



Wearing her wedding dress is Mrs. Emma M. Day who came as a bride to the old Day farmhouse located at the crossroads of Coldspring and Graniteville. Her diaries of the late 1860's and early 1870's typify everyday living here in Westford. Photo: Courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Otis Day

## Westford Recollections

by June W. Kennedy  
Emma M. Day - Her Diary

1871

At the crossroads of Cold Spring and Graniteville Roads stands an old New England farmhouse which has been occupied by the Day Family for almost 130 years. It was about a hundred years ago that Emma M. Day, young wife and mother at this homestead, penned the year's final entry in her diary. She wrote: "Good by old year and may my next year find me at its close far better than this year. May I live nearer by God." Emma's account of the homespun, every day living during the months of 1871 certainly captures the flavor of Westford so vividly that one can almost touch, feel and see the people, the landscape and the times. Indeed, it will make today's women appear quite liberated!

"Sunday, Jan. 1, 1871: Beautiful. Warren and Sarah and Mary and I went to church the Old South. P.M. We all went over to North Andover to church where Aunt Sally goes and the first one we saw was Aunt Sally she was very glad to see us. It was communion. I like Mr. Hamilton very much. Warren carried Mary and Sarah home to get his sleigh for he got wood wagon to go in and come over to Aunt Sallys for I went home with Aunt Sally.

Jan. 2: Cloudy and did snow little when we first got up but we start out for Warren about eight little past they had not been to breakfast when we got there and we started for home about ten and W. had not eat and I did not get out. We got home about one o'clock. Mother cleaned the Milk room. I stitched some on my skirt p.m. Mother came home to night want I glad. Mr. Cummings ground his meat here to night.

Jan. 3: Fair. Mother did not get up till noon for she was very tired and I have not done any sewing and am real lazy. Mrs. Sherman came up a few minutes and did my last week irony and ironed a dress for Mother. Mother Day washed two shawls for us that mother brought home from Dorchester. Warren and Mother and I went to meeting and called and carried Mrs. Sherman. It was to Mrs. Dupee's, there was lots there.

Jan. 4: Beautiful. Mother and I washed. I did all my rubbing. Mother wrung some and hung them all out. We got done little past eleven. Warren went over to Littleton to get his Horse cart wheels, and went to see cousin Mary who does not get along very fast, keeps a girl, I put away the things from Dorchester that mother brought home. Mother D. made some pies. I cut the apples and Mother L. pared them. Mr. Sherman and wife came up a little while to night. I am very tired.

Jan. 5: I did my irony which was large and had lots of starch cloths. I fixed the sauce meat and run all day. In the evening Warren and Mother and David Farren and myself went up to Aunt Betsy to a prayer meeting. There was twenty one. It was a real good meeting. We brought Mrs. Hodgman home.

Jan. 6: Dull and rainy: I helped do up the work and washed the sink room floor and helped measure the carpet off for our pew (Congregational Church - now Parish Hall in Center) - and sewed on Mother's

dress some. P.M. Warren and Mother and I went to Lecture and prayer meeting and went to Mr. Nichols and left some sauce and sausages and pork and butter and a jar of Pickell lily. We put down the carpet and cleaned the paint.

Jan. 7: Fair. Warren carried Mother up to Mr. A. Fletchers this morning and Mother and father went to Lowell. I made 7 pies and 3 loaves of bread and worked about house all day and am very tired. Nancy came home with them.

Sunday, Jan. 8: Fair. Warren and Mother and Nancy and Ada and I went to church all day. Warren carried Mother Lamb down to Grandmothers. Mr. Brooks from Tyngsboro. Warren and Mother and Nancy went to Prayer meeting to night. Butchers Davis little boy is just alive.

Jan. 9: Fair. I did not do much. Made Mothers sleeves to her calico dress and Nancy put them in and fixed the skirt made button holes and put on buttons. I worked on my skirt. Mother went down to Mrs. Shermans to get her yarn. Nancy knit for mother. Mr. Cummings spent the eve.

Jan. 10: Fair and cold. I helped do the work and worked on my skirt. I got it done just after dinner. Warren went after Mother. She was real tired. I did little on her dress, got it all done but the ruffles on sleeves and I put the buttons on Mothers sack. Mrs. Cummings came over and brought home the white beans. Warren is not quite so lame as last night. My head feels real bad. I put buttons on Warren's fine shirt and made 2 button holes and hemmed part of a handkerchief.

Jan. 11: Cloudy, rained tonight. Warren carried Nancy up to Aunt P's this morning. She staid all day. I carried Warren up to work this noon and F went and got him to night and Nancy carried her over to Samuel Fletchers. Mr. Samuel Blodgetts things were sold at --- some of them and finished Mothers dress and sack and pressed it. I got a letter from Mrs. Johnston and wrote her one tonight. I went down to Mrs. Shermans after mothers yarn. Went with horse at noon. I basted one pillow case hem ready to stich tonight. Had the teeth ache today lots.

Jan. 12: Fair A.M., Cloudy, P.M. and warm. Mother and I washed and had quite a wash, got very tired. Did all my white rubbing and wrung most all the cloths and hung them most all out. Did not do much P.M. Ironed out some ----- Mr. Nichols and wife called and took tea. We carried them up to the meeting at Aunt Betsy's. Warren and Mother and I went. Mr. Davis little boy was buried this afternoon.

Jan. 13: Beautiful and warm. I carried Warren up to his work. He is cutting wood for Mrs. Osgood. I did the dishes and did all but my starched irony. I made me a bow to wear on belt and one to wear on collar. Father carried me over to Mrs. Sam Hitches. I had a nice visit, Ada went, but my head aches very bad. I began Mother L. a stocking and knit most 9 inches on it.

Jan. 14: I made my bread and a mess of cream tartar doughnuts. They were nice Mother Day said. Then I made the crust and made eleven pies. Mother filled them and cut the apples. I picked up and swept

and dusted. Mother L. supper hurt her very bad and made her a mustard plaster. I feel very sad. I am afraid she will never stand it to nurse.

Sunday Jan. 15: Cloudy and very damp. Mother and Warren went to church all day. I did not dare to have Ada go and Mother said Father did not feel able to see to both of them. Mother laid low till most three o'clock. I feel tired and sad.

Jan. 16: Rained some. I fixed Mothers velvet and ironed some ribbon and washed my black dress and ironed it. It looks very nice. Mr. Sherman came up after Mother for Lizzie is sick, sores in her head. Mother got a letter from Mrs. Capen.

Jan. 17: Fair. Mother and I washed. I did all the rubbing but two things. We got done before dinner and Mother washed up sink room and back kitchen floor. After dinner Mother Day went up in town and made calls and Warren carried her up and went after her. I put buttons on Mother Lamb's dress. Mrs. Capen bought for her 12 yards at 62 cents per yard 7.44.

Jan. 18: Fair. I ironed. Mrs. Gilson came over here to see about the plasters. Mother went over and put some on to her Tom and one on her. Father carried her over and W. went after her. I cut Mother L's lining to her new dress and tried it on. Mr. Brinkerhoff and son came for oxen.

Jan. 19: Snowed little and cold. I made yeast and helped about the work. I gave Mother some Henna. She did not get up till noon. Mr. Graves stopped here. We bought some lamb. Warren and I went to prayer meeting and carried David Farron. It was to Mr. Luce's. It was a good meeting.

Jan. 20: Fair. Mother went to No. Chelmsford and is going to Lowell this noon. I made a soup for dinner. After dinner Mother was taken sick in a little while. I gave her everything I could think of but did no good. Uncle Amos and Lizzy called. I gathered and sewed on the place behind in mothers black dress and ironed it. Warren started after the Dr. past four. Mother was worse after he went. Dr. Hartwell came down and said all night.

Jan. 21: Snowed in morn but cleared off before night. I got up at five o'clock and got up several times in the night. Slept on lounge. Dr. Hartwell went in the cars. Warren carried him to the Depot and then went for Mother but she did not come. Warren helped me do up the work. Mother is some better. Mr. Cummings made quite a call. Dr. McColleston came about nine. I made Mother some gruel the Dr. told me about.

Sunday, Jan. 22: Monday, Jan. 23: Cloudy and very cold. I helped do up the work and cut Ada two pairs of drawers. Mother seems some better. Dr. came down just at night. He is going to a Silver Wedding tonight.

Jan. 24: Snowed some all day. Mother is some better this morning. I helped do up the work. Got mother up and gave her an injection of 1 pint water and spoonful of salt and little oil. I sewed on Ada's drawers some.

Jan. 25: Beautiful but cold. --- I sent my letter this morning to Mrs. Capen and Mother sent to Cal and Aunt Sally. Warren is fixing the cupboard. Dr. came at noon, staid to dinner. Mother was in dreadful pain and I had

to give her a quieting powder and wet flannel in hot water and put spirit of turpentine. I finished Ada's drawers and began another pair. I washed both of the children.

Jan. 26: Cloudy. ---Quincy did not sleep very well. I laid cold. I worked on the drawers. I washed two aprons and mother washed some for me.

Jan. 28: Beautiful. Warren went to Lowell this morn. I filled Mother's pies and sifted the squash. I have wrote and sent for the Dr. Father went and got Mrs. Cummings home and went after the . . . Dr. arrive.

Sunday, Jan. 29: Snowed A.M. Dull P.M. Warren went to church P.M. Mr. Nichols did not preach. Dr. came down P.M. Mrs. Sherman and David came up to how Mother did.

Jan. 30: Beautiful. I helped do up the work and put new linings into Warren's old great coat, and laid down Ada's squares. She has not got but 10 whole ones to make. Carry Sherman is sick and he has gone after Dr. Smith. He says he has Diptheria.

Jan. 31: Dull and misty and warmer. Mother seems better and children. Ada slept with mother part of the time and I on the lounge. I did not sleep till after midnight, my head aches and I feel tired. Father carried Mother over to Mrs. Gilsons. The plasters have done good. I laid down and had a nap, felt better. Dr. come about thee is getting to N.H. tonight. (To be continued.)