

Manuscript Women's Letters and Diaries:

From the American Antiquarian Society, 1750-1950

Available on the World Wide Web



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PREPUBLICATION ANNOUNCEMENT

Alexander Street's *Manuscript Women's Letters and Diaries from the American Antiquarian Society* brings together 100,000 pages of the personal writings of women of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, displayed as high-quality images of the original manuscripts, extensively indexed and online for the first time. The collection is drawn entirely from the extensive holdings of the American Antiquarian Society.

Spanning 1750 to 1950, the database is particularly strong in 19th century material. Highlights include the letters of Annie Sullivan detailing her teaching of Helen Keller, written to Michael Anagnos, director of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School of the Blind; 100 letters written by Ellen Tucker Emerson, eldest daughter of Ralph Waldo Emerson, describing life in Concord during the Civil War; and the papers of Abby Foster Kelley, noted women's rights advocate and abolitionist, depicting the activities of the antislavery movement in New England, New York, and Ohio.

Thousands of letters and diary entries from less well known women vividly document even the smallest details of their lives and shed light on the roles women played within their families, their communities, and the social and political movements of their times. In many cases, we also include the replies, from both men and women, placing the letters in their full context. Detailed biographical notes illuminate the lives of the authors, including multigenerational details, as exemplified in the letters and diaries of three generations of women within the same family.

The writings in *Manuscript Women's Letters and Diaries* are by women from New England families, but this is by no means a "New England collection." The women wrote from the many places throughout the U.S. in which they lived, traveled, worked, studied, and observed the lives and historical events around them— including John Brown's raid; the activities of the Ku Klux Klan; numerous wars; experiences in a Colorado mining camp, through Nancy Colburn Hartford's log of her time there; frontier conditions in Florida in 1830, as lived and described by Julia Ann Draper Lazelle; World War I Army training camps and the American Expeditionary Forces in France, through Lizzie Bliss Dewey's correspondence with friends in service; charitable work in the South, documented by the Chase sisters' writings of their experiences.

Other topics include female education and intellectual development, medical conditions, religious life, and domestic work, such as Lizzie Wilson Goodenough's documentation of the life of a servant in Brattleboro, Vermont. (*Mine is a hard & lonely life day after day comes and brings its work. It seems my life is made up of nothing but long days for nothing but work...for others.*)

Each letter and diary entry is indexed using *Alexander Street's Semantic Indexing™*, allowing researchers to identify and locate content in ways never before possible, with pinpoint searching to the level of the individual letter and passage. The letters and diaries are displayed as images of the manuscripts, giving users access not only to the women's words, but also to details revealed by the physical documents themselves. A selected twenty-five percent of the collection is also rekeyed, allowing for full-text searching.

Manuscript Women's Letters and Diaries will be available later in 2007. For more information, and to learn about other titles in Alexander Street's ***Social and Cultural History Online*** series, go to <http://alexanderstreet.com>.

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