

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

---

**Name of collection:**

Peabody, Stephen, Diaries, 1767-1814

**Location:**

Octavo volumes "P"  
Misc. mss. boxes "P"

---

**Size of collection:**

12 octavo volumes  
1 folder (18 items)

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

62-3078

**RLIN id:** MAAR92-A127

---

**Sources of information on collection:**

See accompanying sheet(s) for additional information.

---

**Source of collection:**

Octavo volumes the gift of Rev. Stephen C. Peabody, 1939

---

**Collection description:**

Stephen Peabody (1741-1819) was born in Andover, Mass. He was a 1769 graduate of Harvard College and became the first minister of the First Congregational Church of Atkinson, N.H., where he served faithfully from 1772 until his death.

He married Mary (Polly) Haseltine (1741-1793), of Bradford, Mass., in 1773. They had two children: Stephen (1773-1851) and Mary (1775-1856). His second wife (whom he married in 1795) was Elizabeth (Smith) Shaw (1750-1815), sister of Abigail (Smith) Adams and widow of John Shaw (1748-1794), minister of Haverhill, N.H.

This collection consists of eleven diaries. One is a photocopy of the diary for the year 1767 (the original diary is at the Mass. Historical Society). The others range from 1777 to 1814, with an 1809 line-a-day diary interleaved in *Curtis's Pocket Almanack and Register of New Hampshire*, and a book of accounts listing Peabody's borders.

The 1767 diary records numerous aspects of Peabody's tempestuous student life.

Included are accounts of his leadership and involvement in a student strike called against one of the tutors, Peabody's subsequent resignation, followed by controversy concerning his reinstatement in the college.

The remaining diaries provide valuable information on the people and events in and around Atkinson, N.H. He made routine entries on the weather, local births, deaths, and marriages, in addition to recounting his sermon

preparations, visits made and visitors received and his other ministerial activities. To supplement the minister's meager salary, Peabody also ran a farm. Records of his farm labors are contained in his diaries. Peabody's salary was generally paid to him in goods and the diaries describe his elaborate system of bartering (and begging) for his living supplies.

Throughout the years, Peabody commented upon contemporary political and religious topics. The 1777-1778 diary contains observations on the Revolution, as seen from the parsonage and discussed in the papers and with neighbors. He faithfully read newspapers and supported the precepts of federalism. He opposed the proponents of paper money and Shays' Rebellion. Religiously, Peabody was an

### **American Antiquarian Society**

#### **Manuscript Collections**

---

**Name of collection:**

Peabody, Stephen, Diaries, 1767-1814

---

**Collection description (continued):**

orthodox Calvinist. Strong condemnations of Arminians, Methodists, Baptists, and Hopkinsians are scattered throughout the diaries.

In the field of education, Peabody apparently held more liberal views. He was a founder and devoted supporter of the Atkinson Academy, established in 1787. Scholars were boarded in the parsonage and, as a result of his daughter Polly's insistence, the Atkinson Academy is credited as being the first coeducational school of its kind. Peabody provides extensive details of the administration and numerous controversies revolving around the school.

Also of note in the later diaries are Peabody's records of visits with former President John Adams and his wife Abigail. Peabody's account book records the financial arrangements of those scholars from the Academy who boarded with him.

It covers the years 1792 to 1801 and 1807 to 1808. A note was added by William Smith Shaw Peabody (1818-1877) (Stephen's grandson) that he had examined and copied the names from the book in 1868. Similar accounts for the years 1804-1814 are contained in the 1804-05 diary.

The collection also contains miscellaneous notes, newspaper clippings, and short diary transcriptions. They are filed with the photocopy 1767 diary.

See Contents List.

1 December 1976  
revised 4 March 2010

**American Antiquarian Society**

**Manuscript Collections**

**Name of collection:**

Peabody, Stephen, Diaries, 1767-1814

**Sources of information on collection:**

For biographical information, see *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, (Boston: Mass. Hist. Soc., 1975) vol. XVII, pp. 207-17; C.F. Morse, *Historical Discourse, Delivered at Atkinson, N.H., On the Centennial Anniv. of the Congregational Church* (Lawrence, Mass.: Geo. S. Merrill & Crocker, 1875) pp. 7-12; Harriet Webster Marr, *Atkinson Academy--The Early Years* (n.p.: John E. Stewart Company, 1940).

For genealogical information, see Selim Hobard Peabody, compiler, *Peabody Genealogy* (Boston: Charles H. Pope, 1909) pp. 38, 72. See AAS correspondence with Hannah J. Dyer, 1939 and AAS correspondence catalog for further information.

**American Antiquarian Society**

**Manuscript Collections**

Stephen Peabody, Diaries, 1767-1814

Contents List

Octavo Volumes

- 1 Diary, 1777 May 24 - 1778 May 23
- 2 Diary, 1784 May 24 - 1786 May 23
- 3 Diary, 1786 May 24 - 1787 May 23; 1789 May 24 - 1790 May 23
- 4 Diary, 1792 May 24 - 1794 May 23
- 5 Diary, 1801 May 24 - 1803 May 23
- 6 Diary, 1804 May 24 - 1805 May 23; Accounts, of boarders, 1804-1812
- 7 Diary, 1805 May 24 - 1806 May 23
- 8 Diary, 1809 May 24 - 1811 May 23
- 9 Diary, 1809 [line-a-day diary]
- 10 Diary, 1811 May 24 - 1812 May 23
- 11 Diary, 1812 May 24 - 1814 May 23
- 12 Accounts, of boarders, 1792-1808