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Mary T. Perley diaries, 1860-1904

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Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Maine Women Writers Collection

Abplanalp Library

University of New England

716 Stevens Avenue

Portland, Maine 04103

mwwc@une.edu

URL: <https://library.une.edu/mwwc/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Maine Women Writers Collection
Creator:	Perley, Mary T.
Title:	Mary T. Perley diaries
ID:	0006
ID [aspace_uri]:	/repositories/3/resources/458
Date [inclusive]:	1860-1904
Physical Description:	2 folders
Language of the Material:	English .

Preferred Citation

Mary T. Perley diaries, Maine Women Writers Collection, University of New England, Portland, Maine

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Biographical/Historical Note

Mary T. Perley (nee Mary Titcomb Fitch) was born January 7th, 1831, in Portland Maine. Daughter of Judge Luther Fitch and Almira Titcomb, she married Henry Enoch Perley around 1851. They had one son, George Allen Perley who was born in 1856 and died on March 14th, 1858 from unknown causes. Mary traveled extensively throughout her life, first with her husband, and then - after his death in 1860 - with friends and her sisters. Mary had three brothers and four sisters. She was 29 when she began the journals, and 73 at the time of the last entry. She died on June 6th, 1905, and is buried in Naples, Maine, as Mary T. Fitch.

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Collection Scope and Content

In entries spanning the Civil War, the Centennial and the turn of the century, Mary Perley manages to fit decades of experience in two thin diaries. Rarely giving more than a few lines to a day, the journals cover the years between 1860 and 1904, inclusively. The diaries act largely as a record of her travels, with many names mentioned, but few details. On a trip up river from Jacksonville, Florida, her husband Henry dies after a short, non-specified illness. Afterward she writes, "Alone today and forever on Earth."

However, losing her husband does not stop her from continuing her travels. Never remarrying, Mary travels with friends and family, attending concerts and theater performances, taking French and music lessons, and marking the occasional milestone. A common travel companion was William Pitt Fessenden, US senator from Maine and Secretary of the Treasury under Abraham Lincoln. In 1861, she writes that she and her sisters, to whom she was very close and mentions often, are making shirts for Maine troops, that her brother is looking to enlist.

Her traveling dwindles during the war years, but picks up again quickly in 1865. Notably, she attends the 1876 Centennial in Philadelphia, and in 1885 spends four months - January to April - traveling in Bermuda, recording a wealth of flora and fauna. She also loses her sister Harriet in July, 1876, writing, "Harriet died today - oh! What a void it leaves in my life." In 1888, she attends the first International Council of Women in Washington DC and listens to speeches from Frederick Douglass, Lucy Stone and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

With William Pitt Fessenden, she travels to New York, Washington DC and to the "President's country house" in the later half of her diaries. She also visits Governor John Andrew in Boston. In the last year of her entries, Mary records the death of her sister Adeline and the illness suffered by sister Almira.

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Arrangement

This collection is organized as a single series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Maine Women Writers Collection

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Access

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Custodial History

Purchased from Morton Benjamin Katz rare book dealer 5/9/2014 (2014.007)

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Controlled Access Headings

- Maine
- Bermuda Islands -- Description and travel
- Diaries
- Perley, Mary T.

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
Diary, 1860-1888	Box 15 Folder 001

Language of the Material: English.

Diary, 1889-1904

Box 15

Folder 002

Language of the Material: English.