

Mead, Sarah M. Diary

Sarah M. Mead Diary
1850

Title Statement

Mead, Sarah M. DiaryGuide to the Sarah M. Mead Diary SC 00835

Publication Statement

Publisher: Special Collections Research Center

William & Mary Special Collections Research Center
Earl Gregg Swem Library
400 Landrum Dr
Williamsburg, Virginia
Business Number: 757-221-3090
spcoll@wm.edu
URL: <https://libraries.wm.edu/libraries-spaces/special-collections>

2009-09-28

Notes

Description enhanced in July 2019 by Robert Browne.

Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-05-15 12:57:32 -0400.

Language Usage: English

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

SC 00835

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/7913

Unit Date

1850

Language

English

Creator

Mead, Sarah M.

Extent

0.01 Linear Feet

Repository

Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Manuscript collections and archival records may contain materials with sensitive or confidential information that is protected under federal or state right to privacy laws and regulations, such as the Virginia Public Records Act (Code of Virginia. § 42.1-76-91); and the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3705.5). Confidential material may include, but is not limited to, educational, medical, and personnel records. If sensitive material is found in this collection, please contact a staff member immediately. The disclosure of personally identifiable information pertaining to a living individual may have legal consequences for which the College of William and Mary assumes no responsibility.

Conditions Governing Use

Before publishing quotations or excerpts from any materials, permission must be obtained from the Curator of Manuscripts and Rare Books, and the holder of the copyright, if not Swem Library.

Processing Information

Description enhanced in July 2019 by Robert Browne.

Preferred Citation:

Sarah M. Mead Diary, 1850, Special Collections Research Center, Swem Library, William and Mary.

Scope and Contents

Sarah M. Mead's journal is a small, leather bound book, approximately 4" X 6.5" (10 cm X 16 cm) in size. It consists of 138 unnumbered pages. According to the first page, she began it on July 15, 1850, when she was "Age - 12 years," living in Penn Yan, New York.¹ She notes very early her attendance at "Mrs. N. M. Hubbell's school." Later, she says she is going to "Miss Mary Drakes [sic] school."

Like many journals or diaries, there are gaps between her entries. It appears she kept this journal sporadically over a number of years, starting when she was 12 years old and continuing until after she became 18 years old, in 1856.

Before August 1856: These entries cover the period when Sarah was growing up in mid-19th century America. Most of her entries, written in a neat, practiced hand, describe her daily routine: starting at an early hour (sometimes noting it was 5 a.m. or 6 a.m.); doing her morning work at home; going to school; and learning her "lessons." One of these centered on a class "motto" for the week, "Aim at high and noble attainments." Her assignment was to report on what she had attained.

On some occasions she noted her mother's illness and the attendant need to help at home. She often included references to going to church and to "sabbath school." However, one of her entries did include a comment about one of the era's biggest news stories. On August 30, 1850, noting that it was the day set for the execution of Professor Webster for the murder of Dr. Parkman, she wrote "Oh! how sad his children must feel [.]" [George Parkman, a chemistry professor at Harvard University was tried, convicted and executed for the murder of John Webster, a prominent Boston physician. The trial attracted widespread interest; thousands attended the trial. Parkman was hanged on August 30, 1850.]

During these formative years, she devoted one journal entry to five personal resolutions for self-development, beginning with "I will not make no unkind remarks about any other person or that I will speak no evil of any one" and ending with "I will Read these Resolutions over ever [sic] evening and see if I have broken any of them or not." She often closed her daily entries with a cheerful assessment of a long day.

August 1856 and Later: On August 3, 1856, Sarah noted that "I am now 18th years old" She acknowledged it had been "some years since" she wrote in her journal, during which there had been some "sad times" as well as "happy." She then described some events during this interim period, like when she "went east;" took a "pleasher" [pleasure] ride on the steam boat" on the "Fourth of July in 1855;" "got a quanted" [acquainted] with "Mr. Acherson" and having "a pleasant slay [sleigh] ride together."

From this entry forward, her entries reflect more of the concerns of a young woman, one who no longer was learning lessons at school, but working at home (performing "daley duteys"), connecting socially with others through home visits and at church meetings, and striving to become - in her mind - the right kind of adult.

Additional item: One calling card, with the name "Sarah M Mead" on one side. On the other side is a handwritten inquiry addressed to a "Dear Frend [sic]."

Keywords

Young women--Diaries

Children--History--19th century

Teenage girls--Diaries

United States -- Religion -- 19th century
Women--Education--New York--History

Description of Subordinate Components

Diary

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/270556

Mixed Materials Small Collections Box 46 (Box)

Container 1 (folder)

Language English