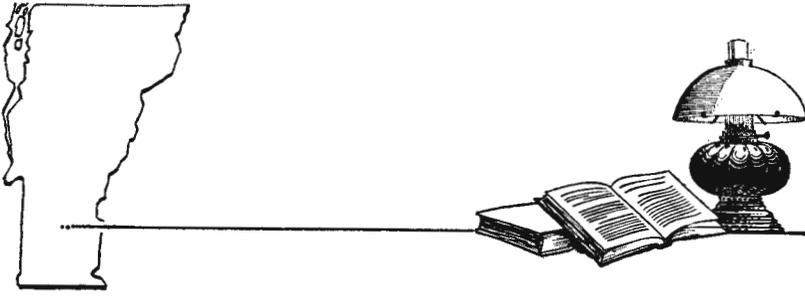


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These two diaries, written in 1853 and 1869, were first made available to scholars in 1969. They yield rare insight into the family and early environment of Chester Alan Arthur.

The Diaries of Malvina Arthur: Windows Into The Past of Our 21st President

By THOMAS C. REEVES

THE MOST obscure President of the United States is undoubtedly Chester Alan Arthur. Until very recently, he was the subject of but a single biography and fewer than half a dozen scholarly articles.¹ Interestingly, the veil was drawn by Arthur himself. Throughout his life he scrupulously evaded reporters; after 1880 he gave the year of his

1. See esp. George F. Howe, *Chester A. Arthur A Quarter-Century of Machine Politic* (New York: 1934); George F. Howe, "The New York Custom House Controversy, 1877-1879," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XVIII (December 1931), 350-363; Lee Newcomer, "Chester A. Arthur: The Factors Involved In His Removal From The New York Custom House," *New York History*, XVIII (October 1937), 401-410; Gilbert H. Doane, "The Birthplace of Chester A. Arthur," *Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society*, IX (March 1941), 3-13; V. P. DeSantis, "President Arthur and the Independent Movements in the South in 1882," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXVI (August 1953), 346-363; and John S. Goff, "President Arthur's Domestic Legislative Program," *New-York Historical Society Quarterly*, XLIV (April 1960), 167-178. This writer has recently added: "President Arthur in Yellowstone National Park," *MONTANA The Magazine of Western History*, XIX (July 1969), 18-29; "Chester A. Arthur and Campaign Assessments in the Election of 1880," *The Historian*, XXXI (August 1969), 573-582; and "Chester A. Arthur and the Campaign of 1880," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXXXIV (December 1969), 628-637. The most accurate survey of Arthur's political career is in Ari Hoogenboom, *Outlawing The Spoils A History of The Civil Service Reform Movement 1865-1883* (Urbana: 1961), pp. 135-267. See also John A. Garraty, *The New Commonwealth 1877-1890* (New York: 1968), pp. 275-283; H. Wayne Morgan, *From Hayes to McKinley National Party Politics, 1877-1896* (Syracuse: 1969), pp. 143-185; and David M. Fletcher, *The Awkward Years American Foreign Relations Under Garfield and Arthur* (Columbia, Mo.: 1962), *passim*.

birth as 1830, when in reality it was 1829;² as President he carefully protected himself and his family from personal inquiries of virtually every sort; and the day before his death, in front of his son, he had burned the great bulk of his private papers.³ What evidence historians have used to examine Arthur's private life and to weigh his fascinating and important career as a Civil War general, Grant-Conkling spoilsman, collector of the New York Custom House, and President of the United States, has come largely from a handful of letters written to a small number of friends and associates, a few often-unreliable memoirs, and the standard newspaper, magazine and official governmental sources.

A great quantity of pertinent documents has emerged over the past thirty-five years concerning Arthur's controversial management of the Custom House and his almost full term in the White House, but it has survived largely unstudied in our recent professional passion to trace the careers of liberal thinkers and reformers.⁴ Chester Alan Arthur remains, as was his wish, a dim figure, seated somewhere between Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, in an era laden with the castigations of the Progressive historians and their students. Our view of late 19th century Presidents remains similar (in large part for lack of research) to that expressed several decades ago by Thomas Wolfe: "They were the lost Americans: their gravely vacant and bewhiskered faces mixed, melted, swam together. . . . Which had the whiskers, which the burn-sides: which was which?"

Arthur's history prior to the time he became collector of the New

2. There is much evidence, to be discussed in a future article, substantiating the 1829 birthdate. See the Arthur Family Bible, New York Public Library, in which the date is twice recorded, once in William Arthur Sr's hand [from a fragment of an older volume, glued into this Bible in 1949 by Chester A. Arthur III] and again in Chester A. Arthur's hand. This curious matter revives the allegation that Arthur may have been born in Canada, rather than Fairfield, Vermont, thus disqualifying him for the Presidency. See Howe, *Chester A. Arthur*, pp. 3-4, and A. P. Hinman, *How a British Subject Became President of the United States* (New York: 1884), *passim*. The former President's grandson, Chester A. Arthur III, wrote in 1948: "There is some mystery in the whole picture of President Arthur's background, even if one does not believe the story that he was born in Canada; for it was not natural that he should have allowed his year of birth to be set down in his 'campaign sketch' as 1830 (which was later duly engraved on his tomb in Albany) when he himself records it in his Bible as 1829, and it appears also as 1829 in his father's record." Gavin Arthur [Chester A. Arthur III], "Full Circle A Tri-Biography," unpublished manuscript in the papers of Chester A. Arthur III, in my possession. I wish to express my deep gratitude to Mr. Arthur, the last of the family line, for all of his gracious assistance.

3. Interview with Chester A. Arthur III, July 26, 1969; George F. Howe to the writer, August 28, 1969; Library of Congress, *Index To The Chester A. Arthur Papers* (Washington, 1961), p. v.

4. Especially valuable are the Chester A. Arthur papers in the New-York Historical Society (donated in 1939), Arthur letters in the E. D. Morgan papers in the New York State Library (purchased in 1942), the Arthur collection at the Library of Congress (purchased in large part from Chester A. Arthur III in 1958), and the Chester A. Arthur Scrapbooks (purchased by Columbia University in 1949).

York Custom House in 1871 is particularly vague. Beyond the brief academic records at Union College, a memoir by a college classmate named Silas Burt, and a few letters to and from his brother, almost everything we know of the younger Arthur comes from authorized biographical sketches.⁵

In 1969, however, two private diaries from the pen of one of Arthur's sisters were made available to scholars. The first, written in 1853, and the second, in 1869, yield rare insight into the family and early environment of this urbane gentleman who found himself President courtesy of an assassin's bullet.⁶

Malvina Arthur was born April 5, 1832 at Fairfield, Vermont, the sixth child of Rev. William Arthur and his wife Malvina. The elder Arthur had emigrated to Canada from the tiny village of Dreen, county Ulster, about 1819 and was married in 1821. A highly literate man who hobbled about on a lame foot, Arthur taught school and studied law before being ordained a Baptist clergyman in Waterville, Vermont in April, 1828. The next month he moved his family to Fairfield, where he served several churches in the area and continued to teach school. He was widely known and respected in Vermont and was remembered clearly by many citizens of the state in 1881 when his son became the nation's Chief Executive. In 1835 the Arthurs moved to western New York, where the father served a number of tiny parishes, often unable to support his growing family, firmly convinced of the truth he brought in lengthy, fiery sermons to his congregations.⁷

In early 1853 twenty-year-old Malvina was living in the little town of

5. There are good Silas Burt collections at both the New York Public Library and the New-York Historical Society. The William Arthur, Jr. papers, cited in Howe, *Chester A. Arthur*, pp. 28-30, 32, and 36, were owned by his daughters, Susan and Alice Arthur, and were read by George F. Howe in the early 1930's. George F. Howe to the writer, August 28, 1969. The William Arthur, Jr. papers were transmitted to Chester A. Arthur III in the early 1950's and contained 187 documents and ten volumes of diaries. Thirty-one of the documents are now missing, but Mr. Arthur had accurate transcriptions made. The documents and the transcriptions are now in my possession.

6. The diaries were given to Chester A. Arthur III in 1933 by his father's first cousin, Mrs. C. H. Jackson, the former Mary McElroy. Interview with Chester A. Arthur III, July 25, 1969. Mrs. Jackson was the daughter of Mrs. John E. McElroy, the White House hostess during her widower brother's Administration. See "Mrs. John E. McElroy," *New York Evening Post*, January 9, 1917, and "President Arthur's Youngest Sister," *The Nation*, February 8, 1917, p. 169.

7. See Sam Henry, "The Ulster Background of Chester Alan Arthur Twenty First President of The United States," in *Ulster-Irish Societies Year Book 1939* (Rutland, Vt.: 1939), pp. 35-51, and Clarence S. Brigham, "William Arthur," *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: 1928), I, 379. The best impressions of the elder Arthur are to be found, perhaps ironically, in Hinman's *How A British Subject Became President of the United States*, a highly valuable volume which has practically escaped the scrutiny of historians. See also "The Rev. Dr. William Arthur," *New-York Daily Tribune*, October 30, 1875; "Death of Rev. Wm. Arthur, D. D.," *The [Geneseo, N. Y.] Livingston Republican*, November 4, 1875.

Cohoes, New York, near Albany, where she had come on April 1 of the previous year from the family home in Hoosick.⁸ Her brother, Chester, then 23, was principal of the academy in Cohoes, and Malvina, along with her sister Almeda, then 27, were teachers.⁹ The extent of Malvina's formal education is unknown, but she told her diary repeatedly of her distaste for the profession of pedagogy. Both young ladies lived in the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Caw, the latter being the former Regina Arthur, an older sister who had been the first of the Arthur children.

Malvina was a rather plain, moody, brooding young woman, with a hypersensitivity and a penchant for hypochondria which often bordered on serious neurosis. She loathed her pious, ever-stern father and reproached herself constantly for being unable to accept the Christianity he demanded of all with whom he associated. Her brother, Chester, then studying law as well as attempting to tame a large number of unruly children, meant a great deal to her, and was apparently a shield between herself and her father.¹⁰ Another brother, William, two years younger than she, was away at medical school.¹¹

Cohoes offered little in 1853 in the way of diversion for its inhabitants. The weather, of course, was often extremely bitter, and young Malvina, as she opened her diary, was at times desperate for novelty. People frequently visited each other to pass long winter nights, and Malvina was especially pleased to receive Chester, usually on his way to or from the library, and his close friend Campbell Allen.¹²

On January 19 Malvina described one evening's entertainment which featured Chester indulging in a parlor game.

Came home to night weary and dispirited. Chester came in a little while, and after tea, James came in, and then Mr. Masten [soon to marry Almeda], who returned home last night. Almeda and Regina went to the Sewing

8. 1853 Diary, April 1.

9. Arthur was employed at Cohoes from November 8, 1852 to March 1, 1853. "The Nation's Sorrow," *New York Journal*, November 20, 1886.

10. There is no suggestion in the diaries or elsewhere of ill feelings between father and son, although it is apparent that Chester found little in his father's life to emulate. As a young man in the Progressive Era, Chester A. Arthur III was told repeatedly by relatives—including Regina Arthur, the former President's sister—that the elder Arthur had seriously alienated all of his children early in their lives. Interview with Chester A. Arthur III, July 26, 1969. In the Chester A. Arthur papers at the Library of Congress, William Arthur Sr.'s will may be found (making Regina and Chester executors) along with occasional small checks from Chester to his father. In the papers of Chester A. Arthur III there is a transcription of an interesting letter from Regina Caw to her brother and sister-in-law, William and Alice Arthur, describing a tearful meeting of the elder Arthur and his first son shortly before the former's death.

11. 1853 Diary, Saturday [July 16].

12. See ten very revealing letters from Arthur to Allen, written between 1850 and 1855, in the Arthur papers at the Library of Congress.

Society, and I went down to the trustees meeting to present my bill, found no one there and went down to Josephine's [her closest friend]. Staid there about half an hour, when Chester came for me, and I went down to the school house to the meeting, then came home, and went into Mr. Hollister's, and staid there until past nine, then came home again and found here Chester, Campbell, and Mr. Masten, and just now they are having considerable fun trying to make the table tip by magnetizing it.¹³

Lectures, church meetings, and reading societies were also sources of companionship and stimulation. Mrs. Caw frequently convened a reading society in her front room.¹⁴

But these were the joys of others, and there was little to lighten the days of this somber young woman. On February 1st she confided to her diary:

. . . another uneventful day. Went in the evening with Chester and Josephine to hear Mrs. C. Oakes Smith lecture on 'The Dignity of Labor.' After the lecture we went to Mrs. Brown's. Had a dull time. Came home about twelve, and went to bed tired enough. Thus day after day passes away and leaves its traces for good or evil.¹⁵

Later in the month she wrote:

Tuesday, another rainy, gloomy day. A party in the evening at Mary Clarke's. Had a miserable time, had worked myself into a miserable frame of mind, before I went. To my shame be it confessed. I should be the last one to complain of the thoughts and actions of those around me, I who make myself so miserable, with my jealous, selfish feelings . . .¹⁶

In early March she made the day's journey to Hoosick to visit with her eighteen-year-old brother, William, on vacation from medical school. If Cohoes depressed her (she once called it a "little dirty *cubby hole*") the family parsonage and the presence of her demanding father caused her to return to Cohoes with much relief.¹⁷

On March 26, Malvina learned of her dismissal from the academy. That evening she poured out her grief to her diary: "It was like a thunderbolt making one vast tumble of all my castles. It seems impossible to tear up all my plans so suddenly, to bear having all my hopes dashed so suddenly to the ground. Oh I cannot bear it."¹⁸

13. 1853 Diary, January 19.

14. *Ibid.*, Monday [January 17].

15. *Ibid.*, February 1.

16. *Ibid.*, Tuesday [February 29].

17. *Ibid.*, Friday [March 4], Sunday [March 6], Tuesday [March 8].

18. *Ibid.*, March 26. Chester's appointment terminated on March 1 with the school's closing, and it is likely that Malvina's dismissal was linked to that fact. See "The Nation's Sorrow," *New York Journal*, November 20, 1886.

Soon she was on her way to Albany, possibly at Chester's direction, to enter school under the tutelage of a Mr. and Mrs. Carter.¹⁹ She remained only until the conclusion of the term and was forced to return to her family, now living at West Troy, New York. Here Malvina was once again faced with the presence of her father, whose staunch self-righteousness and biting comments filled her with terror and bitterness. "I could find it very pleasant here at home, if it were not for that one, great hindrance." Her only consolation was the presence of Chester, "but perhaps I shall find it more lonely when Chester goes away."²⁰ Soon her brother left briefly and Malvina was compelled to confront her father's reproach. On July 11 she wrote, "Ma's so sick. Mr. Loomis'[s] been here to call, and Pa's remarks completely unstrung my nerves. I'm just down sick. I wish Chester were home."²¹ Five days later she lamented, "Chester went off to Cohoes, and left me alone again."²²

On July 27 Malvina was delighted by the news that her sister Almeda was to visit for a month. "But I can take little comfort now thinking of the cold gloomy days which are coming when Almeda and C. will both be gone. . . . Oh how my head aches, aches. It is almost unbearable."²³

By mid-September Malvina was again alone with her parents. "Almeda has gone, and Chester has gone, how I did hate to have him go." And now, because her father had apparently once again lost a parish due to his habit of tongue-lashing church elders, a young student was taken into the household to supplement the family's income. "I am so vexed that Pa has brought so much trouble upon us, but I hope it will not last long. He is mighty stiff."²⁴

Malvina, like her brothers and sisters, thought of their mother with great devotion and affection. The former Malvina Stone was born in 1802 in Berkshire, Vermont, the daughter of George Washington Stone and Judith Stevens, and was an ancestor of Chief Justice Harlan Fiske Stone of the United States Supreme Court and a descendant of Uriah Stone, a soldier of the American Revolution who served in military companies raised in New Hampshire and Vermont.²⁵ She would bear nine children in her lifetime and would leave a reputation within the family of selflessness and devotion. She appears in her daughter's diary

19. 1853 Diary, April 27.

20. *Ibid.*, July 1.

21. *Ibid.*, Monday [July 11].

22. *Ibid.*, Saturday [July 16].

23. *Ibid.*, July 27.

24. *Ibid.*, September 15.

25. Henry, "The Ulster Background of Chester Alan Arthur," p. 41. And see the research of Ruth Grant Abell on the Stones, in the Arthur papers at the Library of Congress.

singing in the choir and accompanying her husband on house calls. The younger Malvina wrote on October 10: "Ma came up to take a look at me before she went to bed. I do believe if ever there was an angel on the face of the earth it is her. I wish I could be more careful about grieving her."²⁶

Home offered little enjoyment for Malvina as 1853 ground to a close and snow again covered the ground. The reason was apparent: "I should like it . . . here if it was not for the same old terror."²⁷ The school teaching she had resumed brought no satisfaction, while her fiancé, a young man named Henry Reynolds, appeared increasingly diffident. There seemed no way to flee the wrath of her father, who no doubt penetrated the doubts Malvina harbored about the Christian faith. In late October she confessed:

Have been to church twice to day and to night have just finished my letter to Henry. . . . I wish I was a Christian. I do wonder that I can sit unmoved Sabbath after Sabbath, and be so little affected by the sermons I hear. Nothing on the subject appears to affect me.²⁸

The personality of her father overwhelmed Malvina's thoughts, compounding her frustrations. On October 27 she wrote, "I do wish Pa would not take so much pains to talk to me[.] I do believe he will drive me distracted."²⁹ Shortly she added, "I feel very happy each time Pa leaves the house. What a horrible idea to think of."³⁰ In early November she wrote, "I do wish I could be let entirely alone. It disturbs me to have him distress himself so much about me[.] I could keep out of his way if it were not for coming to the table."³¹ In Mid-December Mrs. Arthur traveled to Cohoes, causing Malvina to hope that her father would remain in Albany, assuring her a night's peace. But at 9 p.m. in hobbled the minister, causing Malvina to write bitterly, "I did hope Ma was enjoying herself enough to pay for making me so miserable."³²

A few days later Malvina visited the home of a friend, and keenly felt the difference between that family circle and her own.

It is perfectly delightful to see such unrestrained and free intercourse between children and their parents. Why is it not so here. On how happy

26. 1853 Diary, October 10.

27. *Ibid.*, October 20.

28. *Ibid.*, Sunday [October 23]. Chester and his brother William were equally unmoved by Christianity. See references to the William Arthur, Jr. papers in Howe, *Chester A. Arthur*, pp. 29–30. Henry Reynolds may have been a friend of Chester's. See the latter's letter to Campbell Allen, January 16, 1855, in the Arthur papers at the Library of Congress.

29. 1853 Diary, Thursday [October 27].

30. *Ibid.*, November 1.

31. *Ibid.*, [November] 3.

32. *Ibid.*, December 13.

could I be in my home could I enjoy that liberty. My wildest dreams of future happiness ask for nothing more[.]³³

The year 1853 closed with Malvina Arthur, now 21, absorbed with her own bitterness, resentful of the absence of Chester and the chastisements of her father, consumed by the doubts and hopes that she could tell no one but her diary.

In 1869 Malvina, now 36, sat down again to work on a chronicle of the daily events in her life.

Sixteen years ago I kept a journal, and whenever I glance over its pages it gives me so much pleasure, and recalls so much of my life to me that would otherwise be forgotten, that the impulse is upon me to keep one again, and see how the coming year's events will seem to me as many years hence, should I live to glance over this record.³⁴

The desire to write was no doubt brought about by the fear of impending disaster. ("This past year of 1868 has been in every respect the unhappiest of my whole life as yet, tho there may be still darker days in store for me.")³⁵ Her mother was seriously ill and appeared unable to recover. The death of Mrs. Arthur would be a grave blow to the daughter who so heavily relied upon her strength. Moreover, it would mean that some members of the family would be responsible for the full-time support and care of "Pa" Arthur, whose demise Malvina quietly yet fervently prayed for.³⁶ In short, Malvina was one to linger, with apparent pleasure, over her torments.

By 1869 she had been married for almost fifteen years to Henry Haynesworth, a luckless Albany merchant. The marriage appears from the diary to have been moderately satisfactory, but no children were born to the couple, and Malvina continued to be concerned chiefly with the personal ills, fears, and hatreds she wrote about before the coming of the Civil War.

Two of the other Arthur children had encountered tragedy during the interlude between Malvina's diaries. Regina, the eldest daughter,

33. *Ibid.*, Sunday [December 18]. A friend of William Arthur's recalled decades later that "He maintained the most rigid government in his family." Hinman, *How A British Subject Became President of the United States*, p. 51. Chester's two children also knew the taste of strong discipline from their father. Chester A. Arthur II always referred to his father as "sir," and enjoyed little personal communication with him. Interview with Chester A. Arthur III, July 26, 1969.

34. 1869 Diary, "January." Shortly after the conclusion of her first diary, Malvina traveled to the South. (As her brother William put it, she was "off for down South to locate herself among the niggars." William Arthur, Jr. to Regina Caw, February 26, 1854, William Arthur, Jr. papers.) It was no doubt there that she met Henry Haynesworth, a Southerner, whom she married on October 3, 1854.

35. 1869 Diary, "January."

36. *Ibid.*, "Oh will I ever live to be so happy as to have all that burden lifted?"

had become a widow five years earlier, and William, now 34, remained partly crippled owing to a wound he suffered in the war. In addition, Annie, the fourth Arthur daughter, remained, at 41, a spinster with pronounced emotional difficulties.

On the other hand, Almeda and Mary were happily married, the latter, one day mistress of the White House, to a storekeeper named John McElroy. And Chester had become the pride of the family. Now called "General Arthur" by the newspapers for his brief but relevant service in the Union army, Chester was a successful New York City attorney and Republican party leader. He was known as a confidant of the prosperous schemer Tom Murphy and of the powerful New York Senator Roscoe Conkling. Few but relatives would have recognized the once-pious eldest son of Rev. William Arthur.³⁷

All of the Arthurs were deeply grieved to learn of the death of their mother on January 16, 1869. Malvina had sat by Mrs. Arthur's bedside throughout the several weeks of her fatal illness and revealed her intense sorrow day by day to her new diary. It was she who contacted Chester with the news of the death, and he in turn sent telegrams to his brothers and sisters and hurried to the family home in tiny Newtonville, New York. "Just before dinner Chester came. I did not know when it was, but Regina said that when he saw Mother he sat down and wept like a child."³⁸ Within the next day all of the children, including Mary, living in Cohoes, and William stationed at Fort Pulaski, Pennsylvania, arrived to console one another, attend the funeral, and lay plans for the future of their father.

The elder William Arthur was so overcome at his wife's death that he confided to Malvina's husband his strong inclination to commit suicide. Perhaps for the first time in her life Malvina felt pity for her father, who would turn 73 that year. "In the morning Pa came up stairs and had prayers, and it was pitiful to hear how he prayed for the children, as if their affliction could be compared to his, when he is lost and heartbroken."³⁹

It seemed probable that the responsibility for caring for William Arthur Sr. would fall largely on the widow Regina and the unmarried Annie. But Annie was the source of much family concern. Shortly after his wife's funeral, the elder Arthur walked into a vicious verbal battle between Annie and Regina, and shortly told the latter, "the strong must

37. See the Arthur bank books for this period in the Arthur collections at the Library of Congress and the New-York Historical Society. See also Mrs. Richard Crowley, *Echoes From Niagara: Historical, Political, Personal* (Buffalo: 1890), pp. 146-150.

38. 1869 Diary, Sunday [January] 17.

39. *Ibid.*

bear the infirmities of the weak. I have borne with Annie for eight years." Malvina recalled that on her death bed Mrs. Arthur was heard to utter, "Oh Lord, have mercy on poor Annie."⁴⁰

The fighting between the Arthur sisters intensified rapidly, prompting Malvina to describe a scene at home in late January: "Annie is in her room. The boys in the school room. Pa in the sitting room. Regina[,] whether from choice or necessity I know not, writing in the kitchen[.] Isn't this a divided household."⁴¹

For diversion, Malvina and Regina traveled on January 28 to Albany, where they attended a lecture given by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Malvina was far from inspired by the great transcendentalist, commenting, "What he said I've no doubt would read well enough, but his manner was so dry, so awkward that you could not get interested in what he was saying. I didn't even know his subject."⁴²

Returning to her father's home in late March, she was haunted once more by memories of a childhood that had rewarded her with little more than constant headaches and acute self-consciousness.

Was wakened out of my first sleep by those well known 'thunder tones of scolding' the boys in the back room. Oh how the old trembling faint feeling came over me. Shall I ever get so old and hardened to it, that I won't mind. I fear not. The consequence was I did not get asleep in hours, and when I did my dreams were most fearful.⁴³

Annie Arthur, like Malvina, had apparently also been affected deeply by the decades of stern, unyielding discipline she had known with her father. She too found the traditional church services intolerable, and spent much of her time at home lashing out at those closest to her in long, self-exhausting bursts of frustration. Her principal target in early 1869 was Regina, the sister with whom she was bound to the parsonage. Malvina described an evening with this pathetic woman in late March:

Sat down to sew and was in a regular frenzy on the subject, and oh how she [Annie] *did talk*. It was frightful. I am truly sorry for her for she is really insane on that subject. I tried to reason with her, but it was no use. I told her it was fearful, it was wicked in her to talk so, that she only did an injury to herself, and did not in the least injure R[egina]. She got calmed down by dinner time, but I was tired out and almost sick.⁴⁴

40. *Ibid.* Note the special provision for Annie in the elder Arthur's will, Arthur papers, Library of Congress.

41. 1869 Diary, Sunday [January] 24.

42. *Ibid.*, Thursday [January] 28.

43. *Ibid.*, Saturday [March] 20.

44. *Ibid.*, Thursday [March] 25.

Tragedy again struck the Arthurs in late May when William Arthur Jr.'s infant son Willie died suddenly and mysteriously in Savannah. Mary McElroy had taken Alan Arthur, Chester's son, to Georgia in April, probably to visit relatives of Alan's mother. The wives of Chester and William arrived shortly with Willie, and while waiting for Alan to recover from a brief illness, were stunned by the death of the one-year-old boy. Malvina grieved for her brother and sister-in-law. "The shock must have been terrible. I am very sorry for them. They are most forlornly situated at Fort Pulaski, and any grief is harder to bear away from friends in a desolate place."⁴⁵

Malvina visited her father for a total of three weeks throughout the spring and summer of 1869, sharing the chores with several of the Arthur children.⁴⁶ The father's student-boarders were gone in the summer, and Malvina remarked that it was very lonely in the parsonage. Chester and his wife and son visited Newtonville, Cohoes, and Albany in September 1869, entertaining relatives and no doubt assuming many family responsibilities.⁴⁷ As her husband floundered with financial difficulties, Malvina seemed unconsciously envious of the brother who had long ago retreated from the family home to find prosperity, happiness, and self-confidence.

In October, Malvina attended church in the old building at Hoosick, where she had lived and written part of her first diary sixteen years earlier. The memories, most of them painful, swarmed about her, and she was pleased to see the carriage coming to take her away. ". . . I could not in the least realize what my life there had been or the many Sundays I had spent in that house. I rode home with Mr. and Mrs. Hawks, and so bade farewell to that old meeting house on the hill."⁴⁸

Malvina Arthur wrote her second diary for much the same reason that she penned the first: the desire to record permanently each nuance of each day's guilt and suffering. Most of the pages in both diaries are filled with accounts of personal physical and mental pain. On Christmas Eve, 1869, she could summarize the last two years of her life in no more jovial terms than: "My own fearful troubles, and dear Mother's long suffering illness and death, has made life seem a different thing to me, and yet I fear that I am no better woman than before. I wish I was."⁴⁹

Little else is known of Malvina Arthur. In 1883 she visited the White House briefly and was described as a semi-invalid seeking seclusion.

45. *Ibid.*, May 25.

46. 1869 Diary, "From the 27th of May to the 28th of August."

47. *Ibid.*, [September] 4, 8, 9, 11, 13, 18, 20, 23, Friday [24].

48. *Ibid.*, Sunday [October] 10.

49. *Ibid.*, Friday [December] 24.

She remained childless, was widowed in 1892, and died, insane, in 1916.⁵⁰ Her thoughts at her father's death in 1875 are, perhaps regrettably, unknown.

50. As a young man, Chester A. Arthur III knew "Aunt Mel," as Malvina was called, quite well, and recalls that she and Annie were kept upstairs in the Caw home, both quite mad. "I can hear them cackling still." Interview with Chester A. Arthur III, March 19, 1970. The dates of Malvina's birth and marriage are in the Arthur Family Bible at the New York Public Library. The William Arthur, Jr. papers contain a copy of a letter from Malvina to her brother William, dated August 2, 1864, in which she makes a reference to the fact that her husband was a Confederate soldier. It is cited in Howe, *Chester A. Arthur*, p. 32. For the story of Malvina in the White House, see "'Eliza Rumahah'," New York *Evening Post*, April 7, 1883. Mr. and Mrs. Haynesworth attended Chester Arthur's funeral. "Buried Near His Wife," *The [New York] Sun*, November 23, 1886.

*"Of Course You Know How
The Summer People Are"*

When automobiles first appeared in Vermont in the early years of the 20th century the Secretary of State was given the responsibility of registering cars and licensing drivers. In 1916 the Secretary of State, Guy W. Bailey, received this letter:

Thetford, Vermont
July 18, 1916

Guy W. Bailey (Sec. of State)

Dear Sir:—

There is a party here that came from Worcester, Mass. with an Overland Six car registered in Mass. and they have been here nearly a month and have not got a Vt. registration yet. They run the car nearly every day. It isn't that I care but I do not think it is right for them to disobey the law like that when the rest of our fellows have to get a license and they not have one of this state. They are up here for the summer and of course you know how the summer people are in the country. The owner of the car, his name is C. A. Vaughn, his address is at Thetford, Vt. for the present. If they ask who notified you please do not give my name as I do not want any trouble with them. But it is nothing only what is right that they get a Vermont registration. Hoping you will keep my name private, I remain

Yours respectfully,
Chauffeurs License No. 2488 Vt.