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Cathrin Morley Poetry Album

1832-1837

1 envelope (0.25)

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Possibly a worker who boarded in Van Duesenville, a growing industrial area of Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Notebook consists of poems, most of which concern religious faith and local events that were written in Cathrin Morley's hand but may not have been created by her. Also includes a list of significant family dates.

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Scope of collection

This little wallpaper-bound notebook of, primarily, poems, was compiled by Cathrin Morley of Van Duesenville in Great Barrington, Massachusetts from 1832 to 1837. In that period Van Duesenville included two textile factories, a blast furnace for the manufacturing of pig-iron, chair and rope manufacturing businesses, a few mills and stores, a post office, a chapel, and a tavern. Cathrin Morley's parents lived in Lee, Massachusetts in the years she wrote the notebook; it is possible she boarded in Van Duesenville and worked at one of the factories or other businesses.

While most of the poems concern religious faith, as would be expected, there are a few which particularize the locale and life experiences of Cathrin Morley. The longest poem unravels in detail the tragic deaths of three young people while boating on Six Mile Pond in Tyringham, now Monterey [Buell Lake]. Two poems on the deaths of infant twins seem to indicate that the event had considerable impact on Cathrin Morley personally. "Lines Composed on the Death of Lester Newel who was Killed by the Fall of a Tree, Feb. 12, 1824", while not particularly detailed, attests to the life of a local youth. "A Wedding Hymn," "Beauty," "Female Piety," and "A Poem by Miss L. Chapin Aged 18" are particularly revealing about the prevailing attitudes towards and of women and their roles.

Most of the poems are in Cathrin Morley's hand, but it is unclear whether she made any of them. "A Few Lines Composed on Hearing of the Death of Mrs. Gifford of Lee, Mass., July 4, 1835," for example, appears to be signed by CM, but is attributed by her to LM Morley.

A linguistically odd piece is "Indian Experience" which seems to combine stereotypical Native American pidgin speech with Southern Black dialect.

Significant family dates are listed on one of the inside pages.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Purchased from Robert Lucas, October 1986

Processing Information

Processed by Linda Seidman, 1986.

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

Christian poetry, American--Massachusetts--Great Barrington.

Death--Poetry.

Great Barrington (Mass.)--Poetry.

Morley, Cathrin--Notebooks, sketchbooks, etc.

Sex role--Massachusetts--Great Barrington--Poetry.

Spiritual life--Poetry.

Van Duesenville (Great Barrington, Mass.)

Women--Poetry.

Contributors

Morley, Cathrin [main entry]

Genres and formats

Notebooks.

Poems.

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