

# Silas Knapp

## 1797-1845

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### Fact Sheet

Born: Some records show Silas Knapp was born on 20 February 1797 in Sturbridge, Massachusetts and christened 20 July 1798 in Spencer, Worcester, Massachusetts, United States. Others records show 27 February as the birth date. Documentation for these dates has not been found. Vital records of Spencer, Massachusetts show 20 February 1798, which has been passed on as a birth date rather than a christening date.

Best documented record found so far:

<http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/d/a/h/Steven-L-Dahlstrom/GENE34-0310.html#ENDNOTE2539>

Son of: Enoch Knapp (1754-1811) and Lydia Bemis Knapp (born 1760)

NOTE: Silas would've been 13 or 14 when his father died, in Spencer, Massachusetts. Records show that Enoch's family moved to Maine after his death. Some of Silas' older brothers have been found in Maine, but his mother has not been located in Maine, nor has her death and burial place been verified in either Maine or Massachusetts. We don't know when or how Silas arrived in upstate New York.

Married: Lydia Ackermann in 1821 at Jefferson County, New York, United States. Lydia was the daughter of Obadiah Ackerman and Saloma Lewis. Lydia died August 8, 1881 at Provo, Provo, Utah, United States.

Father of:        Albert Knapp, born July 10, 1825 at Antwerp, Jefferson, New York,  
                         United States – died 1864

Melvina Knapp born September 8, 1827 at Champion, Jefferson, New York, United States – died September 20, 1828

Marinda Melvina Knapp born May 22, 1830 at Champion, Jefferson, New York, United States – died 1916

William Knapp born July 18, 1840 at LeRoy, Genesee, New York, United States – died 1916

Emma Amelia Knapp born January 18, 1843 at Nauvoo, Hancock, Illinois, United States – died 1920

Occupation: Farmer

Died: February 10, 1845 at the age of 47 at Shokoquon - near Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, United States of “quick consumption”.

NOTE: Lydia said several times in her letter that Silas died in 1844. She also said that she was married to him for 23 years, which could have meant either 1844 or 1845.

Buried: 1845 – believed to be in the Old Nauvoo Burial Ground, Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, United States

-- Not much is known of Silas Knapp...the following is taken from The Life Sketch of Albert Knapp”. It gives a glimpse into some events in the life of Silas.

In 1823, the family of Silas and Lydia Ackerman Knapp bought a farm next to the Indian River near the village of Antwerp, Jefferson County, New York. Since

their marriage in July of 1821, the Knapp's had moved several times looking for a place where they could settle down and raise a family. While trying to make their investment productive, Silas and Lydia welcomed their first child into the world on July 10, 1825. They named him Albert.

Albert's mother was a very thoughtful and religiously minded woman. Woven in her daily routine of cooking, washing, cleaning and helping with the chores and farm work, Lydia studied and prayed for guidance to find a religious sect that would encompass all that she believed should be included in a true church organized to help people get closer to Heaven. She had been baptized into the Baptist church at the age of 12, and even though she was active in that church, she longed for something more.

Sometime between 1825 and 1827, the Knapps moved to Champion, New York, and again pursued a life in farming. In the Champion area, Lydia was introduced to missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She learned all she could and became convinced that this faith was what she had been praying for. Lydia was baptized June 1, 1834, and began training her children in the beliefs of her new faith.

By this time, Albert had two sisters and one brother. His sister, Melvina, died when she was just one year old. Marinda and William were his constant companions as they grew up. At some point the family moved to the nearby settlement of LeRay where they continued to farm.

Silas was not as easily converted to the Church as was Lydia. Although he did not prevent the family from learning and being active in the Church, he was not baptized until November 21, 1834. His religious activity was not as evident as Lydia's, but their new found religion motivated them to move once again. In the early 1840's they joined other members of the Church in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Albert was instrumental in helping his father finalize affairs on the farm and move the family. Albert was seventeen years old at this time, and he stepped up to the challenging responsibilities of helping his family transport their meager belongings to a new, and unsure future.

The Knapp family arrived in Nauvoo, Illinois on December 25, 1842. They found that the Church members in this area were deeply committed to building their 'City Beautiful', but were facing the challenges of sickness and mob violence. These events piled hardships and trials on a people whose only desire was to provide for their families, develop their properties and follow their faith. Albert and his family arrived in the city exhausted and in a desperate situation of their own. Housing arrangements were made and the Knapps became tenants of Nauvoo. They made every effort to stay warm and fed as the cold winter months slowly moved toward spring.

In January of 1843, Albert received word that he had a new sister, Emma Amelia. The family was grateful for this little blessing. Emma gave them a renewed hope that this move would bring many good and happy times to their family.

In the spring of 1843, the family moved about twenty five miles from the city of Nauvoo to Schockocan\*, (Shokoquon, Illinois), a small settlement along the banks of the Mississippi River. As the much anticipated spring came, so did the dreaded ague fever. Albert and his family were not spared and as each member became ill, their situation became more serious. Weeks passed, and with the help of neighbors and caring members of the Church, Albert and his brother and sisters began to improve. Lydia also began to gain strength. It was not so for Albert's father. Silas continued to suffer until his death on February 10, 1845. The cause of death was recorded as 'quick consumption'. It is believed that he was buried in the Old Nauvoo Burial Grounds.

While living in Shokoquon, Albert and his family received word that The Prophet, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum had been martyred at Carthage. This moment in history was devastating for the Knapps, as well as hundreds of fellow members of the Church. As difficult as these times were for the family and the Church, they were bound together with determination and faith. Albert and his family continued to work hard, hoping to improve their desperate situation. Their dreams of a more peaceful life drove them forward.

Notes:

Records in possession of Mabel F Hale Knapp – Aff & Sale – Liber “K” of Mortgages (page 353)  
Silas and Lydia, his wife, Antwerp, N. Y., Mortgagors to Charles E. Clark, Mortgagee

“Default in payment of above Mortgage. Sold at Public Auction at the Court House in the City of Watertown, N. Y. – April 20, 1830.

From Nauvoo Land and Records – All our records say he (Silas) was “a tenant in 1842, paid \$60.00 personal property tax, and left the city.” It does not tell us where he went. (email dates February 21, 2012 [NauvooLR@ldschurch.org](mailto:NauvooLR@ldschurch.org) PO Box 215, Nauvoo, IL 62354

Silas Knapp’s file obtained from Nauvoo Land And Records lists him as a tenant at Block 15, Lot 4. a map included in the file shows this lot in the north part of the city on Brattle Street between Durphy Street and Wells Street. The location is currently a farm field.

In February of 1843 a Mr. John Cowan visited Joseph Smith in Nauvoo claiming to have been delegated by the inhabitants of Shokoquon (Illinois), north of Nauvoo, to petition a talented Mormon preacher to “take up his residence” with them. A quarter of the lots in Shokoquon were offered to the Mormons. Lydia said that they moved to “Shockocan” in the spring of 1843.

The land upon which Shokoquon was built is described as “a slough too shallow for the steamboats to land at except at high water” ...and “not a good port but was a good transit point for rafted lumber from Wisconsin that was to be sent inland.” It’s not surprising then that the Knapps, having moved to a community built on a “slough” (i.e. swamp), would become sick with the “ague and fever” that summer.