

Seth Shaler Arnold (1788-1871)
Journals, 1809-1871
Doc 387

Biography

Seth Shaler Arnold was born on February 22, 1788 in a large white house on the main highway in Westminster, Vermont, the son of Seth and Esther (Ranney) Arnold. He was educated at Deerfield Academy and graduated from Middlebury College in 1812. He served in the War of 1812. He taught school a year at Bladensburg, Maryland., and at the same time studied theology with the Reverend J. Breckenridge of Washington, D. C. On his return to Westminster, in 1814, he continued his studies with Rev. Sylvester Sage. On January 22, 1817 he married Ann House, the daughter of a merchant ship owner in Haddam, Connecticut. He was a minister in Alstead, New Hampshire, from May 1815 until April 1834 when he returned to Westminster to help his aged father. He continued his ministerial career in Westminster by acting as a supply, interim pastor, or occasional preacher and mixed it with farming enterprises.

Seth and Ann Arnold had four daughters: Mary Ann, Sophia, Olivia, and Caroline. Ann Arnold died on February 3, 1841. Seth married second Mary (Davis) Grout on November 5, 1844. After her death on May 22, 1847, he married third Naomi (Jones) Hitchcock on December 20, 1854. Seth Shaler Arnold died April 3, 1871 in Westminster, Vermont.

Scope & Content

The collection contains two full and one partial copy of a typescript of the journals (or diaries) of Seth Shaler Arnold (1788-1871) of Westminster, Vermont. The journals cover the period 1809-1871 and record the events of daily life of an early nineteenth-century minister and farmer. Arnold saw the coming of the first railroad and the birth of the nascent silkworm-growing industry in Vermont. The journals reveal Arnold's struggle to balance the life of a farmer with that a minister, difficulties with hired farm laborers, and conflicts in the church community. The diaries also show a decline of the author's strong religious convictions to an indifferent attitude toward organized religion.

The typescripts were apparently created by Dorothy C. Walter in the 1940s for the Vermont Historical Society. At that time the originals were in the possession of Seth Arnold's great-granddaughter Gladys Gage Rogers of Ascutneyville, Vermont. A portion of the diaries was published in *Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society*, new series vol. 8, no. 2 (June 1940): 107-193.

The collection came to the Vermont Historical Society at three different times. The first set, described as the "master," came to the VHS in 1940 (accession number 21104) when the VHS paid Miss Walter \$14.35 to copy the journals. It was formerly

cataloged as B Ar65a and then later as MS Box A7. The second set came in 1943 (accession number 22386) from Arthur W. Peach who had edited them for the *Proceedings*; it is an incomplete set. This set was formerly cataloged as MS Box B11. The third set, which includes extensive annotations, came to the VHS in 1994 with other papers of Miss Walter from Lyndon State College (ms. acc. no. 94.4). The collection takes up 1 linear feet of shelf space.

Related Collections

In 1939 the Vermont Historical Society published a series about Seth Arnold (*Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society*, new series volume 7, no. 4 (December 1939): 217-230). The same issue includes extracts from Arnold's *The Intellectual Housekeeper* (p. 231-245). In 1940 a portion of the diaries were published (*Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society*, new series vol. 8, no. 2 (June 1940): 107-193). The VHS library collection also includes an 1826 printed sermon of Arnold's (Pam.-Arnold, Seth Shaler).

Inventory

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2	____, 10/13/1839-10/19/1843
3	____, 10/20/1843-5/7/1847
4	____, 5/8/1847-4/17/1850
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7	____, 1/1/1860-10/30/1864
8	____, 10/31/1864-2/22/1871
9	Copy 2, 3/13/1850- 6-28-1853
10	____, _____, 6/29/1853-12/15/1859
11	____, 1/1/1860-10/31/1864
12	____, 10/31/1864-2/22/1871
13	Copy 3, 9/8/1809-10/11/1839
14	____, 10/31/1839-10-19-1843
15	____, 10/20/1843-5/7/1847
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17	____, 4/17/1850-7/7/1853
18	____, 7/8/1853-12/31/1859

- 19 _____, 1/1/1860-10/30/1864
- 20 _____, 10/31/1864-2/22/1871
- 21 Notes and articles

William Osgood
Paul Carnahan
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