

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

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**NAME OF COLLECTION:**

Goodenough, Lizzie A. Wilson, Diaries, 1865-1903

**LOCATION(S):**

Octavo vols. "G"

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**SIZE OF COLLECTION:**

9 octavo volumes

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**PUBLICATION ABOUT THE COLLECTION:**

Shearer, Laura Baker. "'I owe no one a penny': Labor and Female Subjectivity in the Working-Class Diaries of Lizzie Goodenough." Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers, 19, No. 5 (2002), 62-70.

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**SOURCE OF COLLECTION:**

Purchased from Whitlock Farm Booksellers, 1978

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**COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:**

Lizzie A. Wilson Goodenough (1844- ) resided in Brattleborough, Vt., where she worked as a domestic in order to support herself after she was orphaned in 1860. She also worked occasionally for Cune and Bracket, Merchant Tailors, on Granite Row in Brattleborough. In 1869, Lizzie married Henry F. Goodenough (1835- ), who apparently worked in his family's brick quarry in Brattleborough, where they raised several children, including Arthur Goodenough (1871- ) and Lizzie Cora Goodenough (1874- ).

There are nine diaries in this collection. The first seven, for the period 1865 to 1875 (some years missing), were kept by Lizzie A.; the last two, for the years 1901 and 1903, were kept by her daughter, Lizzie Cora.

The earlier volumes contain brief entries which record the onerous life of a self-supporting young woman who was sometimes faced with financial difficulties and occasionally lamented her lot in life: "Oh how I wish the time would come when the time would seem pleasant to me. Something to think about besides working away from home and friends past for money. Long years have past [sic] since I had a Father home to go to." (19 March 1865) The entries detail her duties as a domestic for several Brattleborough, Vt., families, including the Howe, Tripp, and Taylor families, as well as her employment by Cune and Brackett. Lizzie A. visited her brother Edd Wilson ( - ) and his family for several weeks each year and sometimes attended the circus or played card games with her friends. Her personal cash accounts appear at the end of most volumes and reflect her attempts to remain out of debt despite her meager salaries. "Nothing better was my lot it seems than to be a slave to others' wants." (16 July 1865)

Following her marriage in 1869, Lizzie A. moved to West Brattleborough, Vt., and assumed the duties of a housewife and mother, though she sometimes worked for Cune and Brackett. The volumes also record births, family illnesses, visits, and the annual "sugaring," or tapping of the maple trees.

In 1901 and 1903, her daughter, Lizzie Cora, kept similar diaries which recorded her life with her brother, Arthur, and his family; her household duties; daily events among the family members; and her duties as an occasional domestic for the Howe family. Her diaries also contain cash accounts.

This collection has been microfilmed for the UPA series, 1997.

See Contents List.

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Lizzie A. Wilson Goodenough, Diaries, 1865-1903

Contents List

Octavo  
Volume

Lizzie A. Wilson Goodenough, Diaries, 1865 - 1875

- 1 1865 - records of the weather; domestic duties in the homes of the Howes and the Tripps; assassination of Pres. Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865); records of visitors to the Howes' home, as well as her visits with her brother, Edd Wilson, and his family, and trips to the circus; end of volume contains personal cash accounts (e.g., wages received for the year and a detailed record of expenditures)
- 2 1866 - weather records; list of domestic duties in the Tripp home; assumption of new vest-making duties for Cune and Brackett; and visits with friend, Nellie M. Weatherhead ( - ); end of volume contains detailed personal cash accounts
- 3 1868 - weather records; her work as a domestic for the Taylors; account of "sugaring" days in March; visits with her friends
- 4 1869 - weather records; details of her domestic duties for the Howes; "haying" time; occasional mention of visits of Henry F. Goodenough; preparations for their marriage on 23 November 1869; personal cash accounts
- 5 1870 - weather records; daily household chores as a housewife; visits to Henry's family in Greenfield, Vt.; her occasional vest-making chores for Cune and Brackett
- 6 1874 - weather records; occasional mention of son, Arthur; birth of daughter, Lizzie Cora, 14 September 1874; "sugaring" time; personal cash accounts, including clothes-washing performed for her father-in-law
- 7 1875 - weather records; heavy chores and lack of ability to visit and relax; "sugaring" time; dentist's visit (removal of all her teeth at age 31)

Lizzie Cora Goodenough, Diaries, 1901 and 1903

- 8 1901 - apparently lives with brother, Arthur, his wife, Blanche, and their children, including Freda, whose school days and music lessons are recorded; records of household duties; occasional work as a domestic; births of nephews and neighboring children (presided as a midwife at birth of a child in July); personal cash accounts
- 9 1903 - record of occasional work as a domestic; daily doings of brother, his wife, and their children; personal cash accounts