

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

Name of collection:

Drew, Abigail Gardner, Mrs. Gershom, Jr.,
Diary and Reminiscences, 1799-1818

Location:

Octavo volumes "D"

Size of collection:

1 octavo volume (49 leaves)

N.U.C.M.C. number:

RLIN id: MAAR92-A5

Sources of information on collection:

For biographical information, see Nantucket, Mass. Vital Records to 1850. American Women's Diaries [microfilm]: New England. New York, N.Y.: Readex Film Products, [1984?].

Related manuscript collection: Pinkham-Gardner Family Correspondence, 1794-1826.

Source of collection:

Gift of Mrs. Edgar A. Fisher, 1938

Collection description:

Abigail Gardner Drew (1777-1868) was the daughter of George (1731-1785) and Rebekah Coffin Gardner (1741-1826) of Nantucket, Mass. George Gardner was a Justice of the Inferior Court. On April 16, 1795, Abigail Gardner married Gershom Drew, Jr. (1774-1826), of Nantucket, and they had two sons, Edwin (1800-1812) and George Gardner Drew (1803-1808). Norma Gardner of Oakdale, Mass., has told the Society that, according to family legend, Abigail Drew ran from her husband around 1800 in the company of another man and is buried in Blandford.

The diary first reminisces about earlier events in Abigail Drew's life, primarily the courtship with Gershom Drew and her early feelings of love for him. Their marriage, however, seems not to have been a happy one. Mrs. Drew frequently wrote that her home life was difficult, seemingly intolerable at times. She often questioned why her life was filled with such misery. Her only comfort was the minimal relief that she received by confiding in a few female friends. She later came to think this not wise and decided to keep her troubles to herself. Brief passages recount her daily social activities through this difficult period (e.g., weddings, funerals, church attendance, singing and card parties, etc.). Later entries reveal a change toward a more religious life. Poetry and financial records are scattered throughout the diary.

June 27, 1975
rev. June 7, 1978
rev. November 15, 1983
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