

Dover, Vermont
Account Books
XMSC 28: 1-23

Introduction

This collection consists of 23 account books from the town of Dover, Vermont. The account books, consisting of a variety of daybooks, ledgers and one cash book, were kept by at least 3, possibly 4, separate businesses in the Dover area. The largest grouping is from a general mercantile located in West Dover and consists of 19 books, in which there is a mixture of daybooks, ledgers and one cash book. These account books are from 1829 to 1871 and cover the period in which the store was owned by William H. Jones. The remaining four books consist of 2 paperbound daybooks, which may be from W.H. Jones' store; one daybook from a public house, owned by Cyrus Knapp, in the Estabrook area of Dover; and one daybook belonging to James W. Shipman, a cobbler.

Biographical Sketches

West Dover General Mercantile (1829-1871)

The West Dover General Mercantile was established in 1826 by Water Gillett and J Loomis. Between 1826 and 1829, W.H. Jones bought out J. Loomis' share in the store and became Gillett's partner. By 1829, when the accounting records in this collection begin, Water Gillett's store was known as "W. Gillett's & Co." April 17, 1832, W.H. Jones bought the store in partnership with Jephtha Lyman, who furnished both the building and \$2,000 with Jones providing \$476. The store became known as "Lyman and Jones."

After three years, the Lyman and Jones partnership was dissolved, and Jones took on John Simonds as a new partner. Renamed "Simonds and Jones," this partnership lasted from 1835 to 1836, after which Joseph Franklin became Jones' new partner. "Jones and Franklin" lasted from 1836 to April 1, 1841. From 1841 to 1856, W.H. Jones ran the store with a variety of silent partners, including Morris Stetson and Jedediah Estabrook. After 1856, Jones ran the store alone.

In 1864, Jones partnered with his son William F. Jones – this partnership, "W.H. Jones and Son," would last until 1871, when the Jones' sold the store to William F Converse.

During his 38 years as major proprietor, W.H. Jones never closed for a holiday. Every December 25, July 4 and Thanksgiving Thursday, business proceeded as usual. Jones also served as community banker – lending small amounts (\$5, \$10 or \$25) to various customers. These loans were added to the daybooks as standard debits.

W.H. Jones' portion of this collection consists of 5 leather-bound daybooks, dating from 1829 to 1855. Two leather-bound ledgers roughly correspond with the same time frame – running from 1832 to 1858; Jones was careful to cross-reference between his daybooks and ledgers. The final 11 books consist of thin hardboard-bound daybooks dated from 1856-1871, a ledger (1858-1866) and one cash book dating between 1864-1871 (reflecting the period of partnership between W.H. Jones and his son W.F. Jones).

The ledger references the entries in the daybooks from 1858-1866. There is a possibility that the two paper-bound day-booklets are from W.H. Jones' store as well – though there is no known name or business written within them.

These accounting books present a unique, and nearly complete, cross-section of economic history of a small Vermont town in the 19th century.

William H. Jones (1808-1873)

William H. Jones was born in 1808 to Ebenezer and Anna Jones. Anna Jones, born Anna Perry, was the first white child born (1782) in the town, and daughter of the town's first settlers Captain Abner Perry and his wife, Anna. Ebenezer Jones moved to the Dover area, then part of, and known as, Wardsborough, in 1793.

Along with running West Dover's general store for over 40 years, W.H. Jones also served as a Dover town selectman off and on from 1840 to 1871, Dover's Representative in General Assembly (1841-42, 1864-5) and as a state senator in Montpelier from 1856-57.

Cyrus Knapp and Knapp Tavern (1813-1833)

Cyrus Knapp, and his wife Thankful, moved to Dover from Douglas, MA in 1793. They established a small farm ½ mile south from the current Dover Common, and Cyrus became a jack-of-all-trades. Although a farmer by trade, Cyrus Knapp was also a skilled cobbler and blacksmith. Knapp also kept a livery stable and acted as a money lender. He also had a small tavern from 1808 to 1813.

In 1813 Cyrus built a large two-story building on the high corner of Estabrook Hill, and opened a tavern and inn. For 30 years, Knapp Tavern served as a center for the small, growing community – provided food, drink and lodging, as well as a livery stable and blacksmithy. The one accounting book in this collection is a daybook dating from 1818 to 1849 and reflects the many services Knapp provided Dover, including entries for shoeing horses, lending money, renting farm equipment and horses, selling farm produce, repairing wagons as well as the services offered in the tavern/inn. During the 30 years the tavern existed, Cyrus, Thankful and their thirteen children also ran a full-time farm. The Knapp Tavern was closed in 1833, but Cyrus' records continue to 1849. Cyrus Knapp died in 1852 at the age of 82.

James Shipman

Within the collection is a single daybook belonging to James Shipman, cobbler. The dates within are from 1852-53, and reflect standard transactions for a shoemaker. James Shipman is not in the 1850 Vermont census, but is in the 1860 Vermont census – living either in Newfane or Rochester, both within Windham County. The front piece of the daybook lists several prominent Dover names, including W.H. Jones and S.W. Sparks (a descendent of a founding family). Nothing more is known about James Shipman, at this time.

Inventory

- XMSC 28:1 W. Gillett and Co., W.H. Jones et al, daybook 1829-31
2 Simonds and Jones, W.H. Jones et al, daybook 1831-34
3 _____, daybook 1834-36
4 Jones and Franklin, W.H. Jones et al, daybook 1836-37
5 _____, daybook 1837-40; 1854-55
6 Lyman and Jones, W.H. Jones et al, ledger 1832-43
7 Jones and Franklin, W.H. Jones et al, ledger 1837-41
8 Jones General Mercantile, W.H. Jones, daybook 1856-57
9 _____, daybook 1857-59
10 Jones General Mercantile, W.H. Jones, ledger 1858-1866
11 _____, daybook 1859
12 _____, daybook 1859-60
13 _____, daybook 1860-61
14 _____, daybook 1861-62
15 _____, daybook 1862-63
16 _____, daybook 1863-64
17 _____, daybook 1866-68
18 _____, daybook 1869-71
19 W.H.Jones and Son, W.H. Jones and W.F. Jones, cashbook 1864-71
XMSC 28:20 Knapp tavern, Cyrus Knapp, daybook 1818-1849
XMSC 28:21 James W. Shipman, daybook 1852-53
XMSC 28:22 Dover General Store, daybook 1842-44
23 _____, daybook 1845-46

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