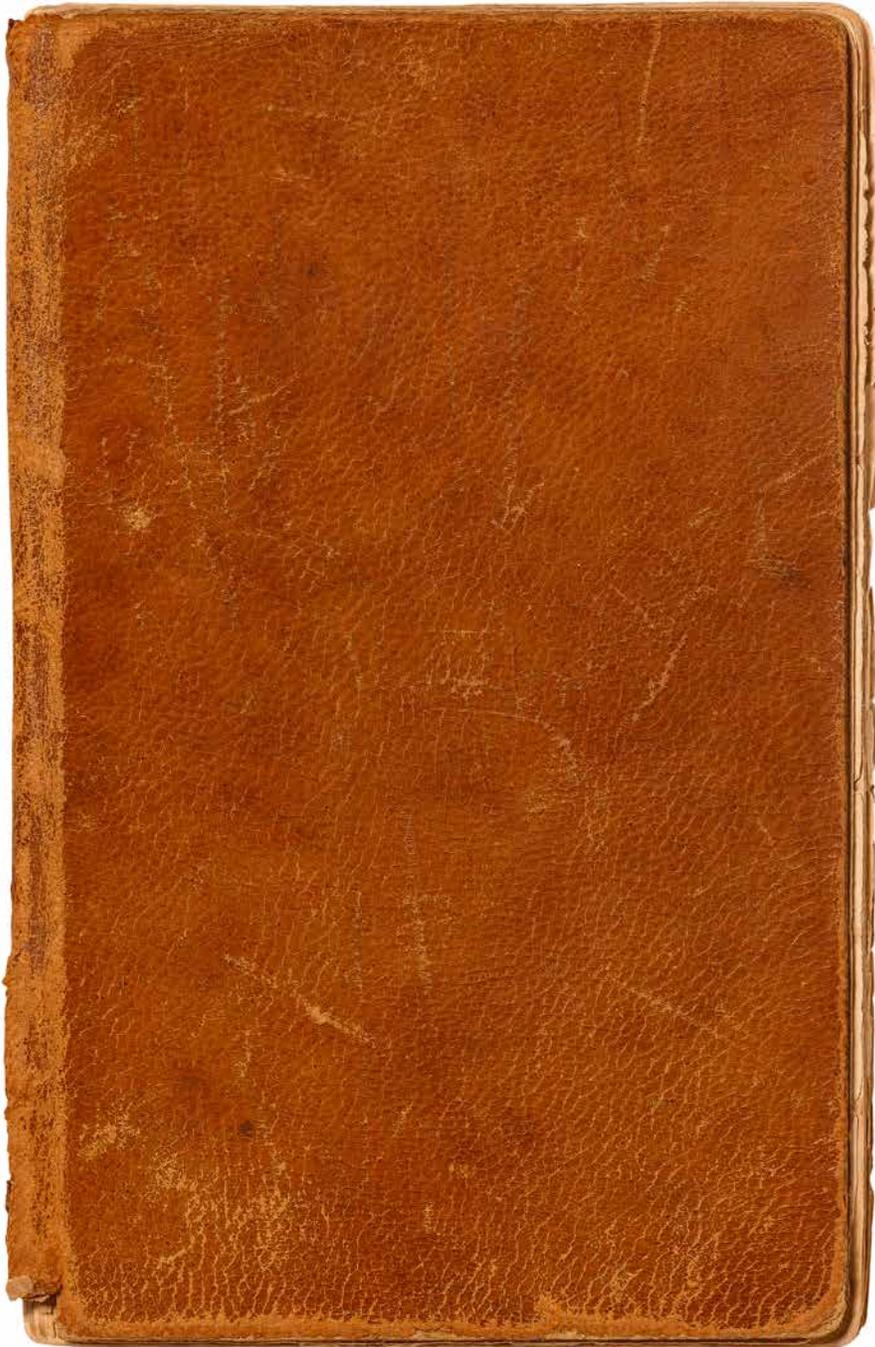




*[Archive]: Handwritten Diary of a Young School Teacher*

Maryland: 1859-1860

\$1800



Small octavo measuring 4" x 6". Brown calf. 106 pages of text. Good only with loose binding, chips, and tears. Included is a full typed transcript of the diary.

A diary of Rosie J. Arnold, a young, single schoolteacher living in Baltimore around 1859. A daily accounting of comings and goings, with numerous detailed entries that together provide a rich narrative of a vibrant social life in Antebellum Maryland. Rosie is constantly parading about town with her energetic group of friends – partying, drinking, staying up too late, having impromptu sleepovers, playing cards, attending oyster dinners and summertime watermelon parties together with her close friends Estelle, Mag, and Sophie, along with a rotating cast of acquaintances, both male and female.

An entry from May 8th, 1859 encapsulates the slightly gossipy, exuberant, and decidedly youthful activities of Rosie and her crew:

*“At home all morning, read in Rena a little before dinner, dressed directly after. Made a resolution which I fully intend to keep concerning a private affair. Pap told me a secret family matter...went up to Estelle’s...E showed us the contents of her cupboard. Read over some of her letters...came down in about ½ hour, and found all the gentlemen in the parlour smoking. Donned our duds and started on a frolic. Reached but a square from home, when I sank through a snow bank, into the water beneath. Quite wet, walked a little farther up the street when by some unaccountable accident I suddenly found myself on the pavement. Received no injury except to my dignity, which was considerably taken down. Returned home after my fall, dried my feet and had a good laugh. Sophie snatched my journal from me and gave it to T. Gave him a good chase, but did not succeed in obtaining them from him until he had carefully perused them. T. and L. persuaded me to stay all night. Thought at first it was much against my rule I at length yielded. As we went up to bed Sam came into the room and teased us for a while. We, after a few minutes were safely under covers, talked a few moments, and were then consigned to the Arms of Morpheus.”*

Entries like this shed light into the divisions and intersections of young male and female realms at the time (the women gossip and read letters upstairs, while the men smoke, then everyone meets up for some flirty fun, then the women stay the night in a separate room, which Sam breaks into for some teasing while the women remain safely under the covers).

Rosie’s romantic longings and jealousies shine through at points; she meets frequently with numerous men, who she is sure to list in her journal by their initials. She “goes home” with them at points, yet is “sorely disappointed” upon not receiving a valentine on February 14th. She has a “very long talk” with an actor at the Holliday St. Theatre, but “he is only about 17 years of age. He is very good looking but rather youthful.” She attends balls and lists men she danced with. Alcohol is involved – “she gave him a bottle of wine, he made me open my mouth, and poured it down my throat.” Rosie and her friends use alcohol often writing, “drank a considerable quantity of hot whiskey punch, and cherry brandy, went to bed rather rocky.” This may explain the frequent headaches she complains about throughout the diary. She also expresses tension between her social life and her moral education. On one occasion she rants in favor of temperance writing “oh, the depravity of human nature that is one of my failings, never intend to taste any kind of liquor again, unless positively needed. Think that it sets a bad example to the young men with whom we may be at the time.” Of course she does not follow through on this vow, anyway the entry devolves into a jealous rant about her friend Mags’ inauthentic personality writing, “think she has two faces, great mind to tell her so. Am of the opinion that if Mr. H seen her as I see her that she would readily change his ideas concerning her very sedate behavior. I for one always try to be the dame at all times. Do not admire double faced people.”

While Rosie associate with unmarried men, she at one point reveals her more chaste side, “at the funeral of Mr. Stansbury who committed suicide at the house of some ill-behaved woman. I would rather that he had killed her. The city would certainly be rid of a nuisance. It is a wonder to me how any woman can lead such a life, of degradation and misery. Although I am a woman I certainly censure the sex, as I think it their fault that there are so many wicked men.”

An interesting social record with many passages detailing youth culture of the time. [BTC#423759]

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April 1<sup>st</sup> 1839.

No 3.4 3. Lombard.  
St.

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W. C. C. C. C.

Rosie J. Arnold lined during the morning, clear at noon, howall day. (I. P.) was  
April 1st, 1859  
No. 343 Lombard St. a nice time. Ask us to on next Thursday night particular wrote

Friday, April 1st, 1859. Clear and pleasant, at school received a letter from  
Richard, sent him the Picayune, went to the Post Office in the afternoon, stoped  
at Mrs. Franklin. John returned with us and spent the evening.

Which made all earth so bright.  
Saturday, 2nd. At home, all day, clear and pleasant before noon, received a letter  
in youth's remembered light.  
from Emma and Richard. Rained all the afternoon and evening.

Oh! years as bring their weight of care  
But never from the heart should fade  
Sunday, 3rd. Still raining, at home in the morning answered Emma's letter, spent  
the afternoon with Estelle. Saw Mr. Fairbank but did not stop to talk. Went to  
Dr. Cumming's church in the evening but could not find a seat. Stoped at Dr. William's  
church, met Mr. Dickson. Very pleasant evening.

January 1st, 1860  
Monday, 4th. Clear but very windy, at school knew my lessons, were examined in  
Algebra, went to Estelle's and compos'd my composition, at home in the evening,  
wrote my composition.

Tuesday, 5th. Snowed early in the morning, clear the remainder of the day. At school  
went to board in Arithmetic. Knew my lessons. Out in the afternoon on business,  
at home in the evening. Father, Mother, etc. went to Commencement.

Wednesday, 6th. Clear and pleasant, at school, home in afternoon and evening. Answer  
Richard's letter.

Thursday, 7th. At home all morning, a little cloudy. Out on business in the afternoon,  
home in evening.

Friday, 8th. At school, cloudy all day. (Crops Corrie, etc. hung.) Home in after-  
noon and evening. (Receive a paper.)

Saturday, 9th. Clear morning, cloudy afternoon, rain at night. Out in afternoon  
on business. Stop at Mrs. Franklin's. Received a letter from Emma.

Sunday, 10th. Rained all morning, cleared at noon, did not go to church. At Estelle's  
all afternoon, home in the evening. (C. L.) was here, spent a very lively time.

Composed my composition.  
went home in the throes of a stage. In Mrs. Allen's in the latter part of the afternoon.