

JOSEPHINE SARAH MERRILL GASSETT DIARIES
SOUTH ACWORTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Josephine Sarah Merrill Gassett was born in 1843, lived her entire life in South Acworth, New Hampshire, and recorded that life in 27 diaries, from 1861 to 1922. She seldom traveled beyond the adjoining towns. In 1866, she married Manley Gassett. Daily she recorded the seasonal household and farm routines. She baked, sewed, washed clothes and floors, knit, made candles and soap, and "worked the butter." She earned money by knitting and sewing for others and by selling eggs and butter. Daily she recorded the weather, her visits and visitors, and her frequent health problems. She chronicled Manley's farm tasks for their farm and for the farms of others in the community. He broke roads, carried wood, planted and reaped the crops, mended fencing, shingled the barn, and traded animals.

The Gassetts had no children, although, they raised a niece, Fannie Merrill, affectionately called "our girlie."

The Gassetts attended community events and supported the local school by attending school programs, boarding the teacher, and cleaning the schoolhouse. Occasionally there is reference to national news; more frequently the references refer to local news. Local elections and events are richly recorded. Births, deaths, ages of friends and neighbors, church dedications, robberies, town meetings, and local catastrophes were recorded.

The diaries were commercially printed with prefaces including calendars, population figures, tide tables, etc. The memoranda include her cash accounts, addresses, patterns, and recipes.

Nieces and nephews

Fannie A. Merrill (Nathanial's daughter?)

b. Dec. 8, 1871

June 28, 1895 - graduated from Mt. Holyoke College

Percy (Fannie's brother)

b. Dec. 18, 1882

Others, possibly nieces and nephews

Eddie b. Feb. 19, 1885 (maybe Fannie's brother)

Hattie b. May 31, 1858

Alice Merrill b. July 17, 1885

Clara Merrill b. July 27, 1887

Others mentioned in genealogical information

Manley's brothers in town:

Joel m. Mrs. Lucena (Barnard) Angier

Walker m. first Sarah T. Morse ch. I Lissie

m. second Mrs. Nathanial Merrill

(Josephine's mother)

John m. Deborah

George

DIARY ENTRIES

typhoid fever (1861, Aug. 4)

village celebration, end of war (1865, April 13)
Abe Lincoln dead (1865, April 15)
Milo, brother-in-law dead (1865, Oct. 24)
Hannah, sister, moved home (1865, Nov. 17)
promises with Manley (1865, Dec. 17)

eclipse (1869, Aug. 7)

tipped over, Manley and Josephine hurt (1871, Feb. 21)
in play (1871, Feb. 24)
auction, probably their things (1871, Mar. 25)
in new home (1871, Mar. 29)

Hannah died (1872, Mar. 3)
Manley bought old place (1872, Apr. 27)
moved home to farm (1872, May 1)

Manley on School Committee (1873, Mar. 26)
Ida to live with Gassetts (1873, July 9)

to Bradford to visit Helen (1875, June 25)

Manley thrown out of wagon, hurt (1876, June 29)

Fannie to school (1877, Apr. 26)
at Helen's with Fannie (1877, Sept. 6 - 20)

ether, four teeth out (1878, Jan. 15)
Town Meeting, Dems licked as usual (1878, Mar. 12)
Greenback meeting (1878, Dec. 6)

five months since taken sick (1881, Feb. 12)
President Garfield buried (1881, Sept. 26)

Presidential Election, Dems beat, everything (1884, Nov. 4)
Democratic celebration (1884, Nov. 18)

complaints of ill health (1886, Jan. 5 - Mar. 3)
stopped writing in diary (1886, Mar. 3)
Fannie wrote in diary (1886, April 11 - Dec. 31)

rode out for first time this winter (1894, Mar. 1)
Town Meeting, Reps carried (1894, Mar. 13)
letter from Fannie, tired from college (1894, Mar. 26)

three fires all day (1895, Feb. 6)
Charlestown Bank failed (1895, Feb. 24)
Fannie graduated from Mt. Holyoke (1895, June 28)

Manley to Charlestown Bank for their 10% (1897, Feb. 17)
cold, rough day, water froze in back room (1897, Apr. 20)
Queen Victoria is 78 (1897, May 24)
Fannie hired to teach in Marlow (1897, Aug. 17)
Percy and Eddie to stay, am mad (1897, Oct. 9)

have distemper (1898, Sept. 20)
Fannie gave up school to stay at home (1898, Sept. 17)
wish I was well and Fannie was teaching (1898, Oct. 1)

bronchitis, (1901, Feb. 13 - Mar. 10)
new hat, first one for 9 years (1901, May 14)
WCTU here (1901, May 31)
rode out, first time this spring (1901, June 16)

Manley to Bellows Falls, had thumb nipped (1904, Jan. 2)
Town Meeting, all Dems (1904, Mar. 8)
May basket from school children (1904, May 4)
Manley at court in Newport (1904, Nov. 9 - Nov. 19)

washed straw tick, mended it (1905, May 22)
put straw in Fannie's bed (1905, May 24)

Manley paid \$300 on the mortgage (1906, Mar. 6)
Snow blew into house, hard time removing (1906, April 10)
gathering for Josephine's 63rd birthday (1906, July 21)
without a cow, purchased milk daily (1906, July 31 - Oct. 3)

tried unsuccessfully to get Youngs by signal (1909, Mar. 16)
all aflutter over Telephone (1909, Oct. 7)

Halley Comet (1910, May 6)
Eddie picked up by auto (1910, July 20)
terrible thunder storm, Fannie knocked down (1910, July 21)
Manley at the Weirs (1910, Aug. 19 - Aug. 26)
hurt right arm so can hardly write (1910, Nov. 14 - Dec. 31)

water gave out at barn, must lug from woods (1912, Feb. 12)
Wilson, Democrat, elected as President (1912, Nov. 6)
not a suffragist (Memoranda)

felt mean, walk to top of hill, felt better (1915, Mar. 22)
stirred cream all day before it came (1915, Oct. 7)

eclipse of sun (1916, Feb. 3)
Golden Wedding Day (1916, Feb. 22)
Helen home from State Hospital (1916, July 11)
expect Mr. Hughes to be next President (1916, Nov. 8)

Lyman broke his wrist cranking his car (1922, July 25)
Helen is horrid, what should we do (1922, Aug. 1)
Helen not as wild (1922, Aug. 9)
Helen back to Concord State Hospital (1922, Aug. 12)