

Worcester Historical Museum

30 Elm Street
Worcester, MA

Archives
2008 FIA .02

Anne M. Ward Diary
Collection

Processed by Forrest Wright
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Collection Information

Abstract : This diary chronicles the life of Anne M. Ward from June 1856 to January 1858. During this period Ms. Ward worked as a teacher of young women at the Salisbury Mansion School in Worcester. Ms. Ward made sporadic entries, typically once a month, yet within those entries she meticulously recorded the events of her life. This included quoting lengthy passages of sermons she had enjoyed, noting the subject of lectures she had attended, or describing in detail a situation she found comical or bizarre. She was active in the Central Church, and became a supporter of local temperance and missionary movements. Ms. Ward also mentions visiting landmarks which remain standing in Worcester County today such as the Asylum, Mechanics Halls, and the Hillside Church in Bolton.

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

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Provenance: Found in Archives

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

Historical/Biographical Notes

When Anne M. Ward came to teach at the Salisbury Mansion School in September of 1856 the property has been in use as a school for a few years. With a Mr. Beane as headmaster, the school focused on the education of young women, particularly on issues of religion. Ms. Ward lived on the grounds of the school (which she stated was “beautiful”), and taught these young women. Ms. Ward was devoutly religious and became quite an involved member of the Central Church. This included attending religious lectures, and supporting local missionary and temperance movements. Although most historians recognize the 1830’s as a period of great religious revival, Ms. Ward states at the end of her diary (January 1858) that “we are now enjoying a general revival of religion in Worcester.”

Scope and Content

This diary chronicles the life of Anne M. Ward from June 1856 to January 1858. During this period Ms. Ward worked as a teacher of young women at the Salisbury Mansion School in Worcester, MA. Ms. Ward made sporadic entries, typically once a month, yet within those entries she meticulously recorded the events of her life. This included quoting lengthy passages of sermons she had enjoyed, noting the subject of lectures she had attended, or describing in detail a situation she found comical or bizarre. She was active in the Central Church, and became a supporter of local temperance and missionary movements. Ms. Ward also mentions visiting landmarks which remain standing in Worcester County today such as the Asylum, Mechanics Halls, and the Hillside Church in Bolton.

Series Description

Series 1: Anne M. Ward Diary

Anne M. Ward Collection
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Series 1, Anne M. Ward Diary

When Anne M. Ward began this diary she was living in Lowell, MA. Her first (and only) entry from Lowell was on June 1st 1856; by September of that year she would be commencing her career as an educator in Worcester. In this Lowell entry Ms. Ward reveals to the reader both her reserved nature as well as her commitment to Christianity. For after being asked by members of her local church to attend a “social sermon,” she replied “no thank you” because she “wanted to be in my own place, doing the duty of a Christian.” Her next entry was on October 18th, “three weeks after leaving Lowell” and having started her job teaching young women at the Salisbury Mansion School. This must have been a difficult change for Ms. Ward as she noted in this entry being “nervous” but had “faith in God” to help her through. In November it is clear to the reader that Ms. Ward had become fully involved in the Central Church as she mentions attending services as well as teaching Sunday school. Her hopes also seem to have picked up as in her November 1st entry Ms. Ward proclaims “since coming to Worcester, I have come to a region of perpetual sunshine.”

Besides coming to Worcester for employment, Ms. Ward also became active in local societies and organizations. On January 24th 1857 she visited the “Female Employment Society” and vowed to help the women there out of poverty. She was accompanied to the Society by several of the young women she taught at the Salisbury Mansion. This interest in Worcester life continued as on February 23rd of that year Ms. Ward visited the Worcester Insane Hospital, where she recorded that there were approximately 300 inmates, and that the general facility was “nicely kept.” Just a couple weeks later on March 19th she witnessed the dedication of Mechanics Hall, becoming a member of “The Mechanics Association” later that year. Additionally Ms. Ward makes mention of being an active member of the “Worcester City Missionary Society”, which included helping to support missions as well as to attend local lectures on the importance of missionary work.

Ms. Ward was also a big advocate of the local temperance movement. On two occasions (April 25th and July 10th) she records witnessing speeches from John Gough, a prominent temperance lecturer. Gough stressed the role of women in the temperance movement, a common message in many temperance lectures and publications at the time. Of her experience seeing Gough, Ms. Ward records, “Mr. G urged women to be faithful to her duty, and showed how vast her influence might be in the cause of temperance.” Later in the summer (July 18th) Ms. Ward travels Gough’s home in Boylston just to see where the lecturer lived, only to be let in by the gatekeeper and shown inside. Gough gave Ms. Ward a tour of his home, and also showed her photographs of himself. Ms. Ward, seemingly a little smitten by Gough, later recorded that “no picture of him quite does him justice.”

The concluding entry of Ms. Ward’s diary is on January 16th, 1858. In this entry she states that “we are now enjoying a general revival of religion in Worcester.” Clearly she sensed that the influence of the local religious groups she was involved with was growing. This may have been possible as Worcester would see a surge in temperance activity in the coming decades. A few pages after her last entry a poem appears titled “The English Lark.” This was apparently written by Ms. Ward herself as she had initialed after the final stanza.

