Abisha Lincoln was born in 1800 in Massachusetts. By 1850 his general store was the principal supplier for residents in the north end of Raynham, selling groceries, hardware, dry goods, shoes, and many other items. Although much of his business by 1860 was on a cash basis, transactions in these three daybooks also reflect the persistence of local exchange. In 1861, for instance, James Lothrop paid his bill with two dozen eggs; Edward Tisdale with eight pairs of boots; and Thaxter Harvey with over 70 pounds of ham.

Lincoln's business prospered and his family grew. The 1840s witnessed Lincoln's election as a town selectman and to the state General Court. By 1850 he was worth about $3,000 and had three sons--Edward H. (23), Charles D. (16), and Elmer (14)--living on his farm, which Edward worked. In 1860 Abisha owned real estate valued at $6,000 and personal property valued at $2,100. Edward, soon to inherit the store with his brothers, still ran the farm at that time, but had married and had a three-year-old daughter. The younger sons also had married, each with a one-year-old child, and lived in their own homes although still probably on Abisha's property. By 1872, according to the Beer's atlas, Edward and Charles ran the store in the north end; Elmer had his own store in the center of Raynham.

The three daybooks document the consumption habits of Raynham residents in the 1860s and highlight the general store business in a largely agricultural community. They could also shed some light on the costs of goods during the Civil War. One can also note the declining portion of business conducted through exchange.
Processing Information

Acknowledgments
Encoding funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Copyright and Use (More Information)
Cite as: Abisha Lincoln Daybooks (MS 233). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects
- Barter--Massachusetts--Raynham--History--19th century--Sources.
- Consumer goods--Prices--Massachusetts--Raynham--History--19th century--Sources.
- Consumers--Massachusetts--Raynham--History--19th century--Sources.
- General stores--Massachusetts--Raynham--History--19th century--Sources.
- Raynham (Mass.)--Economic conditions--19th century--Sources.
- Raynham (Mass.)--History--19th century--Biography--Sources.
- Shopping--Massachusetts--Raynham--History--19th century--Sources.

Names
- Lincoln, Abisha, 1800-1863.

Genre Terms
- Account books.