

Worcester Historical Museum

30 Elm Street
Worcester, MA

Archives
2008 FIA .01

Jenette Waite Diary
Collection

Processed by Forrest Wright
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Collection Information

Abstract : This collection consists of one diary left by Jenette (“Nettie”) Waite for the year 1867. Jenette was born on April 7th, 1851 to her parents Increase Summer and Mary Jane Waite. She was fifteen at the start of her diary entries, living with her family in the outskirts of Worcester. Within this diary Jenette records her daily activities, those most often revolving around chores and going to school. Jenette also mentions her church attendance, talks with her older sister, and visits with her extended family.

Finding Aid: Finding Aid in print form is available in the Repository.

Preferred Citation: Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Provenance: Found in Archives

MARC Access: Collection is cataloged in MARC under the following subject headings

Historical/Biographical Notes

As a young girl living in Worcester Jenette Waite seemed to live a typical life for someone of this era. She attended school, helped her mother with chores, and went to church. Her father was a traveling business man who made frequent trips to the surrounding communities of Holden, Fitchburg, and Leicester to name a few. Her mother was a teacher; however Jenette never reveals what grade she taught. Current events or local matters are never mentioned in the diary, thus it is difficult to gain a sense of Jenette’s surrounding environment at the time.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of one diary left by Jenette (“Nettie”) Waite for the year 1867. Jenette was born on April 7th, 1851 to her parents Increase Summer and Mary Jane Waite. She was fifteen at the start of her diary entries, living with her family in the outskirts of Worcester. Within this diary Jenette records her daily activities, those most often revolving around chores and going to school. Jenette also mentions her church attendance, talks with her older sister, and visits with her extended family.

Series Description

Series 1: Jenette Waite Diary

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Series 1, Jenette Waite Diary

On the opening flap of Jenette Waite's 1867 diary someone (presumably a family member of a later generation) has written her basic biographical information. This writing states that Jenette was born on April 7th, 1851 in Worcester to her parents Increase Summer and Mary Jane Waite. Additionally, the writing states that she had a sister named Ellen who was born in 1845. This information is important for the reader, for Jenette never reveals her exact age (even on her supposed birthday) or her parent's names at any point in the diary.

If someone had not identified Jenette's age it would be assumed that she was a young girl given her mentioning of attending school. However Jenette's school schedule differed much from what one today would expect. On May 6th Jenette recorded that "school commenced today", staying in session until August 1st. She then "commenced to go to school" again from November 4th through the end of the year. In the extended gaps between the schooldays Jenette recorded that she "helped" her mother with chores, and would attend church most every Sunday. Trips ice-skating and going blackberry picking are also noted.

Jenette makes mention her father's profession, which is assumed to be a traveling businessman given his extended trips to towns such as Leicester, Fitchburg, and Holden. Her mother is identified by the information on the opening flap as a "teacher" however Jenette in her diary never supports this claim. On the back pages of the diary Jenette records the price of some purchases she made throughout the year, and offers an un-attributed poem about remembrance.