

The Totoket Historical Society

The Journals of Polly Linsley 1809---1827

**Edited by
Eugene C. MacMullan, Curator
North Branford, Connecticut 2008**

**Edward Smith Library
3 Old Post Road
Northford, CT 06472
(203) 484-0469**

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Tuesday Morning June 21st 1844.

Thanks be unto God for life and being, and the precious gift of
rational existence; among the ranks of his intelligent creatures.
Thanks be unto God for the preservation of my life another year, and
for permitting of me to see the pleasant light of this present anniversary
my birth-day-morning.

- 1 Again I see the morning rise,
Again I view the lofty skies.
Again the Sun begins his song
And spreads his beams to cheer the day.
- 2 Again I celebrate my birth,
And pray thy Lord, of heaven and earth
To send his Spirit from above;
And warm my heart with grateful love.
- 3 The path of life to me reveal,
And fill my soul with holy zeal.
In ways of truth let me be found,
And in thy statutes make me sound.
- 4 Thy mercy, Lord, to me extend,
On thee alone my hopes depend.
Thy warmest soul to thee would fly,
And raise her anxious thoughts on high.
- 5 "But ah! what clouds of guilt I find,
Within the chamber of my mind:

The Journals of Polly Linsley

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Introduction:

One of the advantages of my document conservation work at the Whitney Library is the opportunity it affords to work on the manuscript collection. In the course of this work I have "discovered" many fascinating documents and learned much of the history of the area. Recently, while working on the Woman's Collection (MSS 58) I came across a set of journals written by Polly Linsley of North Branford. I was familiar with the Linsley family from my work at the Totoket Historical Society in North Branford. Jesse and Chauncey Linsley, Polly's brothers, were important figures in the early history of the town but Polly Linsley was unknown to us.

The journals are a treasure trove of North Branford history and I first intended only to mine them for items of local historic interest. However, as I read the journals I became convinced that the words themselves were important and not just to residents of North Branford. Here we had several hundred pages of the private thoughts of an educated, intelligent woman from the early 19th century. I was hesitant at first about publishing the private thoughts of a woman long dead but reading the journals I found that Polly had specifically said that she hoped her words would be read by others after her death. I then decided to transcribe substantial excerpts from the most interesting parts of the journals. Transcribing the entire four hundred surviving pages was beyond my ability. In the transcription I have included all references to other persons, to her health and to her teaching. I have also included a large sampling of her religious writings. Overall, this amounts to about ¼ of what Polly wrote. Editorial comments are shown in brackets.

I realize that this sort of editing carries with it the risk of distorting the record. The biases of the editor will affect the items chosen to be abstracted, and therefore present a distorted view of the author's work. Aware of this potential problem, I have done my best to abstract a faithful sampling of the journals. The doubtful reader always has the opportunity to read the entire work at the Whitney Library.

In addition to the abstracts I have included a physical description of the journals and a summary of what is known of the Linsley family of North Branford. There is also an Appendix with some further background material.

A Description of the Journals:

Twenty volumes of Polly Linsley's Journals have survived and may be found in The Women's Collection (MSS 58, Box 1) at the Whitney Library of the New Haven Museum and Historical Society.

Each volume is made up of six folio sheets (except one which has five) measuring 12 inches by 7 ½ inches, folded down the middle to make 12 leaves (24 pages) of 6 inches by 7 ½ inches. The volumes are sewn through the fold to a cover made of coarse brown paper, slightly larger than the pages. A volume number is written in large Roman numerals on the cover of each volume. In this way we know that there were originally at least 39 volumes as that number is written on the last surviving volume. The pages of each volume are numbered sequentially with the numbers carried forward from volume to volume.

The earliest surviving volume is Volume II which starts on June 4th 1809 with pages numbered 25-48. The last date in Volume XXXIX is December 25th, 1827 with pages numbered 937--960. One volume is numbered 31 in Arabic numerals. From the period covered, this volume probably should have been numbered XXVIII. There is also a pagination error in Volume XXXVII. The page numbers jumped from 872 to 893 instead of to 873. A list of the surviving volumes may be found in the Appendix. In addition to the bound volumes there is an unbound fragment with pages numbered 25--32, covering the period September 1822 through August, 1824. This is the same period covered by volumes XVIII to XXIII. It appears that this fragment is a surviving rough draft recording the events which were later described more fully in the final journals.

The journals are written in ink in a fine, precise hand covering the entire page with almost no margins. The quality of the paper is good and the ink has not faded so that they are easily read. There are very few insertions or corrections which strengthens the impression that Polly worked from a rough draft to produce a smooth finished copy. However, there is some indication of censorship of the journals. The lower half of page 321 has been removed by a sharp blade. While Polly may have done this herself, it seems equally likely that it was done by one of her relations who inherited the journals after her death. This raises the question of the missing journals. The surviving journals are in very good condition, with no tears, water stains or insect damage. If they had all been stored together they should likely have all been in the same condition and survived together. Perhaps the missing volumes have been destroyed or were held back when the journals were donated to the Historical Society.

Family Background:

Before passing to the journals themselves, it might be helpful to record what is known of the family of Polly Linsley. She was one of six surviving children of Dr. Reuben Linsley and Tryphana Baldwin Linsley, widow of Josiah Harrison. They married in 1779 when he was 26 years old and she 27. He was a well known and prosperous Physician.

Their first child, David, died eight days after his birth in 1780. There soon followed Chauncey, Sarah, Polly, Jesse and the twins Miriam and Wyllys, all of whom lived to adulthood.

No mention of Polly can be found in the town records but her brothers were very active in the community. Chauncey and Jesse were two of the original members of the Zion Episcopal church in North Branford when it was founded in 1812. When North Branford separated from Branford in 1831 Capt. Jesse Linsley was chosen as First Selectman. He served again in 1835 and was followed by Chauncey in 1836 and 1837. Jesse was skilled in calligraphy and several samples of his work are in the archives of the Totoket Historical Society of North Branford. In the same archive there are also three religious tracts almost certainly written by Polly although they are not signed.

Wyllys has been described as a farmer, a Democrat and an Episcopalian. He was one of the Constables of North Branford in 1836 and for nearly 50 years was the county surveyor.

Sarah married David Page and moved to Massachusetts. Miriam married Augustus Dudley and they settled nearby in North Guilford. The boys all married local girls and stayed in North Branford. Polly was the only unmarried child in the family.

Dr. Linsley died in 1817, aged 64. Tryphena outlived him by 25 years, dying in 1842, aged 90 years. They are buried in the cemetery of the North Branford Congregational Church. Polly was the first of their surviving children to die, at age 45 in 1830, just a few weeks after preparing her will. Her brothers all lived to ripe old ages. They and Polly are buried in the cemetery of the Zion Episcopal church. There is no local record of the deaths of Sarah and Miriam as they had moved out of town and are not buried in North Branford.

Abstracts from the Journals of Polly Linsley.

Volume II, Pages 24 -- 46

First entry

"Sabbath June 4, 1809. Through indisposition of bodily health I have not been able to attend public worship for three Sabbaths and an half past, during great part of the time I have been exercised with painful disorders, being at first brought very low with a severe pain in my teeth, after which I was taken with the measles which disorder quite exhausted the strength of my debilitated constitution. It is the Lord's mercy that I am not consumed, for his compassion fails not."

"Sabbath June 11. Thanks be unto God, who hath preserved my life, and restored to me the enjoyment of a comfortable state of health. I have this afternoon been permitted to present myself in the house of God and heard an excellent sermon by Mr. Atwater."

"June 13, 1809. I performed a journey to Cheshire, having it in mind to spend a few weeks with an affectionate sister. Should it please God to permit me to enjoy this pleasing privilege, I hope to esteem it a mercy from him."

"June 25th I was this day permitted to attend public worship of God in the town of Cheshire and heard two sermons delivered by the Rev. Mr. Smith of Durham. His texts were taken from Psalms 11, 12 and from Proverbs ... "

"Wednesday, August 2. I have now returned to my father's house in circumstances of comfort after passing almost 7 weeks with a kind sister and her family connections."

"Sabbath Sept 3 (Discussion on the sermon preached that day) In discourses from this text these six propositions were brought into consideration; 1. God was manifest in the flesh 2. Justified in the spirit 3. Seen of angels 4. Preached unto the gentiles 5. Believed on in the world 6. Received up into glory. These discourses were preached by a Mr. Attwater, late president of Middlebury College in the state of Vermont; but now removing therefrom to the southward on account of his ill state of health."

"November 30th The children of Jairus Bunnell received the outward seal of baptism."

"Thanksgiving evening. I have attended meeting and heard Mr. Atwater preach from these words "The Lord reignith; Let the earth rejoice." Psalms 97.1 "

"MONDAY JANUARY 1st A.D. 1810"

"Thanks be unto God who hath kept me alive through many trying scenes and safely conducted me thro' the changing seasons of the past year."

(There follow three pages of prayer and a poem entitled "On the Goodness of God", signed Polly.)

"Friday, 23rd (March). I attended the funeral of Daniel Smith, whose remains, after being interred 7 months in York were removed from thence to Northford, and again buried. Upon this solemn occasion, there was a sermon delivered at his father's house by the Rev. Matthew Noise from the words of St. John. "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me." Chapter 11, Verse 1."

"Friday, 20th (April) A day appointed to be observed throughout the state as a day of public fasting, humiliation and prayer. I attended meeting ... "

"Sabbath April 29th I attended meeting and heard Mr. Osgood preach from these words "For by grace are ye saved, through faith ... "

Last entry in this volume.

First entry:

"Tuesday morning, June 21, 1814. Thanks be unto God for life and being, and the precious gift of rational existence among the rank of his intelligent creatures. Thanks be unto God for the preservation of my life another year, and for permitting me to see the pleasant light of the present anniversary birth day morning."
(Polly's 29th birthday. There follows a poem of 11 verses.)

"Saturday October 15th. I have this day closed my school and taken an affectionate leave of the dear little pupils with whom I have passed many precious hours. God grant that they may prove profitable both to myself and those whom I have instructed. "

"Monday, October 24th. I went home to visit my parents and other friends.

"Saturday. I returned to East Haven after passing a few days at Branford."

"Tuesday, November 28th. (November) I returned from East Haven to Branford and had the satisfaction of finding my affectionate parents and other friends in health. O that I might feel a suitable return of gratitude to God for all his mercies to me."

Thanksgiving Day, December 1, 1814 (Poem celebrating the day)

Christmas Day. (Poem)

"Saturday, December 31, P.M. This present pensive season is the close of a day, the close of a week, the close of a month and of a year. And O how solemn is the thought! How important is the consideration! That while I am writing, the present period of time is doubtless the close of mortal existence to numbers of the human race. And my bounds are set. My days are numbered and my life will soon close."

"Wednesday, January 25, (1815). I attended the funeral of Mary Munroe and heard Mr. Plumb preach from the following words "Prepare to meet thy God, O, Israel."

"Wednesday, February 15. I attended the funeral of Timothy Harrison, who was aged 85 years."

"March 1 A day appointed by the members of the society to be observed as a day of rejoicing for the cessation of hostilities between England and America. I attended public worship and heard Mr. Atwater deliver an oration on the joyful occasion."

"Thursday, April 13. A day appointed to be observed as a day of thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God for the bestowment of His great mercy in granting peace to

our nation and giving security to our country from foreign invasion and rest to its inhabitants from the disastrous perplexities of awful war ... "

"A Remnant of Time Employed in Thought"

1. While sitting by the fire
And musing with desire
To know my present state
I find my sins are great.

2. Like boisterous waves they well
And dash against my soul
Which like the flinty rock
Unconscious bears the shock.

(Continues for 6 more verses.)

"Tuesday, April 25 P.M .. I attended the funeral of Mrs. Abigail Palmer and heard Mr Harrison preach a sermon adapted to the occasion ... "

(Last entry in this volume)

(In this volume Polly continues to record church attendance for each Sabbath.)

First entry:

"Monday, May 1, 1815. How welcome is the return of spring after the extreme severities of an unusual winter. How animating is the delightful prospect of approaching summer ... "

"Thursday, May 12. I took lodging at the house of Doctor Joseph Foot after 8 days in boarding with the agreeable family of Capt Stiles. In this pleasing family I find myself in a constant school. O Lord, may it please thee to grant me the grace to make improvement equal to the advantages with which thou art pleased to favor me ... "

(It was the usual practice for teachers to "board around" with the families of their students. Polly was evidently teaching in North Haven that summer.)

SPRING

1. O, man thy choicest incense bring
To celebrate the opening spring
Thy grateful thanks to God unfold
Nor let his praise remain untold.
2. 'Tis He that spreads the winter's gloom
And makes the vernal spring to bloom
He rolls the circling seasons round
And makes reviving life abound.

(Six more verses follow, signed "Polly Linsley")

"Sabbath 14 (May) I attended public worship at North Haven and heard Dr. Trumbull preach a sermon ...

. (Continues to record each Sabbath sermon by Dr. Trumbull)

A FAIR MORNING IN JUNE

1. This pleasant morn portends a day
Of comfort rich, profuse and gay
But who can tell what may be done
To blight our joys before they come.

First entry.

"Monday, October 2, 1815. I concluded my school in North Haven and took an affectionate leave of the little charges with whom I have passed 22 weeks. On Tuesday P.M. I returned home and had the satisfaction of finding my parents and friends in health.

A Few Thoughts on Leaving North Haven

1. Farewell my tender friends, adieu
Accept my best regards for you
Your generous kindness to me shown
With lively gratitude I own.
(Continues for 12 verses.)

October 15. (Sabbath sermon by Mr Attwater)

Thanksgiving day November 30, 1815. (Poem celebrating the day)

"Friday, December 1, 1815."

"Pale autumn is now expired and bleak winter commences this day. Chill blows the cold piercing north wind. Winter! Awful Winter! Emblem of Death ...
When the grass of the field is withered ; the trees of the forest are stripped of their verdure; when no blossoms are to be seen upon the meadows Alas! What a feeble, frail, dependent creature is man! Subject to the vicissitudes of time and chance ...

At this pensive season of the year when the natural creation is wrap't in the shroud of death, how loud and solemn is the proclamation that vibrates in the ear of reason; concerning the winter of death which awaits the numerous race of mortals now in existence. "What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?"

"Christmas Eve The family are now retired to rest. I sit in silent solitude musing in pensive thoughtfulness upon the grand solemnities and important events which the church is called to celebrate and commemorate at the present season ... "

Christmas day, December 25, AD 1815
(Long poem signed "Polly Linsley")

"Sabbath December, 31 "This precious day concludes the annual rotation of the changing seasons and closes the year 1815I have one year less to pass in time and one year more to account for in eternity"

Monday, Jan 1, AD 1816
(Poem signed "Polly Linsley")

"Thursday, February 1. "Month after month rolls away with seemingly increasing rapidity while the streaming sands of mortal life continuously flow to lessen and exhaust the few particles which compose my probationary state of existence. Oh! Wither will this rapid flight of time convey me! It will shortly bring me to the close of life."

"Friday, March 1. Farewell winter, welcome spring. Lovely harbinger of joyful information whose hasty footsteps approach with nimble speed to announce the pleasing proclamation. Winter is retiring! The spring is commencing! The summer is advancing! "

"Monday, March 25. I began a private school in the New District school house at North Branford. May my labors in my present important employment prove pleasing and profitable to those whom I may instruct and meet the approbation of my employer ... "

Good Friday April 12. (After religious discourse on the day adds the following) "After experiencing severe distress of a nervous kind and being kindly relieved from the same and restored to ease."

"These days of ease which I enjoy
To praise my Saviour I'll employ
Now pain has once more left my head
I'll praise his name upon my bed."

"Thursday, May 9. I closed my private school and took leave of the scholars with a degree of satisfaction "

"Monday, May 13. I commenced teaching a public school. O, may I be truly sensible of the important trust committed to my care at present."

"Saturday, June 1, 1816."

"Another May has passed away with all its bloom
Each fleeting day contracts my stay this side the tomb.
My soul prepare. I have a share of trouble here.
Submit to god and trust his word with faith and fear."

"June 20, 1816."

"My days just like a shadow slide
There's none doth stay nor long abide
They pass just like the rising moon
Which follows quick the early dawn
And straight the transient hours are gone."

"Polly Linsley, North Branford"

Last entry this volume.

Journal No X Pages 239 -- 262

First entry

"Monday, November 3th, 1817

"The following poem was written in a season of much affliction."

1. When I am pained with deep distress
Great God to thee I will address
My secret thoughts in humble prayer
And make devotion my chief care.

2. When pain extends to every part
And grief sits heavy at my heart
To thee I'll make my sorrows known
And seek relief from thee alone.

8. Gracious Father, Heavenly King
Remove from me death's bitter sting
And O, with faith's (xxx) power
Console my last departing hour.

"The present gloomy time is a very melancholy, mournful season with me. I am called to experience much affliction and sorrow. Distress and anguish have come upon me and I am almost overwhelmed with pain and grief. "

"Monday morning November 17, 1817"

1. I've had a very painful night
Yet I rejoice to see the light
And hope that I may pass away
With much more ease the coming day.

2. How long, O Lord, shall I remain
Confined with deep distress and pain
Thou see'st my sorrow and my grief
O, send me comfort and relief.

(Poem continues for 6 verses)

"November 23 Sabbath. This is the 8th Sabbath that I have been confined from the house of public worship ... "

"Thanksgiving Day Saturday, November 27, 1817 This precious anniversary Thanksgiving day which I used to celebrate with the most agreeable sensation of joy and delight is now shrouded with mourning and gloom to me ... "

"April 15 I have this day, for the first time, visited the grave of my father and the mournful pleasure I have received from viewing the silent clods which decently conceal his precious body has given a peculiar degree of satisfaction to my melancholy mind ... The beauties of spring already begin to spread themselves upon his grave."

This is the last entry in this journal.

First entry

"April 20th 1818 Almighty God I humbly beseech thee to assist me in all my ways and grant me grace reservedly to dedicate myself to thee ... "

"Tuesday, April 21 I rode four miles to visit newly married sister, and passed the time very agreeably with her and her new formed connections until Saturday morning when I returned home again to the mournful habitation of my mother".

"Saturday, May 3rd The frame of my brother Jesse's house was this day raised, and my brothers and sisters were all convened at my mother's house upon the joyful, mournful occasion. Joyful because no one received any material wound in erecting the frame; and mournful because our precious father is no more numbered among us here on earth."

"Tuesday, May 5th I who a few months ago was confined to the bed of languishing and distress, expecting shortly to go down to the grave and to behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the earth, am now restored to the enjoyment of my usual health and am again engaged in my most delightful employment. I have this day had 40 children to receive my instruction. I have again commenced my favorite employment of school teaching and have the pleasing gratification to find my little ones whom I instructed as strongly attached to me as ever."

"Thoughts at the Grave of My Father"

"I love to see my father's grave
This privilege I now can have
To stand and view the rising ground
Where he reposes safe and sound
'Tis here his body rests secure
From all the ills which I endure
He rests so sweet, so quiet here
The very dust to me is dear."

Saturday morning, May 23, 1818 (Poem on a spring morning)

"Sunday It is seven months this day since the death of my precious father and it is the first time I have entered within the walls of the meeting house upon the Sabbath since the 28th of September last. I then, for the last time, went into the house of God in company with both my parents, and have been there with my widowed mother today.

"Thursday PM I have now received the visit from the gentlemen committee of inspection appointed to regulate the schools in North Branford: and passed an

examination respecting my ability to instruct the school [according to the laws of the State] and received their united approbation, which was manifested by the presentation of a certificate."

"Saturday, June 6, 1818 I am sick of the world. I am sick of the vanities of time and sense and tired of the trifling amusements which have so often engaged my attention and eager pursuit and wither I shall turn to avoid these enticing allurements ... "

(Adds a long scripture quotation concerning death)

"How often are the above passages strikingly verified before my eyes and in a special manner in the recent death of a young woman who was taken away in the 24th year of her life and separated from the husband of her youth and two small children; who are left to lament her early death ... "

"Saturday evening, June 20, 1818 This day concludes the 33rd year of my life Twelve months ago this very day as I sat alone within the walls of this school house musing in solitary silence the well known voice of my precious father saluted my ears in the following pleasant and familiar interrogation, "Polly, What are you doing here?" I instantly arose and opened the door to see him and as near as I can recollect informed him what my employment was. He then being prompted by the most tender parental affection for me, made some particular enquiries respecting the state of my health; after which he immediately rode away, leaving me alone to return again to the enjoyment of my own solitary birthday reflection. But now, no precious father's voice I hear..."

"Thursday September 17. 1818 My school has this day passed a public examination, and received the approbation of those who were there to view the exercises which they exhibited."

"Saturday, September 19 I dismissed my school after continuing twenty weeks in this my most delightful employment."

"Wednesday, September 30, 1818 I rode to New Haven with my friend, Miss Elisa Wolcott and visited at the Rev. Harry Crosswell's, sought and received his instruction upon subjects of great importance; and received a present of a book from him entitled "An Address to Christians on the Primitive Government of the Christian Church" (The Rev. Crosswell was a prominent Episcopal clergyman, Rector of Trinity Church, New Haven.)

"Sabbath, November t", 1818"

"In a season of distress
These tedious intervals of pain
My proud ambition doth restrain
And makes me more content to be
Exempt from show and vanity

Shut up from every worldly pleasure
I make the lord my only treasure
And try to seek the grace and favour
Of Jesus Christ, my only saviour"

Thanksgiving day, November 26, 1818
(Poem celebrating the day followed by excerpts from the Psalms.)

Last entry in this volume.

Branford, July 4th
(Poem celebrating the occasion.)

"July 22 I returned with pain and sorrow to the mournful habitation of my aged, widowed mother." (Continues with discussion of how much she misses the presence of her father.)

"August 24 "Many painful days and wearisome nights have been appointed to me .
But I am now restored."

Sabbath September 5
(Poem)

"Wednesday September 8 Attended funeral of grandmother, Sarah Baldwin, who died on the 6th. "aged 89 years, 9 months and 15 days. No age is exempt from death."

"Friday, September 10 I went to North Guilford to pass a week or two with my sister Page and family but was taken sick on the 15th where I lay confined with the dysentery and nervous complaint ... "
(Remainder of page 321 has been removed with a sharp blade.)

Thanksgiving Day, December 2nd, 1819
(poem)

"Sabbath, December 12 It is three months this day since I have been able to attend public worship of God."

Christmas day, December 25th, 1819
(poem)

Saturday, January 1, 1820
(poem, a fragment of which reads)

"Another and another year
Still brings my final exit near." .
(Then continues)

"Having experienced a long and distressing sickness and passed through a series of painful and trying scenes during the revolution of the changing seasons of the past year, I am safely brought to the beginning of the present in circumstances of peculiar comfort and tender mercy But a few months since, I lay confined to the bed of sickness, when the jaws of death appeared ready to devour me, the gates of the grave prepared to receive me "

"In the course of the past year my sister Miriam Dudley has removed from North Guilford in Connecticut to Richmond in Massachusetts and has become the joyful mother of a darling son."

January 30

(Attended church and gave thanks for her recovery.)

"February 10 My brother Wyllys moved his wife from Huntington and commenced house keeping on the 11th. And my aged mother and myself are now the only two remaining members who constitute the family which once contained eight in number. Oh how solitary is the lonely apartment of the widow and the fatherless."

"Good Friday My late distressing and alarming sickness has greatly interrupted the order of my meditation and put an end to the regularity of my poetical excogitations for the present."

(Then prays to God for relief from pain and suffering.)

Last entry in this volume.

(No starting date)

"When I reflect on the many painful scenes which I have experienced for months past, I am astounded that I am still in the land of the living

The following lines were occasioned by my being in a very painful and to human appearances, in a very critical and dangerous situation and passed in my mind on Sabbath day, April 23, 1820 when I considered myself, and was viewed by others to be just entering upon the eternal world."

1. The ties that bind me to this world are strong
Yet death will separate these ties ere long"
The fond affection of the human heart
Must cease when God shall take the vital part.
2. My health and strength are hasting to decay
And I myself am passing fast away
My prospects here are shaded over with gloom
And I am going to the silent grave.

(Poem continues in this vein for two more verses and then is followed by a seven page reflection on adversity)

SPRING

1. O what enchanting scenes arise
To entertain my ravished eyes
What glowing beauties now appear
To decorate the opening year.
3. This is a season of delight
O how inviting to the sight
To see the footsteps of a God
Impressed in all his works abroad."

"Friday, June 16, 1820 I have been permitted once more to enter the house of God accompanied by my near and dear friends." (Gives thanks to God for her recovery.)

"O, Lord, God of my salvation assist me to conclude this page by ascribing praise and thanksgiving to thy great name for the preservation of my life to the present time and for all thy mercies constantly bestowed on me through Christ Jesus. Amen."

(Last entry this volume. It appears to cover the period April through August, 1820.)

First entry:

"North Branford, Monday, Aug 14, 1820

My gratitude to god is due
For mercies past and present too
To him my thanks I will express
For favors great and numberless.

With satisfaction I will own
The sweet enjoyment I have known
In seasons past which I have spent
In this my loved employment.

Tho' for a while I've been confined
From work which most delights my mind
A strong desire I still embrace
To benefit the rising race."

"Friday AM 19th (August) I went to the burial of Roger Harrison, child of Jairus and Betsey H., aged 4 years. The child's death was occasioned by his being scalded with beer which his mother had been brewing and put away to cool. As the child was playing he accidentally slip't with his feet and caught hold of the kettle which contained the element that put a period to his life ... "

Saturday, 19th (Passed another week in teaching for which she is thankful.)

"Saturday, Oct 7th, I have now closed my school after teaching 8 weeks, much to my own satisfaction in passing the time very agreeably among my little, loved associates. "

"Oct 24th O, the tender recollection of a precious father who has been folded in the cold embrace of death three years this day. This season brings the mournful scene of that gloomy day fresh to my remembrance, when death deprived me of one of the choicest earthly enjoyments and cast a shade of melancholy over all my earthly prospects. "

"Thursday, Nov 3rd PM My mother set off upon a visit to Richmond and left me to keep house by myself with an additional weight of cares which I have reason to think will be too heavy for my feeble constitution to support. Lord,... give me strength."

I LOVE MY BOOKS AND READING

No other companions do I require
No other associates do I desire
A well chosen book enlarges the mind
And stores it with knowledge and wisdom refined.

Thanksgiving Day Nov 30th, 1820
(Poem celebrating the occasion)

"Dec 12th My mother is yet absent from home but thanks be to God I do not realize my fears of ill health at this time. My health and strength are unusually good."

(Poems for Christmas Day and New Year's Day, 1821)

"Friday Jan 19th I left the solitary habitation of my mother and went to brother Jesse's ... and passed a few fleeting days much to my satisfaction."

"Monday, 29th I went from brother Jesse's to sister Sarah's in North Guilford."

"Monday, Feb 5th I began to instruct a small school in the house where my sister's family are and hope I may be useful while I continue here."

"Sat. Feb 10th I have this day heard that my honored mother has returned home and is in good health. "

"Tuesday, Feb 27th I have this day had the peculiar satisfaction to see my precious mother in enjoyment of excellent health."

"Ash Wednesday, March 7th, 1821.

1. Turn me O Lord! And I shall turn
To thee and my past errors mourn
Draw me O Lord! And I shall run
To follow thee and thy dear son.
2. Throughout the fast make me refrain
From things impure and thoughts profane
Make me renounce each luxury
And try to serve thee faithfully
3. Each passing day make me deny
Myself and with the truth comply
Make me receive the same with love
And seek for happiness above.

4. Not only while this fast shall last But
when these forty days are past From
evil habits make me cease And grant
me penitence and peace."

Last entry in this journal.

First entry

"For Christmas Day 1822

1 . With joy I hail the rising morn
On which the Son of God was born
The Prince of Peace whose precious birth
Proclaims good will to man on earth.

2. He laid his robes of glory by
And left the realms above the sky
To dwell with mortals here below
And suffer sorrow, pain and woe.

12. All glory to the trieme God
The three in heaven that bare record
The father, Son and Spirit too
To whom all praise and thanks are due.

(Poem of 26 verses, "At the Commencement of the Year 1823")

"Tuesday, February 4th I have this day attended the funeral of Lucretia M., wife of Dr Bedford Mowry. This amiable and interesting female was only 17 years of age. She was the youngest child of Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Lucy Wolcott.

During the short existence of their union (married less than a year) The Dr. manifested an increasing affection for the worthy object of his love ...

The loss which he has sustained in her dissolution, which melancholy event took place Sunday the 2nd inst. after a confinement of four weeks with a consumptive complaint ...

At the commencement of Mrs. Mowry's confinement she was delivered of a child, which expired on the second day after its birth and was carried "from the womb to the grave".

"The remains of Mrs. Lydia Russell, a worthy and respectable matron aged 88 years were likewise consigned to the grave this day. The two funerals were appointed at one and the same hour of the day "

"The aged and the young must die
And in the silent grave together lie"

"Tuesday, Feb 11th There has been two funerals again this day in this small society. The one was occasioned by the death of Mrs Amy B., the wife of Mr Asakel Brackett who died of consumption, aged 46 years and has left an afflicted husband and 8 children ...

The other was that of a child of Mrs Rufus Rogers, aged 4 years who died of a bowel complaint. "

"There was likewise a funeral on Thursday last. The widow Lydia Bunnell, aged 77 was buried. Five deaths have occurred within the compass of eight days in this vicinity. Perhaps not more than three miles distant from each other while living ... "

"Thursday, 13th I went to North Guilford to visit sister Page and family. Found them in usual health. - Spent a fortnight with them and came home on Friday the 28th. This day the funeral of Mr. Moses Baldwin, my uncle, was attended. He died of a dropsy complaint, aged 73. On Wednesday the 26th, the funeral of Louise Prudence Baldwin, the daughter of Mr Benjamin and Mrs Sally B. was attended. She died of a fever, aged 20 years ... "

"There has been 7 deaths this month."

Good Friday, March 28, 1823 Poem of 16 verses.

"Thursday, PM, April 17th I have this day attended the funeral of Mr Benjamin Baldwin, a very valuable man, a deacon of the Baptist Society in North Haven. He was the father of Louise P. B. who died the 24th of Feb last."

"Thursday, April 24th Alas! Alas! What desolations are occasioned by the ravages of death And now Benjamin, a youth of 22 is laid by the side of his father and sister."

"Ascension Day Thursday, May 8th, 1823" (Religious reflections on the day, then) "After performing my domestic avocations for the morning ... I went about four miles from home to visit my lonely friend Miss Phoebe Bunnell who has recently been separated from her parents by death ... "

Last entry in this volume.

"The Epiphany or the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles"
January 6, 1824

"O, God who by the leading of a star did manifest thy only begotten son to the gentiles, mercifully grant that we who know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen." Collect for the day, Prayer Book."

(Three pages of prayer and reflection on the Epiphany follow.)

"Saturday, Jan 24 My mother is distressingly sick and in a very dangerous situation. Yet I hope that her present sickness may not be unto death ...

"28th The symptoms of my mother are quite favorable and I am encouraged to hope for her speedy recovery to the enjoyment of her usual health."

"Thursday Jan 29 Charles Foot, the youngest child and only son of Mr. Walter R. Foot died very suddenly, being sick not much over 24 hours and being precisely 11 months old to the day. He has had the privilege of an early exit from the stage of mortal existence and I trust that he will enjoy the blissful glories of eternity without experiencing the vanities and vexations of time."

"Feb 8th The health of my mother is in good degree restored to her ... "

"Thoughts Upon Waking from Sleep in the Night"

"Oh, how refreshing it is to wake
From midnight slumbers and partake
The Joys of Solitude ... "

"Sabbath, February 29th This day is an addition to the usual number of days which complete a common year, it being bissentile or leap year. There have been five Sundays in this month, which commenced and closed with Sunday, which is a remarkable circumstance ... "

Ash Wednesday, March 3rd, 1824

The season of abstinence
Of fasting and penitence
This day the Church does commence
And calls upon me to _keep
The same with repentance deep
And for my past sins to weep.

(Another, similar verse follows, then)

"At this solemn season the Episcopal church, in the beautiful order of her excellent direction; enjoins it upon her faithful members to be punctual in the discharge of their religious duties ... The constitution of the Church is admirably adapted to afford its members opportunity for their instruction in spiritual knowledge; and their improvement in Christian graces. O, may I never willingly neglect the observation of her solemn feasts and joyful festivals."

"Monday, 19th I have this day had the satisfaction of receiving a friendly visit from my dear Eliza Wolcott in company with her brother Alexander and sister Martha. Alex and Eliza have recently returned home after an absence of four months which they spent in New York hoping to get established in the practice of his profession but he met with so little encouragement that he has left the city without any intention to return thither again ... "

"Apr 125 My dear afflicted friends, Mr. Wolcott's family have just been caused to experience an addition to their multiple sorrows. Henry Bartholomew of Northford, a youth between ten and eleven years of age, son of Mr Samuel and Mrs Mary B. and grandson of Mr Wolcott has suddenly been removed from them by death."

"Saturday, May 1st At the close of the day on return from their labors, brother Chauncey and cousin Dana brought me a number of plants in full bloom of the virtuous and well known species called Round Bath Root. The sight of these lovely plants brought afresh to my mind the pleasing and melancholy remembrance of my dear, departed father. He was accustomed at this season of the year to make frequent botanical excursions, of which he was extremely fond and would often on his return present me with some root, plant or flower which he had gathered and with a smile of pleasure would point out their natural beauties and explain their medicinal qualities ... "

"Thursday May 13 Early this morning a little messenger was sent from a neighbor in the vicinity to inform us of the departure of a fellow mortal who is removed hence from us by death. Mrs Mary Chidsey who had advanced to the age of ninety-two has just expired ... "

"The Privileges of Retirement and Solitude"

Sweet solitude, thou art my friend
With thee my choicest hours I spend
And count it quite a xxxxxxxx
To pass my leisure time with thee
With joy to seek the lonely shade
For pious meditation made."
(poem continues for several more
verses)

"Monday, May 24 I have once more commenced my most sweet and delightful employment of school teaching in the New District and hope for the blessing of God upon my labor in the same. I have taken my lodgings at Mr. Jairus Harrison's where I expect to continue while I keep the school and hope to enjoy the peculiar privilege of indulging in that retirement and solitude which are exceedingly precious to me and refreshing to my mental powers."

"June 8th I am attended with so great a degree of bodily debility and languor of mind by reason of a very severe cold that I am scarcely able to perform the daily exercises which the duties of my present station requires ... "Yet while I feel it is a grief to bear the infirmities of my feeble body let me remember" It is good to be afflicted" and let me so conduct myself that I may reap the benefit of this fatherly correction "

When my last breath on earth is drawn
And life and motion both are gone
Where will my spirit be?

The spirit that now lives within
Conscious of sorrow and of sin
Ah, whither will it flee?

To unknown regions it must go
To share in bliss or dwell in woe
And that unchangeably.

For when the change of death is past
The state is fixed, and fixed to last
The same eternally.

Last entry in this volume

First entry

" Friday, October 1st, 1824 With the dawn of this morning I received the intelligence of the death of Almira F. Linsley, a relative of mine who died of consumption at 22. The once blooming and healthy Almira has long been consuming and withering away beneath the fatal blow of a slow but sure and pale consumption. She is no more numbered among the living ... "

"Saturday, October 2nd. I have this afternoon concluded the private school which I have kept 9 weeks with peculiar satisfaction, but the time has now passed away and gone and I have taken leave of the dear little objects with whom I have been so long conversant.... Perhaps I shall never look upon the cheerful faces of this little group of children again in this world or see them together any more until we meet at the bar of God"

"Sabbath, 3rd " I attended the funeral of Almira F. Linsley and saw her lifeless remains committed to the silent grave to rest in the dust at a small distance from the place where I expect my feeble body will be laid to repose in the slumber of death

"Monday, Oct 11th O, why am I still preserved in life amidst surrounding death! and permitted to witness the melancholy scenes which so frequently occur "of death oft". There has been another funeral in the neighborhood today, of a young man by the name of William Whiting who died of a fever with which he had been confined above four weeks, aged 18 years."

"Thursday PM, October 14th I set out in company with my friend Miss E. Wolcott to visit my friends in North Guilford"
(Stayed with sister Miriam and then with sister Sarah. On the way home stayed with Dr. Fithes.)

"Saturday morning we came to North Branford, called at my mother's and found all well, and E. requested me to accompany her home, accordingly I went to make the family a visit... "

"Monday morning, October 18"

"

My dear Eliza let us try
To elevate our thoughts on high
And may the Lord direct our way
In duty through the coming day"

(More stanzas follow)

"In the course of the day I made a call at Dr. Baldwin's and spent a few hours ... returned and spent the night at Mr. W."

"Tuesday morning Called at the humble cottage of Mary Brockway who is a poor, feeble creature and suffers much adversity by reason of sickness and poverty."

"This was a delightful morning and I had a pleasant ride to Northford in company with Doct W. and Eliza"

(returned home after 8 days)

"On Saturday evening after my return I was taken with a very distressing complaint in my throat attended with universal pain in every part of my feeble frame and accompanied with a considerable fever which confined me for several days ... "

"The 24th of October That mournful day on which the death of my dear departed father took place has again passed by."

"Wednesday, Nov 4th Brother Wyllys' family received the pleasant gift of a 3rd son, a fine, promising, healthy boy."

"Our days on the earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding."

"Nov 10th PM I attended the funeral of Jairus Harrison who died last evening in a very sudden and surprising manner! Just before night he went from the house as usual with a view to get his cow for milking and with an expectation, no doubt, of shortly returning back again. But, alas!, he had taken his last steps in his dwelling on earth! And gone out to come in alive no more. Then in about an hour after he had gone from home his body was found, a cold and lifeless corpse, lying in the river at a place where he daily passed heretofore, for his cow, morning and evening with safety and convenience. The run of water was very shallow where his body lay. It is therefore supposed that he must either have had a fit which caused him to fall or that his foot slipped and he fell accidentally as the common expression is and was so stunned by falling that he was unable to help himself to rise and accordingly was strangled by the water "

Thanksgiving Day, Dec 9, 1824

(Poem celebrating the day)

"This day is appointed by the Governor of Connecticut to be observed throughout the State [by all denominations of Christians] as a day of public praise and thanksgiving to almighty God."

"Thursday Dec 18 Charles Merwin Attwater, the eldest son of the Rev. Charles Attwater died of a fever, aged 14 years ... "

Christmas Day, December 25, 1824
(Poem celebrating the Day)

Dec 31st 1824

"Alas! My days how fast they flee
To waft me to eternity
Another year has passed away
The present date concludes this day"

Saturday, January 1, 1825

"With joy I hail this New Years day
And lift my heart and hands to pray
To my redeemer from above
For grace and mercy, peace and love"

"At Midnight"

I shall address my friends no more
In eighteen hundred twenty four
Reflect and drop a tear upon the flight of time
For eighteen hundred twenty five
Will be the date, if I survive
To write the present year to those dear friends of mine"

Epiphany January 6th
(Poem of 14 verses)

Monday, January 24

"Death Levels All"

"The master and his faithful slave
Both slumber in the silent Grave"

"Zenas Richards, an aged black man belonging to Mrs Merrick was found dead in his bed on Saturday evening. He was a faithful and trusty servant in the family where he lived and was respected according to his merit by his acquaintances in the neighborhood. He performed his laboring services with a great degree of cheerfulness and always appeared to be contented with his humble station and manifested as much freedom of mind as if the possession where he lived had been his own. But his services are now at an end. He has ceased from his labors and is decently laid in the silent grave."

"WRITTEN IN A SEASON OF AFFLICTION"

"May these long nights of pain be spent
In soberness of mind
That of my sins I may repent
And ready pardon find"
(9 more verses follow)

(This is the last entry in this volume)

Volume XXV, Pages 597-620
(1st entry)

"Ash Wednesday, February 16th, 1825

O, when will the glorious times of primitive Christianity be again revived and flourish in all their genuine purity, both in principle and practice? When will the happy period arrive when the pious institution of the ancient and venerable church shall be faithfully attended to; and her religious ordinances punctually observed and seriously kept in a solemn manner becoming to the dignity of her spiritual authority? And when, O when will the professing children of the truly apostolic, catholic and evangelical Church be anxiously solicitous to be engaged in the performance of her requisite services ...

O, death! how fatal is thy dart
When sent to pierce the mortal part
The strong men bow beneath thy sway
And all their mortal powers decay ... "
(Continues on this theme for 1 ½ pages)

"Monday, February 21, 1825 The Rev Charles Attwater died of a fever after a short illness, aged 39 years. He had been an ordained minister in North Branford 16 years wanting 7 days and has left a widow and three young sons to lament their loss in the decease of an affectionate husband and loving parent. May this affliction be sanctified to the bereaved family, the church and congregation of which he was the pastor, to the brethren of the association of which he was a member and to all the relations, connections and acquaintances who are called to lament this sudden removal from time into the unseen world. How often is the emphatical inspiration verified before the eyes of the living. "In the midst of life we are in death ... "

Sunday, February 27th 1825

(After church in North Branford, Parson Baldwin of Guilford went to Wyllys' house and baptized his 3rd son, named Seth Hurd. The weather being too severe to risk taking infant to church.)

"Wednesday March 9th I have just heard of the death of Sally Plant who died at the house of the widow Gainter in Northford where she had been for a few days." (Took ill while riding to her feeble, sick sister. She stopped at the house of Miss Gainter to rest and died a few days later of consumption.)

"Sally Plant was a person who never enjoyed the privilege of a fixed home upon earth or enjoyed the tender endearments and sympathies which are peculiar to affectionate family connections. In her feeble state of health she was dependent on the benevolence and charity of acquaintances for support."

"In Lent"

"On the death of Mrs. Nabby Wright Strong who died of the Lung Fever, March 14,
1825"

(Poem of 11 verses follows, then describes the difficult life of Mrs. Strong.)

"Monday, March 21 Daniel Little the son of Mr. James and Mrs. Polly Little died of a complaint of the throat, aged 19 months ... He was taken alarmingly ill at 6 o'clock in the evening and died at 3 in the morning."

(poem of lamentation follows.)

"March 27th At 6 o'clock this morning Russell Butler, an infant and only son of Mr. Rufus and Mrs. Mary Butler died after a short illness, thought to proceed from a cold, aged 4 months."

Good Friday, April 1st 1825

(Poem and reflection on the day.)

Easter Sunday April Jth

(Poem)

"Monday evening, April 4th I have just heard of the death of Mr. Timothy Harrison who died of a fit yesterday morning at 10 o'clock, aged 73 years. And likewise the death of Amelia, a black woman who had lived in the house of Capt. Mulford for years past. She died of a fever at 10 o'clock in the evening, aged 39 years."

(Poem on Death)

"Thursday, April 7 "Brother Wyllys' infant lay in convulsion fits and was at times apparently in the last stages of disease. We called upon the physician immediately after we discovered his alarming situation, who came soon and after administering proper remedies and after observing his dangerous symptoms for several hours, he pronounced his case destitute of all prospect of recovery, and left the house saying that the child could no continue to breath but a short time and he thought the most efficacious (remedies?) had been used without taking the desired effect and as his other patients required his presence he must leave us, to resign our little sufferer into the arms of his maker God where I hope and trust we were all anxious to have him remain, both living and dying. But as there were some symptoms of life still to be perceived from the close throbbing of a very weak pulse and some other motions in his body we made every possible exertion to preserve life which was in our power or rather within the circumscribed knowledge of the ease of remedies. We continued to

use external applications while he lay almost motionless until at length he opened his eyes and was shortly able to swallow. We then began to feel a little encouraged about him and sent for the doctor to return who came soon and was surprised to see any symptoms of remaining life returning. He said that his case was very doubtful and he thought it most probable that he would not live to see the rising morn of the next day. He gave directions how to proceed in administering medicine and left us for the night as he said with very small expectation of finding the child alive in the morning. We were faithful to attend to his prescriptions as we thought the varying circumstances of the disease and strength of the infant would permit, and through the blessing of God upon the means used for his recovery he is evidently in a hopeful way to e restored to health. May God be praised ... "

"Friday 15th PM I visited the family of my friend Miss Eliza Wolcott who have sold all their possessions in North Branford and expect shortly to remove to the city of New Haven"

(The women spent the weekend together and exchanged poems of friendship.)

"Sweet is the reflection that my dear friend Eliza and myself have always lived in amity from our first acquaintance to the present time ... "

(Last entry in this volume)

(First entry, n.d.)

"Bestow thy pardoning mercy lord on me
And fill my heart with gratitude to thee
Let all my past offences be forgiven
And, O, prepare me for the joys of heaven."

(1st dated entry)

"April 24th Mr. James Baldwin, the father of a very dependent family and a worthy and respectable man, died of a singular complaint, aged 49 years ... "

"The shafts of death fly swiftly round
And cut poor feeble mortals down
My work on earth will soon be done
My time to die will shortly come."
(Two more verses of like tenor.)

"Another death I here record
A saint I trust is gone to God
An aged saint indeed
I trust she's gone to Christ above
To dwell in realms of peace and love
From sin and sorrow freed."
(3 more verses, then)

"On Monday May 9th Mrs Lydia Foot died, aged 89. Her disease was thought to be the decay of nature by reason of old age."

Ascension Day, May 12, 1825
(Prayerful reflection on the Ascension.)

"Monday, May 16th I have this day commenced or more properly recommenced teaching school in the New District of North Branford. A Mr. G., Committee of Inspection, visited examined and approved of the school and presented me with a certificate. I now enjoy the satisfaction to think that I am properly and pleasantly established in my most agreeable employment. My accommodations are as convenient as can be expected I am living at the same house where I lodged last summer and though there has been a melancholy change in the family I trust that I shall live very contentedly if my health and life are spared ...

In this my sweet employment here
I hope the savior will be here
And all my weak exertions bless
And to my labors give success. Polly"

"At the sister's graves, Sarah & Lucretia

I fell no tears nor do I weep
For here two sisters sweetly sleep
How quiet is their rest"
(seven more verses)

"An evening after school in the school house

I am not solitary here
Nor do I feel alone
For I have books the hours to cheer
As they glide swiftly on"

"Wednesday Morning, May 25th Mr. Ichabod Page died of a lingering illness with which he had been afflicted for some years and which terminated in epileptic fits ...Mr. P. was 66 years old ... "

"Monday evening, June 20, 1825" (Birthday eve)

"Another round of months and days
I added to my mortal race
Another year is flown
And many friends in the last year
Have left this world and all things here
And to their graves have gone
Yet many precious friends remain
To comfort me and entertain
My solitary mind
They sympathize with me in grief
And study to afford relief
With words and actions kind"

Tuesday morning, June 21, 1825

(Another poem on the passage of time, then)

It is forty years since I received my introduction into this world and I have been supported in existence by a constant succession of multiplied mercies which have been freely bestowed on me by the hand of my heavenly Father. "

"Wednesday, July 16th My precious mother is this day 73 years old and through the blessing of God she enjoys a comfortable state of bodily health and the peculiar privilege of the exercise of her mental powers She is gone 9 miles from home this day to see a brother-in-law of hers who is in a declining state of health ... She is gone alone and is expected to return this afternoon ... "

"Wednesday, PM July 29 Had a short but pleasant interview with my aged and respectable friend Mr. Fowler who came into the school house and patiently listened to hear the children read, spell and recite ... At noon left and went to brother G's to take dinner."

"Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Thou canst cleanse my polluted soul and body from all the defilements of sin with which my whole nature is contaminated I am vile ... "

(Closes with a poem on same subject)

(Last entry in this volume)

1st entry

"October 1, 1825 After long and I trust prayerful and mature deliberation upon the important subject of Episcopacy I have come to the fixed and determined resolution to embrace the same and to make an open profession of my sentiments to the world May God enable me to perform this duty [which I esteem a religious obligation and a precious privilege to annex my self to the truly Catholic, Apostolic, and Episcopal Church of God upon earth] in the exercise of a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward man.

With these views I have written the following lines to my Presbyterian friends; and design to send the same to them tomorrow. May it meet with a favorable reception and no unpleasant feelings arise in consequence of my request.

To the Members of the Presbyterian Communion in North Branford

Dear Affectionate Friends,

Permit me to take this method to inform you that I think it is my duty to join the Episcopal Communion.

I have considered this important subject with much deliberation of mind and feel convinced that it is my bounden duty to embrace Episcopacy. I therefore ask you to grant me the privilege of a regular dismissal from your Communion, in Christian love

I likewise request the continuance of your fervent prayers to Almighty God for me, that I may continually live in dutiful obedience to the commands of the Savior, in favor with God, and in perfect charity with the world, so that living and dying I may be the lord's.

I pray the same for you, affectionately.

Polly Linsley"

(No date)

"Vanity of Vanities, saith the Preacher"

1. There's nothing here beneath the skies
But Vanity of Vanities
Exchanging scenes of woe
With each revolving day I find
Some sinful stain pollutes my mind
To pain me where I go.

2. When I am distressed with doubts and fears
And sorrow fills my eyes with tears
Because I am so vile
I go before my master's throne
And through the merits of his son
I ask to share his smile

(continues for 6 verses)

"Wednesday, October 12th Sister Page came home to make a family visit among her friends here and Parson Fowler came from Middletown and spent the night with us. We had a very pleasant interview in the evening and I hope the time was profitably used by us in listening to Mr. Fowler's instructing conversation and in reading; we read the Psalms appointed for the evening by responses... Mr. Fowler made me a present of a book containing "Miscellaneous Observations, Moral, Religious and Entertaining". He likewise left me some writings for me to copy in his Miscellaneous Book which I am writing for him. Spent Thursday A.M. with us and passed on to Guilford P.M. after accompanying sister Page and myself to brother Jesse's where we spent the afternoon and returned at evening."

"Monday, October 24. 1825 It is eight years this day since the death of my beloved father and I have had the satisfaction of visiting the grave where his remains were deposited in hope of a blessed resurrection to immortal life and glory hereafter. I have likewise visited the little mound of earth beneath which the darling of my affection, the body of Elijah P. now sleeps in the still repose of death. It is 5 weeks this day since he has lain in the grave "

(No date After a long, emotional prayer this follows)

"I have no expectation of becoming a real Episcopalian without entering the church through the door of Baptism; that is, unless I receive baptism from an Episcopal clergyman. I had accordingly concluded in my mind to be publicly baptized in the church. I mentioned my intention to some of my near relations and talked of the subject to my dear mother, who appeared to be quite agitated in her mind at the thought of such a measure. She said she had given me up to God in my infancy, as she supposed, in the way of her deity and she knew there were others confirmed in

the church without being baptized there ... I cannot bear to wound her feelings or disquiet the peace of her mind upon a subject of such delicacy to her and so much importance to my own soul. I am in trouble. May God direct, bless and keep me from all evil and give me peace of mind, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

"Friday, November 4th While I was troubled with many perplexing exercises in my mind, my benevolent and sympathetic friend, the Rev. Mr. Fowler made us a call (as he was on his way from Middletown to Guilford). To him I expressed the sorrows which distressed my very heart and asked his counsel. His Christian conversation at this time of my need was like a healing balm to my wounded spirit. He told me he thought it was my duty and would be acceptable in the sight of God for me to receive Baptism in as private a manner as possible. He likewise said that if it was my wish, he would baptize me himself or, if not, he would invite any other Episcopal clergyman to perform the solemn office, whom I would name.

He spent the night with the family, left some writings for me as usual and went on to Guilford ... coming out of Church and going some distance exposed to the chill air of the night he took a great cold and was quite unwell when he returned on Monday evening. He stayed through the night with us again and I had the satisfaction to administer to the relief of his complaints, and I trust my faithful attention to his wants afforded him comfort; as it was a real pleasure to me to be able in any measure to express my grateful acknowledgement of the affectionate friendship and kindness he manifests for me .

.. While Mr. Fowler was at Guilford he had a letter from his wife in Charleston, S. C. which informed him of the death of their infant child, 10 months old. And perhaps this melancholy event had some effect in giving him a present depression of spirits." (three pages of prayer follow)

"Monday evening Mr. F. called here this afternoon and left some writing for me which I have just inserted in his book and concluded the same containing 172 pages. His health was somewhat improved since he was here before ... My mother is quite complaining. I fear she is going to be very sick. .. "

"Tuesday Mother is quite ill today but I think that a great part of her recent weakness may be occasioned by her taking a powerful cathartic in order to remove her complaints ... "

"May ev'ry sentence, ev'ry line
I write be with a good design
To edify myself and those
Who may peruse the same at last
When my short life on earth is past
And I in death's cold arms repose"

"Polly"

(Last entry in this volume but a small leaf of paper was inserted in its pages with the following poem)

"On the Death of a Young Woman"

"Her pains are all ceased
If her sins are forgiven
Her body is eased
And her soul lies in heaven"

Volume XXXI Pages 741-764 1st
entry

"Wednesday March 1 I begin this book with a pious extract and hope that I may experience the salutary influences of the divine spirit in the operation of genuine Godliness upon my soul.. Grant me this blessing I humbly beseech thee, O lord, through Jesus Christ, thy son. Amen."

(One page extract follows, entitled "The Excellence of True Religion" then two more pages of religious reflection and prayer.)

"Friday Morning Gidelia has just expired!. Yes, she has passed the solemn change of death and bid a long adieu to terrestrial concerns! She has left a world of sorrow and trouble! Released from the body of pain and disease ... "

"Wednesday 8th PM The Rev. Mr. Fowler called upon us and spent the night here. We passed the time in reading and conversation on serious subjects as is usual when we meet, excepting the hours devoted to rest, by sleep, for the refreshment of nature. He brought me two blank books which he designs to have me write for him. This worthy Gentleman manifests a parental affection and tenderness for me and appears to feel deeply interested in the concerns of my immortal soul... I entertain a childlike affection for him esteem him highly in love for work's sakeO that I might improve this and every privilege which I have for my everlasting benefit."

"O, how smoothly does the stream of life roll along through time and glide into the ocean of eternity."

"Tuesday, March 14 Mr. Fowler made a short call on us as he was on his way from Guilford to New Haven and brought me his Journal in MS of his first missionary tour from Charleston to Chatham in the state of South Carolina in the year 1819 and I immediately commenced to write the work and hope to progress with alacrity. He likewise brought me "The Pious Guide to Prayer and Devotion" that I may read the same, which I hope to do with pleasure and profit."

"Thursday PM Mr. Fowler called on his return from New Haven and brought me another book to write in. He also gave me \$2.50 for writing and said he wished to reward me handsomely for my labor in his service ... "

"March 19 Sunday next before Easter I here insert the Epistle for the day hoping thereby to retain the same in my mind ..
. Phil. 1, 5"

"Wednesday PM 2 o'clock I have just finished writing Mr. Fowler's 1st Missionary . Journal to Chatham, Cherow Hill, in the year 1819 containing 166 pages of very interesting and instructing matter. I have written this work with much pleasure, hoping that by doing the same I have obliged my worthy and amiable friend who is

very kind to me. May God bless him!"

"Thursday before Easter In the Gospel lesson appointed to be read this day [by the Episcopal Church is the following expression of the Blessed Saviour addressed to his Heavenly Father ...

Father, Forgive them for they know not what they do."

Sunday, March 26, Easter Day

(There follows a long heavily underlined prayer on the meaning of Easter.)

"Solitude, The Best Society"

"1. Sweet Solitude, in thy lone shade

What pleasure do I find

Thou art a comfort to my head

A solace to my mind."

(Five more verses follow on the same theme.)

"April 5th Wednesday Evening Charles Wolcott Morton, an orphan child, grandson of F.G.W. died of a consumption with which he had been a long time confined, aged 11 years. He died at his grandmother Morton's in North Guilford where he had been for nearly a year ... On Sunday the 9th the body of Charles was brought to North Branford ... and deposited in the cold grave by the side of his mother who had slept in the dust for more than 3 years."

The Rev. Mr. Wetmore came ... from North Guilford ... Being a Presbyterian Minister, he observed that as the deceased was an Episcopalian or had been a child of the church, he thought proper to have the funeral service performed, and accordingly brother Jesse read at the grave the appointed service for the solemn occasion.

"April 8th Saturday The Rev. Mr. Fowler made a short call here as he was passing from Guilford to New Haven and prompted by kindness ... presented me with a neat and elegant volume of his third edition of The Exposition of the Book of Common Prayer, recently printed in Middletown ... I feel very grateful to him for the concern which he manifests for my spiritual welfare ... "

"April 10th, Monday An uncommon winter like day for the season of the year--A large body of snow fell in the course of the day ...

"On Tuesday some persons made use of sleds instead of carts in getting wood ... And brother Wyllys had the curiosity to exercise himself by skating which he did, as he said, til he was fatigued ... "

April 19th, Wednesday

"The principal part of employment for some time past has been writing which is a very delightful occupation for me ...

I have just finished writing Mr. Fowler's first Missionary Journal to St. Augustine, East Florida comprising 50 pages. Mr. Fowler commenced this mission on the 29th of September and closed the same on the 9th of November in the year 1821."

"Friday Morning, 21st With the close of this day I have concluded writing the second book of Mr. F.'s second Missionary Journal to Charleston, S.C. containing 172 pages. I pursue this delightful employment with much pleasure and I hope equal profit ... "

Tuesday, April 25th, St. mark's Day
(Poem and prayer, then)

"Life is short and uncertain! Death is certain! And eternity is long! O Lord, prepare me for the change.

In a short time I shall go hence
Beyond the things of flesh & sense
To be on earth no more ... "

Thursday, May 4th, Ascension Day
(poem and prayer)

(Last entry in this volume)

(No date)

"Mr. Dutton baptized two infant females today. The one the daughter of Mr. William A. Reynolds, named Elizabeth Ann and the other a daughter of Miss Katherine Wheadon, named Ann Eliza. I hope they were both given up to God in faith and sincerity and humbly pray that his blessing may ever rest upon them."

"Monday morning,(n.d.) I woke early and felt myself refreshed by quiet sleep; but do I feel a grateful heart within; inclining me to present my body a living sacrifice to God? And to devote myself to his service by faithfully endeavoring to labor for him thru the coming day?..."

"With all the fatigue which I endure to instruct and watch over my little flock, I pass many pleasant hours among them; and hope the time thus employed may be profitable to them and myself ... "

"Saturday morning. O how delightful it is to behold the splendid beauties of the opening day. This is an uncommonly pleasant morning, not a cloud obscures the "azure vaulted sky" , the king of day is coming forth in glorious majesty to illuminate the world ... "

"Sabbath Morning, July 23 What a pleasant morning! God of mercy help me to improve this precious season to thy glory ... "

"Wednesday I received a large parcel of papers from my worthy friend Mr. Fowler. They were sent from New York and contained a Blank Book, with the manuscripts of a missionary journey for me to copy, with a line informing me how to proceed, and likewise encouraging me with the expectation of soon receiving the Bible and Prayer Book designed for the use of Zion Church."

"Thursday 27 According to Mr. Fowler's request I have commenced writing the journal just received and laid aside the others for the present. ... I hope to gain much improvement and satisfaction, together with the peculiar pleasure of gratifying and obliging a truly valuable and affectionate friend."

"Thursday PM Half past 4 o'clock -- Have had a very busy time so far through the week -- had a very large school to attend to, and other employment to occupy each moment that I could spare to resting to refresh my frail nature-have just dismissed 44 children from school-have been visited by the Gentlemen Committee of Examination and have closed my public school-have reason to think that I have gained the approbation of my employers. Am in comfortable health and inexpressibly grateful to God ... "

"Tuesday August 8th Commenced a private school in the same house and among the same children that I left on Thursday last; being requested to do so by a large number of parents who are anxious to have their children continue in school and invited me to keep them in my charge for some time longer yet this season for I am extremely fond of being in the employment of teaching children the first rudiments of useful knowledge ... "

"Thursday 10th I pass my time pleasantly in my present employment and I hope profitably to myself and the children who I instruct. The school is not so numerous as it has been, while a public one, and therefore less fatiguing ... "

"Friday August 11th – It is one year since the death of William Fitzgreen Dudley, sister Miriam's youngest child - Yes the little creature once so lively and promising has slept the sleep of death for one full year! How peaceful is his rest!"

"Monday PM - Half past 30'clock, went to the grave of Mr. Justus Harrison to see his lifeless remains interred in the narrow house - He died yesterday of consumption... Mr Harrison had lived to the advanced age of 71 years ... "

"August 19th-Saturday Morning half past 8 o'clock. I have just finished writing a journal through the southern islands and the Lower Part of the Main, in the State of South Carolina in the year 1823 for the Rev. Mr. Fowler, containing 145 pages of interesting travel.

"Monday 28 Brother Wyllys and his wife went to Huntington to attend the funeral of brother ??? Hurd who died Sunday of Typhus fever, which he had been sick of for several weeks - he was aged 28 years ... His mother is dangerously sick of the same fever."

"Friday September 1st I have not Kept school today on account of there being a military parade in the place and the children, of course, are anxious to see exercises of this kind and I think it very proper that they should be indulged in their inclination on such occasions. I spent a great part of the day in the school house by myself in reading and writing .. I hope by thus employing the time to improve my mind and benefit some of my fellow creatures who may read what I write with some attention, perhaps when I am sleeping in the silent grave.

"Thursday September 7th Brother Wyllys' wife returned from Huntington, left her mother dangerously ill with the fever. May God preserve her life ... "

"Wednesday Evening September 13th I was very agreeably surprised by the unexpected appearance of my worthy friend the Rev. Mr. Fowler who called but a few minutes to inform me that in consequence of being disappointed about some books sent him from Middletown to New York, among which he expected a Bible

and Prayer Book for me. He had waited some time and not receiving them he thought best to return to Connecticut and attend to this ... He only stayed to enquire after my health and to bid good night.

(Last entry this volume)

1st entry

"Sunday December 24th 1826

Although I cannot go to join
In public prayer this day
Yet I can ask for grace divine
My private vows to pay."
(Continues for seven verses)

Christmas Day
(Poem)

St Stephen's Day

(Poem, then)

"At 6 o' clock this morning Joshua Linsley died of the smallpox, aged 27 years. He has left a wife, father, mother and two brothers to lament him."

Sunday, December 31 ". 1826
(Poem)

Monday, January 1st, 1827
(Religious poem, then)

"For eighteen hundred twenty seven
The New Year's Day is come
And I am yet a living soul
O may I set my heart in heaven
And seek it for my home
As days and years succession roll."

Epiphany January 6th
(poem)

Sunday after Epiphany
(Poem)

The Conversion of St. Paul, Thursday, January 25th
(Poem)

"Tuesday January 30th Thanks be to God, my heavenly Father, for the continuation of my life, the preservation of my reason, the usefulness of my limbs and the enjoyment of such a measure of health as he has been pleased graciously to grant me ...

" ... The weather has for the most part been extremely severe since the beginning of the winter: yet my health has been much better than I apprehended it would be, from the unfavorable symptoms that attended me at the beginning of the cold season. I have food and raiment convenient for me; with many other agreeable and comfortable accommodations: and only want a grateful heart to praise my maker for all his mercies, benefits and favors which I receive, to make me truly blessed. My feeble constitution requires me to be very particular with regard to my health, and obliges me to keep at home the principal part of the time: Yet I am able to labour moderately, which is a very great satisfaction to my mind. I delight to employ my leisure hours in reading and writing, which gives me peculiar pleasure. I have just finished writing the 5th Book of Mr. F.'s Missionary journal to Chatham, which contains 120 pages. I make slow progress in writing the works of this pious friend, because of the difficulties which attend me in this labour. Yet, notwithstanding the unreasonable interruptions which I have to encounter in the performance of this employment, I hope that I am still gaining some mental improvement; and laying up a substantial treasure of useful information and important knowledge, which shall prove an advantage to my soul, both in this world and that which is to come: and likewise, that it may be eventually beneficial to the Church of God. If so, I am content to bear the hard speeches and severity which I receive from those whom I love, and from whom I should expect to experience the most affectionate offices of friendship, and the most mild treatment. But I am convinced that mortal life is a state of trial."

"Saturday, Feb. 24th -Early this morning I came from brother Jesse's where I went on Wednesday the 9th inst. with a design to make a family visit, and have stayed 16 days. The weather has been cold, the sleighing excellent. We received some company; visited some, etc I enjoyed much satisfaction; had an agreeable visit and the time passed away quickly. I am now returned home where I hope to enjoy retirement and lonely solitude, which I highly prize and I flatter myself that I shall have more frequent intervals of leisure to employ in reading and writing; and happier opportunities to make mental improvement. May I have a disposition to improve every portion of my precious time to the best advantage, viz. in making preparation for a blissful eternity to come.

This day is appointed by the Church to celebrate the Festival of saint Matthias, an Apostle of Jesus who was chosen to supply the vacancy made by the treachery of Judas Iscariot; and was probably one of the seventy disciples. The following is the Collect for the day, "O Almighty God, who into the place of the traitor Judas, didst chose thy faithful servant Matthias, to be of the number of the twelve Apostles, grant that thy church, being always preserved from false Apostles, may be ordered and guided by faithful and true Pastors, through Christ our Lord, Amen."

"First Sunday in Lent, March 4th "

Sunday evening-In the course of the day I have been informed of the death of two persons, with whom I have had formerly some little acquaintance. The one was Mr.

David Baldwin, an uncle to brother Chauncey's wife; he died of a consumptive complaint and expired last night between the hours of twelve and one o'clock, while brother Chauncey was watching with him. Thus in the dead of night his spirit departed to the unseen world; and left his lifeless body to the care of his surviving friends, who performed the melancholy task of preparing it for the grave. Mr. B. was aged 54 years: has left a wife and four children to mourn the loss they sustain in his death.

The other was a Mr. Rufus Linsley, a person who has been in a state of derangement for a number of years. He died this morning between the hours of seven and eight o'clock. He was aged 48 years. It appears as if this person was taken out of this world in mercy to his surviving friends: and I hope that his spirit has gone to rest in peace through the all-atoning merits of the great and ever blessed Redeemer and saviour Jesus Christ. May all those who have the use of reason be truly grateful for the inestimable favour and endeavour faithfully to improve it to the glory of God who is the giver of every good and perfect gift.

"Friday march 9th P.M. I attended the public examination of the centre School; and was very much gratified with hearing and seeing the performance which the scholars exhibited. There were a large number of children together, and their behaviour was an honor to their teacher and a credit to themselves. The room was filled with spectators; and I believe the parents and others present were pleased with the appearance of the school, and satisfied with the proficiencies the children had made in the several branches of learning to which they had attended the past season.

O may my soul delight in doing good
And often raise her thoughts in gratitude
To God, the giver of my life and breath,
My present comfort, and my hope in death."

Sunday March 25th The annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
(Reflection and short poem)

Last entry in this volume

(Note: There is an error in the original pagination. In numbering the pages, Polly jumped from page 872 to 893 instead of to 873.)

First entry, n.d.

"The Holy Name of Jesus

Jesus, the only thought of thee
With sweetness fills my breath
But sweeter far it is to see
And on thy beauty feast
No sound, no harmony so gay
Can Art of music frame
No thoughts can reach, no words can say
The sweets of thy blest name."

April 1st The Fifth Sunday in Lent

(There follow 12 pages of prayer and reflection on Holy Week covering the period from April 1 to April 22, the Sunday After Easter.)

"April 23rd Monday-I have this day entered the school house again in the capacity of instructress, and feel quite animated with the hope that I may be useful to the little children committed to my care; their appearance is quite pleasing to me, and I hope to have the satisfaction to enjoy their affection and promote their improvement in useful knowledge. May the blessing of God our heavenly Father rest upon the children;« upon their parents; and upon myself. May we all be useful in life, peaceful in death; and happy in eternity. May we seek the glory of God while we live and be prepared to dwell in his glorious presence hereafter, for ever, for Christ's sake. Amen.

"Sunday April 28-Robert Rose, the second son of Mr. Alfred and Mrs. Sally rose was buried. He died on Thursday, P.M., a little past 9 O'clock. His disease was the King's-Evil, which brought on a consumption. He was aged 12 years. He was an amiable, pleasant child, and one of much promise while in health-patient and resigned in his sickness, and I trust that through the merits of the Saviour he now rests in peace. May his parents and other connections, be resigned to the will of the heavenly father in this bereaving dispensation of his righteous providence, and make a suitable improvement of this serious admonition, to prepare for an exchange of worlds. The living must go to meet the dead! But the dead cannot return to earth to converse with the living! O Lord, prepare me for a dying hour. I pray that when I come to die I may sleep in Jesus, and be forever with the blessed in the mansions of immortality. "

"Saturday May 5-1 have once more visited the solitary mansion where the dust of my much loved father reposes and likewise the grave of my once dear little Elijah P. These precious friends quietly rest free from the trials of this life! And I hope their spirits are happy in the presence of their lord and saviour. May I improve the time allotted to me here, to prepare for a coming state of existence, so that I may enjoy a blessed hereafter in the presence of God and the Lamb. Thanks be-unto God for all the mercies I now enjoy and for all the superior comforts which I hope to obtain thru the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, the saviour. Amen."

"May 9 Wednesday P.M. The Committee of inspection, Col. Philo Harrison and Capt. Levi Rose, Junr. Have visited and approved of the school which I am teaching; and I am highly gratified with the prospect of benefiting the little children and youth committed to my charge. 39 scholars were present to read and exhibit their lessons; and their behaviour was as becoming and decent as could be expected from such small children. May the blessing of God, our heavenly Father rest upon this school and upon the superintendents, the parents and all others concerned and desirous to promote the best good of the same.

Let my instructions Lord, I pray
Be blest for good, from day to day
To all the subjects of my care
And their affections let me share."

(n.d.) "Although the weather is uncommonly cold for the season, yet the Spring is advancing and vegetation comes forward, tho' not with that rapidity which is usually seen in the month of May. Nature is adorned in gay attire; she has put on her verdant robes; the trees are in bloom; they make a beautiful appearance and promise an abundance of fruit at a future season I hope that through the blessing of God, this promise may in due time be realized; and that the hearts of all who shall enjoy the bounties of nature may be filled with gratitude to the Supreme Being, who is the giver of every good and every perfect gift. As the beauties of the present season are transient, and will soon fade and pass away: Let me view this as emblematical of this mortal state of existence. Life is short and all the enjoyments of time are fading away; they will soon come to an end. But O, the happy thought, the delightful contemplation of a never ending hereafter! Where the righteous shall be clothed with an immortal vigour and forever bloom in the eternal beauties of heaven and shine in the celestial mansions of glory! O, may it be my constant concern in this life to seek the kingdom of Heaven, and its righteousness, the glory of God and the best good of my immortal soul. And in the life to come, may it be my happy portion to enjoy the full fruition of the blessed felicities of the New Jerusalem above. I ask it in the name of and for the merits of Jesus Christ the Saviour; and beseech thee to hear me, O God, and grant my petition for his sake. Amen."

June 10 (Religious reflection)
Last entry this volume

First entry

"Saturday August 18, 1827 Blessed be God, that I am permitted to behold the returning light of another morning in circumstances of comfort, surrounded with the mercies of his fatherly kindness and watchful providence. O, may his renewed care and continued goodness manifested to me, excite my devout gratitude to follow in the exercise of prayer and praise to him, in whom I live and move, and have my being and be accepted of him, alone, through the meritorious intercession of Jesus Christ. Amen.

O, Lord of Hosts, Almighty God
To me thy special aid afford
And make me ready to obey
Thy blessed mind and will Always

O, Guide me safely through this maze
Of changing seasons, nights and days
And when in death I close my eyes
Then take my soul to paradise.

Polly"

(n.d.) "My health is in a declining state, and I am exercised with a severe cough, have a slight fever and other complaints, which very much exhaust my strength and impair my feeble constitution; and which, if not speedily removed will most surely take me off from my present agreeable employment; and bring me down to close confinement and perhaps to death and the grave. O, Lord prepare me for the dispensations of thy providence concerning me and enable me to meet the events before me with composure and resignation to thy will. If I am shortly to be separated from the dear children who have long been the subjects of my charge and often cheered me with their interesting appearance and pleasing smiles, while labouring for the improvement of their young and tender minds: may some more able teacher have the care of their instruction, and guide them in the path of learning and virtue. Above all, may God by his grace, enable them to be blessings to themselves and their fellow- creatures in this world and make them happy in the world to come, for Jesus Christ's sake, so be it. Amen"

"Tuesday, 21st Soon after I entered the school house this morning, while the children were collecting to engage in the business of the day: I was agreeable surprised by the appearance of my aged friend, the Rev. Mr. Fowler, from South Carolina. He only made a short call and bade me good morning; as he was in haste, going on to visit his connections in Guilford. Mr. Fowler appears cheerful and I rejoice to see him in good health. May God grant him life, and bless him with the enjoyment of health and the comforts of religion, for a long time yet to come in the present work: and reward

his faithful labours for the prosperity of the church with "a crown of righteousness" in the future world.

"Thursday 23rd My cough constantly increases, together with my other complaints, so that I have but little rest either by day or night. I must quit my pleasant employment very soon, and seek the restoration of my health, by discontinuing my pleasant labours as my strength is not sufficient for the performance of the duties of my station here.

P.M. 4 o'clock Mr. F. called at the school house again. I was glad to see him; but was so fatigued by the exercises of the day, and spent with almost constant coughing, that I was able to converse but little. I invited him to refresh his mind by reading in a book which I had copied from the manuscripts he left with me to. He accepted the invitation, and while he was thus employed; I had a short respite from coughing and kept quite still in the interval, so that when he laid his book aside, I could speak with more ease, and taking the Prayer Book I opened it and turning to the Psalms appointed for the evening of the day, I asked him to read with me. We accordingly read together, by responses; I was able to pronounce each sentence with an audible voice. We closed reading with the Gloria Patria and Mr. F. took his leave; after expressing a tender concern about my ill state of health; and wishing the blessing of God to rest upon me. O, how grateful I ought to be for the pious friends I have."

"Friday 24th-- I must leave the school this day and give over the pleasing anticipation which I have fondly indulged, of passing the approaching autumn among the little engaging children whose improvement in useful learning has been my daily study through the summer. The thought that I must quit the school at present, excites tender emotions in my breast and I go away with reluctance; being apprehensive, from my complaints that I shall be immediately confined to a sick-bed. Yet I still cherish a secret hope, that I may have relief from my complaints in a short time, and be restored to my usual health and to the care of the school; but knowing that all events are subject to the supreme control of my heavenly Father. I desire to commit myself and all my cares and concerns into his hands and to leave the same entirely at his disposal; and if my present disease shall terminate this mortal existence, I hope to be delivered from this body of death and brought into the glorious liberty of enjoying an immortal inheritance among the saints in light. And it shall please God to remove my pains and restore me again to the possession of my former state of health; I pray for grace to enable me to improve the precious privilege, by a renewed and more faithful dedication of myself and all my powers to him and the employment of his service ... "

Oct. --- Through the mercy of God, I have recently been preserved in a season of sickness and have experienced that there is no word impossible with him, and that he can raise up such as one apparently just about to depart into the world of spirits ...

When I left the school and came home, the 24th of August, I was in hopes that by resting from my laborious employment a few days, I might be restored to such a measure of health and strength, as to be able to return and accomplish the term which I calculated to continue in teaching the children. But the event has proved otherwise. For a few days after I came home I was able to walk about the house, but my fever and cough both continued to increase, until I was confined to my room and bed, and brought so low that those who attended to me expected I must speedily experience a separation of soul and body and go hence to be no more seen upon earth. I thought so myself and entertained a hope that, that through the mercy of the Lord, I. should be safely conducted through the dark valley of the shadow of death to rest in peace in the bosom of the Saviour ...

My relatives and acquaintances have manifested a tender concern for me in my sickness. They have been affectionate, kind and attentive to me in my confinement ...

Parson of Guilford, called to see me twice, and read the prayers of the church, appointed for the sick, at each time; which together with his serious conversation, was truly gratifying to my mind ...

In the course of my sickness, two physicians of my acquaintance were so kind as to call and visit me. The one was Doctor Converse, who resides in the neighborhood and who is the favorite physician of our family. When he had examined my pulse and made some inquiry regarding my complaints, I asked him what was his opinion about my disease; He replied in these words "perhaps it is not best to tell you". I told him I thought I was sensible of my weak condition and that I did not expect to continue in my present state. He told me it was possible that I might be comfortable again; but coincided in opinion with me respecting the use of medicine; that it was proper for me to take such nourishment as was agreeable to my stomach and that good nursing was all that was to be done for me. ---

The other was a physician of years and experience, viz. Dr. Foot of North Haven, with whom I have long been acquainted and who has formerly called on me in sickness & given me directions how to proceed in my particular case, as to the use of the most proper means to the removal of any unfavorable symptoms in order to restore me to comfortable health, for he has often told me that there was not any prospect of my ever enjoying health, and I am really grateful to him for his kindness and candour. He conversed, as formerly, with much freedom upon the subject of death, which was very interesting to me as I thought it might, in all probability, be the last time that we should converse together in this world. He asked me many important questions relative to the state of my mind, whether I was willing to part with this world, whether I could meet death with composure ... I told him that I had many anxious thoughts concerning my preparation for death., that it was a great thing for soul and body to be separated ...

As the Dr. had been long acquainted with my feeble constitution, he soon perceived the nature and tendency of my present complaints and upon examining my pulse, he did not hesitate to say immediately that my symptoms indicated a confirmed case of hectic fever. He said he would not advise me to use much medicine at present, as I was too feeble to stand anything powerful. ...

I continued for several days much in the same situation;... uncertain whether I should rise or fall: uncertain whether I should sink to sleep in the arms of death and drop into the grave; or rise to life and return back to be again engaged in the busy cares of time. --But it has pleased God to afford me a prospect of restoration. My fever has subsided; my cough has abated and I am gaining strength gradually. O may the renewed mercies which I receive be sanctified to me for my spiritual good ... "

"There is a funeral in this afternoon which is the fifth that has been in this small society since my confinement. And I am still preserved among the living to witness these melancholy occurrences; to think upon another's death The first two who died of the above number were a Mr. Rogers and his wife. Mr. Josiah R died very suddenly, being taken with distress and pain of body which carried him out of time in a few hours. This melancholy event took place on the 6th of September; and on the 8th, his wife, Mrs. Nancy R. died of a consumption, with which complaint she had been confined for a long time. Mr. R was aged 66 years and his wife 63

The next who died was Mr. Samuel Baldwin, who departed this life on Wednesday evening the 10th of Oct, aged 88 years His complaint appeared to be the decay of nature occasioned by old age Mr. B. was the last person who sustained the relation of uncle to my mother and was a peculiar friend of hers.

On Thursday morning, the 11th of Oct., about the time the day-light appeared, Maria, the second daughter of Mr. Richard and Mrs. Olive Linsley died of a consumption, aged 22 years. Death levels all!.. It is three years the first day of this month since Almira, the eldest sister of Maria, died of a consumption. Mr. Baldwin and Maria were both buried on Friday the 12th Inst. P.M. and this afternoon the remains of Mrs. Olive Linsley, the wife of Richard L. have been deposited in the grave. Mrs. L. died of a consumption, aged 56 years.

O 'tis a solemn thing to die
Prepare me Lord to live on high. "

"Oct 24th This is the anniversary of the death of my precious father. It is ten years this day since that loving, fond, beloved parent has slept in the cold and silent embrace of death and has been numbered with that vast congregation who have gone to the unseen world and whose places will know them no more! O solemn thought! I too must die! I feel in myself that I have a mortal body subject to disease, decay and death ... "

"Oct 30 Thanks be to God for the measure of health I now enjoy and the prospect of regaining my usual degree of strength ...

This morning the Rev. Mr. Fowler made us a call to bid us farewell, as he said he was then on the way to New Haven, expecting to go from thence to Charleston. He expressed much satisfaction on finding my health so far restored to me again; and when I told him that I hoped to be able to write soon, he said that he wished me to be very careful of my health and not to exert myself too much and go beyond my strength, for he observed that it appeared to be a reed shaken in the wind. Yet if I should be able, he would like to have me continue writing his Missionary Journals, etc., and accordingly spent some time arranging and correcting his manuscripts, in order to facilitate my labor in copying the same. When he had finished this employment and conversed a short time, as he was about to take his leave, I observed to him that perhaps this might be the last time we were to see each other and converse together in this vale of tears. He immediately replied, Let our last words be the words of Christ. And kneeling down we repeated the Lord's Prayer together. He then bade the family good morning and went on to N. Haven."

"Wednesday evening 31. Mr. Fowler called upon us again quite unexpected and tarried the night here, being disappointed in getting a passage to his mind at New Haven, he was returning to Guilford in order to go from thence, etc., He seemed quite fatigued and almost sick in the evening but was better in the morning and after writing several letters to absent friends, etc. went to Guilford, expecting to return the next day to take a parcel of books and other things which he had left in the care of brother Chauncey, at his house. Accordingly, he called again on Friday, Nov 2nd and bade us an affectionate good-bye. May the blessing of God attend him on his way. May he have a safe passage home, and enjoy the peculiar satisfaction of meeting his family and friends in health."

"Sunday evening Nov 4th Mr. John Butler died aged 84 years. "Dust to dust concludes the scene." Death is the end of mortal life .. . May the death of this aged person be suitably improved by his surviving relatives, connections. and acquaintances. "

"Thursday evening Nov 8th I received the present of a book entitled The Sunday Visitant from Mr. Fowler. It was brought to me by his nephew, Mr. Daniel Hubbard of Guilford. The Sunday Visitant is a folio work, containing two volumes in one book, of 208 pages each. This work was edited by the Rev. A Fowler, AM., and printed in Charleston. S.C. on separate sheets of paper, in form of a newspaper; and came from the press on Saturday each week for two years, viz. 1818 and 1819; which being bound, they make a very valuable book ... I feel highly gratified in having this excellent Miscellaneous Work added to my small library of books "

"Saturday Nov. 10 I concluded writing the sixth book of Mr. F Missionary Journal to Chatham, S.C., containing 168 pages; and began to write the seventh, which I hope to

be able to accomplish in a shorter time than I have been in copying the last number ... "

"When love divine my bosom warms
The world recedes with all its charms
This grace subdues each vain desire
And makes my hopes to heav'n aspire.

Where objects vain can never rise
To tempt my heart or pain my eyes
In that bright place, all trials cease
There all is purity and peace.

O love divine, celestial guest
Come, take possession of my breast
And let my spirit always know
The joy thy presence can bestow.

Alas! The flight of time! How soon
The rising moon gives way to noon
And noon retires as fast away While
evening closes up the day.

Polly"

"Wednesday evening Dec 19th Mr. Joel Barker departed this state of mortality, aged 64 years. Mr. B. has left a widow and six children to experience the bereavement, which his removal from them by death has occasioned."

"Christmas Day December 25, 1827"

"1. This precious day I celebrate
The precious Saviour's birth
And with a cheerful heart relate
My merry Christmas mirth.

2. Jesus the light of life divine
The Son of God is born
His brilliant rays of glory shine
To bless and cheer this morn.

8. And when these Christmas scenes should end
And I from here remove
A better Christmas let me spend
In thy eternal love.

Polly Linsley, Tuesday morning, North Branford"
(Last entry in last volume)

Discussion:

I feel obliged before concluding this work to describe my personal reaction to reading Polly Linsley's Journal.

Polly began to write her journal in 1809 when she was 24 years old. The last surviving journal was written in 1827 when she was 42. As you might expect the nature of the journals changed as she grew older. In the early volumes she mostly records just her church attendance for each Sabbath and the name of the preacher. Her personal comments are short and reserved. As time went on the journals grew more personal, recording her fears and hopes in a freer manner. This can be seen in the length of the extracts I have taken from each volume. The extract of Volume II, which consists almost entirely of repetitious recording of Sabbath fills little more than one page. The more personal Volume XXXIX merits an extract of six pages.

There are several recurrent themes which dominate the writing in the journals. The first and clearly the most dominant concerns the importance of religion in her life. Fully two-thirds of the Journal is given over to prayer, religious meditation, and to poetry of a religious nature. I trust that I have included enough of this material to make this clear to the reader. However, you can assume that the material not included in this transcription was almost entirely of a religious nature.

A major crisis in her religious life was her decision to leave the Congregational Church to become a member of the Episcopal Church. The first hint of this occurs in 1818 (Volume XI) when she records a trip to New Haven with her friend Eliza Wolcott to receive instruction of the Rev. Harry Croswell, Rector of Trinity Church. Before that date her journal entries would simply record her attendance at Sabbath services. Thereafter she begins to record her entries in terms of the Episcopal liturgical calendar, even though she continued to attend the Congregational church.. On Ash Wednesday of both 1824 and 1825 she praises the Episcopal observance of Lent. In October of 1825 she made the final break and formally left the Congregational Church to join the Zion Episcopal Church of North Branford. It should be mentioned that her brothers Chauncey and Jesse were founding members of this church in 1812 and this may have influenced her decision. However, her mother remained a member of the Congregational church until her death and was scandalized by Polly's desire to be re-baptized by an Episcopal clergyman.

While religion was very important to her, it did not seem to bring her either peace or joy. She desperately prayed for salvation but feared that she was too much a sinner to merit the joys of heaven. In one entry she describes herself as being "vile" and "polluted".

Another dominant theme in the journals is Polly's obsession with death, particularly her own, which she always felt to be near at hand. By her own account Polly was sickly all her life. Several times in the journals she describes herself as being near

death, unlikely to survive her current illness. She records her tooth aches, measles, fevers, colds and a persistent cough. She also mentions the return of a nervous complaint. In 1827 during a particularly severe illness one doctor said she suffered from a "hectic fever" while another told her it was best that she not know the nature of her disease. She did, in fact die young in April, 1830 at age 45, three years after the last surviving journal entry.

Her father's death in 1817 when he was 64 and Polly 32 years old was a major blow to her. She was confined to her bed for four months, unable to teach or to attend church services for seven months. This seems to be an excessive reaction to the death of a man who had reached a normal lifespan. We don't know her immediate reaction to his death as the journal for that period is missing. Each year, on October 24, she would remember him and comment on his death. After his death and the marriage of all her siblings Polly was left alone with her widowed mother in the family home. She clearly resented this fate and referred to her mother's house as a mournful, lonely place. About this time, Polly and her mother began to sit in separate pews at church.

There was one curious episode that indirectly shows Polly's aversion to living alone with her mother. In November 1820 Polly's mother, then aged 67 decide to visit her daughter Miriam in Massachusetts. She traveled alone and returned the following February. This was no easy journey for a woman of her age in the middle of winter. Polly by that time had gone to visit her sister Sarah in nearby North Guilford. On February 10 she learned that her mother had returned home but she waited another seventeen days before going to see her.

In volume XXXVI, when she was working at home transcribing the Rev. Fowler's Missionary Journal, she complained of "unreasonable interruptions" and "the hard speeches and severity which I receive from those whom I love and from whom I should expect to experience the most affectionate offices of friendship, and the most mild treatment". Since she was living alone with her mother at this time, the interruptions and hard speeches most likely came from her. Her mother may not have been sympathetic to the work Polly was doing for the Rev. Fowler.

Throughout the journal she records the deaths of 41 relatives and neighbors. There is no equivalent record of births or marriages. At first the deaths are briefly noted as signs of human mortality but after her father's death she begins to record more details such as the age of the decedent and the cause of death. These records show that death in the early 19th century was, in fact, always close at hand. They record, for example, that the Rev. Charles Atwater died in February 1825, aged 39, of a fever and that his 14 year old son also died of a fever two months earlier in December, 1824. Benjamin Baldwin, his daughter Louise, aged 20, and his son Benjamin, aged 22, all died within three months of each other of "fever". Nancy Rogers died two days after her husband Josiah in 1827. Olive Linsley, aged 56, died one day after her daughter Elmira, aged 22, both of consumption.

The third consistent theme in the journals is Polly's joy in teaching the local children. This theme is a ray of sunshine in an otherwise dark and unhappy life. According to the custom of the time Polly was able to teach only during the summer session. During the winter session she would be replaced by a male teacher who would have been engaged in other, more profitable work in the summer. This enforced idleness during the bleak winter months caused Polly to dread the approach of winter which she came to associate with death. Winter became for her a time of unhappiness to the point of despair. She welcomed the approach of spring with great joy. It meant the return of warmth and of flowers and the opportunity to return to her cherished work as a teacher.. It was not an easy job, teaching 40 children aged 4 to 14 in a one-room school but she clearly relished it. Perhaps the opportunity to surround herself with her small students minimized the pain at not having children herself. It is therefore doubly sad that this one joy was denied her during the winter session by the customs of the time.

There is no mention anywhere in the journals of a male suitor. Perhaps, because of her sickly constitution she had given up any hope of marriage and family. Throughout the journal she praises the joys of solitude and of reading alone in her room but she seems to be making a virtue of her unhappy fate. However, there was a male friend who brightens the final volumes of the journal. He was the Rev. Fowler, an Episcopal clergyman, originally from Guilford, who was a missionary based in Charlestown, South Carolina. He had engaged Polly to transcribe his journals, which described his travels in the hinterland of South Carolina and Florida. He visited Polly frequently during a prolonged stay in Guilford and they became friends. She expressed a tenderness for him which in other circumstances might have been considered romantic. It seems more likely that he served as a surrogate for her lamented father. While Polly describes him in one place as her "aged friend" she also mentions him receiving a letter from his wife telling of the death of their new-born son. His visits dominate the last few journals and were a source of pleasure to Polly during a period of sadness and ill health.

It is not possible to read Polly's journal without feeling sorry for her in her mostly unhappy life. As the sickly, unmarried daughter, she was left to care for her aged mother. How she must have envied her sisters who married, raised families and moved away from home.

Appendix

The Last Will and Testament of Reuben Linsley

In the Name of God, Amen

I, Reuben Linsley of Branford in the County of New Haven and State of Connecticut, being of sound and disposing mind and memory, do this 14th day of April, 1811 make and declare this my last will and testament in the manner and form following. First of all, my will is that my just debts and funeral expenses be paid by my Executor in a reasonable time after my decease out of my personal estate

Item. I give and bequeath unto my wife, Tryphena Linsley, one half of my dwelling house and one third of all my lands, for her use during her natural life, and also one third of all my personal estate after my debts and charges are paid, and excepting what I hereafter shall give to my three sons Chauncey, Jesse and Wyllys Linsley to be heirs forever.

Item. I give and bequeath to my three sons Chauncey, Jesse and Wyllys and to their heirs and assigns forever all my real estate including my wife's dowry after her decease, also my wearing apparel and all my Husbandry tools, carpenters and joiners tools of every kind whatsoever and to be equally divided between my said three sons.

Item. I give and bequeath to my second daughter Polly , she being of a feeble constitution, the sum of six hundred Dollars.

Item. I give and bequeath to my other two daughters Sarah and Miriam the sum of five hundred fifty dollars each, and the legacies herein given to my said three daughters shall be paid to them in a reasonable time after my death out of the two thirds of my personal Estate not before disposed of, and the advancements I may make to any or all of them in my lifetime as by my account kept and left for that purpose, and if any sum should be wanting to make up the full legacies to my said three daughters, then my three sons Chauncey, Jesse and Wyllys shall make up to my three said daughters the full of the legacies as given above out of my land or in money as they may choose, each one paying his equal proportion of what may be wanted as aforesaid.

Lastly, I do hereby appoint my eldest son Chauncey Linsley sole executor of this my Last Will and Testament, hereby revoking all former wills by me made, and confirming this only. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and date above.

Reuben Linsley

In presence of
John Russell
Sally Russell
Edward Russell

The Last Will and Testament of Polly Linsley

In the Name of God, Amen. I, Polly Linsley of Branford in the County of New Haven and State of Connecticut being in a weak and declining state of body but of a sound and disposing mind and memory do make and ordain this my last will and testament in form and manner following. After commending my soul to God and resigning my body to the grave, I will that one hundred dollars of my property be given to the Protestant Episcopal Parish of North Branford to remain as a fund, the avails of said fund to be applied for the support of the Gospel in said Parish, and the above donation to be under the superintendance of the church officers of the Parish.

Item. I give and bequeath to my brother Wyllys one certain piece of land containing two acres, situated in front of Samuel Foot's dwelling on condition that he pay, within the term of two years, forty dollars to each of my two sisters.

Item. I give and bequeath to my two brothers Chauncey and Jesse ten dollars each.

Item. I give and bequeath to my sister Sarah Page one half of the remaining part of my property, to be left in the care of my brother Jesse, and delivered to her and her heirs as he sees their needs and necessities require.

Item. I give and bequeath to my Sister Miriam Dudley the other half of my property.

I hereby constitute and appoint Jesse Linsley Administrator of this my last will and testament hereby revoking all other and former wills by me made, in witness thereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 2nd day of March AD 1830.

Polly Linsley

Alfred Rose
Clarissa Foot Witnesses
Richard Linsley

Who in her presence and in the presence of
Each other hereunto signed their names.

The Family of Dr. Reuben Linsley and Tryphena Baldwin Linsley

Reuben Linsley, b. Nov. 1, 1753, m. Feb.3, 1779, d. Oct.24, 1817, aged 64

Tryphena, widow of Josiah Harrison, b. June 25, 1752, d. Sept.3, 1842, aged 90

Daniel, b. April 6, 1780; d. April 14, 1780

Chauncey, b. Mar 27, 1781, m. Parnell Gorham

Sarah, b. Aug. 12, 1782, m. David Page

Polly, b. June 21, 1785, d. April 23, 1830

Jesse, b. Apr. 27, 1787, m. Abigail Baldwin

Miriam, b. May 19,1791, m. Augustus Bradley

Wyllis, b. May 19, 1791, m. Bertsey Hurd

Deaths Recorded in the Jourrials of Polly Linsley

No.	Name	Age	Date	Comments
1	Daniel Smith	?	Mar 23,1809	Body moved from York
2	Mary Monroe	?	Jan 25,1815	
3	Timothy Harrison	85	Feb 15,1815	
4	Abigail Palmer	?	Apr 25,1815	
5	Infant child	?	July 26, 1815	
6	Ruth Bradley	?	Sept 20, 1815	
7	Dr Reuben Linsley	64	Oct 24,1817	Journal missing
8	Young woman"	?	June 6,1818	
9	Sarah Baldwin	89	Sept 8, 1818	Polly's grandmother
10	Roger Harrison	4	Aug 19,1820	Son of Jarius Harrison
11	Lucretia Mowry & child	17	Feb 4,1823	Died in childbirth
12	Lydia Russell	88	Feb 4,1823	
13	Amy Brackett	46	Feb 11,1823	Consumption
14	Rogers child	4	Feb 11,1823	Bowel complaint
15	Lydia Bunnell	77	Feb11,1823	
16	Benjamin Baldwin	?	Apr 17, 1823	North Haven
17	Benjamin"	22	Apr 27, 1823	
18	Charles Foot	11 mos	Jan 29,1824	
19	Henry Bartholomew	10	Apr 25, 1824	
20	Mary Chidsey	92	May 13,1824	
21	Almira Linsley	22	Oct 1,1824	Consumption
22	William Whiting	18	Oct 11,1824	Fever
23	Jarius Harrison	?	Nov 10,1824	Drowned
24	Charles Atwater, Jr.	14	Dec 18,1824	Fever
25	Zenas richards	aged	Jan 24,1825	Black servant
26	Rev Charles Atwater	39	Feb 21,1825	Fever
27	Sally plant	?	Mar 9,1825	
28	Mrs Nabby Strong	?	mar 14,1825	Lung fever
29	Daniel Little	19 mos	Mar 21,1825	Throat infection
30	Russell Butler	4mos	Mar 27,1825	Cold
31	Timothy Harrison	73	Apr 4, 1825	Fit
32	Amelia, Black woman	39	Apr 4, 1825	Fever
33	James Baldwin	49	Apr 24, 1825	
34	Lydia foot	89	May 9, 1825	Old age
35	Ichabod page	66	May 25,1825	Epileptic fit
36	Charles Morton	11	Apr 5, 1826	Consumption
37	Justus Harrison	71	??, 1826	Consumption
38	Mr. Hand	28	Mar 28,1826	Tytphus fever
39	Joshua Linsley	27	St Stephen's day	Smallpox
40	David Baldwin	?	Mar 4, 1826	Consumption
41	Rufus Linsley	48	Mar 4, 1826	
42	Robert Rose	12	Apr 28, 1826	King's evil
43	Josiah Rogers	66	Sept 6, 1827	Husband of Nancy
44	Nancy Rogers	63	Sept 8, 1827	Consumption
45	Samuel Baldwin	88	Sept 10, 1827	Old age
46	Maria Linsley	22	Oct 11,1827	Consumption
47	Olive linsley	56	Oct 12,1827	Mother and daughter
48	John Butler	84	Nov 4,1827	
49	Joel Barker	64	Dec 19, 1827	

The Journals of Polly Linsley
1809-1827

<u>Volume</u>	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Period Covered</u>	<u>Comments</u>
I			Missing
II	25-48	Jun 1809-Apr 1810	
I"			Missing
IV			Missing
V			Missing
VI	121--144	Jun 1814--Apr 1815	
VII	145-168	May 1815--Oct 1815	
VIII	169--192	Oct 1815--Jun 1816	
IX			Missing
X	241-264	Nov 1817--Apr 1818	
XI	265--288	Apr 1818--Nov 1818	
X"			Missing
X"i	313-336	Jun 1818--Mar 1820	
XIV	337--360	Apr 1820--Jul 1820	
XV	361--384	Aug 1820--Mar 1821	
XVI			Missing
XV"			Missing
XVIII			Missing
XIX	457--480	Dec 1822--May 1823	
XX			Missing
XXI			Missing
XX"	525--548	Jan 1824--Jun 1824	
XXIII			Missing
XXIV	573--596	Oct 1824--Jan 1825	
XXV	597--620	Feb 1825--Apr 1825	
XXVI	621--644	Apr 1825--Aug 1825	
31 ??	669--692	Oct 1825-Nov 1825	
XXXI	741-764	Mar 1826--May 1826	
XXXIV	817--840	July 1826--Sept 1826	
XXV			Missing
XXVI	845-868	Dec 1826-Mar 1827	
XXVII	869-912	Apr 1827 --Jun 1827	See Note
XXVIII			Missing
XXXIX	937--960	Aug--Dec 25 1827	
None	25--32	Sept 1822--Aug 1824	Draft fragment

Note: Volume XXVII has pagination error of 21 ppges