

"My Only Confidant"—The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

Judy Nolte Lensink

Christine M. Kirkham

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“My Only Confidant”— The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

JUDY NOLTE LENSINK
CHRISTINE M. KIRKHAM
KAREN PAUBA WITZKE

American settlers' diaries are valuable historical resources. Their detailed descriptions of daily life and activities furnish the historian with priceless data about the life of average people. One such diary, kept by Iowa pioneer Emily Hawley Gillespie, serves as an historical document which reveals a great deal about life in early Iowa.

In the fall of 1978, Judy Lensink's American Studies class at The University of Iowa focused on pioneer women. Until recently, histories have usually overlooked women's contributions to settlement. Luckily some women settlers kept their own record of these contributions, in their diaries. Emily Gillespie's diary offered students in Lensink's class immediate and unmodified contact with the lives of settlers one hundred years ago. Each student in the class read an eighteen-month segment of the Gillespie diary, plotted events, determined the tenor of family relations, and noted information concerning material culture.¹

¹Emily Gillespie's diary was donated to the Iowa State Historical Depart-

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

Emily Hawley Gillespie's diary, faithfully kept from 1858 to 1888, is a detailed thirty-year account of rural Iowa life. Mrs. Gillespie recorded many facts: what produce she harvested and preserved from her garden, how her husband tended his fields, and what he raised. She kept meticulous financial records, so that historians today can learn how much a yard of silk or a pound of butter cost and how many days it took to prepare for a barn-raising. The diary, however, tells us much more than agricultural and environmental conditions. While Emily Gillespie lived a fairly typical existence, she possessed exceptional insight and a sharp wit. Her diary not only describes what an Iowa farm woman did and the circumstances of her life, it tells how she felt about her lot. Emily Gillespie's life is revealed as a youth full of promise and hope fading into middle and declining years of lost dreams and eventual tragedy. The students who studied the diary partook of the drama and came to understand why her daughter wrote, "I am reading Ma's diaries preparatory for preservation. It grieves my heart to review my dear mother's sorrows. . . ." The class learned most, perhaps, from the record of endless drudgery and tedium which engulfed most events in Emily Gillespie's life.

If Gillespie's story were reconstructed as a biography, it would have the benefit of retrospect and hindsight. Logical motives would be seen to infuse her actions; her suffering would have meaning. But diaries do not offer such perspective and pattern. Though continuous, they often seem unstructured; they show life as a process, with all its unsettling, unanswered questions. Some entries are colored by sentimentality, some by

ment, Division of the State Historical Society in 1951 by her daughter, Sarah Gillespie Huftalen. The earliest entries were originally written on loose foolscap, so Huftalen recopied them into bound books. Emily Gillespie herself copied over some of her diaries in late life. The candidness of the entries suggests the diary was not censored when copied, but the Historical Society is attempting to recover the original diary papers. This would enable researchers to check the accuracy of Huftalen's and Gillespie's transcriptions. The students in Lensink's 1978 American Studies class were Lori Arduser, Deborah Dargitz, Michael Higgins, Thomas Hopper, Cathy Houlihan, Christine Kirkham, Darcy Lipsius, Lise Ludwig, Cindy McManis, Becky Mitchell, Jeanette O'Brien, Cassie Savage, Debra Schnoor, Kristin Shales and Karen Witzke.

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

anger—but Gillespie's account has the honest air of immediate response.

The excerpts from Gillespie's diary that follow, along with a narrative summary of her life, provide an outline sketch. The complete story of thirty years in Gillespie's life is told in the diary's ten long volumes.

—Judy Nolte Lensink

EMILY GILLESPIE was almost twenty when she began keeping a diary in 1858. The first page contained this preface:

Diary—which may compose reminiscences of the life, from day to day, of

Miss Emmie E. Hawley
A.D. 1858

One of the first events she recorded was her election as "editress" of the local literary society in her hometown of Morenci, Michigan. She had already taught school for three terms, and had then returned to school herself to take singing, dancing, geography, and writing classes, which delighted her. She wrote, ". . . Am sorry school is out, would like to go to school until I could be master of a good education—Graduate—vain hope. . . ." She was offered a chance to attend art school in New York, but declined the opportunity because her mother was opposed to her going.

. . . Mr. Armstrong called to see my flowers and to see if I could go to New York with them to learn to be an artist; he will pay my expenses there and hire me to paint for him enough to pay him when we get there. O, I would like so much to go but Mother says so much against it I will stay at home yet awhile.
—though sure I will regret. Oct. 10, 1858

Guests in the Hawley home were frequent and Emily's social life was a continual round of parties, dances, and courting. The swarm of gentlemen wooing Emily apparently pleased her. But she found talk of marriage annoying:

. . . why is it? I ask myself that every young man one meets with must begin to talk of love and marriage the first thing . . .

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie



Emily Hawley at age twenty before her marriage to James Gillespie.

surely I am not a beauty nor an heiress and what is more do not desire to have anything to do with matrimony . . .

Oct. 3, 1858

Her mother, on the other hand, confronted Emily on the idea of marriage:

This I find to be my birthday . . . Mother says, 'Here you are twenty years old and not married yet.' I think I feel as happy today as I should with a man and half a dozen children to bother

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

me,' I replied. Thus passes the first day of my twentieth year.

Apr. 11, 1858

Emily discarded beau after beau, and noted the downfall of each unsuccessful fellow. Dr. Chappell was eighteen years older than Emily and she felt he might "die anytime from the effects of cutting his hand with a lance." She wrote this account of Dr. Chappell's proposal:

My dear, dear girl . . . I do love you . . . I have watched you when you have been sick and have waited until you are old enough to answer for yourself to ask you to be my wife. [And when she refused:] O it is too bad, Emmie after I have waited so long for you, ever since you were but a little girl' . . . was sorry to see Doc shed tears . . .

Feb. 13, 1860

Of George Kellog, Emily wrote:

. . . he has an impediment in his speech, tis his only fault. were I his wife I could but pity him all my life . . . I believe I am incapable of loving anyone, at least until the *right one* . . .

Jan. 20, 1860

Separson Lewis escorted Emily to a party and proposed. ". . . Father and Mother think he is just *the one*. Mother says he is rich. suppose he is worth ten or fifteen thousand . . ." Mr. Quenlisque was a traveling salesman staying at the Hawley home, who cornered Emily alone in the parlor one afternoon and proposed. Emily declined politely but allowed him to kiss her goodbye: ". . . though he was a stranger those tears plainly told he was in earnest."

Emily was concerned with more than the proposals of distinguished gentlemen. The first mention of national events in her diary is this brief comment on abolitionist John Brown: "Today Brown is to be hung in Virginia for meddling with that which is none of his business about Kansas matters."

The tone of the diary varies from day to day according to Emily's many moods. She sometimes lamented that it was hard to be poor, and at twenty wrote, "most of life is sorrow and strife." Since at least age sixteen, Emily had been keeping account of money she earned by sewing for hire. (She charged eighteen cents for sewing a pair of overalls.)

The Hawleys apparently were a close family. Fights were rarely recorded; when they did occur, Emily was saddened. "Pa

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

scolded—what a foolish girl . . . cried three times before I went to sleep." In sentimental moments (and there were many), the thought of ever leaving home depressed her: ". . . Ah, that I can not always have a home at Fathers, why, because my father will not live always."

In the spring of 1861, Emily's Uncle Henry Baker arrived from Iowa to visit her Michigan home. (According to family records, Uncle Henry had been recently widowed when he invited Emily to be his housekeeper and guardian for his twelve-year-old daughter, Susan. After weeks of consideration, Emily finally agreed.) "Today and tonight am at home perhaps for the last time for I am (if no preventing providence) going to start for Iowa." The next day, June 27, 1861, she began her journey to her uncle's home in Coffin's Grove Township, near Manchester, Iowa.

In addition to being a justice of the peace, Uncle Henry was the proprietor of an inn on the stage line, widely known as a comfortable stop for overnight travelers. Upon her arrival, Emily took on the bulk of household chores. Her time was filled with cooking, cleaning, and sewing, and fourteen-hour days often left her exhausted.

Emily had a loving relationship with her uncle. His daughter, young cousin Susan, however, resented Emily's presence at her home:

. . . I cried today for the first time since being at Uncles, what for? because S_____ was saucy, however she is a good girl, yet it seems a task to have the care of one old enough to use reason and will not; may I hope that in time Susan may govern her disposition and be an amiable young lady! . . . July 13, 1861

Despite these additional responsibilities, Emily was again socially active by her third month in Iowa. She attended frequent parties, went shopping in town, and visited. Men called fairly often, but Iowa men, it seems, were no more able to impress Emily than Michigan men had been.

. . . do not believe there is any *very great gentlemen* for beaux if Parker is called one, but it is of little consequence to me for I would choose for my associates those who are more refined in their manners. July 11, 1861

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

In October, James Gillespie, the son of an area farmer, stopped at the inn. Emily was interested enough to note briefly that a "Mr. Galispy" had been visiting. She didn't mention James again, however, until December, when she wrote, ". . . may we never forget the conversation that passed between us, how much would I give to know if he really means all he said."

Although Emily recorded what she disliked about the men she rejected, strangely, she didn't write what attracted her to the man she chose. She never included in her journal any mention of James's background or ambitions. But on February 19, 1862, Emily accepted his proposal.

Emily apparently wanted to earn some money before her marriage, for in spring she agreed to be the first teacher in a near by village.

I commence school in Masonville this morning. had twenty scholars . . . my school house a new one situated on a large (high) prairie where we can see the [railroad] cars everyday. not a tree to be seen only in the northeast . . .
June 16, 1862

She sometimes found teaching frustrating. "How many times does a teacher have to weep for the misconduct of some pupil, Yes I cried to think that some larger scholars were saucy."

During the school week, Emily boarded with the families of her students, returning to Uncle Henry's on weekends. This "boarding out" also displeased her: ". . . am at Mrs. Hilton's. had for breakfast: chicken half-done, potatoes, bread & butter & coffee. well, I guess I can stand it a week." Emily taught school through the long summer of 1862. During these months she saw James infrequently, and missed him.

Two national political issues interested Emily. One was the temperance movement.

. . . two men were buried today in sight of Uncles'. they drowned yesterday. they had started to go home & crossing the creek they fell in, and, being under the influence of liquor, died. thus ends the lives of two more victims of intemperance.

Mar. 30, 1862

She was concerned with the problems of the Civil War. She joined the Soldiers' Relief Society, a group of area volunteers who raised money and sewed clothing for the men in battle.

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

(Although she mentioned the Society only twice in her diary, Emily played a prominent role in this organization. She was elected secretary and the attendance lists she kept faithfully for two years are still preserved.) Emily constantly feared the possibility that James would be drafted: ". . . how sad and lonely would be my lot were he to be gone to this awful war." She need not have worried, however, for it seems James had no intention of donning the Union blue.

. . . [the men] organized a club to raise money to hire substitutes. they raised \$850 James paid \$25 it is to be divided equally among those drafted in the club. Sept. 26, 1864

James and Emily were married by Uncle Henry in the ball-room of his inn on September 18, 1862. The couple moved in with James's parents (whom Emily thereafter called "Ma" and "Pa"). Two ground-floor rooms of their rural Manchester home were converted into a bedroom and kitchen. In December, his mother gave James the deed for 200 acres of land she held by "right of dower" in payment of his wages since he was of age. Emily must have considered this a monumental event, because she starred and underlined the entry.

Those first months of married life were an adjustment for Emily. She spent most of her days at home alone and visitors were infrequent. When James returned exhausted from the fields each evening, he would often go immediately to bed.

Three emotional themes occur in her entries from this period. First, she appears to be deeply in love with her young husband:

. . . this afternoon James and me went to visit our farm and see where we intend to build. ah, we are happy now and may it be the will of God that we may never cause each other pain.

Nov. 9, 1862

Yet she was sometimes plagued by inexplicable depression:

done my washing and cleaning. Knit some on James mitten. he has been husking corn all day . . . why am I sad.

Nov. 3, 1862

And in her recollections of quarrels with James she was often self-castigating:

[James] cut his ankle quite bad this evening we went to Mrs. Nelson's to a party . . . I cried because James did not want to go

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

. . . how foolish to cry for James is too kind to have his feelings hurt by my silliness of crying. Dec. 31, 1862

During her twenty-fifth year, Emily wavered between hope and disillusionment. That year she and James were to make the first purchase of lumber for their new house and witness the birth of their first child. Yet, living in their partitioned-off corner of the older Gillespies' home proved difficult. James and his parents disputed over a matter Emily never made clear except to indicate that it involved money. . . . James and me . . . went to take a walk on the railroad . . . Pa tried to make James settle with him again. ah, me it makes James nearly sick."

By springtime, 1863, James's health had established a pattern of periodic failure. He complained of weakness and heat rash. During one bad spell, he talked about dying.

. . . I rub his stomach with liniment . . . he said he did not know but he was as ready to go now, as ever, if his time had come. and if he found out he must die, he would settle up his business and die in peace. Aug. 20, 1863

Emily was worried and sympathetic during James's illnesses, and recorded her own theory about their cause.

. . . I have made up my mind tis a nervous fever . . . there has not been the time since last winter but that his mind had been completely harrassed from him . . . by his folks, they have harped and bothered him ever since they gave him the Deed for his farm . . . Aug. 18, 1863

James owed labor to his neighbors and the couple drifted slowly into debt because he remained unable to work. Emily, now several months pregnant and sickly herself, managed things as best she could. But as long as James was ill the debts would have to wait.

Meanwhile, she recorded the deaths of neighboring children with an air of doom.

do my usual work . . . James went this morning after a coffin for Mr. Jones' little girl. it is the third one that died within two weeks . . . James has gone to the funeral. I am sad . . .

Aug. 6, 1863

With a reserve typical of her era, Emily recorded the birth of her first baby:

ah me, what have I to write for this day; was real sick all night

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

(last night). did not sleep a minute, nor neither did James sleep but little, about daylight James sent for some help to take care of me . . . Mrs. Lewis was the Dr. (paid her \$2.00) she is a real good woman. Baby was born about half past ten AM then could we thank God for our boy . . . M. Lewis kissed me, O she seemed like one kind deliverer, and they were all kind. James felt real bad to see me sick. but he need not, it seems there can be none more kind and true than he. Sept. 4, 1863

Emily now sometimes recorded her daily entry while holding baby Henry on her knee. Her social life slowly began to revive after Henry's birth. Neighbors visited daily to chat and she occasionally accompanied James into town. Relations with her in-laws remained poor. In October, she wrote:

. . . Ma came in and got Baby and carried him in the other room. I guess to let James' father see him, would I live in a house with a grandchild for eight weeks and not go in to see him? no, I think not! Oct. 25, 1863

Living in the same house with her in-laws proved unpleasant and it was a great relief to Emily the following month to move into a rented house.

Emily's use of her diary as an accounts journal increased. She kept track of who owed James work or money and what he owed others. She was meticulous in her record-keeping, noting every yard of lumber they purchased and every cent due them. Emily was no romantic and did not hesitate to charge for any service rendered; she sold a cup of coffee to a traveling stranger for fifteen cents and duly recorded her profit. She also had little patience with those less efficient or prosperous than herself: ". . . Mrs. Stephens borrow 8 lbs. 10 oz. flour, tis *borrow, borrow, borrow* all the time."

Emily was apparently too busy in her new role to concern herself with events outside of her immediate realm. She merely listed community events and noted the weather daily. She still mentioned the war occasionally and her anti-war sentiments often coincided with the publication of Federal draft lists.

in the afternoon [James and Dennis] went to the grove to drill or elect officers for a company—to practice so as to be ready when called on to kill their fellow men to the best advantage . . .

Sept. 17, 1864

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

Soon after, Emily noted that Richmond had been taken and that Grant was in pursuit of Lee.

If her entries for those first two years are fair evidence, Emily was more deeply in love with James than ever. Again, however, appears the pattern of contentment mingled with self-doubts. ". . . I cried. I was sorry but was tired and almost discouraged to think James wanted to put on his flannel shirt and I had not mended it for him." Yet Emily was sometimes lighthearted:

. . . guess James and me will never forget when we went to bed.
how I chased him in the Hall and he fastened me out of the
room. O, how pleasant. seems like spring. Jan. 3, 1863

Little Henry's progress was also noted: ". . . Henry commence to sit on the floor today, he dumps over most anyway."

Thus the days passed until November, 1864, when Emily, James, and one-year-old Henry moved from the rented house into the longed-for home they had built. Emily wrote, ". . . seems good to know we live at *home*."

By her twenty-seventh birthday the following April, Emily must have known she was pregnant with her second child. But the pregnancy passed without any special note in her journal until one morning in July, when she gave birth to her daughter, Sarah, and a still-born son.

. . . her twin brother didn't live even to breathe. I do not know but it was right—however we would have done the best we could had he have lived, may our little girl be in the world as virtuous and pure as has been our prayer for little Henry.
July 7, 1865

In a month, Emily was doing all of her own work and her diary again records a continuum of domesticity. She found most of her pleasures in her husband and children. "We are at home and may we not safely say all is well? Yes, we are a happy family circle . . ."

Emily's domestic routine was soon enlivened by a family scandal, which she delicately recorded. "Oh, dear, what will Uncle say or do when he knows the sad news which Susan told me—bad indeed." Two months later, Cousin Susan (whom Emily had once complained was "saucy") was secretly married in the Gillespies' home. Only three months after the wedding, Emily reported the birth of Susan's baby girl.

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

In February, 1866, Emily bundled up Sarah and with two-year-old Henry in tow, boarded a train for Michigan. The trip was Emily's first visit with her parents in nearly five years. She enjoyed her six-month stay in Michigan; however, the trip was not without its flaws. She missed James and wrote of him every day, and once she wept because she was unable to attend a party. While in Michigan, Emily had another encounter with her former suitor, Dr. Chappell, although the circumstances of the meeting were not as romantic as before. He treated young Henry for mumps and worms.

In 1868 Emily turned thirty, but no mention of this milestone was made in her record of an uneventful day.

Saturday. Bake, sew & knit. Help James set trees. He plow $\frac{1}{2}$ day. James go to town in evening to get the mail received a letter from Mother, she said she started a box of dried apples to me. (shower of rain.)
Apr. 11, 1868

Emily's life had settled into a domestic pattern and she gave most days short, factual treatment in her diary. James's activities often received more attention than her own, especially if his errands required him to be away from the farm. Emily recorded the farm's life as well as her own.

Friday. Finish my apron. Mrs. Smith call. James do chores and saw wood. Old Spot Cow has *twin calves*, both steers. an omen of our having better luck. . . .
Mar. 13, 1868

She took more and more pleasure in her growing children. She read to them and saved time for fun such as winter sledding: "It pleased them very much to see ma dump off in the snow." Emily recorded some irritations at her husband: "James spent \$.10 uselessly on ale." In addition, bad feelings still continued with the in-laws. James had paid his mother \$40 to settle his father's estate and this final money issue left Emily feeling wronged. This may explain why Emily wasted little sentiment on her mother-in-law's death in the fall of 1869. (In contrast, she wrote several poems eulogizing James's father, who had died a few years before.)

In September, 1869, Emily's younger sister Harriet arrived from Michigan. Emily welcomed the companionship and called Harriet "my favorite person this side of the Mississippi River." Harriet remained in the area, was courted and later was married

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

in the Gillespie home. Emily made the bride's cake and refreshments for the wedding guests. She also attended her sister during the birth of Harriet's first child.

"Do my usual work" is written hundreds of times in Emily Gillespie's diary during these middle years. Sometimes she would finish her tasks after James and the children were asleep; then she had time to confide in her diary.

Bake 4 loaves of bread, 2 pies, a cake besides get dinner for threshers. Yes they were here to breakfast too. Three of them and 4 to dinner and 6 to tea. I'll set it down after supper. 'Tis now three o'clock and here I am writing once more in my journal. the only confidant I ever had, and *thou* dear journal, dost not know *every* secret. Nay! Nay!! Now I will write to Mother and Father.

Aug. 20, 1874

Emily's work included Monday washing, a task that took from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. In winter, the laundry could only be done if Emily could melt snow for water fast enough. Mopping and dusting were weekly chores. Baking was done several times a week, and rarely a day passed without some needlework. Emily even admitted that she "violated the Sabbath" several times to mend or patch. All of the sewing was done by hand until 1870 when the Gillespies bought a sewing machine.

Each season determined additional tasks beyond Emily's core of "usual work." In spring she gardened, helped set out plants and nested her poultry. Early summer provided fresh berries to be gathered and preserved. Emily also made several kinds of cheese. In the fall she canned. On one occasion she spent three days putting up 100 pounds of grapes. Although by her calculations it was cheaper to buy commercial canned goods—thirty cents per store-bought can versus the fifty cents it cost to can the same amount at home—Emily continued this time-consuming chore. She helped husk corn, and cooked for the harvesters. In the winter she knitted and did more sewing. She took pride in the 96,000 stitches she put into a sofa cover and often reported a "lame neck" from hours of quilting. She kept careful track of the materials she used and sometimes calculated how much she saved the family by sewing their clothes. "Finish James' coat. Took me *forty-eight* hours. used 9 spools silk and 2 spools black and one basting thread."

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

Emily earned money by selling butter for about twenty cents a pound. She skimmed and washed twenty-four milk pans every day and churned several times a week. At age thirty-three she began raising turkeys as another source of income. At first she sold only about two dozen birds, for seventy-five cents each, but eventually she was raising over 100 turkeys a year. Their antics kept her busy; they laid their eggs in obscure spots and often wandered onto the railroad tracks. Every spring she worried about losing her flock to cholera and recorded the recipe for a curative cake: milk, meal, ashes, sulfur, alum, pepper and salt.

Emily's neighbors and family often required nursing as well. One winter she reported, "Henry sick all day. Sarah take lozenges too. They both are troubled with worms." During one of James's long illnesses, she woke hourly to give him patent medicine and her own mixture of teas, onion syrup and valerian (a sedative made from this medicinal herb). With ironic wit she recorded the daily flow of visitors to the sickroom. "Oh dear. Every neighbor seems to come in now that we are sick. When we are well they hardly know we live here. Passing strange."

Political issues continued to take Emily's attention beyond the family circle. She and James read the Sunday paper and she commented on the news in her diary. She still supported the temperance movement and recorded that forty-three Manchester women visited local saloons to read hymns. She blamed drink for the shortcomings of Harriet's husband, John. She also supported women's suffrage and followed the suffragists' campaigns through the newspapers. "May right prevail, may women vote and help to make the laws which govern them," she wrote in 1872.

Sometimes in the fall the entire family would attend religious camp meetings for several days. The Universalist church to which the Gillespies belonged was by no means conservative; still, Emily was critical of some revival enthusiasts. "One man had *the Power* and several women acted rather powerful. I can not see where there is any religion in such actions."

In spite of these activities, Emily did not get out as often as she wished. In frustration she noted, ". . . get real mad at James because he never seems to want to go anywhere." When she missed

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

a masquerade party, she declared her days of pleasure were over. She complained during fair week, 1872, "Tis the first day of the fair. I would like to go very much indeed. But when a man *won't* a woman can not."

The annual fairs were important events for Emily and the children. They all regularly entered crafts, handwriting samples, and food exhibits. In 1878 Emily entered thirty items and won twenty-five cash premiums. She also used her handiwork talents as another source of income. People hired her to make hair flowers and she occasionally decorated ladies' hats for a Manchester store. She also recorded her pleasure at returning to her abandoned hobby, painting. She sometimes devoted an entire morning to it and she recorded visitors' compliments on her work.

Emily began her 1874 diary with a poem of hope:

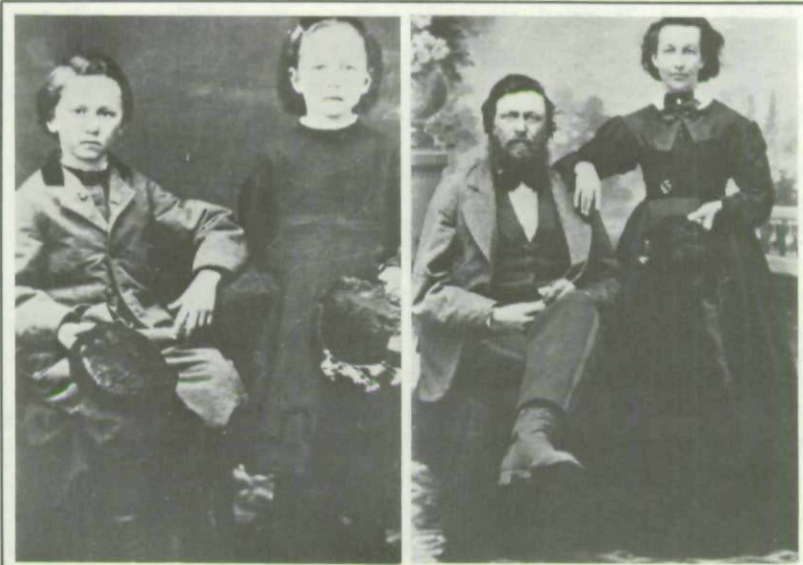
Another book is added to my Journal of life
May it not be filled with sorrow and strife,
But pure and undefiled its pages unfold.
May our lives be pure and bright as fine gold.

She had reason to be optimistic. The Gillespies were planning a new house and had put up a new barn the fall before. (In fact, the men at the barn-raising were so enthusiastic that they pulled one wall up—and completely over!) Emily seemed to feel that she and James were true partners on the farm. On New Year's Day, James presented her with the deed for the land. She wrote:

. . . yes James gave me a Deed of his farm. indeed I can hardly express my feelings of gratitude for his placing so very much confidence in me as to entrust to my honor the keeping of his hard earned property . . .
Jan. 4, 1874

The children, now nine and eleven, were a growing source of joy and inspiration to Emily. They had begun helping with chores, which she recorded daily in her journal. Whenever Emily scolded them, she sought their forgiveness and vowed in her diary to be more patient. She was constantly concerned about their teachers at school and wrote critiques of each. Her standards as a parent and ex-teacher were probably difficult to meet. ". . . the way our school is taught by the present teacher is a mere state prison. The pupils move, act, speak, etc. at the thump of a bell . . ." When the children stayed home from school due to bad weather or sickness, Emily read them their lessons and had them

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie



The Gillespie children—Henry, aged ten and Sarah, aged eight—in 1873 (left). Emily and James in 1873 (right).

write in their own journals which she had assembled and given them as gifts.

By 1876, Emily no longer churned butter, but the Gillespies still kept cattle and sold milk for others' buttermaking. Emily's turkeys were quite profitable. She kept careful account of her poultry profits and recorded loaning James \$8. When he paid her back—with interest—he asked for a receipt; this formality indicates some strain over her private control of money.

Other men were borrowing money wherever they could, for the depression of the mid-1870s was taking its toll in mortgaged and forfeited farms, including John and Harriet's. Emily noted that Grange organizational meetings were being held. She continued to criticize her neighbors for their money management and refused to loan money to one family who still kept its piano, which Emily considered a luxury. (Perhaps this was the same family that asked her to sit through their daughter's after-dinner recital. Emily wrote she would "rather hear a pig squealing.")

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

Emily said "tramps" were stopping almost daily to ask for work and a meal. A neighbor woman who had raved of running for president was finally committed to an asylum. Her fate struck a sympathetic note in Emily.

. . . I only wonder that more women do not have to be taken to that asylum. especially farmers wives. No society except hired men to eat their meals. Hard work from the beginning to the end of the year. Their only happiness lies in their children with fond hopes that *they* may rise higher . . . July 29, 1877

In 1877 Emily turned thirty-nine and the Gillespies built their second home. Parts of the old house were probably used in the construction, for the family camped out for several weeks while the new one was being built. The Gillespies did much of the work themselves, so hired labor and materials came to only \$552.87, according to Emily's careful records. In October, they invited fifty-four guests to a house-warming supper and dance. Emily's list of her contributions to the evening included six fruit cakes, eight dozen cookies, and fourteen pies.

The farm was prospering (it had doubled in size since 1870), but family relations were more strained. Emily reported more arguments with James over a variety of topics and even the children sometimes became involved in the quarrels.

. . . Henry felt real grieved that I felt so bad. 'Oh Ma do not cry any more,' he said & so pathetic too. how reasonable, how just and true he is . . . Feb. 8, 1878

A pattern of emotions appears in Emily's entries about these arguments. After stating the initial complaint, she would enlarge on her general discontent; yet she put her hopes in her children and inevitably repressed her anger.

I am sad—do not know but tis foolish, but the tears will sometimes start, perhaps tis The Blues, I *did* so want to go and hear Miss Susan B. Anthony lecture last Monday evening, & *might* have gone, only that it seems to be so much trouble to take me any where, that I am, seems to me, almost a hermit, tis the saddest of all things to give up, as it were, the Idea of being any higher in society than merely to be always at home, except sometimes to go when necessity compells us to. but I *must* not give up *no no*, my children are too noble, I must use every effort to help them to be what I might have been. tis my only pleasure

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

to see them happy. yes & James too is ever so kind as one can be, ever ready to do anything to promote others happiness though it make himself miserable, therefore knowing as I do, I never let him know how great my desire is to go more in public. no blame to him, he may sometime see differently, I hope still hope on as ever for a contented mind . . . Jan. 16, 1878

Emily's final note of hope perhaps shows what a therapeutic "confidant" her journal was.

Although her life followed a predictable routine, Emily was still curious about her future.

Gypsy Girl here this morning says I am to receive a letter from a distant relation and am to receive a large property. And she will tell me who from and when if I will pay her \$3.00. Think I'll wait. July 11, 1876

It was probably a mercy that Emily didn't know what lay ahead for her.

Perhaps because the children were in school all day and relations with James were deteriorating, Emily began to turn inward. She frequently reminisced about her home and her parents in Michigan, and regretted what she viewed as an incomplete education and a life of unending hard work. Her bouts with "the blues" and emotional fatigue increased:

. . . I do wish I may not be so nervous. the children are so good. how thankful I am they bear with me patiently and are so kind to help me when I have so much to do. I too well know my mind sometimes fails in strength to what it used to do. My hope and prayer, that I may never lose my reason as many have done at my age of life . . . May 6, 1878

Emily participated more than ever in a variety of activities despite these problems. She continued to attend lectures on temperance and was pleased with the 1880 termination of Manchester's liquor license. She was a student of phrenology (a popular nineteenth-century "science" which studied skull contours to predict an individual's character), and frequently attended lectures by members of the Phrenological Society. Her fascination with the topic led her to order by mail a chart and description of characteristics for each of the children. Henry's turned out to be "a model chart," reflecting many good qualities and assuring aptitude in anything scientific; Sarah's chart encouraged involvement in medicine or teaching.

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

In addition to her usual chores, Emily was involved in the management of the farm and attended Agriculture and Dairy Association meetings both alone and with James. Her organizational abilities were also called upon for the annual county fairs, which she sometimes helped to supervise. She organized a petition drive to have the children's current school teacher removed, and eventually withdrew Henry and Sarah from the classroom and taught them at home, along with several young boys. Emily found time for creative pursuits as well, including fiction writing. At age forty-three, she entered two 3800-word stories in a magazine fiction writing contest.

The Universalist Church closed due to low attendance, but Emily's strong moral convictions continued to appear frequently in her journal. She recounted the 1881 shooting of President Garfield and the subsequent hanging of the assassin, Guiteau, then expressed her view of capital punishment: "It seems to me very wrong to hang. Tis murder in the first degree too." Later, on a visit to Anamosa, she saw the construction of the state penitentiary and wrote:

. . . I often wonder why can not all *do right*. no I do not wonder that either. I more wonder why there is not *more there in that dark place*. when I think how many parents drive their noble sons and daughters away from their homes send them into the world alone, long before they can live unaided by the protection of parents. Woe to such parents . . .

Dec. 3, 1882

Emily's life was increasingly filled with emotional trials, partly caused by her failing relationship with James. She was still disappointed in his lack of sociability and wrote, "The children and I like society but James does not." James's introversion was soon overshadowed by his violent outbursts of temper:

. . . James has one of his fits of—well I do hardly know what—whenever he has to pay out any money for any thing he seems to think I ought to get everything for myself & the children without calling on him for it. Henry & Sarah went out & got him to come in. they were afraid he would hang himself—well he *did*—as he has done many times before—get a rope & threaten. Alas! the trial to get along with such a disposition . . . he does not want the children to go to school, thinks there is no need of it—but wants them to stay at home & work . . .

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

he does not like me to raise turkeys because I use the money they bring to send the children to school . . . [he] said now I was planning to get all of his money again—that I grabbed every cent he got. most truly I never spent one cent of his—except to buy something necessary to wear or to eat . . .

Oct. 8, 1881

According to Emily, James also began beating and overworking the horses. "I can not endure the seeing of kind animals abused," she wrote. One of the horses had been her pet since it was a colt.

Emily experienced further emotional strain due to a deterioration of ties to her family in Michigan. Her mother had died—the first death in that close family circle—and the distribution of the dead woman's goods created a jealousy which tore the Hawley family apart. Harriet, who had suffered the loss of farm and income during the 1870s depression, received the bulk of her mother's effects. Despite this fact, Harriet still resented those items which had been willed specifically to Emily, and she did little to hide that bitterness. Emily recorded her own opinion on her sister: "Harriet has written so much wrong, untruth, of me & for no reason save envy. I hope she may sometime repent, be forgiven, & be happy."

Emily often complained that James worked her too hard and bitterly noted his concern with the neighbors' opinions:

. . . he did not like it because [Sarah & I] walked to [Manchester] this morning. do not think he cares so very much about the *jant* as the thoughts of the people seeing us. I think it *much harder* work to work in garden & *other* work I do than to walk to town. *that* however is quite unnoticeable. tis not as public . . .

Sept. 13, 1883

James went for days without talking or eating with the family. At one point he attempted to force Henry off the farm, and Emily wrote, "When a man lays his hands hold of his wife & children I think tis time something was done."

She was afraid that her much-beloved children would be "driven from home by their unfeeling father." These fears were increased when James accused her of intending to turn him out and demanded that she give him back the deed to their land. She was afraid to do so, for she realized what additional control that would give him.

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

By the time she was forty-six, Emily's nerves were no longer strong enough to permit her to climb a ladder. Earlier, she had written:

. . . I sometimes think of words which different women have told me in my girl-hood—that—"woman is always lovely—until her strength & beauty fails, then—she is only in the way"—it seems almost invariably true, yet we will *try* to say and think—all is well . . .

Aug. 16, 1881

In addition, Henry and Sarah were making tentative attempts to live independent lives, and Emily agonized over each of their numerous partings. Her relationship with James was influenced too: "When Henry & Sarah are gone, it is not very pleasant always to keep still & only listen." She was determined, though, to ". . . see both children established in a profession so they can provide for themselves better than I can for them." Sarah eventually received her teaching certificate and returned home, at most, only on weekends. (Emily made an interesting note of her early teaching wages compared to those of Sarah: for twenty days of work, Emily received \$6 in 1855, to Sarah's \$32.50 in 1883.)

Henry frequently left Manchester in search of employment to earn money for his tuition at a Michigan college. He spent part of one summer peddling various items alone in east-central Iowa, and Emily constantly prayed for his welfare. Her fears for his safety were ultimately confirmed when, employed as a carpenter, he was placing a weather vane upon a church spire and fell seventy-four feet to the ground. His hip was badly injured and he was sent home to recuperate.

Home was not a quiet place in which to convalesce, however, for Emily's father had arrived unannounced from Michigan with the firm decision to live with her.

. . . I can scarcely believe that Father would have come here, he *did* come last night about eleven o'clock . . . I believe [the relatives in Michigan] have sent him here & that he intends to stay as long as he lives. I think a great deal of him and respect him though I feel it an imposition upon us all after [brother] Henry has squandered all he had, then leave him, poor old man, in the streets . . . most surely I do not feel able to take care of him. My health is too poor and I can not concieniously keep Sarah at home to do the work. She wants to teach and earn something for herself . . .

May 15, 1884

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

The tone of this entry is in sharp contrast to her sentiments at age twenty—"Ah that I can not always have a home at Fathers . . ." Mr. Hawley meddled in the work division and other family routines which caused numerous household problems.

Relations with James had deteriorated further. He lectured Emily on money, blamed her for their various problems, and threatened desertion and divorce. Emily disapproved of divorce and once wrote: "Three Divorces last week . . . Alas! such a disgrace & sorrow . . ." James also accused her of being unfaithful, and of desiring to murder him. His sudden changes of mood puzzled Emily.

. . . we were coming home through a bushy dismal place and talking about the calves &c. All as I thought was good nature & all right. when to my very unpleasant surprise he said "*Emily* I believe you mean to kill me sometime. I want you to tell me if you do. I want to meet my God prepared"—I was perfectly terror struck . . . I only said "you have no reason for such unjoust talk." "*I have many reasons*" he said. I asked him what are they, but he would not say. I was *very thankful* when we arrived *safe* home. it seemed like riding with a maniac in a *dark dark* night alone . . .

Apr. 19, 1884

Emily's father finally moved in with her sister Harriet, and Emily was disturbed over the rumors that she had kicked Mr. Hawley out. (Sarah also was keeping a journal during this time, which adds another perspective to Mr. Hawley's departure. She wrote, "Grandpa will have to leave here. He needn't tell Ma she 'lies.' I can't take that." A bit later she explained, ". . . Grandpa would not have turned against Ma so if Pa had not so slandered her to him & Aunt Hattie.") Emily's father then instigated a lawsuit against her to retrieve the items she had inherited from her mother. Legalities forced her to return the deed to James so that she wouldn't have to support her estranged father, and she wrote, ". . . felt like signing myself out of a home."

Emily's illness grew worse. It had begun with her unsteadiness on the ladder, and within three years had developed into "a curious feeling" in her hands and feet. Three months later she wrote, ". . . whole self so nearly paralyzed that I can hardly get around at all." Within a few months she became weak, pale, and swollen with fluid retention, yet weighed only ninety-three pounds.

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

. . . my eyes too seem to be weak. Tire easy. my ankles I can scarcely dent them they are so hard. & if I do the indenture stays for hours—as if made in warm wax . . . June 1, 1885

Her symptoms were diagnosed as dropsy (a nineteenth century term for edema). She experienced frequent headaches and wrote, "[I feel] as if drunk when I walk." Within a year she could hardly walk at all, even with a cane. If she fell, she couldn't get up again, and was forced to nearly drag herself about her chores. "I do feel I am ready to go anytime I may be called," she wrote, and added, "Had [James] treated me as half human, I do believe I should have been in better health now."

Yet James, too, expressed a similar bitterness. Emily wrote, ". . . he shook his fist in my face and said 'Emily you treat me worse than I treat my cows in the stable' . . ." Henry and Sarah feared for Emily's safety when she was alone with James, for he appeared unconcerned with her grave illness.

. . . [James] says I cant do any thing here that I am of no use and might as well go and stay among my relations . . . alas! what can he think, as weak and helpless as I am. I do believe more than ever that he is crazy. Every time he catches me alone, he says all he can of abuse, such as 'any one can lay around & be waited on' etc. . . . Aug. 4, 1886

Emily was hurt by his treatment and wrote, "I can scarcely have one spark of love for him, indeed, it is unpleasant even to ride with him or be near him at all—he treats me like a dog."

James attempted to choke Henry to death, threatened him with pitchfork and club, and chased Henry and Emily as they fled in the carriage for Manchester. Finally, Emily's prized turkeys and chickens began dying; salt was discovered mixed with their feed and James was suspected. "I do not think he has been sane for years and grows worse all the time," she wrote.

Emily began to plan her will ". . . so that right & justice be done at last." She consulted a lawyer in Manchester who recommended that Henry rent and care for the farm while James spend a year away from the family. James at first refused, then left. When he later paid occasional visits to the family, his behavior was sometimes subdued, often vehemently angry. Emily stated that she didn't want to live with him again, yet wished him well, for perhaps he did not grasp that ". . . he has wronged us so

The Life and Diary of Emily Hawley Gillespie

cruelly." She had long been discouraged with the strenuous routine of a farm wife and had often dreamt of buying a house in Manchester. After the allotted year of separation, the rental agreement on the farm was not renewed and Emily moved to a house in town.

Her health deteriorated further and doctors were consulted. One considered using ". . . the correct application of the electric battery" in an attempt to arrest her symptoms. She also had a number of treatments with a magnetic doctor from Maquoketa who claimed that he ". . . could cure her if there was a cure." His sessions consisted of rubbing and patting her body, as she described, with a "general magnetic drawing of his hands over me and a shaking of his hands over me as if drops of something invisible fall." Emily had faith in his guarantee of health, but was totally bedridden within a few months, and eventually developed large, painful bedsores over each hipbone.

Henry took time out from his studies to haul stone, wood and manure in order to earn money for her medical bills. Sarah, who two years before at the age of twenty had stated emphatically that she would never marry, became engaged to sixty-year-old pawnbroker William Huftalen, a man older than her father. Her mother worried:

. . . I only do hope [Sarah] may not see the trouble I have. Ah, *marriage is a lottery*. how full of deceit do they come with their false tongues and 'there is no one as dear as thee' until one is married then 'you are mine now we have something else to do besides silly kissing.' . . .
Apr. 26, 1887

Emily's illness caused gaps in her usually meticulously-kept journal, and numerous entries were dictated to either Henry or Sarah.

. . . I am writing for Ma [Sarah wrote] . . . She has a high fever & is sitting up in the Rocking Chair. Her hip sores are so painful and such fearful sores it makes her so sick. And then her left arm is laid up with rheumatism; it being nearly impossible to move it . . .
Jan. 21, 1888

The entries written in Emily's own hand grow increasingly illegible beginning in late 1887. Entries made consistently in the book's margins suggest that she often re-read recent items and added new thoughts. As her health increasingly failed and she was un-

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

able to do daily household chores, Emily could only reflect on past and present circumstances.

Whatever her thoughts were, Emily did not tell all. Earlier she had noted, "I have written *many* things in my journal. but the worst is a secret to be buried when I shall cease to be." Yet she divulged some of her faded hopes, and comforted herself remembering the opinion of a phrenologist: "I had the most remarkable head he ever examined . . . I could be one of the finest poets—best author—artist."

Although she lay in bed, paralyzed, she still had enough faith in her talent to mourn, "I only wish I had never burned my stories." Her final entry, dated March 11, 1888, concluded: "It seems sometimes unbearable to endure such pain, that my work is nearly done. yet there is a presentiment to stay yet longer."

Emily died slightly less than two weeks later, on March 24. Sarah related her mother's last moments in her own journal:

. . . She could not cry, for the muscles of her face were paralyzed. She would say 'who are these?' 'when will they come?' 'How long, how long' 'O! I can't tell you' & 'write' & 'paper' I got her pencil & paper, but she could not use her right arm . . .

Mar. 27, 1888

JAMES GILLESPIE remained on the farm until his death in 1909. His body was buried next to Emily's in the Manchester cemetery.

Henry graduated as valedictorian of his class from Ryder Divinity College in Galesburg, Illinois in 1894. He became a carpenter in Chicago, and served as assistant pastor of St. Paul's Church there. After his father's death, he returned to Manchester to take over the farm. He raised cattle and sheep, ran a small mill and a dairy, and contributed articles to the local newspaper and to *The Christian Leader*.

Sarah married William Huftalen in 1892. She later became superintendent of schools in Page County, Iowa. She served as president of the Delaware County Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) for nine years, and of the Iowa State Teacher's Association, Rural Section, for fifteen years. She was involved in the Equal Suffrage Association, and received her A.M. from the State University of Iowa in 1924.

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