

Finding Aid to the Benson and Johnsgard General Store Financial Records

Benson and Johnsgard General Store (Christine, N.D.)

Benson and Johnsgard General Store Financial Records, 1895-1907

1 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 306

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OVERVIEW

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Elizabeth Pizalla, 1998 (Acc. 2515).

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Citation: [Identification of item]. Benson and Johnsgard General Store Records, MS 306, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

HISTORY

Austin Johnsgard and Aslag Benson purchased the Benson and Johnsgard General Store, formerly the Olaf Monger General Store, in Christine, North Dakota in 1891. They managed the store together for seven years, until Johnsgard bought Benson out. According to a brief history of the Johnsgard family, the store was “much like all general stores, the sales area of the first floor carried an extensive line of merchandise, including furniture.” Johnsgard continued to manage the store for sixty years until 1954 when he sold it to his son Ortley. Ortley promptly sold it to a non-relation, and it continued to exist until 1977.

Austin Johnsgard was born December 11, 1864 in Lansing, Iowa to Norwegian immigrants. He came to Dakota Territory in 1885 and lived near Walcott, N.D. for a time. In 1889 he went into partnership with Aslag Benson. Austin married Sophie Monson in 1895 and they raised eight children. Sophie died August 5, 1946 and Austin on August 15, 1951.

Aslag Benson was born January 16, 1855 in Norway and came to America in 1865. He was an early resident of Christine, N.D. and went into partnership with Austin Johnsgard in operating a store in Christine. After the partnership with Johnsgard was dissolved Mr. Benson farmed in the area. He also served in the North Dakota Senate from 1903 to 1906. He married wife Guri circa 1883 and they raised four children. He died July 19, 1937 and wife Guri died in 1951.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Benson and Johnsgard General Store records consist entirely of six financial records. The volumes document purchases, sales, credits, and debits and stock inventories from 1895 to 1907. The records provide a nice glimpse into the business transactions of a small town general store. The ledgers also provide interesting information on what individuals purchased at the store.

The volumes have been organized into a single [Financial Records Series](#) consisting of six bound volumes dating from 1895 to 1907. The Inventory volumes document the merchandise stock held by the store together with the value of each item. The Day Books cover from October 29, 1903 to Dec. 31, 1904. They record the sales of each day, to whom sold and what was sold. Each entry also includes the page in the ledger where the transaction was posted. The Ledgers include a name index to the people that had accounts with the store. There is also a brief history of the Johnsgard family, written by Elizabeth Pizalla, found in the folder with a copy of the finding aid.

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Finding Aid, and Historical Information
	Financial Records Series
	Inventories—
1/2	1895
1/3	1895-1896
1/4	1906-1907
	Day Book—
1/5	1903-1904

	Ledgers—	
1/6		1901-1903
1/7		1904-1905