



Transcription of the diary of Elizabeth B. Stalker Jeffers (1853-1888), June 28, 1863-October 1864

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Cite the original diary as: Elizabeth B. Stalker Jeffers Diary, 1863-1864, Mss Octavo Volumes J, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester MA.

Please note: The numbering appearing in brackets, (i.e., [1]) has been added to indicate page numbers.

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E.B. Stalker.

June 28-1863- Jan 8- 1865

9y- 10m 10y-5m

June 28- 1863- 1st mention of nature

June 30 mention of war

July 3- went to father's marsh land

July 4- Played with Mary Ella

July 8- 1st picture taken (alone) (see box) M.R.H.S. bad [?] taken (see album)

Aug. [?] Comfort bags ([?] of hers)

Rain all summer long spoiling hay.

Aug 12 celebration of 10th birthday.

Aug 23 went to the beach in bathing.

Oct 5- Went to Groveland last week and rode in ferry [?] [?].

Nov 8. [?] of [?] fall from window.

Dec 27 Description of Episcopal service.

Apr 4- 1864- making more comfort bags. Received letter from H.N. [?] last one sent.

May 22 Having measles

July 31- War and God

Aug 12 Birthday and Friday

(L.R.J. Fall- 1899.)

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[new page]

[new page]

Miss Lizzie B. Stalker

[in account with]

From her cousin E. L. Hardy

9 years old 1863

[Counting house almanac, 1860]

[new page] [penciled handwriting surrounded by hand drawn botanical border of green vines and orange flowers. Letters are also decorated with green leaves and underlined in orange]

Lizzie B. Stalker
Ipswich Mass 1863

[new page] [green vines and orange flowers penciled on the top of the page]
June 28th 1863. With pleasure I begin to write in my little pink book a present [present] from cousin Ella. It is Sundy [Sunday] and I feel very grateful that I could go to meeting and sabbath school. How beautiful nature looks in her summer dress. Thursday Mother and Father went up to Groveland and brought aunt [dowand?] a meal bag of rags and a great mat for Mother to draw in because aunt Rebecca did not kno [know] how to. Mother left me to keep house while she went and she told me not to go outdoors, and sorry to say I disobeyed her and got a bad cold. I have been verry [very] sick and had the doctor the seventh of

[new page] [green vines and blue flowers penciled on the top of the page]
June when I was so sick. There was a going to be a concert and the girls were going to dress in white and have wreaths and a stag in the meeting house and I was going too if I had not been sick, and I was very much disappointed, so dear mother bought me a little dolly. It was china and it is a little totty [tottie] then Mother made her a little white dress and scirt [skirt] and I made her a little cape of some pink and white striped cloth and a little hat. It was trimed [trimmed] with green ribbon and a white hen's feather, and mother made me a little present [present] of a little cradle to rock baby in. I named her Mary Lizzie for myself.

[new page] [green vines and blue flowers penciled on the top of the page]
June 29th Mondy [Monday]. I have had the pleisure [pleasure] of going to school today. My sums troubled me a little, but I got above Ella Newman in spelling. Mother has binn [been] washing today and got very tired. It is very warm today and I was very warm at school and I got sweaty and then coming out into the air I got cold, and I cough very badly tonight.

June 30th Tuesday. I have been to school today and got along very well. Poor mother is not well. She has got a very bad headache and Aunty and I do the work. How very dreatful [dreadful] this war is. When will it come to a close and there are so many that favour the south, even of

[new page] [green vines and yellow flowers penciled on the top of the page]
little girls in my school and they try to make me hate the poor slaves. I pity them very much. It is time to get my lesson so I must leave.

July 1st Wensday [Wednesday]. It is a very warm day and I am glad that there is but one school today. Mother is a little better of her headache. While I am writing, kitty is playing around me and jumping up into my lap. Mrs. Hascal is come into see aunty this after noon.

July 3rd 1863 Fryday [Friday]. I went to school this fournoon [forenoon] and got along verry [very] well and this afternoon we went to ride down to Father's marsh and Father wanted us to go and see his land. Aunty and Mrs. Hascal thought they would not go with us, so Mother, Father and

[new page] [green vines and yellow flowers penciled on the top of the page]
I went, and we got our feet very wet. While we was gorn [gone] aunty and Mrs. H. sat down in the sade [shade]. I found some flowers then we went over the hill to the poor farm and on the way we found some wild strawberries and I brought home a bunch for my baby.

July 4th Saturday. In the foornoon [forenoon] I trimed [trimmed] up my room and set the table for afternoon and father bought me a coconut and Mr. Peatfield sent me some cherries and Mother bought me a box of strawberries. Then in the afternoon Mary Ella came to take a walk with me and Aunty and Father, but Mother could not go because she had a bad head ache. We went up on town hill and gatherd [gathered] some wild flowers

[new page] [green vines and orange flowers penciled on the top of the page]
to put on my table. Then we came home and Mary staid [stayed] and played with me and we gave our dols [dolls] some suppe [supper] and put them to bed for Sunday. Then we went up in the attic and swung and we danced and capered till six oclock then she went home, and then we had supper and then we sat down to talk and the first thing I new [knew] there was cousin Clara and uncle Manly before me.

July 5th Sunday. I am not able to go to school so I have to stay at home. Uncle and cousin have gorn [gone] home this morning and left aunty again.

July 7th. I do feel

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very sick today and mother and aunty are going to give me a xits bath and a pack.

July 8th. I got over my bath very well, but it was very hot am not very well today.

July 9th. I am about the same today not very well. I went out this afternoon with Mother and aunty and got my picture taken to send to clara, and Mother had hers taken for Aunty and I was going to house my hair cut but the barbor [barber] was sick so I could not.

July 10. I am not so well today as I was yesterday. I have got a very bad headache.

July 11. It is very pleasant today but am not able to go to school.

July 12. It is pleasant but Mother thought I had better stay home.

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July 13. Very pleasant but did not go to school in the afternoon. Mother, aunty, and I went to make some calls at the neighbours [neighbors].

July 14. It is very stormy today and cold.

July 15. Very stormy and aunty made me some pins with heads of seeling [sealing] wax this foornoon [forenoon].

July 16. Very stormy. What unpleasant weather it it is. I do wish that it would come pleasant. Poor aunty thinks she must go home this morning and I feel very sorry about it.

July 17. Aunty gorn [gone] and I feel very lonesome so I thought I would write in you. We are having a very great thunder storm this morning and the litening [lightning] comes very sharp into my window. It is very dark now so I can't write any more.

[new page] [green vines and blue flowers penciled on the top of the page]

July 18. Very dull today. Poor Father's grass is spoiling in this wet weather. Again I say how dreadful this war is and mobs are all through our land those that favor the south. There had to have a whole rigement [regiment] of men to keep them from doing hurt. It is in New York and Boston and Salem and there was four killed in Portsmouth.

July 19. It was stormy this foornoon [forenoon] so I did not go to meeting, but hoped I could go this afternoon but it is so wet out that mother thought that I had better not go so I had to stay at home. Father and Mother have gorn [gone] to meeting and left me at home. It has come out very pleasant this afternoon. It looks beautiful out after

[new page] [green vines and yellow flowers penciled on the top of the page]

this long rain. How glad everything is to see the bright sun come out. Mother has come home most worn out, she had to go to bed just as soon as she got home she is not at all well this summer. How I ought to love her while I have her. I do love her very much but I don't half so much as I ought to.

June [July] 20 Monday. It is very pleasant this morning and everything is rejoicing in the bright sun. Mother thinks that I can go to school today and I am very glad to go this fine morning. How sweetly the birds sing and there comes snowdrop with her whole family of eleven chickens. June [July] 20. I have binn [been]

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to school all day and have enjoyed it very much. I got along a great deal better than I expected to. I feel rather tiered [tired] tonight so I can't write long.

June [July] 21 Tuesday. It is very unpleasant day. It is very warm and muggy. I got up this morning feeling very badly so I can't write so much as I should like to. Last night I coughed till past 12 o'clock and then I could not sleep much this morning. I thought that I was going to have a very nice breakfast of berry cake and sauce and pie, but I could not eat anything because it made me sick to my stomach. I don't know whather [whether] to go to school or not to.

[new page] [green vines and orange flowers penciled on the top of the page]
July 22. I went to school yesterday in the fournoon [forenoon] and it began to rain before school was done and poor Father had to come up after me and it rained real hard all the afternoon so I could not go to school in the afternoon. I made Father comfort bag for the soldiers and I made mine a good while ago. It is very pleasant this morning after the rain yesterday and I am going to school this fournoon [forenoon] but there aint any this afternoon. It is most [almost] school time now so I must leave and get ready.

July 26 Sunday. There has not been any school for three days because Miss Stanwood was sick. I made mother's comfort

[new page] [green vines and yellow flowers penciled on the top of the page]
bag last week and today I have been writing my letter to the soldiers. I have not been to meeting any today. It rained this fournoon [forenoon] so I did not go and this afternoo [afternoon] Mother and Father went, but I had a dreadful headache and could not go.

July 27. I went to school but found my teacher sick so I came back and helped mother wash.

July 28 Tuesday. Teacher sick today and mother and me at home.

July 30. School is up after two months school we are going to have 5 weeks vacation.

August 1st. It is a very pleasant day and I shall have the pleasure to go and carry my comfort bags this afternoon. I filed [filled] mine with a piece of soap, a pencil,

[new page] [green vines and orange flowers penciled on the top of the page]
2 tracts, 2 mesengers [messengers], a letter, some cloves, some yarn and thread, white and brown tape, red white and blue cotton, and pins knedls [needles], buttons for shirts panse [pants?], some cards, and a [?] book, a wellspring, and a picture of a bad heart.

August 2. It is Sunday and Father and Mother have gone to meeting while I am at home alone. Yesterday, there was a very great rain and there has been ever since June and the oldest person can't remember such a unusualy [unusual] summer and there was a great deel [deal] of hay lost. It rained so pouring that I could not go to carry my comfort bag till it was all most [almost] three. They had read three letters that want seeled [sealed] and sung and pased [passed] the cake around before I got there, but

[new page] [green vines and yellow flowers penciled on the top of the page]
I got one piece that was left.

August 3. It is very pleasant today and I can't stop to write much for I must go and help mother wash for she don't feel very well today.

August 8. Yesterday Mary Ella and I went down to the marsh to get a load of hay with my Father and we had a nice time. Day before yesterday our president appointed a meeting all day for thanksgiving foor [for] our good newes [news] we are getting along nicely.

*August twelvth th [twelfth] * It is my birthday today and dear Mother made me a presant [present] of a little wash bole [bowl] and pitcher and [?] words of advice with a five sent [cent] piece. And she baked 14 little mites of cakes no bigger than a lozenger [lozenge]

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and 16 large ones and a little plum cake. In the afternoon I went up to Mrs. Dudlies and took supper. The table was all most covered with flowers and we trimed [trimmed] our hair up and we had the table out on the piaxxa [piazza] and after supper we went over the feald [field] and I got a few black berries for dear Mother. I did not get home

till most 7 oclock * and I mean to try to break up my bad habit of selfishness and I hope to spend the year better than I ever have before.

August 23. There has just gone past a returning regement [regiment] of soldiers and we was glad to hail them back. I went to meeting this foornoon [forenoon] all alone and

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this afternoon Mother and Father have gone and left me alone to keep house so I thought I would write a little in my little book. Yesterday Mother Father and I went down to the beach and I went in bathing and we had a splendid time till when we was comeing [coming] home the horse got the [sharf?] out and Father got out to put it in. When he was getting in, the horse begun to go and Father tumbled onto the wheal [wheel] and hurt his side very badly and he suffers a good deal of pain from it.

August. Cousin Ellen has come to see us a little while today. Father, Mother and I went down to Essiks [Essex] to hear Cousin George ordained to be a home

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Missioners in western New York. We rode down in a caryall [carryall]. It was a very solem [solemn] seen [scene] when the Minister put his hand on his head when he put his right hand into his and giving [giving] him words of advice. I hope I shall never forget it.

September 7th. My school begins today and so I can't write what I wanted to.

September 8th. It is a very pleasant morning to go to school in. I had a very pleasant one yesterday and hope to have as good a one today. This term I am going to study grammar arith arithmetick [arithmetic] and green leaf's and read and spell get defernitions [definitions] write and geography.

September 10. I have something that I must record with pain but I want

[new page]

to record it so as to remember it as long as I live. Yesterday, some girls called for me to go over to Miss Hewman's store and there was a little piece of pink tape hung on the counter and I took it and I feel very sorry about it and dear Mother gave me two sents [cents] to pay for it. I hope it will be the last time and I mean it shall. I have been to school a whole week and had very pleasant ones.

October 5th Sunday. Mother and Father have gone to Meeting and left me alone so I thought I would write about my ride to Groveland last week. Father Mother and I rode up to see the Folks. It was Mother's birthday and Aunty gave her

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a beautiful squash and a few apples. I went over the ferry twice and it was a splendid day. Coming home, Father and I got out to have a good time and we found lots of apples on the ground. We got home nice. Now I think I ought to try to be good when Mother and Father try to do so much for me.

November 8th. It is Sunday and a very calm and beautiful day. I have been so busy this long time about my school lessons that I have foun [found] nothing to write in my book, but I now snatch a moment. Yesterday Mr. Baker killed our pig and dear mother is glad to have the peacefull [peaceful] sabbath come. I am deprived of the pleasure

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of going to meeting this beautiful day, but I ought to be thankful tht [that] my life is spared for yesterday I had been upstairs and swept, and I went up to dust and I had some little things set up and they were blown down and I set them up, but I saw that one little card was gone and I looked out of the window and saw it was on the grownd [ground], and I was comeing [coming] down after it but just then the cow came along and I was trying to scare her away because I thought she would step on it, but the furst [first] thing I knew, I was out of the window in the air falling at a rapid rate and when I hit the ground I had to catch my breath 3 or 4 times and as soon as I could I screamed

[new page]

Mother, and she tried to get me on my feet but I could not stand and she carried me and put me on the bed. She said I looked as pale as a gost [ghost] and I came so fast and heavey [heavy] that I tore my dress and burst the hoop to my scurt [skirt] and there is a great hole in the grownd [ground] where I hit. I hurt my back and side very bad and spraint my rist [wrist] and it makes me lame, so I could not go out. But how greatful [grateful] I ought to be that it did not break any bones or even kill me.

December 6th. It is the sabbath and I am staying at home to let Father and Mother go to meeting. There has been some very sudding [sudden] deaths since I last rote [wrote]. Mrs. Wilson is one and another is Mr. Linburg.

[new page]

He and Ervin Peatfield went up to the mills to get some gloves for Mr. Peatfield and there is a bridge that he had to go over before he get to the mills. The horse became

[contrary?] and it backed the carriage down a steep bank but Ervin saved himself by jumping, but Mr. Linburg fell and hurt his head, but he got up and went to take hold of the bridle and he fell down and fainted. Then the [?] got him into Amos Mann's and he never spoke to his wife nor he did not know her. All he said was that he thought that they has better try to get him home. Then he had spasms, and he died that night. The doctor said that he broke a blood vessel in his brain last week Thursday. Mother was planning to go to lecture and

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worked very hard so as to go, but just as we were eating dinner cousin Silvanus and cousin Ellen and Clara drove up to the door, but they could not stop only a few ours [hours] and they had not had any dinner, so Mother had to fly around and get them some, and she was very much disappointed because she is getting so feeble and she can't go to meeting in the evening and not a great deed Sundays. I have had my vacation and my school beging [beginning] tomorrow. Dear Mother said that I should have a ride before I went to school again, so yesterday she got father to leave his work and take us up to see the mills and the place Mr. Linburg was hurt and we had a beautiful time. I must close now and try to get my lesson.

[new page]

Dec 27th Sunday. It is snowing fast, and I cannot go to church. It is the last Sunday in the year. Last Friday was Christmas day and I had the presant [present] of a handsome photagraph [photograph] album. I bought Mother and Father a little presant [present]. Christmas forenoon the Episcopalians had a meeting and Mother and I had never been to one before and so we thought we should like to go. When we got there the room was trimmed [trimmed] up splendidly there were wreaths hung up at every window and so many crosses that I could not count them.

[new page]

There were four great trees, one in each corner and two at each end of the pulpit and there was a lot of Roxbury waxwork among it. The minister looked the funniest of all when he came with his great white robe on. It came down to the floor and draged [dragged], then he had on a long black sash over the white. Then he went out and changed it for a long black one with such great flowing sleeves that he had to keep pulling them up. I thought he looked very funny. My sabbath school teacher has got back and I went to

[new page]

see her a little while ago.

April 4th 1864. I have long neglected to write and therefore I shall have a good lot to write. Last week my school closed. We had a very good examination. Dear Mother had the privilege of going. I wrote my first composition and had to read it myself. It was about my visit to Groveland. We have three weeks vacation. The sabbath school is about getting another box of comfort bags for the soldiers. I have made mine and I am now helping make Mother's and Father's. We are filling them with the same kind of things that

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we did before. I have written a letter and put into mine and I hope it will do the poor soldier who gets it good. I wrote one before and put it in my first bag. I am now reaping the fruits of it. I have received a beautiful letter expressing his thanks for the things that I sent and telling me how he gave some of them away among his companions and how glad they were for them.

April 10 1864 Sunday. Very stormy. I have a bad cold and so bad that I cannot go to church and sabbath school. Father has gone and dear

[new page]

Mother is at home with me. Last week our class spent Tuesday afternoon at our dear teacher's Miss Southgate. We all had a very pleasant time. Wednesday Mother and I went to Salem and spent the day. In the afternoon we walked out & we saw a great many pretty things & among others we saw a great owl & eagle that was shot in south Salem on Dr farm. I thought it was very large. The owl had such large eyes and looked so funny that it made me laugh. After a while we started for home. We had a very pleasant

[new page]

ride home and arrived safely.

April 14th 1864 Sunday. It has been a very pleasant day, only rather cool. Attended church and sabbath school this forenoon. I have a very bad headache so that I can hardly write. I have been very buisy [busy] since last sabbath. It remained stormy till Wednesday. Monday afternoon I took my work & staid [stayed] a little while with Hatty Hovey. Tuesday remained at home. Wednesday Mary Farley came & stayed a little while with me had a very good time. Friday went with dear

[new page]

Mother to make some calls. Saturday morning after my work was done, I went over the hill to get some checkerberries in the afternoon staid [stayed] at home helping Mother cover my school books. School begins tomorrow and I hope it will be pleasant.

May 1st 1864 sabbath. It has ben [been] very stormey [stormy] all day & still continues to. My school has kept two weeks and I have enjoyed it very much. Saturday I went over the hills to see if I could not find some flowers. I had a very good time and I found enough to make three

[new page]

very pretty bouquets for today. It is growing late and my head aches very bad, so I must leave.

May 8th 1864. I have today deceived dear Mother.

May 17. Disobeyed my dear Mother.

May 22nd. It is a beautiful May sabbath. All nature seems as if it hat [had] put on its best and most lovely apparel. The trees are all in bloom and the little birds are all buisy [busy] building their little nests. There is a little yellow bird that is building his nest on the lilach [lilac] right close by the window.

June 1864. It is the sabbath and a very windy one.

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Father and Mother have gone to church and left me alone to keep house. In the last few lines that I wrote I said that there was a little yellow bird building in the lilach [lilac]. He got his nest all done with the mother bird's help and she had begun to lay her eggs when one night an old cat got up on the bush and knocked the nest down and broke some of the bush. Mother went out and tried to put it back but the old bird did not like it and she and her mate moved it all off some where that I can't find it. I have

[new page]

been very sick for two weeks with the measels and have not got over them yet. I am very weak and I cannot see to read or sew much. I fell [feel] very bad about have to stay out of school so long, but it can't be helped.

June 14 1864. It is a very hot sabbath and it makes me very uncomfortable, but I have been able to attend church & S.S [sabbath school] last week Mother thought that before I begun to attend school again it would do me good to have a few rides, so one morning we thought that we would go to.

[new page]

Mother and I went, and we had a nice ride in the cars going down but when we got to the house it was all locked up and the lady in the other part of the house said she had gone to Cambrige [Cambridge]. I felt very much disappointed, and we had to come home in the twelve oclock train. The next ride we took was up to Groveland. We did not get disappointed that time but had a very nice time. I think I shall begin going to school Monday if it is pleasant.

July 31st 1864. A hole [whole] month and more has passed away

[new page]

& I have not had the opportunity to write. I said in my last piece I wrote that I was expecting to go to school the next week. I went that week and then had to give up going I was so unwell. I had a long time to rest and get better in, so last Wednesday I began to go to school to Miss Chote. I like her very much. It is vacation at Miss S... O I dread to say anything about this dreadful war. It is still rageing [raging] very furious. O when will it come to an end. We are living in dreadful

[new page]

times. Our beautiful flag is up half mast every day for some poor soldier fallen. There has been dreadful fires that have distroyed [destroyed] cities and cause great suffering. Besides that there is a very great drouth so that we shall not have any crops at all in some places they have not had rain for 22 monthes [months]. The poor cattle are dropping down dead for the want of something to eat. The hand of got [God] seems to be chasting us very much but we deserve it and even more. I think we ought to humble ourselves in his sight. Very much for our sins.

[new page]

August 7, 1864. Last sabbath after wrighting [writing] I was taken very sick. I vomited very bad and had quite a sick night. Went to church this forenoon with dear Mother and Father. It is a very warm day and all things are drying up again. We have had a little rain since I last wrote. I hope we shall have some more. There has not been much news from the war this last week. I still go to school to Miss Chote and like very much. This week on Friday I shall be 11 years old. Our school is thinking about going to the beach this week on Wednesday. I hope we shall. There has been

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a very sudden death this week. Mister Alfred Kimball. He was taken sick in the morning and died in the evening with asiatic cholera.

August 14 1864. It is a beautiful sabbath. Last night we had a beautiful shower to refresh the drooping earth and this morning when I got up the sun was just riseing [rising] and al nature looked as if it had washed her face for the sabbath. I have been to meeting and sabbath school with dear Father. Dear Mother was not able to go. The last time I wrote I said that our school was expecting to go to the beach on Wednesday, but we got disappointed. Miss

[new page]

Chote found it would cost so much that she said we had better have a little party here, so we carried our dinners to old England and spread a large table over there we had a splendid time. I read my composition and we said some of our lessons there. Last Friday was my birthday. I was 11 years old. I received some good advise from Mother and hope to keep it.

October 1864. It is one of those lovely days in Autumn when all is bright and beautifull [beautiful]. Oh how fast time flies. It seems but yesterday since I began to go to school. I like Miss Chote's letters than ever. Vacation will soon be here. Dear Father seems

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