

Asa Knight Business Records, 1827-1881  
1993.51



**Old Sturbridge Village**  
**Research Library**

1 Old Sturbridge Village Road  
Sturbridge, MA 01566  
508-347-0204

**Collection Overview**

Repository: Old Sturbridge Village Research Library, Sturbridge, MA

Creator: Asa Knight

Title: Asa Knight Business Records

Dates: 1827-1881

Extent: 12 phase boxes and 1 archival box, approx. 2.5 linear feet

Abstract: The collection consists of record books and loose papers belonging to Asa Knight of Dummerston, Vermont. There are eighteen records books of the Knight store and a collection of papers relating to Asa Knight and his family.

Location: OSV Research Library Vault as of April, 2017

Language: English

**Biographical Sketch**

The Honorable **Asa Knight** was born February 29, 1793 in Dummerston, Vermont. He died July 20, 1851. He served as a constable, collector, deputy sheriff, and representative. In 1824 he moved to Newfane but returned to Dummerston in 1828 and became a merchant. He served as Judge of Probate from 1835-1837. On May 1, 1822 he married Susan Miller (1796-1884). They had seven children; Susan Helen Bliss (1823-), Mary Ester (1826-1903), Rosanna Williams Maynard (1828-1905), Asa Randolph (1831-1910), Lovina Louisa Sproul (1833-1883), John Miller (1836-), and Fanny Duncan Ogle (1840-).

The Asa Knight store represents a crucial link between the farming community and the world at large. The store was originally built as a modest one-story building. By 1838, it had grown into an imposing two-and-a-half-story emporium that stocked an expanding variety of products. Customers paid for their purchases with credit earned by selling such items as butter, cheese, palm leaf hats, and knitted socks to the storekeeper, who in turn sold them in the cities where he bought the goods to stock his shelves. New England stores carried items from around the world, including woolen broadcloth from England; cotton textiles from England, France, and India; linens from Ireland and Central Europe; and silks from China and Italy. In addition, New Englanders could purchase teas, coffees, spices, sugar, raisins, and dyestuffs from China, Arabia, Greece, the East and West Indies, and South America. Domestic items included sheeting and shirting, calico prints, shoes, many tools, window glass, brooms, books, and paper goods, all made in New England shops. There were also garden seeds raised and sold by New England Shaker communities. (<https://www.osv.org/asa-knight-store>)

**Daniel Lester**; born ca. 1793 and possibly died in 1867. No definitive information was found on Daniel Lester. He worked for Asa Knight among other residents ca. 1839-1849.

An 1843 request letter of guardianship was found in an account book in the collection. It requests that Asa Knight become guardian of Charles Henry Thayer. Thayer (1829- ) is the son of Fanny (1804-1836) and Luther (1797-1860) Thayer. It appears that Charles' sister Fanny (1833- ) lived with Alvin Alexander who was a shoemaker in Bernardston MA [1850 census] and his brother Horace (1835- ) lived with Lewis Thayer while working as a farm laborer in Waitsfield VT [1860 census]. The oldest child is Hiram (1825- ). No information was found if the guardianship of Charles was formalized or why the children did not stay with their father other than Luther went south to preach after his wife died.

### **Scope and Content**

The collection of record books and loose papers of Asa Knight depict the workings of a general store in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The account books and day books document the routine credits and debits while the papers enable readers to see the daily recordings. The loose papers were primarily found in the record books but were removed in order to preserve the materials. The papers have been shuffled around and the pages where the items were originally stored are unknown. The account books are arranged first by type of book then beginning date. The papers are arranged first by which account book they were found in and then chronologically by date with undated materials at the end, when multiple dates are listed they are organized by oldest date first. Many of the loose papers are blotters or scrap paper with calculations. Referred to as blotters in the finding aid, they are retained for the purpose of handwriting, record keeping, and paper differences. One day book is labeled with another name-Daniel Lester. It has been kept with the collection because the loose papers in it relate to Mrs. Knight and notes the owner worked for Asa Knight.

The collection is number by the accession number then series number and the individual item number for that series.

This collection is organized into two series:  
Series I: Record Books, 1827-1884  
Series II: Loose papers found in record books

### **Restrictions**

This collection is open for research. Use is limited to available Library hours and staff. Copies and scans are done at the discretion of the library staff and condition of materials.

### **Search Terms**

#### Personal Names

Knight, Asa (1793-1851)  
Knight, R. A.  
Knight, Susan (Miller) (1796-1884)  
Lester, Daniel (ca. 1793- )  
Thayer, Charles H. (1829- )

#### Subjects

General Stores

#### Occupations

Merchant

#### Family Names

Knight  
Lester

#### Genres

Account Books  
Day Books  
Receipts

#### Geographic Names

Dummerston (VT)

#### Corporate Names

Knight and Miller Store

### **Administrative Information**

#### Preferred Citation

Item, Collection Title, Collection number (accession number with extensions for box and folder numbers). Old Sturbridge Village Research Library, Sturbridge, Massachusetts. Date Accessed.

### **Processing information**

Originally processed by library staff in 1993

Individual Accession numbers and Finding Aid prepared by Amy Hietala, April 2017

### **Related Collections**

Old Sturbridge Village Collections; Asa Knight Historic Building, Asa Knight trunk (12.23.73), oil painting of Asa Knight (20.1.242), oil painting of Susan Miller Knight (20.1.243)

Old Sturbridge Village Research Library; Asa Knights military commission, notebooks and copies of the Knight and Miller store records (1968.50, mostly photocopies)

## Contents

Box #	Folder #	Accession #	Description
<u>Series 1: Record Books</u>			
1		1993.51.1.1	Account Book; 1827-1843
2		1993.51.1.2	Account Book; 1837-1852
3		1993.51.1.3	Day Book; 1830-1831
4		1993.51.1.4	Day Book; 1834-1836
5		1993.51.1.5	Day Book; 1836-1843
6		1993.51.1.6	Day Book; 1839-1843
7		1993.51.1.7	Day Book; 1842-1844
8		1993.51.1.8	Day Book; 1844-1847
9		1993.51.1.9	Day Book; 1847-1852
10		1993.51.1.10	Day Book; 1848-1850
11		1993.51.1.11	Day Book; 1850-1852
12		1993.51.1.12	Day Book; 1857-1859; for R. Knight
13	1	1993.51.1.13	Day Book and Memorandum Day Book, for Daniel Lester, A few pages state "Daniel Lester commenced work for Asa Knight", last page has genealogy for Lester family; 1838-1844 Memorandum for Mrs. Asa Knight; 1870- 1884 Memorandum for S. M. Knight; 1870 R.A. Knight hours worked
		1993.51.1.14	Account Book, for Mrs. Asa Knight; 1853 Reverse: Cash Book, for Asa Knight; 1842
13	2	1993.51.1.15	Record Book, listing of names, dates, amounts, deeds, mortgages; 1826- 1852
		1993.51.1.16	Record Book, Memorandum of money received from the estate of Asa Knight; 1851-1854
		1993.51.1.17	Record Book, possible list of customers- contains list names; ca. 1833-1854
		1993.51.1.18	Record Book, Journal of Mrs. A. Knight, listing of debits and credits; 1852- 1854

Over Size	1993.51.1.19	Invoice Book of goods; 1846
(Stored in OS	1993.51.1.20	Invoice Book of goods; 1848
From Collections)	1993.51.1.21	Business Records, consignment sales, various locations including San Francisco, Stockton, Philadelphia, Vallejo, Syracuse; 1881

Items found in 1993-51.1.1

13	3	1993.51.2.1	Account page for Miss Fairbank; 1828-1837
		1993.51.2.2	Receipt; November 21, 1831
		1993.51.2.3	Promissory Note, Abel Brown to Asa Knight; December 27, 1831
		1993.51.2.4	Receipt; Asa Knight's Account by William Robertson; July 4, 1834
		1993.51.2.5	Receipt for Perry Knight; November 19, 1835
		1993.51.2.6	Listing of names, possibly ledger index; no date

Items found in 1993.51.1.2

13	4	1993.51.2.7	Receipt, H. Buckley to garden seeds; May 18, 1835
		1993.51.2.8	Receipt for Thomas Miller, Esq.; August 30, 1837
		1993.51.2.9	Receipt, Asa Knight to Mr. Houghton, serving fees; December 1839
		1993.51.2.10	Receipt for William Houghton; December 11, 1839
		1993.51.2.11	Receipt for William Houghton; November 7, 1842
		1993.51.2.12	Calculation blotter; 1843-1848
		1993.51.2.13	a-accounting page for Roswell Ingram; June 26, 1843
			b-balance of account; no date
		1993.51.2.14	Promissory Note, George Ward Clark; July 24, 1843
		1993.51.2.15	Receipt; April 16, 1846
		1993.51.2.16	Promissory Note, Asa Knight to William Bemis; December 16, 1846
		1993.51.2.17	Blotter; 1846
		1993.51.2.18	Blotter; 1847, 1850
		1993.51.2.19	Account page; 1844-1848

1993.51.2.20	Letter, G. Braman to Asa Knight complaining hats have not been received; August 6, 1849
1993.51.2.21	Calculation blotter and account balance; 1849-1852
1993.51.2.22	Account balance; 1849
1993.51.2.23	Blotter and account record; 1850
1993.51.2.24	Blotter; no date
1993.51.2.25	Blotter, one side has repeated signatures of "Asa Knight Esq"; no date
1993.51.2.26	List of names; no date
1993.51.2.27	Blotter with the name "H Tolman Petersham" on the back; no date
1993.51.2.28	Blotter; no date
1993.51.2.29	Blotter; no date
1993.51.2.30	Blotter; no date
1993.51.2.31	Blotter, has repeated signatures of "Asa Knight", "Miss" and "R.A. Knight"; no date
1993.51.2.32	Receipt, possibly Mrs. Rice; no date
1993.51.2.33	Blotter; no date
1993.51.2.34	Broadside, "Farmers' Protection! Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Company" signed Charles W. Morris, Brattleboro. Back has calculations and the signature "Miss Knight"; no date
1993.51.2.35	Listing of names; no date (possibly customers)
1993.51.2.36	Listing of names; no date (possibly customers)
1993.51.2.37	Receipt; no date
1993.51.2.38	Blotter, has "Dummerston" repeated; no date
1993.51.2.39	Blotter with note; no date
1993.51.2.40	Blotter with handwriting practice on back; no date
1993.51.2.41	Account record, back states "good conduct, resolution Courage"; no date
1993.51.2.42	Blotter; no date
1993.51.2.43	Account record, one side lists Mrs. Dodge, the other Randolph A. Knight Esq.; no date
1993.51.2.44	Blotter and listing of items (possibly inventory or grocery list), no date

		1993.51.2.45	beginning of letter or account for A. Knight; 185-
		1993.51.2.46	Blotter; no date
		1993.51.2.47	Account record; no date
		1993.51.2.48	listing of words written in decorative script, possible writing practice; no date
<u>Items found in 1993.51.1.3</u>			
13	5	1993.51.2.49	Listing of names, possible account holders; no date
<u>Items found in 1993.51.1.4</u>			
13	6	1993.51.2.50	Writ, John Clark vs. Joel Hudson; Marshal Miller, atty.; April 29, 1820
		1993.51.2.51	Receipt, Asa Knight to Boat Industry; August 28, 1833
		1993.51.2.52	Advertisement, Franklin Snow & Co. Dealers in Dry & Pickled Fish; March 28, 1861
		1993.51.2.53	Receipt, listing of items and cost; no date
<u>Items found in 1993.51.1.6</u>			
13	7	1993.51.2.54	Account record for employees, first page titled "Mr. Eldridge Lost time"; back has dates 1841-1843
		1993.51.2.55	Bill of Goods; October 1, 1842, 1843
		1993.51.2.56	Receipt, Loyal Smith to L. Hatter; September 21, 1843; later used as blotter
		1993.51.2.57	Receipt, Wilder Hudson; April 23, 1843
		1993.51.2.58	Blotter, reverse has end of statement; 1843, 1851
		1993.51.2.59	Notice from Warren Parker; July 18, 1846
		1993.51.2.60	Blotter; no date
		1993.51.2.61	Blotter; no date
		1993.51.2.62	Blotter; no date
		1993.51.2.63	Blotter, note "Charles Ramboth has gone to take the old [-] to Mr. [-]; no date
		1993.51.2.64	Receipt, Mrs. Bradley; no date Reverse: penmanship practice of Hannah Willson and Taft & Son
<u>Items found in 1993.51.1.13 (Daniel Lester's book)</u>			
13	8	1993.51.2.65	Bill, Mrs. S.M. Knight to Benjamin Estabrook; November 8, 1854
		1993.51.2.66	Receipt, taxes paid by Mrs. Asa Knight, signed R.A. Knight; December 29, 1859
		1993.51.2.67	Notice of tax for Asa Knight, to R.A. Knight from Joseph Miller, treasurer; March 5, 1882

1993.51.2.68	Receipt, Mrs. Asa Knight; August 1882
1993.51.2.69	Puzzle Card used as blotter (Christmas scene), reverse has printed ad for Mrs. Wm. Wadsworth: dealer in Candy, Tobacco, and Cigars; no date
1993.51.2.70	Handwritten note, 'Mrs. Asa Knight Real Estate 1000\$, estate 500\$ on Grand List'; no date
1993.51.2.71	Debt settlement, notice of settlement of work with amount due to Mrs. Knight; no date
1993.51.2.72	Blotter; no date
1993.51.2.73	Receipt, Mrs. S.M. Knight; no date
1993.51.2.74	Receipt, Mr. Braggs; no date

Items found in 1993.51.1.14

13	9	1993.51.2.75	Account page, balance for Mrs. Asa Knight, settled with Miller and Knight; 1854-1855
		1993.51.2.76	Form letter from E. Pierpoint offering a selection of dry goods; February 1, 1856 Reverse: handwritten note "May 11 Susan has a daughter born, received a letter from Lina'
		1993.51.2.77	Account page, balance for Mrs. Asa Knight, settled with R.A. Knight; 1862-1863
		1993.51.2.78	Receipt of delivery of goods, Vermont and Mass. Rail Road Company; September 7, 1864
		1993.51.2.79	Preprinted advertisement for Knight Bros. Millinery Department, Des Moines, Iowa; handwritten bill and settlement for Mrs. A. Knight by Jesse J. Mansfield; April 1, 1879
		1993.51.2.80	Bill and Settlement for Mrs. Asa Knight; 1882
		1993.51.2.81	Receipt for building wall to stone cellar for Mrs. Asa Knight, signed B. J. Willard; August 10, 1882
		1993.51.2.82	Business card, J. M. Knight with Orin Slate dealer in Foreign and Domestic Dry Goods, Waterbury, Conn.; no date
		1993.51.2.83	Order Form, New York Weekly Witness; reverse has 'paid Mr. Walker'; no date
		1993.51.2.84	Behavior Chart, Esther and Susan's chart for tracking their behavior; no date



Item found in 1993.51.1.20

13

10

1993.51.2.85

Letter of Guardianship, Charles H. Thayer,  
minor age above 14, state allows Asa Knight  
Esq. to be guardian; July 27, 1843