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Clark H. Obear Diaries

1845-1888

4 vols. (0.5 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 601



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A resident of New Ipswich, N.H., Clark Obear was an ardent supporter of the temperance and antislavery movements, and was deeply involved in the affairs of his church and community. A teacher in Hillsborough County schools, Obear also worked as a farmer and insurance agent, and served in public office as a deputy sheriff, a Lieutenant Colonel in the militia, a fence viewer and pound keeper, and for several years he was superintendent of schools. Obear and his wife Lydia Ann (Swasey) had two children, Annabel and Francis.

The four diaries in this collection contain brief, but regular entries documenting Clark Obear's daily life in New Ipswich, N.H. during the middle years of the nineteenth century. Despite their brevity, the diaries form a continuous coverage of many years

and offer details that provide a compelling sense of the rhythms of life in a small New Hampshire village. Of particular note, Obear carefully notes the various lectures he attends in town and the organizations of which he is part, including reform movements like temperance and antislavery.

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Background on Clark H. Obear

A life-long resident of New Ipswich, New Hampshire, a small town perched on the border with Massachusetts, Clark Hopkins Obear was born on Feb, 25, 1811, the youngest child of the shoemaker Josiah Obear (1747-1820) and his much younger second wife Abigail. Josiah had emigrated to New Ipswich from Wenham, Mass., in the 1780s, eventually purchasing the Daniel Foster house on Main Street in the central village, just north of the graveyard. According to local historian Charles Henry Chandler, Josiah, like his son, was known for keeping "a daily journal with a record of public events, especially deaths."

Clark Obear was raised in New Ipswich, educated at the New Ipswich Appleton Academy, and apparently never strayed far from his family home. He made his living from a diverse range of occupations. For many years, he was a public school teacher in Hillsborough County, but at various points he was a farmer, insurance agent, fence viewer and pound keeper, deputy sheriff, and superintendent of schools. On June 8, 1848, Obear married Lydia Ann Swasey (born 1820), a public school teacher, writer, and historian. The couple raised two children, Annabel Clark Obear (born 1852 and later wife of the civil engineer George F. Conant) and Francis A. Obear (a letter carrier, born 1857, who married Sarah Jenkins).

Reformist in spirit, Obear and his wife were supporters of the temperance and antislavery movements, and were deeply involved in the affairs of his church and community. As a member of the militia, Clark rose to rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and although he was too old to serve in the Civil War, he supported the cause by raising funds for the Freedmen's Aid Society and serving as Secretary of the town's Freedman's Education Society. Clark Obear died in New Ipswich on April 11, 1888, aged 77.

Scope of collection

The four diaries in this collection contain brief, but regular entries documenting Clark Obear's daily life in New Ipswich, N.H. during the middle years of the nineteenth century. Despite their brevity, the diaries form a continuous coverage of many years and offer details that provide a compelling sense of the rhythms of life in a small New Hampshire village. Of particular note, Obear carefully notes the various lectures he attends in town and the organizations of which he is part, including reform movements like temperance and antislavery.

Inventory

Obear, Clark H.: Diary

1845-1851

252 p.

Vol. 1

Obear, Clark H.: Diary

1871-1877

280 p.

Vol. 2

Obear, Clark H.: Diary

1878-1883

280 p.

Vol. 3

Obear, Clark H.: Diary

1884-1888

203 p.

Vol. 4

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Benjamin Katz, April 2009 (2009-064).

Bibliography

Details on Obear's family and life are available in:

Chandler, Charles Henry, *The history of New Ipswich, New Hampshire*. Fitchburg, Mass. : Sentinel Publ., 1914.

Kidder, Frederic and Augustus Addison Gould, *The history of New Ipswich, from its first grant in MDCCXXXVI to the present time*. Boston : Gould and Lincoln, 1852. This history also includes a map (p.287) of the central village in New Ipswich, ca. 1850, showing Obear's house near the cemetery on Main Street, across the road from the schoolhouse.

Obear, Lydia Anne, *New Ipswich in the War of the Rebellion*. Worcester, Mass. : Lucius P. Stoddard, 1898. Clark Obear's wife, Lydia, quotes regularly from his diary; the volume cited is not present in this collection.

Processing Information

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Language:

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Search terms

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Abolitionists--New Hampshire

Antislavery movements--New Hampshire

New Ipswich (N.H.)--Social life and customs

Temperance--New Hampshire

Genres and formats

Diaires

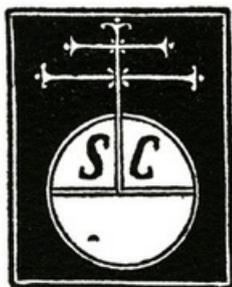
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