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Levi Newton Diary

1889-1890

1 vol. (0.1 linear foot)

Call no.: MS 998 bd



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[Credo digital](#)

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A farmer living in the Quabbin region, Levi Newton spent most of his life within a few miles of the adjoining towns of North Dana and New Salem. Born in 1830, Newton was married three times and raised two sons and a daughter. He died in New Salem in 1919.

Written at a time when his son Willie was living at home and his wife Persis was struggling with her health, Levi Newton's pocket diary is a terse record of the daily life of a farmer in the great Quabbin region. Little more than a sentence or two in length, each entry makes quick note of the weather, travel, and Levi's and Willie's activities for the day, but there are relatively frequent references to the ailments and ultimate death of Persis and occasional notes on the anniversaries of the death of family

members. The Newtons raised wheat, potatoes, cattle, hay, and oats on their farm and occasionally record hauling logs and other miscellaneous work.

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Background on Levi Newton

Levi Newton, a small farmer from the Quabbin region, was born on October 21, 1830, the son of William and Betsy Newton, and spent nearly all of his life within a few miles radius of the adjoining towns of Dana and New Salem, Massachusetts.

At the age of 20, Newton was recorded in the census as living with his family just over the border in Marlboro, Vt., and it was in Vermont that he married his first wife, Josephine Victoria Whitaker, on Nov. 24, 1859. Shortly after their marriage, the couple returned to Massachusetts and settled first in the Quabbin town of Greenwich, and then in nearby New Salem, raising a family that came to include two sons, Marshall Delevan Newton (1862-1930) and William Levi Newton (1871-1952), and a daughter, Martha Clara Newton (1865-1884).

Widowed when Josephine died three months after the birth of their third child, Newton went on to marry Persis Pratt on March 30, 1873, and following Persis' death on Feb. 19, 1890, he tried his luck for a third time, marrying Estella J. Bullock in a Methodist service on July 26, 1891. Barely six years later, on April 2, 1897, Estella died.

Although Newton lived in North Dana for several years beginning in about 1886, he was a resident of New Salem when he died in June 1919.

Scope of collection

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The entry noting Persis' death (Feb. 19, 1890) is characteristically brief, reading only: "Willie went to Barre with the stage. Persis died at 3.30 P.M. I take care of her." The depth of Levi's feeling, however, comes through in subsequent weeks and months when he notes the passing of another anniversary of her death, week by week and month by month.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Audrey Duckert.

Processing Information

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Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

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Search terms

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North Dana (Mass.)--History

Wives--Death--Massachusetts--North Dana

Contributors

Newton, Levi **[main entry]**

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