 23, 1836.

Local historians tell us that the first store in the village was established by Jabesh M. Mead and his brother-in-law, Ansley S. Arms, in 1836, in the little frame building now standing near the Main street river bridge, but which was originally near the Neeland residence on Huron street. The book is 16 inches long, 7 1/2 inches wide and 2 1/2 inches thick, most substantially bound in calf and the entries on its pages have faded but little in the 76 years since they were written. Incidentally it might be mentioned, that the plain legible handwriting with letters almost as perfect as though cut in steel plate, would put to shame the average person's writing in this day and age of boasted educational advantages.

A peculiarity of the bookkeeping is that in every case the price per yard, pound, or whatever the unit may be is indicated on every item in shilling and cents and the amount carried out in dollars and cents. For instance:

To 1 broom	2 6	.31
2 lbs. sugar	1 4	.33

The stock appears to have included nearly everything that the necessities of the people required, in the line of drugs, medicines, clothing, hardware, etc., as well as some liquor and tobacco.

We grumble about the high cost of living but in those days they had the real thing on many articles and there was no suggestion that it was mixed with the "cost of high living". Following are a few of the prices:

Sugar cost 17 cents, six pounds for a dollar; salt \$1.13 per bushel; tea 88 cents a lb.; coffee 22c; rice, 9 cents; hops 50 cents; pepper 25 cents; cloves 25 cents; mackerel 13 cents; raisins 25 cents; codfish 9 cents; saleratus 18 cents. A ball of wicking cost 22 cents, thread 12 cents per spool. Dry goods per yard—shirting 16 to 19c; factory 21 cents; ticking 31 cents; flannel 75 cents, calico 17 to 30c, gingham 38c.

In the hardware line a hatchet cost \$1.50; axe \$2.00; 2 tin pans 75c; nails 13 cents lb.; shave knife \$1.50. 2 gimlets 25c; 1 file 69c, 1 hoe 75c, tin pail 75c, 1 saw \$1.50. Quart lamp oil 44c. A quire of writing paper cost 31c, 6 lemons 38c, tobacco 38c lb., bottle of ink 18c; molasses 88c gal.; powder \$1 per lb.; paper pins 12c. Quills cost \$1.25 per 100 at wholesale.

Eggs were taken on account at from 12c in summer to 18c in winter. Butter was as high as 25c in winter. Oats were allowed for at from 30c to 40c, onions 75c, potatoes from 25 to 31c. Prices for wheat and flour nowhere appear as that trade was wholly through the grist mills.

Boots and shoes cost anywhere up to \$4.00 per pair, while ladies' bonnets are charged as high as \$2.75 each.

Days' works are repeatedly credited at about 88 cents, although \$1.00 in one place for "work on the road". The farmer could haul in a load of slabs and receive credit for 19 cents.

Glancing over the pages are seen many names that we have frequently heard in connection with early history as well as many others not so well known. It is quite possible that the old book contains the names of nearly all the pioneer householders of that day in this and some of the neighboring townships. Among the names recorded we find those of Aaron Phelps, A.S. Arms, Luman Fuller, Leonard Phillips, Wm Foreman, John Bowers, Alanson Crawford, John Vincent, Calvin Eaton, Moses Newman, Stanley Ruggles, Henry Ruggles, John Davis, Morris Andrus, Wm. Potts, Joseph Openo, Nancy Openo, Lyman Bennett, Henry Hosmer, Stephen L. Clark, Wm. Andrews, Willis Stephens, Elizur Ruggles, Pliny Philipps, Isaiah J. Hudson, Lyman Bennett, Jesse Tenny, Archibald Nelson, Abijah Wixom, Wm. Hale, Wm. Kinney, Michael Beach, Erastus I. Smith, Squire Rowe, Daniel Rowe, Crocker Hastings, Christopher Hosmer, James Gamble, James Palmer, E.I. Smith, Elias Armstrong, Johnson Balcom, Abel Peck, Abner Hyde, Peter Lambert, Job G. Bigelow, Duncan McCall, Richard Sutton, John Glines, A. Hubbell, I.G. Horton, George Lee, Noble Ruggles, James Brophy, Jabez Dennison, Peter McPherson, Austin Sturges, Daniel Morgan, Thomas I. Wheeler, Samuel Hubbard, Jehial Culver, Daniel Dunham, peter Alger, Rufus Tenny, Almerin Hodge, Abner Knapp, Patrick Gillick, Hubbard Bullard, Nelson Hubbard, Horace Hubbard, Enos Leek, Adam Coonrad, Thos. R. Field, Henry K. Foote, Harvy Steel, Daniel Houghton, John L. Hayes, Eli Lee, J.F.

Stratton, Nathan D. Calkins, Robert Rutherford, James M. Sample, Truman Fox, John Cosart, James Mendon, Frederick Pryor, Alfred Hayes, James Miller, Henry L. Teeple, John Chamberlain, Job Cranston, Amos Waltherhouse, Leonard W. Perkins, Jerry Woodruff, J.M. Mead, Thomas Bourns, Joseph Laning, Russel Alvord, Abraham Harding, Americus V. Alvord, John Tillapaugh, John Kesby, Robt. Pierson.