

**McLean County Museum of History**

**George Dietrich Collection**

Processed by  
Carol Straka  
Spring 2018

**Collection Information**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1844 – 1867, 1910, 1983, 2011.
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	From multiple donors.

## Brief History

George Dietrich (1816-1900) was born in Bevidere, New Jersey, to Pennsylvania parents of German descent. The seventh of nine children, he apprenticed to a tinsmith. In 1838, at age 22, he travelled west and eventually settled in Illinois. He selected Bloomington based a gazetteer and arrived in 1839. Here he purchased some tinner's tools left by the failed business of the Freyliers Brothers. Brother John Dietrich arrived in 1844 or 45, and joined in the hardware business. Eventually, Dietrich sold his interest in the business to his brother and nephew and moved to Normal. In 1875 he left Normal and lived successively in Texas, New York, Missouri, and Washington and engaged in land speculation in Missouri. He is buried in Bloomington's Evergreen Cemetery.

Dietrich wed Harriett Munsell in 1842 and the couple had four children. His wife died in 1857, and he married her sister, Elizabeth Munsell, in 1861.

A musician, he led Bloomington's first band. He held strong abolitionist views at a time when that was considered a somewhat radical position. Because of his views, his home was mobbed and another time he was egged when accompanying abolitionist speaker Owen Lovejoy.

## Scope

Biographies, personal and business correspondence, business receipts and ledgers.

## Box and Folder Inventory

### Folder 1: Leinicke Biography

- 1.1 "George Dietrich: Your Helpful Hardware Man," by Linda M. Leinicke, 5 April 1983. 24 pp. 2 copies.

### Folder 2: Correspondence, etc.

- 2.1 Revd J. M. Sturtevant at Illinois College in Jacksonville to George Dietrich, concerning night shirt he'd presumably left behind at their home, 6 July 1867.
- 2.2 John Magoun to George Dietrich, testifying to the integrity of friend James R. Means, 1 March 1854(?).
- 2.3 Unidentified at Bloomington to Mr. Charlie Parker concerning letter and draft just received and an overpayment of \$3.23, 28 Nov 1854.
- 2.4 George D. at Bloomington to Friend Cotterell concerning enclosed draft to Mr. Geo Farr to pay the well digger and for plastering and boarding(?), etc., 14 Nov 1856. Appears that Cotterell may be Commissioner at General Land Office.

- 2.5 Geo. Dietrich at Bloomington to V. Fell concerning unpaid note receivable, 29 Nov 1856.
- 2.6 Geo. Dietrich in account with Jas. Grover, 23 Nov 1852 to 27 April 1858. Purchases are largely candles and soap.
- 2.7 Two sheets of stray notes and computations.

**Folder 3: Correspondence with Brother John Dietrich**

- 3.1 Biography of Col. John Dietrich from *Biographies from Historical and Biographical Annals* by Morton Montgomery, pp 39-42 as accessed on line 15 Jun 2011.
- 3.2 Printout of Past Perfect entry for Geo. Dietrich, 15 Jun 2011.
- 3.3 Photocopy of newspaper article "Letters from Bloomington in 1844," concerning two letters written by the late Geo. Dietrich and found amongst the belongings of the late Col. John Dietrich. 12 May 1910. Includes text of one letter and extracts from the other letters.
- 3.4 Letter: John Dietrich at Belvidere, NJ, to George Dietrich at Bloomington, is concerning the death of their father and his will, family's plans including those for tavern, etc., 21 Jan 1844. 2 sheets.
- 3.5 Typed transcript of the above letter.
- 3.6 Letter: George Dietrich at Bloomington to Brother John, concerning death of their father news of Blm. persons and businesses, inviting John to return to Blm and join the business, 14 Feb 1844. See item 3.3 above for transcription of this letter.

**Folder 4: Financial receipts, etc.** Fourteen items, invoices, receipts, etc., 1846-1867 with most from mid 1850s.

**Folder 5: Index to Ledgers**

Alphabetical index by name of account holder. 16 sheets.

**Loose Hardware Business Ledgers:**

1845-49: "Geo. Dietrich's & Dietrich & Brothers Book of Accounts " 328 pp.

1849-56. 430 pp.