

**Edmund Quincy Sewall Jr.
Journal No. 3, June 27-October 4, 1839
Sewall Family Papers, Thoreau Institute**

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Thursday June 27th 1839.¹ We had two fresh mackerel for breakfast & three for dinner which we caught ourselves as related in the preceding volume. They were very good though rather lean.

We had Mr & Mrs. May do.do. Bates do.do. Simmons to tea. In the afternoon I hoed potatoes. In the evening I went with Mr Morrison and Ellen to a lecture ^meeting^ on Normal Schools. We went in Mr May's carry-all with Mr & Mrs. May. Mr May was one of the speakers.

Friday 28th. It was a rainy day.

Saturday 29th. Mr Morrison went away. Mr Edmund Whitman came early in the afternoon and took dinner and tea with us. He brought a Mr Osgood with him. Ellen went away at 1 ½ o'clock in the afternoon with Mr H. Bowers & Miss M. Bowers to Hingham.

Sunday ~~29~~ 30th. Mr Farley preached in the morning from the 1st Epistle of John, 4th 7th. "Brethren let us love one another for love is of God." In the afternoon a child was christened. Father made some of the prayers and read some of the hymns and Mr F. performed the rest of the exercises. Mr George Leonard came over to preach for father in the afternoon ~~so he~~ but finding Mr F. he sat in the pew.

Monday July 1st. I began to keep an account book. I swallowed a ninepence in the afternoon without hurting myself. I never

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heard of it again.

Tuesday 2^d. In the morning Mr Davis Litchfield came and white washed the ceiling of our parlor twice. He gave us the white wash which remained. I received a letter from Aunt Prudence. I began to study "Smith's Geography" and got my first lesson in it.² I began with Europe.

Wednesday 3^d. Nothing special happened.

¹ This transcription follows the original in spelling (including misspellings) and punctuation. Editorial additions and explanations are given in brackets [as in this example]. Words crossed out by Edmund are written with strikethrough as in this example and later insertions by Edmund are set off by carets as in ^this^ example.

² Roswell C. Smith, *Geography on the Productive System: For Schools, Academies, and Families* (Philadelphia: W. Marshall, 1835).

Thursday 4th. was "Independent [sic] day." In the morning I went with George to the cliff to take a walk and got some flowers for mother. When we got to the bars to go home we missed the scissors which we had carried to cut off the flowers with. George said that he had put them into the basket on top of the flowers. They were not there then however so we went back to look for them supposing that they must have dropped out. We looked round but could not find them and supposed that they had fallen into the holes with which a part of the path abounds. These holes are bog holes and full of water. I then missed the basket. George said that I took it when we began to look for the scissors. So we looked round for that till I spied it by the bars where I had set it down. We then took up the basket and as I was carrying it home what should I see but the scissors poking their noses out of a hole in the bottom of the basket. In coming home we caught some "polywogles" alias tadpoles in a little pond and put them in a bog hole. When we had done looking at them we let them

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out again.

About 9 o'clock I went with Father to hear Mr Garrison deliver an Anti Slavery Address.³ The house⁴ was very full. There was a contribution taken after it. There were two hymns sung and a prayer made. There was a meeting in the afternoon also but we did not go to it. Those who staid to it patronised a baker who was there and who I saw selling gingerbread.

Friday 5th. I did nothing of importance.

Saturday 6th. George and I were roused at our own request at 4 o'clock as Ellen was to go away in the stage at 4 ½ to be gone a month. She went. She is to go to Brookline first to see her friend Louisa Goddard a fortnight and will spend the other fort night at Concord with Aunt P. and Grandmother.

Sunday 7th. In the morning Father preached from John 19th 2^d and 3^d verses. "Then the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head and they put on him a purple robe and said Hail King of the Jews."

In the ~~after-noon~~ ^afternoon^ he preached from Malachi 2^d. 2^d.

In the afternoon latter part of the afternoon service I felt a little sick at my stomach. I threw from my stomach after I got home and did not eat my supper. I took some warm water which I afterwards threw up but which had no effect on me. About 5 o'clock I laid down and did not get up till next morning when I was well.

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Monday 8th. See 3^d.

³ William Lloyd Garrison's address was delivered at the annual meeting of the Plymouth County Anti-Slavery Society. It was printed in the *Liberator* on July 19, 1839.

⁴ "Mr. May's meeting house" (EQS Jr. footnote).

Tuesday 9th. Mr Chandler began to mow Mr Vinal's field.

Wednesday 10th. Our part of the grass was cut. I undertook the management of it.

Thursday 11th. There were three thunder showers in the day and a very violent one in the night which wet our hay a good deal.

Friday 12th. was a beautiful *hay day*. In the afternoon George & I got in our hay. I turned it twice during the day.

Saturday 13th. Mr Vinal Charles & Lucius came in the morning to stack up the hay in his field. He set up the four great poles very near Mr W. Vinal's barn. We then made a kind of floor of rails to prevent the hay from lying on the ground. We then began to carry in the hay. I say we because I helped him all day. We got in a part of it I should think about half in the forenoon.⁵ We should have worked longer but a shower came up which Mr Vinal thought would be a very heavy one but which was only a gentle rain for a few minutes. In the afternoon we worked at it again and finished the job. The stack however is not near full as he intends to put in the hay of the orchard which is not yet cut and to finish with salt hay.

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Sunday 14th. In the morning I went to meeting when the text was from John 2^d. 3^d. In the afternoon I staid at home.

Monday or Tuesday I don't know which Mr Vinal tore down his stack and got the hay into Mr W. Vinal's barn or rather got in the hay and tore down the stack. I stowed it away. On Tuesday night and Wednesday the orchard was mowed.

Thursday 18th. I helped pole the hay in the orchard and get in that part of it which was dry enough.

Friday 19th. Father went away at 4 ½ o'clock in the morning for Cambridge with Mr Leonard in the carryall of the latter.

He came to our house with his horse and carriage left his horse here and put in our horse. ~~I finished~~ Mr V. and I finished getting in the rest of the hay.

19th to 23^d nothing of importance happened.

Tuesday 23^d. In the afternoon we set out to Mr May's hoping to get there before a shower should come on but before we had got a great way it began to rain and we turned back. When the shower was over we started again. I had a very pleasant time.

23^d to 28th. See 8th.

⁵ "There were as I afterwards found 42 racks 27 were carried in the forenoon" (EQS Jr. note).

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Sunday 28th. Mr May preached in the morning from Job 27th. 6th. "My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live" and Mr Phipps in the afternoon from 1st Galatians 4th. 18th. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing."

Monday to Saturday as usual.

Saturday August 3^d. Sister came home in ~~the morning stage from~~ from Concord. She came in the evening stage. We had expected her in the stage from the second boat and little George waited for her at the gate an hour. The reason she did not come in the afternoon stage was that she did not know there was any stage from the second boat. She was well but rather hoarse from riding in the wind. She brought me a present from Louisa Goddard a little book called "Nina."⁶

Mrs. Goddard had also given to her "Tales of a Grandfather."⁷

Sunday 4th. Poor father had one of his spasms. He was taken in the very beginning of the sermon. It was not a very bad attack.

(Mem. I began to go to school last Monday. We have Wednesday and Saturday afternoons to play in. We begin at 8 ½ and 2 and leave off at 11 ½ and 5. Mr John Beal is teacher.)

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Sunday 18th. Mr Bulfinch from Washington (D.C.) preached.⁸ He had with him his mother in law and his little daughter. They staid at the tavern.

We have now a fine brood of six chickens.

Sunday 18th Mr Briggs of Plymouth preached.⁹ He had his wife with him. In the morning I had a chase after our horse. He had run away when let out of the pasture in the morning and after breakfast I went for him. I made two inquiries both had seen the horse in the road to the beach. I proceeded up the road and found her in a pasture at least a mile and a half from home. Mr Welch was in the field and helped me catch him. The pasture was very large so that he had a great deal of room to run about. There was a ^thick^ seafog and the grass was so wet that before I had run half a dozen rods in it my feet were perfectly soaked in which ^state^ they continued till I got home. After a vast deal of scampering we made him jump over the fence into the road when I supposed he would go

⁶ Maria Elizabeth Budden, *Nina, an Icelandic Tale* (Boston: Munroe and Francis; New York: Charles S. Francis, [1826 or 1827?]).

⁷ Sir Walter Scott, *Tales of a Grandfather: Being Tales Taken from Scottish History*, multiple American editions beginning in 1828.

⁸ Rev. Stephen G. Bulfinch was minister of the Unitarian Church of Washington, D.C., from 1838 to 1844.

⁹ Rev. George W. Briggs (1810-95) was minister of the First Church in Plymouth from 1838 to 1853.

straight home but the very first corner we came to he “set out” to run up the wrong road but a man came along on horse back and helped me get him into the right road again. The man inquired “if my folks warn’t [illegible word blotted out] fools to send me after such a wild critter as that.” The next division of the road we came to Kate of course went up the wrong road and I submitted hoping to bring her to the right road by a lane, but she would by no means go down the lane but kept on. A boy coming alone helped me stop

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her but instead of going right she ran down a lane having bars at the end of it which stopped her. When I drove her out again she went down the road by which she had come up from the main road and to crown all when she got to the main road instead of going towards home she went the other way. Mr Spalding was coming along and helped me and we had much ado to keep her out of the lanes the rest of the way. We got her safe home at last and I was so tired that I could not go to meeting in the forenoon.

Tuesday September 3^d. I have shamefully neglected my Journal lately, and have let several weeks pass unnoticed. Uncle Henry came with his son John who was about to enter college. He went to meeting in the forenoon and went off to Cohasset in a hired chaise in the afternoon. I staid at home to see them off.

Last Sunday Mr Dwight preached all day from Philippians 3^d 20th. “Our conversation is in heaven.” The sermons were very long all days.

In the afternoon father gave notice that there would be no more meetings till the house was repaired. They were to have taken out the pews today.¹⁰

Thursday 5th. In the evening sister and I went to Capt. Bowers’. We heard several tunes played (on the harpsichord) and sung among which were “Three blind Mice” and “The Pilot on the deep.”¹¹ The words

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of the latter I think are very fine. I learned them by heart. They are as follows—

“O Pilot ‘tis a fearful night
There’s danger on the deep
I[‘]ll come and pace the deck with thee

¹⁰ On the repairs see *Old Scituate* (Scituate: Chief Justice Cushing Chapter, D.A.R., 1921), 167. In a letter dated September 10, 1839, EQS Sr. wrote to Dennis Ward that he was suffering from “my annual catarrh & cough” and having one of his old attacks. He tells Ward he was planning to resign, but the parish didn’t want him to. “I have not preached at all since my illness, but have hired a substitute. Last spring the Parish voted that when the Meeting House was [being] repaired I should have leave of absence. The House is now in the hands of the Carpenters. And I should immediately set out on a journey had I any means. But I have spent my last dollar in supplying my pulpit. Thirty dollars since my attack in August. My situation has never been so dark and discouraging.” Sewall Family Papers, AAS.

¹¹ Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797-1839), “The Pilot.” Music by Sidney Nelson (1800-62).

I do not dare to sleep.’

‘Go down’ the sailor cried, ‘go down
This is no place for thee
Fear not but trust in Providence
Wherever thou may’st be.’

‘O Pilot dangers often met
We all are apt to slight,
And though hast known these raging waves
But to subdue their might.’

‘It is not apathy’ he cried
‘That gives this strength to me.
Fear not but trust in Providence
Wherever thou may’st be,

On such a night the sea engulfed
My father’s lifeless form
My only brother’s boat went down
In just so wild a storm,

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And such perhaps may be my fate,
But still I say to thee,
Fear not but trust in Providence
Wherever thou may’st be.’”

The lightning appeared differently from what I ever saw it before. It looked like a ball of fire running along under the horizon and occasionally rising partially above it. We had a very pleasant time and got safe home a little after 9 o’clock.

Friday 6th. In the afternoon my school did not keep because the master was headachy, so I set to pulling up weeds in the garden. We had our first melon in the evening but it was a bad 1.

Saturday 7th We began to cut our stalks.

Sunday 8th. Ellen and I went to the Methodist meeting in the forenoon and staid at home in the afternoon. Father’s cold was too bad to admit of his going out.

Nearly all Father’s nights this week were very bad indeed.¹²

¹² The thickness and color of the ink in this line suggest that it was written at the same time as the entry for the 15th rather than that of the 8th.

Sunday 15th. Ellen and I went to the Calvinist meeting. Mr Simmons preached from Romans 12th 20th and 21st. all day I sat 'up gallery.'

Monday 16th Father and mother went away early in the morning in the stage between 5 and 6 o'clock. They intended to go to Niagara Falls if fathers cough

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is better for going into the country. They will probably be gone for 3 or 4 weeks. Miss Sarah Otis is to spend the nights and indeed the larger part of her time with us "to make it her home here" as father expressed it.

Tuesday 17th. Mr Hawthorn came at noon to split some wood for us and brought us two mackerel.

Sunday 22^d. Miss O. George and I went to the methodist meeting. G. sat with Miss O. I sat up gallery.

Ellen went to the Calvinist meeting in the morning rode home with Miss Mary Bowers took dinner there and rode to Marshfield with them to the Episcopal meeting. The Bishop was to preach. She had not intended to stay to tea but Bishop Griswold¹³ and the minister were invited to take tea at Mrs. Bowers' and she wished to see them very much so she staid too. George and I began to be frightened about her (Miss O had gone to spend the afternoon at her brothers) and we were sating our hunger with every thing we could find and we were attacking some brown bread crusts when Ellen came home. George and I thought we should be starved to death for Ellen and tother went leaving us

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a supper but without telling us that they did so. We did not find it out till they came home.

~~Sunday 29th~~ Wednesday 25th. We received a letter from dear Father and Mother. They were then (the Friday before) at Albany and were to go to Syracuse per rail road cars the next morning where they probably spent Sunday. Father had got much better of his cold and had less asthma.

Friday October 4th. We had another letter from Father written at Niagara Falls. With the falls he is not at all disappointed but rather they exceeded his expectations. They had been also to Trenton Falls. He was entirely rid of his cold and getting better every day. Mother was well.

[end of journal no. 3]

¹³ Alexander Viets Griswold (1766-1843).