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## Hannah Tilton Daybook

1845-1885

1 vol. (0.25 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 250 bd



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Born into a working class family from New Bedford, Mass., in Nov. 1829, Hannah Sisson was the daughter of a cooper Job Tilton and his wife Patience, and was raised in the multigenerational home owned by her grandparents John and Nancy Tilton. In April 1853, Hannah married George Oliver Tilton, a farmer from Chilmark on Martha's Vineyard, and moved to the island.

The first 340 pages of this daybook detail the daily transactions of a general store in New Bedford between 1845 and 1847. The store traded in very small quantities of consumable goods, ranging from a gallon of molasses to 150 crackers, a pound of butter, a peck of potatoes or apples, flour, pork, and fish. Most purchases were for less than a dollar.

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## Background on Hannah Tilton

Born into a working class family from New Bedford, Mass., in Nov. 1829, Hannah Sisson was the daughter of a cooper Job Tilton and his wife Patience, and was raised in the multigenerational home owned by her grandparents John and Nancy Tilton. Her brothers, like her father, spent time at sea as young men, before settling down to landed life.

In April 1853, Hannah married George Oliver Tilton, a farmer from Chilmark on Martha's Vineyard, and moved to the island. In 1860, the Tilton's farm was small and poor by almost any standard. Barely eight acres, five of which were tilled, it was valued at a paltry \$200. The Tilton's raised eight children, of whom at least three sons spent time at sea in their youth. After being widowed in Nov. 1906, Hannah Sisson died of a "cerebral hemorrhage" in Chilmark on Apr. 13, 1911.

## Scope of collection

The first 340 pages of this daybook detail the daily transactions of a general store in New Bedford between 1845 and 1847. The store traded in very small quantities of consumable goods, ranging from a gallon of molasses to 150 crackers, a pound of butter, a peck of potatoes or apples, flour, pork, and fish. Most purchases were for less than a dollar. It is unclear whether Hannah Tilton or some other member of the Sisson family operated the store or how she came into possession of the daybook, however it clearly passed through her possession. Her name, both prior and subsequent to her marriage, is written in several places.

The daybook was repeatedly reused in the 1850s and 1860s, and includes some personal accounts, genealogical notes on the Sisson family, notes on the comings and goings of Tiltons (to work, to sea, to visit) and other Chilmark residents, labor accounts, farm notes, an occasional poem or draft of a letter, and doodles by children.

The precise location of the store is not certain. While the Sissons lived at 17 Morgans Row at the time, south of the center of town, the customers -- and especially repeat customers -- typically resided just north of center from Middle Street to Hillman Street. All are near the waterfront.

## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Gift of John Smith, Apr. 2010.

### Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Aug. 2017.

### Language:

English

### Copyright and Use (More information )

*Cite as:* Hannah Tilton Daybook (MS 250 bd). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

## Search terms

### Subjects

General stores--Massachusetts--New Bedford

New Bedford (Mass.)--Economic conditions--19th century

### Contributors

Tilton, Hannah [main entry]

### Genres and formats

Daybooks

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