

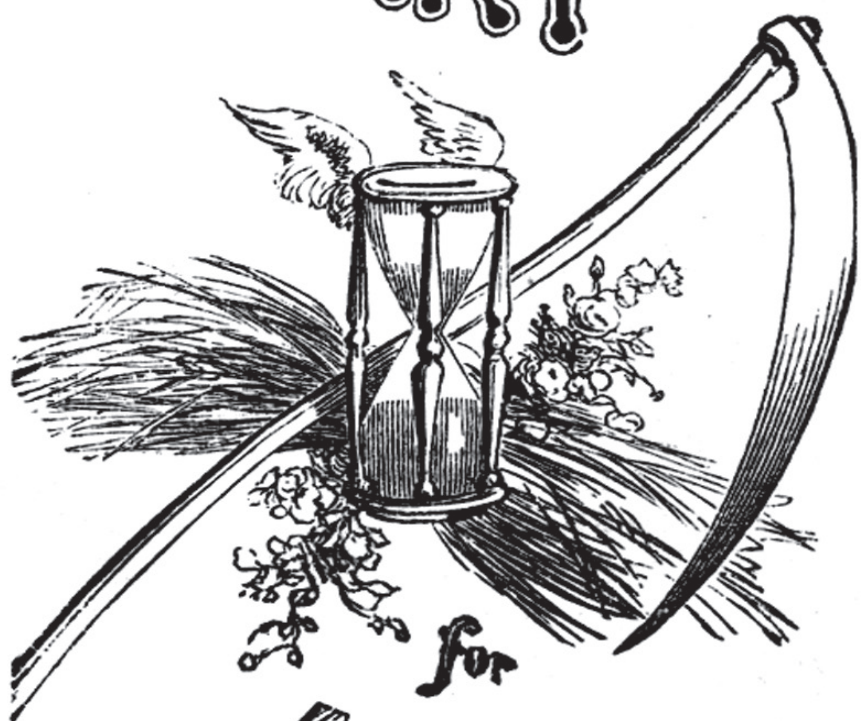
Aida Austin's 1881 Diary



Daily Life in Eldred and
New York City, New York

Louise Elizabeth Smith

EXCELSIOR DIARY



for
1881.

Oh, that man once more were manly,
 Woman's pride and not her scorn!
 That once more the pale young mother
 Dared to boast a man is born!
 Oh, for a knight like Bayard,
 Without reproach or fear;
 My light-glove on his casque of steel,
 My love-knot on his spear!"

Inside front cover of original diary.

"Oh that man once more were only
 Woman's pride and not her scorn!
 That once more the pale young mother
 Dared to boast a man is born.
 Oh, for a knight like Bayard,
 Without reproach or fear;
 My light glove on his casque of steel,
 My love knot on his spear."

Aida A. Austin
 290 East Broadway
 New York

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Daily Life in Eldred and
New York City, New York

Louise Elizabeth Smith



Aida Austin as a young girl. Courtesy of Katherine Calkin Traxler.

Published by Halfway Brook
Cave Creek, Arizona

Family information online:
<http://halfwaybrook.com>
Halfway Brook community blog,
on-going projects, resources

<http://weezy.info>
Stories and information about
the Crabtree-Higginson, Austin-
Leavenworth, Smith-Corbridge, and
Fallin-Williams families

Original 1881 Diary of Aida Austin
courtesy of Mary Briggs Austin

Cover and Interior Design: Gary Smith

Photo contributions:
Mary Briggs Austin, Melva Austin Barney,
Katherine Calkin Traxler

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Printed in the United States of America
ISBN: 978-0-9826374-1-8

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Other books by Louise Elizabeth Smith
The Mill on Halfway Brook
Grandma and Me

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INTRODUCTION

Great Aunt Aida Austin was 19 years old when she started writing her 1881 Diary. The Diary is quite small—almost 2.75 inches wide and 4 inches long. Each page was scanned and the entries keyed in. Punctuation and capital letters were added to make reading easier.

Since the first printing of Aida's Diary in 2007, I have written *The Mill on Halfway Brook*, the first in a series called *Memoirs from Eldred, New York, 1800 to 1950*.

The Eldred-Austin letters shared with me by my cousin Melva Austin Barney, and family photos sent to me by my mother Mary Briggs Austin, and

Katherine Calkin Traxler (descendant of Aida's brother James Eldred Austin), made it possible to update information and photos and explain who many of the people in Aida's diary were.

Even though much of Aida's 1881 Diary will be included in Book Two, *Echo Hill and Mountain Grove*, Aida's Diary is a stand alone book of daily life in 1881.

Special thanks to my husband, Gary Smith, for laying out the book and getting it ready to be printed.

I hope you enjoy reading this diary as much as I have enjoyed putting the book together.

—*Louise Elizabeth (Austin) Smith*

ABOUT AIDA'S DIARY

Aida A. Austin's parents, William Henry, 57, and Mary Ann, 54, Eldred Austin lived in Eldred (the Village), New York, 95 miles from Aida's Uncle Augustus and Aunt Maria Eldred Austin in New York City.

In January 1881, Aida Antoinette, 19, and her sister Maria, 28, lived in New York City with or near Uncle Augustus, 71, and Aunt Maria, 65, and their children.

Aida's Siblings

- James Eldred (Ell) Austin, 26, and Albert Alonzo (Lon) Austin, 24, lived in Solomon City, Kansas.
- Mary Henrietta Austin, 31, Charles Mortimer (Mort) Austin, 16, and Henry Ladore (Dorrie), 15, lived in Eldred, where their father farmed.

Aida's Eldred-Austin NYC Cousins

- Mortimer (Mort) Bruce, 42, Mary Austin, and children: Gussie, 9, Mary E., 7, and John M., 3.
- Henry and Net, 41, Austin Clinton and their children: little Ida, Buddie, and little Net.
- Thomas, Addie, 40, Austin Thompson, and family: Gussie, 7, Tommy, 5, and Harry, 15.

- Archibald and Rand, 36, Austin Paton.
- Randolph and Tina, 33, Austin Laing.
- Edward Austin, 34.
- Ida Belle Austin, 22, school teacher.
- Alonzo Eugene Austin, 44, his wife Belle, and their children lived in Alaska.

Aida's Other Austin Relatives

- Uncle Irvin and Aunt Laura, 47, Austin Clark and their sons, Ellsworth, 19, Elbert, 15, and Robert, 7, lived in Eldred.
- Uncle James and Aunt Julia Austin may have lived near New York City.

Aida's Other Eldred Relatives

- Aunt Eliza Eldred Gardner, 71, lived in Barryville with her son Stephen, 46, Gardner's family. Katie and Myers Gardner were Stephen's children.
- Uncle C.C.P. (Cortzi), 73, and Aunt Effa Van Tuyl Eldred also lived in Eldred. Rebecca (Becca) Eldred was their daughter.

Not relatives

Kate N. (Newcome); Emma Kelso Collins; Mr. and Mrs. Braisted, Willie and George; and the Preacher in Eldred, Mr. Fisher.



The Austin cousins in Eldred, New York. Photo courtesy of Melva Austin Barney.

DIARY ENTRIES



New Year's Greetings. Postcard in the collection of Mary Briggs Austin.

JANUARY, SATURDAY 1., 1881.

"A bad beginning makes a good ending," I hope that is true. For I have made a very bad beginning. Tom took the boys around to Net's this afternoon. Harry and I went to Central Park after supper. There was no skating, so we called at Mrs. Braisted's. It was 11 o'clock when we got home. Lil came around this afternoon. She found out there was no skating and told Ida, and she has been laughing at me ever since.

SUNDAY 2.

JANUARY

Saturday 1, Sunday 2

"A bad beginning makes a good ending?" I hope that is true for I have made a very bad beginning. Tom took the boys around to Net's this afternoon. Harry and I went to Central Park after supper. There was no skating, so we called at Mrs. Braisted's. It was 11 o'clock when we got home. Lil came around this afternoon. She found out there was no skating and told Ida, and she has been laughing at me ever since.

JANUARY, 1. MONDAY 3. 1881.

Mr Buckbee was here
this morning he is
going to send the plumber
here tomorrow

JANUARY, WEDNESDAY 5. 1881.

The plumbers have
been here again all
day

TUESDAY 4.

The plumbers have been
here all day and I have
not got a bit of sewing
done

THURSDAY 6.

Maria came over this after-
noon. I was just going out
I called down at Mrs. B's
to see if she would go
to Central Park Saturday
evening with Harry and
I. Her half sister was
there with her husband and
little boy. The plumbers
were here again this morning
until eleven o'clock

JANUARY

Monday 3

Mr. Buckbee was here this morning.
He is going to send the plumber
here tomorrow.

Wednesday 5

The plumbers have been here again
all day.

Tuesday 4

The plumbers have been here all day
and I have not got a bit of sewing done.

Thursday 6

Maria came over this afternoon. I was
just going out. I called down at Mrs. B.'s
to see if she would go to Central Park
Saturday evening with Harry and I. Her
half sister was there with her husband
and little boy. The plumbers were here
again this morning until eleven o'clock.

JANUARY, FRIDAY 7. 1881.

Better trust all and be deceived
And win that trust and that deceiving
Than doubt one heart that is believing
Had blest ones life with true believing

JANUARY, SUNDAY 9. 1881.

I have written to Mother
and Dora West this after-
noon, and that is about
all I have done today.
I wonder how long
I will have to live.
"The good die first and they
whose hearts are dry as sum-
mer dust burn to the
socket."

SATURDAY 8.

Harry and I went to Central
Park. Mrs. Braisted and
George went with us. It
was seven when we got to
Mrs. B.'s. She thought we were
not coming. It was so
late. We took Will around
to the engine house to
stay with his father. It
is twelve o'clock.

MONDAY 10.

I have studied and sewed
and taught the children.
Mrs. Trimble has been here
making Ida's dress. She has
been telling our fortunes.
Ida is to have one husband
and three children and I am
to have two husbands and
three children.

JANUARY

Friday 7

Better trust all and be deceived
And win that trust and that deceiving
Than doubt one heart that is believing
Had blest ones life with true believing.

Saturday 8

Harry and I went to Central Park.
Mrs. Braisted and George went with us.
It was seven when we got to Mrs. B.'s.
She thought we were not coming, it
was so late. We took Will around to the
engine house to stay with his father.
It is twelve o'clock.

Sunday 9

I have written to Mother and Dora West
this afternoon and that is about all I have
done today. I wonder how long I will
have to live. "The good die first and they
whose hearts are dry as summer dust
burn to the socket."

Monday 10

I have studied and sewed and taught the
children. Mrs. Trimble has been here
making Ida's dress. She has been telling
our fortunes. Ida is to have one husband
and three children and I am to have two
husbands and three children.

JANUARY, TUESDAY 11. 1881.

Ad has been sick abed all day. I have been sewing on the machine I run the needle through

WEDNESDAY 12.

Ad is better today she has been down stairs. Madge Germain called this afternoon she wanted to know if I had been to see Mrs. Braisted lately and if I was going again soon. She (Miss Germain) was house hunting

JANUARY, THURSDAY 13. 1881.

I went to Ridley's this afternoon then to Maria and I stopped at Mrs. Braisted's when I came back. It is fearful walking so muddy. Mrs. Braisted says Miss Germain is now married New Years. Maria has a fearful cold composed some poetry to-night.

FRIDAY 14.

It has been a fearful day. Maria did not get over. Mr. Gilso called this evening while we were eating supper. He says Tina is sick abed

JANUARY

Tuesday 11

Ad has been sick abed all day. I have been sewing on the machine. I run the needle through.

Wednesday 12

Ad is better today. She has been down stairs. Madge Germain called this afternoon. She wanted to know if I had been to see Mrs. Braisted lately and if I was going again soon. She (Miss Germain) was house hunting.

Thursday 13

I went to Ridley's this afternoon, then to see Maria, and I stopped at Mrs. Braisted's when I came back. It is fearful walking so muddy. Mrs. Braisted says Miss Germain was married New Years. Maria has a fearful cold. Composed some poetry tonight.

Friday 14

It has been a fearful day. Maria did not get over. Mr. Gilso called this evening while we were eating supper. He says Tina is sick abed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Although Louise always wanted to write, she gave up on fiction when her third grade “Bear Story” was an obvious failure.

After getting a bachelor’s degree in music education, a master’s degree in elementary education, and teaching 30 years, Louise began writing family history

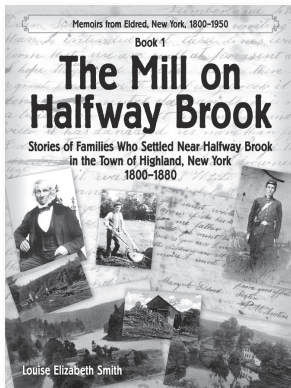
from stories her maternal grandmother had told her. Nonfiction, Louise discovered, was more her style since the people, place, and plot were givens.

Louise and her husband Gary and three of their four grown children live in Arizona.



Photo: Gary Smith.

OTHER BOOKS BY LOUISE ELIZABETH SMITH

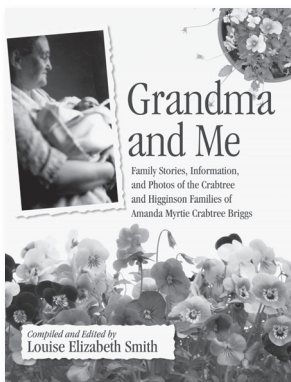


The Mill on Halfway Brook tells of the Eldred, Austin, Myers, and Leavenworth families, their neighbors, friends, and kinsfolk that settled in what was once the Town of Lumberland, in the villages of Halfway Brook (Eldred), The River (Barryville), Ten Mile River (Tusten), and South Lebanon (Glen Spey).

The narrative weaves vignettes of townsfolk, preachers, churches, regional and national events with historical information, land documents, censuses, an 1875 biography, Congregational and Methodist Church records, over 300 photos and postcards, old and new maps, and at least 200 family letters (1845–1880).

The Mill on Halfway Brook is fully indexed with names of over 900 people, places, and events. It is the first in the series, *Memoirs from Eldred, New York, 1800–1950*.

ISBN 978-0-9826374-0-1, 8.3 × 11, 284 pages, softcover



Grandma and Me

Amanda Myrtie Crabtree Briggs was born in 1891 in a sodhouse on her father’s Nebraska homestead farm. Over the years she told her children and grandchildren the stories of her growing up as well as those of her parents and her Crabtree and Higginson grandparents—real pioneers of the west. This book is a collection of those stories and includes almost 600 photos and documents.

8-1/2 × 11, 246 pages, softcover