

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Manuscript Collections

<p>Name of collection:</p> <p>Brookfield, Mass., Minervaeae Society, Records, 1789-1794</p>	<p>Location:</p> <p>Octavo vols. "B"</p>
<p>Size of collection:</p> <p>1 octavo volume, 181 pages</p>	<p>N.U.C.M.C. number:</p> <p>N.A.</p>
<p>Finding aids:</p> <p>For mention of Minervaeae Society, see <u>History of Worcester County, Mass.</u> (Boston: C.F. Jewett &amp; Company, 1879), Vol 1, p. 336; <u>Sibley's Harvard Graduates</u>, Vol 13, p.405; see also, <u>Brookfield, Mass., Vital Records to 1850</u>.</p>	
<p>Source of collection:</p> <p>Gift of Mrs. Levi Lincoln, 1858</p>	<p>Copies available:</p> <p>Electrostatic <u>  X  </u></p> <p>Microfilm <u>  X  </u></p> <p>No copies <u>      </u></p>
<p>Collection description:</p> <p>The Minervaeae Society was organized by the men of Rev. Nathan Fiske's (1733-1799) parish in Brookfield, Mass. for the purposes of practicing public speaking and the writing of essays. With Fiske as their president, the club met every two weeks and included as members and contributors many eminent Brookfield citizens, including Pliny Merrick (1755-1814), George Baxter Upham (1768-1833), Dwight Foster (1757-1823), and Col. Seth Banister (1739-1819).</p> <p>The collection consists of one octavo volume of 181 pages, containing the records of the Society from 1789 to 1794, and a membership list. Entries for each meeting include the topics of forensic exercises, orations, and extempore disputes, with the vote of the members on each issue; the presentation of dialogue from contemporary plays; and the production of compositions, essays, and declamations for publication in the <u>Worcester Spy</u> and the <u>Massachusetts Magazine</u> under such pseudonyms as the "Worcester Speculator" and the "General Observer." Most were written by Rev. Fiske, and were later compiled into his <u>Moral Monitor</u> (1801). The debates and writings focused on social, philosophical, religious, and political questions of the day (e.g. the poll tax, lotteries, imprisonment of debtors, assumption of state debts) and reflect the various views taken on these issues.</p>	