



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

William H. Albro Collection of Store Ledgers

NMAH.AC.0166

NMAH Staff

Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
Business Number: Phone: 202-633-3270
Fax Number: Fax: 202-786-2453
archivescenter@si.edu
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	1
Scope and Contents	2
Arrangement	2
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	William H. Albro Collection of Store Ledgers
Date:	1845 - 1895
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0166
Creator:	Albro, William H., 1823-1883 (store owner) (Author)
Extent:	2.3 Cubic feet (7 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Ledgers of store accounts of daily transactions with customers, mainly in food and household items in Peace Dale, Rhode Island.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Collection donated by Miss Elizabeth R. Albro.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Archives Center staff.

Preferred Citation

William H. Albro Collection of Store Ledgers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

William Henry Albro, a store owner, was born in 1823 and died May 13, 1883 in Peace Dale, Rhode Island at the age of fifty-nine and a half. His parents were Samuel Albro and Anne Smith. He was married three times--in 1844 to Eliza Taylor who died in 1851; in 1852 to Nancy Rose who died in 1869 and in 1877 to Sarah G. Kenyon. One daughter, Mary E., was born to Eliza Taylor and Nancy Rose became the mother of two sons, John and Charles F.

Nancy Rose, the second wife, was the daughter of Samuel Rose on whose land on North Road, Peace Dale, the store was located. She was also the great-grandmother of Elizabeth R. Albro, a retired curator of the National Park Service, who gave the ledgers and from whom what is known about William H. Albro was obtained.

Miss Albro thinks that if her great-grandfather attended school it was not for long and that he may have farmed in addition to operating the store since that was customary at the time. After William H. Albro's death in 1883 the store was operated by her grandfather, John Albro, until he married and left to work his wife's farm. That ended the operation of the store. The building no longer exists. Miss Albro does not know whether her great-grandfather purchased the store or established it but thinks the latter.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of twenty-one ledgers containing store accounts. One of these is labeled Helen Albro's cookbook but contains a number of accounts and only two recipes. The ledgers are primarily a record of daily transactions with customers with purchases identified by type of purchase. The trade was primarily in food and groceries with less frequent purchases of materials, thread, pins, etc.

Eleven of the ledgers are numbered; seven carry William H. Albro's name; two are marked Helen Albro and one John Gould. The others are not identified by name or number but appear to be accounts from the same store located in Peace Dale in an area known as Rocky Brook, Rhode Island, in nineteen of the ledgers purchases are listed by name of purchaser with the date of purchase entered chronologically. Two are entered chronologically with purchasers listed under the date. The first fifty pages of one (unnumbered and unidentified by name) appear to be company accounts for large quantities of such items as barrels of oil, bales of cotton and bags of wool. Individual accounts by customer and item, comparable to those in the other ledgers follow. The ledger with accounts ranging from May 1, 1867 to November 4, 1868 includes an account for William H. Albro for some months in 1868 (p.267).

The ledgers are handwritten, mostly in ink, are legible and in reasonably good condition. Pages have been scissored out of several volumes, however and it is not possible to tell whether they were blank pages or contained store accounts. Several have children's drawings on otherwise unused pages and two have been used to press flowers or leaves. Book No. 17 has newspaper pictures of the Mexican-American War; some newspaper clippings have been torn out of this ledger. The gap in ledger dates is due to the fact that eight or so were included in a family auction in 1964 held to settle the homestead estate.

The approximate opening and closing dates in the container list and on the folders are purchase dates not dates of payment which in many instances are much later.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- General stores -- 1840-1900
- Merchants
- Retail trade -- 1840-1900

Types of Materials:

- Ledgers -- 1840-1900

Places:

Peace Dale (R.I.) -- 1840-1900
Rhode Island -- 1840-1900

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Unidentified, April 1848-July 1848
Box 6, Folder 1	Helen Albro, March 1864-April 1864
Box 1, Folder 2	Unidentified, January 1865-1867; April 1877-July 1878; 1906
Box 1, Folder 3	John Gould, 1865-1866
Box 1, Folder 4	Unidentified, May 1, 1867-November 4, 1868
Box 1, Folder 5	H.T. Albro Cookbook, February 11, 1868-October 1, 1868
Box 2, Folder 2	Book No. 1, October 1, 1868-February 14, 1872
Box 2, Folder 3	Book No. 4, June 1, 1871-September 30, 1871
Box 2, Folder 4	Book No. 8 William H. Albro, January 1, 1873-October 31, 1873
Box 3, Folder 1	Book No. 9, November 1, 1873-October 31, 1873
Box 3, Folder 2	Book No. 1 Wm. H. Albro; Summary of Accounts, 1873-1882
Box 3, Folder 3	Book No. 12, September 1, 1875-January 8, 1887
Box 3, Folder 4	Book No. 13, May 1, 1876-February 28, 1877
Box 6, Folder 2	Book No. 16, August 1, 1878-December 1878
Box 4, Folder 1	Book No. 14; William H. Albro, March 1, 1877- October 31, 1877
Box 4, Folder 2	Unidentified, 1878-1895
Box 4, Folder 3	Book No. 17; William H. Albro, January 1, 1879-April 30 [?]
Box 4, Folder 4	Book No. 18; William H. Albro, May 1, 1879-June 5 [?]
Box 2, Folder 1	Book No. 21, W.H. Albro, May 1868-August 1870; June 1881-November 1881
Box 7, Folder 1	Ledger, Book No. 22, Rocky Brook, 1870, 1881-1882 Notes: Includes loose photocopied materials: invoice, 1870 and Rocky Brook estate papers , 1883.
Box 6, Folder 3	William H. Albro and Son, November 2, 1882-August 27, 1883

Box 5, Folder 1 William H. Albro and Son, September 1, 1882-September 30, 1883

Box 5, Folder 1 Farm accounts, January 1896-October 1896