Apprenticeship Diary from the Apprenticeship Materials in the Worcester State University Archives

Jump to:

Henrietta Elliot
Estella Gates
Clara Green
Ida Whalen
Katherine Leahy
Theresa Kehoe
Katherine Power
Mary Finneran
Katherine Daley
Margaret Seahy
Mabel Disney
M. Kennedy
Mary Haire
N. M. Silk
Florence Case
Winifred Geary
Julia Buckley
Jennie Raferty

[front cover]

State Normal School
Worcester Mass.
Specimens of Apprentices’ Diaries
1903-04

[format for the start of each section]
[State Normal School at Worcester.]
Apprentice’s Diary
For the Week Ending
Friday, _____190
Apprentice.

_______
School.
Grade, __,_______
Teacher, ________

Week Ending October 2, 1903 [“Sept 29” crossed out], Henrietta Elliot, Grade 8, Chandler Street School, Miss Stockwell

Tuesday, Sept. 29, 1903

I have decided to try this week to make the children give the ideas in the book in their own words. In the History lesson today I tried this and it seemed satisfactory to me. When a child recited and gave almost the exact words from the book I would ask another child to give the thought or thoughts in his or her own words. I tried to call upon those children who I thought would be likely not to understand all that was recited. I think this is safer than to allow a child to study simple words and perhaps get an entirely wrong idea of the thing.

In history we are taking up Jefferson’s Administration and the Administrations which to me were uninteresting and difficult when I studied them in the grammar school, have found a new interest for me and I enjoy the subject very much. I think this is due in part to the fact that when I studied history I had to learn it “by heart” and it was not made interesting by outside subject matter. Since I have been teaching history I have been reading a great deal from different authors and this has helped me to enjoy history. I think I can say that I never realized how interesting history
was until I began to teach it I find that McMaster’s “History of the People of the U.S.” is a very fine reference book, it goes into any one subject so deeply.

Wednesday, Sept. 30, 1903

Fully convinced of the fact that the majority of the B class at least, have not learned how to study I decided to go on an exploring expedition this morning. While my teacher was having a class, the A. class, the B class were studying Geography. Without telling the children my object, I walked up and down the aisles, and accidentally (?) stopped at several desks and explained several things in the lesson. I paid particular attention to those pupils who I thought needed the help. Eventually the children came to realize that there were many things in the lesson which they did not fully understand so they asked questions, not before the class always, but of me privately. The idea of me walking about the class seemed to encourage the children, and I think if I had been busy otherwise, the children would not have thought of asking questions. I did not notice any marked improvement in the recitation but I think that if I continue to help the children to study that is held them individually; they will recite better and what is of more value than the recitation, they will understand what they recite.

As I think over my Apprenticeship I think I have given more of my individual attention and help in this appointment, than in any one of the others. Perhaps, because this is a more advanced grade than any I have been in or perhaps the children lend themselves more to this kind of treatment. I have a number of requests every day from pupils who wish to remain after school and be helped with lessons, particularly the arithmetic lesson. I am surprised at the amount of interest I have gotten up in this subject because I used to feel badly because I was not more proficient in the subject. But I really enjoy it now.

Thursday, Oct. 1, 1903

For science this week I have been taking up “How the Plant eats”, and “How the Plant drinks”; I did not attempt to explain fully the structure of the leaf and the story of the chlorophyll, but I told the children and showed by a simple drawing on the board that the leaf was made up of tiny cells which were filled with a green substance which was the thing that kept the plant alive, etc. I explained that the leaf acted as a mouth for the plant and sucked in carbon dioxide. The important point was that the plant got more of its food from the air and sunlight than it did from the soil. This rather surprised the children and they asked why the farmer took so much care of the soil and I explained that the plant needed good soil because it got some of its food from soil, but that sunlight was so cheap and plenty that the farmer did not have to pay attention to that, just as in building a fire air was the necessary thing because the coal would not burn without it, but
we never think of the air as important because it is so cheap while the coal is expensive. If one had to pay $6 or $8 a ton for air, more attention would be paid to it.

In studying the roots I brought in the root of the radish. These showed the hairs and rootlets very well, and the children seemed to enjoy the lesson more, having these roots to look at while I talked about them.

Friday Oct. 2, 1903

As it is sometimes hard to reach every member of a class, I decided to keep a record of the recitation. Sometimes one pupil will be called on more than another and this is rather discouraging for the pupil who studies and doesn’t get a chance to recite; so I told the pupils yesterday that I had a new plan which I would tell them about tomorrow. My plan is to keep a record of every recitation and give credit. I wrote the names in my book and explained to the children that for every good recitation they made I would put a dot after their names. I have a square for each week and four dots can be placed in each square for the four recitations a week. If they wish they may make up any recitation outside and I will give them credit. The children seemed delighted with this plan and almost everyone was eager to recite today.

Week Ending November 6, 1903, Estella M. Gates, grade 3 Oxford Street, Miss Hopkins

Tuesday – Nov. 3.

As it is nearing Thanksgiving time, Miss – has begun to prepare for this. About a week ago she started to teach the children a song, appropriate for the season. This song however is not new to all of them, for some of the children learned it last year.

This afternoon, for the last period Miss – took out a book and began to read aloud to the children. The book was “Stories of Colonial Children”, and the chapters in it are very interesting for little folks. The book is written by Mara Pratt. It begins by telling how the Pilgrims left England, their landing in America and gradually leads up to the Thanksgiving story.

Miss – says she always keeps these stories to read to the children at this time of the year.

Wednesday – Nov. 4.

I think it is interesting to note how far children’s imaginations go sometimes.
For instance one afternoon some of the children were sent to the board and were asked to illustrate the myth about “Clytie and the Sunflower” which I told them in the early part of my appointment.

I expected they had forgotten it by this time, but I found they remembered it very well.

They pictured Clytie as riding in the sea-shell with fishes for her horses. Some of the children drew the gold-fish, so that they had four legs and looked more like pigs than fishes.

I think they all remembered to put on Clytie’s golden locks, and one girl surely meant to have Clytie in fashion and placed on her head a very large hat with a great poppom on the front.

Thursday – Nov. 5.

I think my leaf-screen has been the prettiest to-day that it has been any time. That is, – the color has been the richest and and prettiest.

There was a beautiful combination of crimson, (some leaves had almost a purplish tint), green, – and delicate yellow, and being a cloudy day, what sunshine we had made us appreciate it all the more.

After the maple leaves dried the screen was bare most of the time. I think I should have been tempted to take it down, if I hadn't trusted that these ivy leaves would be brought in, through these late fall days.

We had a great abundance of these brought in by the children to-day. I suppose the showers this morning beat these off the vines.

Friday – Nov. 6.

In number-work the children are learning the table of four. In connection with this, they are having multiplication examples like this – 597x4. We are now introducing the cipher in such examples as 906x4, and 870x4.

We have drill so much on the tables that I find a great many devices have to be used to hold the attention. Lately I have had the children do a good deal of guessing-work. For instance, I write on the board 4x2 4x12 4x1 4x5 etc. and then in turn go round the class for the answers. Then I call upon different pupils.

Then for variety I tell them that I am thinking of some number (Perhaps I have in mind 4x12.), and want some-one to guess the number. If one fails to guess correctly, I call on another. THe
one guessing are to give both their examples and answers. For instance one may guess 4x7. He answers 7x4=28.

By doing this I know whether the children are learning the tables at the same time or not. When the right number is guessed, I rub it out. To the child guessing the right one, I allow the privilege of calling upon any one in the class whom he wishes, to try and guess the number he is thinking of.

Then they continue in this manner. I thought perhaps the boys would always call upon boys and girls upon girls, but I find this is not so. I suggested that they call upon children who stand well in line. I think they use very good judgement, and the boys fo call upon the girls also.

I have been having contests during the recitations lately. I have the table written in the board as before, and then have some child who has said all the table correctly, take a pointer.

Then I point to a number, he is to give the answer. If he gives it correctly he may point out one for me to answer, and so on until one makes a mistake.

The child who corrects a mistake takes the place of the one he corrects, so that there are two people with pointers at the board at a time.

The children enjoy this very much and seem to try hard to do good work so that they may have a turn at the contest.

I tried this experiment in one of my other appointments, when the class were drilling upon the states in the Union. The children took great interest in it then, and it has worked equally well this time, although the children are a good deal younger.

This time however I use this more as a reward than I did in the higher grade.

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Week Ending November 20th, 1903, Clara E. Green, grade 7 Elizabeth Street school, Miss Mary A. Portelance

Tuesday, November 17, 1903

The work in nature study is beginning on a new line. The object is to teach the children the different shapes which leaves have and the apexes, bases, and margins.

In order to for this Miss – has taken up a new method. For the first few lessons the shape was talked about and the names such as ovate, and linear were given to the class and the whole lesson dwelt on those things.
After the shapes of leaves, were discussed, the study of apexes was taken up. That work came in to-day’s lesson.

When the rudiments of these separate subjects have been taught the plan is to have the children make charts, illustrating the separate points which have been made. For instance, the class will draw a leaf of the Judas-tree to represent the heart-shaped leaf, a sassafras leaf to represent the ovate shaped leaf and so on.

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 1903.

I find that the class are getting much more interested in the history. The work of the first weeks was to get the story of exploration and discovery settled to some degree in their minds.

We are coming now to the settlement of the colonies and the interest of the children seems to increase.

To-day’s lesson was about the troubles of the Virginia colonists. One thing which the class seemed especially interested in was the subject of slavery.

The children have time given them to study the lesson and then ask questions to bring out the main thoughts in the paragraphs assigned.

After the all the paragraphs which bear upon Virginia have been recited, there will be a review of the whole.

Thursday, November 19.

I tried a good many things in my geography class to-day.

We are studying about the countries of North America south of the United States. To-day’s lesson was about Mexico.

In the first place, as there are a few facts given about the country, in the geography, I had the children take their books and read these facts aloud. As a child read a statement, we discussed it and I explained anything about it which was not clear to the class. After this had been read over, I had the class shut the books and reproduce what had happened.

Since this work was satisfactory, I told the children that they might open the geographies again to the map of Mexico. Then we studied the map and got from it some facts which had not been given in the previous work.
After I had led the class to get all that we could from the maps, I gave them some more facts which were especially interesting. These statements were taken from notes which I had made, taken from standard books outside the regular school-books such as Meiklejohn’s Geography, and Tarr and McMurry’s Geographies; I think the class enjoyed the lesson; I am sure that I did.

Friday, Nov. 20, 1903.

Our reading lesson to-day was of a different nature from the regular reading-lessons. The story was taken from Grimm’s “Fairy Tales” and there was but one book.

With such a lesson as this, it is not very hard to keep the interest and attention of the whole school.

One child took the book and read until he was stopped then he handed the book to the person behind him, who went on with the story.

I find that the class as a whole is improving greatly in the reading. I have tried to make a special effort in getting expression.

Week Ending January 15, 1904 [“3” of “1903” crossed out], Ida L. Whalen, Grade 1 Salem Street, Miss McDermott

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 1904 [“1903” is written with a “4” over the “3”]

I was better pleased with my nature lesson this morning than I have been with any I have yet given here. The lesson was on the cow, but I had given lessons on the same subject last week, so it was not new to the children.

I had brought to school with me a pincushion made from a cow’s horn, which I had found at home. Instead of taking it from the paper and holding it up for every child to see, I opened the lesson in this way.

I had several children come out and look at what was in the paper and then tell the other children one thing about it. One child felt of it and said it was very hard; another said it was black and white; another said it was shiny; and still another tried to draw it on the blackboard in order to show its shape. All this mystery kept even the youngest children interested and after they had guessed that it was a cow’s horn, I held it up for them to see. Then I went around the class and let every child feel of the sharp point and see how hard the horn was.

After that I spoke of the uses of horns, showing the children buttons and a comb made of horn. I also had some leather and some glue to show them, and we talked about the uses of all the parts.
of the cow to man. The little children did not get restless as soon as they usually do, and I think perhaps this was due in part to the things I had to show to them.

Wednesday, Jan. 13

In the poorest reading class to-day I made a house on the blackboard with fire and smoke pouring from the doors and windows and a big ladder leaning against it. On the ladder I wrote words, and I was surprised to see how so simple a device kept the children’s attention. I have used ladders before but to-day was the first time I used a picture, too. The children in the other reading classes give good attention always for the sake of the sticks they receive as reward for correct reading.

Thursday, Jan. 14.

I feel rather tired tonight, and I don’t feel like writing. I am surprised at the amount of patience it takes to teach little children.

Friday, Jan. 15.

Ever since I came here I have been teaching the number six, and now I think most of the children know it fairly well. But I cannot leave it yet, and when I review the numbers before six I feel as though I ought to go back and teach them all over again. I think I shall have to do it, anyway.

[in pencil]

Please excuse the ink on the back of this, I did not see it until this morning, and then I did not have time to rewrite the diary.

Week Ending November 13, 1903, Katherine C. Leahy, grades 3 & 4 Ward Street, Miss Flanagan

Tuesday Nov. 10, 1903.

Frank and James are boys who write with their left hands. They have both been transferred from other schools and have been in this room only a short time.

In both cases the right hand has been trained. I know this because I have observed that if told to do so they can use tis hand and write with it as well as the other.
Both boys will write write [repeated] with the right hand only as long as the teacher watches them. Just as soon as they think they are not observed they go back to the left hand. I have watched both a great many times when they were wholly unconscious of my doing so.

Both boys are very poor writers.

Wednesday Nov. 11, 1903.

This morning in our Geography lesson we read about Japan. What we read was mostly about the people of Japan, their customs and manner of living and also their occupations.

It was one of the most interesting lessons we have had. The children knew a number of things that were not mentioned in the book and were very anxious to tell what they knew.

I also told them some things which had not been mentioned and showed them pictures which illustrated points mentioned not only by me but also some given by the children or in the book.

The children were delighted with these pictures and eager to talk about them. Each picture suggested several new things to be spoken of.

When silk was mentioned all the children were eager to talk. They had studied about the silk worm in some other grade and knew a good deal about it.

I had the cocoon of a silk worm and the children were very much interested when I showed it to them.

Thursday Nov. 12, 1903.

Grace is a girl who has skipped the third grade. She was in the third grade until a week ago when my teacher put her into the fourth grade. Now she is doing better work than some of the regular fourth grade children.

Every paper she hands in to us is perfect. Her work is not only correct but her paper is very neat and also remarkable written. She is not a good reader however and I have to keep her in my poor class in reading.

She finds difficulty in pronouncing the words and does something which she tries hard to correct. That is the dropping of the letter “h” where it should be pronounced and giving the sound of that letter where the letter doesn’t even appear.

She knows what the words mean however even though she cannot pronounce them correctly and can give sentences containing them.
She is a very faithful worker. She is eight years old.

Friday Nov. 13, 1903.
Every Friday morning we have a number test in both grades. I look out for the fourth grade while my teacher takes charge of the third grade.
We give ten examples. If a child has them all correct he gets “one hundred”, being marked ten for each example.
Each child’s record is kept and I was surprised to see how hard they tried. Some of the children who do not do their work at all well on other days get seven or eight examples right on Friday.
It seems strange to me however that children who do excellent work in mental work do poorly in the tests.
I think that perhaps they are so sure of themselves that they are not careful enough.
It is often hard for me to be strictly honest in marking the papers. When I come to a paper belonging to one of my best pupils I do not like to mark an example “zero” especially if there is only a slight error in it.

Week Ending January 22, 1904, Theresa Kehoe, grades 8 and 9 New Woodland Street, Miss Jones + Miss Fitzgerald

Tuesday Jan. 19, 1904
I think to-day’s history lesson was a success. The children have gone much farther in their histories than is prescribed for the second term and have, I think, a good knowledge of the ground that we have gone over. To-day I gave out different histories form those we have been using and went back as far as the discovery of gold in California. I had one pupil read and the others who had their books closed, listened. When the pupil had finished reading I had those who had listened question each other and tell what had been read.
This exercise kept their minds active and made them think and every one took part in it.

Wednesday Jan. 20, 1903
To-day in Latin I taught the children a new use of the ablative and genitive cases that is the ablative and genitive of description. The children found it difficult at first to realize that they might use either the ablative or genitive of description only when an adjective was used with a
noun. By giving sentences illustrating this and having the children give me the Latin sentence [typo] for it, I think they finally saw when the specified cases were to be used and when they were not to be used. I feel that most of them will remember it; For I tested them at the end of the lesson and gave several different tests. I could not puzzle them.

Thursday Jan. 21 [“1” written over “0”], 1904.

In connection with history I read and told the children of the escape of Owen Brown from Harper’s Ferry. The children had become very much interested in the raid made by John Brown in Kansas and I thought this an opportune time to bring in the story of Owen Brown.

I have been having the children reproduce the story orally and I was surprised to see how much they remembered of it.

Friday Jan. 22, 1904.

My German lesson went off well to-day. The story we were reading was interesting and the children were eager to get ahead with the story. I think it was a good instance of attention through interest for they were willing to take a longer lesson than usual in order to finish the story.

Week Ending October 16, 1903, Katherine L. Power, grade 4 Canterbury Street, Miss E. Whalen

Tuesday October 13

I fully realize to-day how plain and easy directions must be made for the children in order that they may realize what is wanted. I wished the pupils to out into their blank books a few facts about Columbus. I gave the directions as to arrangement etc, for the children have not written in blank books before. I even illustrated what I wanted by drawing on the black board a page of the book as it was to look. The result was discouraging to say the least. Out of a school of forty, but ten children followed directions accurately. Perhaps if I had shown them a page from their reading books they would have understood the arrangement.

This seems to me a good example of how much of a lesson the children get that is devoid of illustration or something they can see or do for themselves.

Wednesday – Oct. 14 –
This morning when the children came in it seemed that nearly everyone had something interesting to show or tell to me. Many did not wait until they came in, but met me in the yard, and presented me with leaves, seeds, flowers, etc.

One boy brought a milkweed butterfly very carefully in a box; another told me that he had counted two trees entirely bare of leaves and many nearly so on his way to school; another brought a large branch of witch hazel with the leaves, flowers, and nuts still on it. Indeed we had so much to talk about that I did not give the regular lesson on the distribution of seeds. The children enjoy these talks about the things they bring and the time for the nature lessons does not seem half long enough.

I have been particular about adhering strictly to my times-table, and sometimes one of the hardest parts is to stop the lesson just when the children are interested and eager to continue.

Thursday, Oct. 15 –

I have noticed James since I have been in this room, for he is a boy who claims your attention a good part of the time. In appearance he is pale and ill-looking with small listless eyes which never seem to look one frankly in the face. In my classes I have to continually watch him in order to keep his attention. On the whole he appears so listless that only yesterday I asked him if he did any work outside of school. He told me that he sold papers in the evening, but just enough for spending money.

Something happened today which threw light on James’s indifferent in school, and not only made him interesting to Miss – and [“I” crossed out] me, but he became attractive to the entire school, although in a different way, I imagine. In one of the classes a girl came to Miss – and said that James lit a match and had more in his pocket. Upon investigating we found a card of matches in his packet. I must confess that I did not connect the matches with anything else, but Miss – evidently did, for she immediately told James to take everything out of his pockets. This he readily did until he came to the pockets in his coat. His evident hesitation aroused suspicions, but Miss – calmly told him she wanted to see everything he had. Very reluctantly James took from a coat pocket a package of tobacco. Finally amid many tears James confessed that he had smoked some of the tobacco and had given some of it away to older boys. He also said that he smoked cigarettes, but that his parents did not know of it. The matter was reported to his parents, and they were entirely ignorant of what was going on, and could scarcely believe that it was true.

In thinking this incident over it clearly shows how watchful a teacher should be of her pupils, for in many cases she sees more of them then their parents do.
Friday – Oct. 16

In reading over what I have written in my diary this week I find that I have not said any thing about Anna who has claimed so much attention. She is or appears to be a child who has been spoiled ever since she has been to school, and now she is annoying in many ways. She must see and hear and often give her opinion on any thing that comes up. At first she left her seat and wandered about the room at will, but she was shown that this was strictly forbidden. Often I have noticed that if Miss – and I happen to be talking together Anna immediately finds some excuse to come to the desks. If I correct a pupil in language etc. Anna will make the same mistake then quickly correct herself. When spoken to she puts on an injured air and straight-way becomes sulky.

Today she came to me and said, “Miss Power some of the girls were talking together and we thought about how much better it would be for you if you had a school of your own.” Sometimes it seems hard, but for her own good, I take no notice of her.

[in pencil, different handwriting]

An unusually good diary.

Week Ending March 20th, 1903, Mary E. Finneran, grade 1 Millbury Street, Miss Smith

Tuesday.

This morning I had some difficulty with the number work. The children had forgotten what I thought I had impressed upon their minds, last Friday. But after a few minutes drill the combinations gradually came back to the children. This was a capital example of one of the subjects treated by Mr. Russell in the second class, he spoke of the “Endless Repetition” of the subject before any permanent knowledge of it is gained.

This class differs from the one first mentioned because the children are so unevenly divided according to scholarship. There are eleven children in the class, four cannot count up to five, three know the combinations 1+1=2, 2+1=3 while the remaining four have a superficial idea of the combinations from 1 to 5. It is hard to plan the class work to hold the attention of all, and instead of giving twenty minutes for class work, I gave ten minutes. The remaining time I spent with the children who are learning the combinations 1+1=2 2-1=1 etc. Individual attention brings about better results with these children.

Wednesday.
This morning I took the class of foreign children in reading. These foreign children have great difficulty in reading. I wrote a number of words on the black-board in ladder form and each child chose a word about which he told a story. This story I wrote upon the black-board and then the child read it. If the child could not tell a story about the word, I told one and then wrote upon the board for him to read.

The children were anxious to read the stories as I wrote them upon the black-board. I asked the children to whisper the sentences before reading aloud so that I might be able to tell that children who were not working. I had to tell the children to “whisper” that insisted upon talking aloud the sentences.

When the child found a sentence he could read I allowed him to erase it. This was a pleasant reward.

A number of slips of paper with sentences, similar to those drilled upon in the lesson, was given out to the children. I found that the children had great difficulty to recognize the first word. They were eager to recite and often began with the last word in the sentence. I found it necessary to allow each child the first word in the sentence.

I enjoyed my first lesson with the class as they are eager to learn.

Thursday.

E. is a boy who has interested me since I came to this school. E’s mother is in the Insane Asylum and at times he seems to wander from the work he is doing and talks about extreme things. I have noticed he has talked about people disliking him for no reason at all. This is a sad phase in this child’s life. He does not enjoy playing with the children, at times, then again, he is happy and plays when he is given work to do but Miss – excuses him and encourages his play.

The nature study interests E. and he likes to talk about the different birds and animals. Yesterday in a lesson on the Blue Jay, its cruel habit of killing smaller birds’ young was talked about. This excited E. who reported he saw his father kill the Blue Jay that ate his canary. He said he had a shot gun, which was given him at Christmas time and he would kill the Blue Jays.

Every bird or animal I mention E. can tell about it in an exaggerated way for example he said, “His uncle had elephants” when I asked him what use his uncle’s elephants were, he said his uncle plowed with them in summer. M. said E’s uncle had oxen not elephants. It is surprising to see how angry E. becomes when any child disagrees with him.

Friday.
Today I was left alone with the school. Miss – told me yesterday that she expected to be absent to-day, accordingly, I planned to use some of the extra work I had prepared for such an occasion. I found I had little need for extra work in the morning. The regular programme filled every minute of the morning and when noon came I felt I had good success.

The principal of the building visited me in the afternoon and heard me give the nature lesson which he said was an interesting lesson. Every child was eager to talk and nearly every question brought the sought for answer. Every child left the room at the sound of the dismissal bell in the usual quiet way and I felt pleased with my day with the school.

Week Ending May 22, 1903, Katherine Daley, grade 7 Providence Street Miss White

Tuesday, May 19, 1903.

The pupils in this room keep a record of the wild flowers that they bring in, and I think all are interested in the new flowers. I know that some want to get their names down for as many flowers as possible, but I think most of them are interested in the flowers, themselves. Every morning and especially Monday, they bring in many new kinds. Yesterday morning they brought in fifteen new ones. Miss – takes time every morning to speak of the flowers and to show them to the school. When a number have been brought in the day before, she reviews the names to be sure that they know them; and I think these pupils know a great many wild flowers.

Wednesday, May 20, 1903.

My teacher encourages observation in a great many directions, and I think that she is very successful in getting the pupils interested in natural things. Weather flags are put on the front blackboard, and the pupils, not the teacher, change these as the weather changes. I had not noticed this particularly until today, because the white flag has been up so much. This afternoon after recess, one of the boys came in and put up the blue flag. It did not seem very cloudy to me, and I looked rather questioningly, I am afraid, at the flag, although I said nothing. The boy evidently saw my look, for he said, “The blue flag is up on the State Mutual”. Two or three others said the same thing, and pointed to the flag on the State Mutual building. I had not noticed before that this flag could be seen from this room, but the pupils evidently keep a close watch of it.

Thursday, May 22, 1903.
Two of the pupils in this room, a boy and a girl have just come from the special school. They have not had just the same lessons that the others had the first part of the year, and they try very hard to keep up with the others.

In arithmetic, both do very well, but neither like to recite in class. This is true of the boy, particularly, for his English is not as good as the girl’s. He is from Canada, and he speaks with a decided French accent. He likes to answer in geography when he can do so with only a word or two, and I try to remember to call on him when there is an easy answer or whenever he raises his hand. I like to call on him, because he seems pleased when he answers correctly, and especially if I say, “That’s good, Alfred”; and I know he tries very hard.

Friday, May 22, 1903.

This afternoon, I think, was rather a hard one. Before recess, I took the B class in grammar, while I usually have the A class; and I found it hard to keep the attention as it should be.

After recess, my teacher went out of the room to hear five pupils say their Memorial Day pieces. I was to take both classes in reading.

For the first time since I have been out apprenticing, I had to stop the class to wait for order. The room was really noisy, and nothing that I said stopped it. Finally, I closed my book, and refused to go on with the lesson. I told each class what to study, and I sat at the desk. They must have felt that I meant what I said, for in about a minute, you could have heard a pin drop. For ten minutes I sat there, and they studied, for I wanted to be sure that this quiet was not a thing of the moment. I tooked [typo] the other reading class then, and during it, there was not a sound, in fact, things seemed almost strained.

I think that I may have been partly to blame for not stopping little things in the beginning, but as this sort of thing never happened with my teacher, I did not expect it. Although I lost ten or fifteen minutes, I made them feel that I had more authority; and I resolved to do this if it took till four o’clock, for I know that I shall be alone at times next week when my teacher is drilling on the pieces for Memorial Day.

Week Ending October 23, 1903, Margaret V. Seahy Grade 4 Providence Street Miss Joyce

Tuesday, Oct. 20, ‘03

This morning in my arithmetic class I had a number match. I had put the tables of eight on the board, the multiplication table and the division table. First I had the children recite from the board, having the children stand [in crossed out] by rows. THose in the row who who recited
correctly remained standing, the others sat down when some children from each of the three rows which compose our class were standing I asked them for combinations in the table of “nine” then “ten” and so on until I reached the table of twelve I called on them by turn and those who answered incorrectly sat down. By the time I reached the table of twelve there were but six children standing. It seemed that we were going to have a tie until I asked for “twelve times twelve.” They all failed on that. It was answered by one of the other children. The interest in the match was noticeable. Each child was eager to see “who would stand the longest.”

Wednesday, Oct. 21, 1903

A branch of the witch-hazel on which there was an abundance of blossoms and as well as seed vessels brought in by one of the pupils suggested a topic for what proved an interesting lesson. I called attention to the fact that blossoms and fruit appeared at the same time as the children compared it with other shrubs as to the time that blossoms appear. The children knew that its bark is used for medicinal purposes and the majority of them are familiar with the extract. They were all interested in the fact that it has been used as a divining rod.

Thursday, Oct. 22, ‘03

The after-noon when we were reading about cotton in the reading books I was glad that I had a good specimen of the cotton plant to show the children. One of the older girls from another room brought in to our room yesterday a cotton plant about two feet high which she said her sister who has been travelling through the South all summer brought from Georgia. The plant is an excellent specimen showing the root and the balls in several stages of development. The children were interested and asked many questions about the plant. They all wished to see the seeds.

Friday, Oct. 23, ‘03.

One of my boys discovered this morning that there are paragraphs in his spelling book which are extracts from a history. When he first noticed this he came to me with the book and pointing out the passage with his finger wanted to know “if that isn’t history?” When I said that it was he smiled in a satisfied sort of way and went back to his seat and applied himself diligently to the task of mastering the contents of the paragraph. He was delighted when he found that there were many more paragraphs of the same nature. He is a good speller and learns his lesson quickly and will no doubt read in his spelling book in future while the other children are studying their spelling. He is so ahead of the other children both in reading and in spelling.
Tuesday, Sept. 22.

The girl who has been giving me so much trouble about paying attention was one of the best in the class to-day. Last Thursday I talked with her telling her that since she was one of the largest girls she ought to be a help. This seemed to have no effect Friday so I am doubtful as to what caused the change to-day. She kept her eyes on the book and read well. I allowed her to collect the books telling her she had read so well.

Wednesday, Sept. 23.

Five children from out Third Grade were sent into another room and four new ones came into the Second Grade. This makes my Second Grade Reading class the larger now, and has made my Third Grade class a much better size. I think I had much better results from the class to-day.

I have just started to teach a Finnish girl to read. She does not understand a word of English. I used an illustrated Reader to-day. Each word had a picture beside it as “a ball” [little drawing of a baseball]. I took up ten words to-day drilling on each one. I covered the pictures and asked for the words also covered the words and asked for the names of the pictures. She had difficulty with cow calling it “coo” and drum. I cannot tell just how she pronounced that but after a time she got them fairly well.

Thursday, Sept. 24.

To-day Sophia; the Finish girl, remembered most of the words I tried to teach her yesterday. I wrote several sentences beginning with have and has and then I wondered if those words meant anything to her I wrote “Has Sophia a cow?” She read it and then I looked at her and asked the same question. She seemed doubtful but, after I showed her a picture of the cow and repeated my question pointing to her, she smiled. Then I wrote yes and no pronouncing them. She said “No.” Then I gave her some more questions of the same kind changing the last word. If she said “Yes” I wrote the word adding “I have a _____” and making her read it. She seemed pleased to think she understood. I asked for one question, “Has Sophia a foot?” She said “Yes,” and then I asked “One?” She smiled and said, “Two.” In that way I worked in the plural of foot writing the answer for her. In the same way I taught her the plural of arm, eye and ear.
Miss – says that Sophia has picked up the names of some of the numbers in the Number Class by hearing the other children give them.

Friday, Sept. 25.

Today I reviewed the sentences with Sophia. She has some difficulty in remembering has and have. I taught her the word give using sentences like, “Give me a paper.” After she could read it I repeated the sentence and had her give me different things such as cup, hat and coat. Then I had her put up the different things and wrote the requests after I had spoke them. I tried to teach her the word speak by pointing to my mouth and saying “I speak.” When I asked, “Can Sophia speak [no end quotes] she did not seem to understand but after I showed her a cat and asked “Can a cat speak?” she smiled and said “No.” Then she said she could speak. I tried to get her to speak by saying “You speak.” She could not quite understand this although she tried. She has had nearly all her spelling papers wrong this year. I think that up to to-day she had only one word right.

To-day I had fifteen spare minutes during the time the children were studying their spelling so tried to help her. First I pointed to each word on her paper, pronounced it and had her repeat it several times. Then I took her paper away and had her try to write the words as I pronounced them. She made a few mistakes but after a few minutes she wrote them all right. When the time came for the lesson she wrote every word as it was given out and has a perfect paper.

Week Ending October 2, 1903, M. Kennedy, grade 9 Lamartine Street Miss Cunningham

Tuesday, September 29, 1903.

To-day I started to give a lesson on the changes of seasons.

I imagined that the pupils in this grade would have a store of facts that would help me in getting the facts from them. I was surprised to find that some of the pupils didn’t know what I meant by the term, “axis.”

I had to go over little points and the children lost interest in the lesson. I couldn’t blame them for I lost my interest and was discouraged.

I feel that this lesson is more of a failure than any that I have ever given. I have geography to-morrow and I am hoping that that [repeated] I shall have better success.

Wednesday, September 30, 1903.
This afternoon I gave another lesson on the change of seasons and I feel that it was a decided success.

I am just as happy tonight as I was discouraged last night. To begin with I felt eager to get at it to see if I could redeem myself. I had a little start from yesterday and the children could follow me better on this account.

I lit a gas jet representing the sun, and with the room darkened, it threw a good light on the globe that I had.

With these I showed them the position of the sun’s rays on the earth at different seasons of the year.

This lesson lasted for an hour, but even in this time I did not cover much ground. During the lesson I felt that the children understood what I was talking about.

Thursday, October 1, 1904.

I had the school alone to-day and everything went well.

The greatest trouble that I have had in my other appointments when left alone, has been with myself and not with the children. I have found myself on the alert, looking for trouble. This has always been my attitude and although I realized what I was doing I could not seem to help myself.

I have been surprised that I have not had more trouble on account of looking for it.

Today I did not have this trouble with myself and I felt more at ease.

Friday, October 2, 1903.

This afternoon while I was having my reading lessons, Miss – listened and marked the children.

We did not tell the children that they were being marked, but that soon found it out. I think this made them a little nervous and they did not do as well as usual.

Week Ending May 8, 1903, Mary Haire, grade 4 Chandler Street Miss Murray

Tuesday, May 5

In my nature lessons for the past two or three days I have been trying to have more free time and easy intercourse. I have been trying all along to get more and more from the pupils, and I think I
have improved in this, being often very much surprised at the amount I could get from them. But before this I had tried to save the greater part of the personal experiences for the latter part of the period. But I thought I would change. To-day I gave a lesson on ants. After the remarks on length of day, new flowers, etc. I asked them if they had ever stepped onto an ant’s hill. Of course they had and all were ready to describe what happened – great confusion in the nest, ants carrying away the eggs, etc. From this it was very easy to tell about the worker ants and to describe the structure of the hill, b, being the lower chamber into which the worker ants take the eggs, etc. in times of danger, through the narrow passage-ways, a. There was hardly a sound in the room when I drew the diagram [a drawing is included] and explained it. In this way we carried on the lesson as it were, supplying the missing links in the children’s knowledge. I kept the class five minutes overtime with my teacher’s consent, and even at the end of that time it seemed as if we could go on talking indefinitely.

Wednesday, May 6.

My teacher left me alone for about an hour to-day – from eleven till twelve. Everything went on beautifully for about half an hour. Then they began to get restless and noisy. The time for my lesson with the A class wasn’t quite up, but I stopped, took a book, and stepped up to the desk without a word, and began to talk about Indian legends. Then I began to read them one of the old Greek legends. The noise still continued, through growing fainter, during the first three or four lines. By that time it had stopped entirely I had perfect attention during the rest of the time. After the story I added a little of my own experiences. The whole thing took less than ten minutes, and the room was quiet for the rest of the morning.

Thursday, May 7, 1903.

I opened the school this morning, and everybody seemed to take it as a matter of course. I open the school quite often. At first they seemed to think it very strange, looking around and smiling at each other. For the past two or three times there has been none of this.

Friday, May 8.

Oh, I feel so sorry to leave! I love the children here. They are so full of life and interest. If it were not for those two boys, this would be a beautiful school. In my nature lesson, I sat down and gave a real heart to heart talk, the editor of “Our Dumb Animals” forming the basis. I think I got the children to agree with me (I emphasized the fact that animals have same feelings as we hunger, cold, fear, love, to certain degree) and they had many tales to tell, sad and otherwise.
Tuesday, Oct. 6, 1903.

It was not until this week that I learned how helpful it is to write out the plan of each lesson, however simple the lesson may be.

This takes a little time to be sure, but I find it is time well spent.

In writing out the plan of my lessons I first note the points which I think are most important, and how I can best impress them upon the children. I also note the less important points in order that I may not make the mistake of dwelling upon them too long.

At the end of each lesson or as soon after as I can, I go over the plan which I made out previously and try to see where in I could make it better. I sometimes feel it would be better if I omitted one or two steps. Again I think I could improve some lessons by making a few additions.

To-day I gave a number lesson and in making out my plan for this lesson I decided to teach two new points, namely, 4+1=5, 4-1=3.

During the first part of my lesson my plan worked nicely, but as I was about to take up the second point, I found that I could not follow out my plan exactly, because of unexpected conditions.

I discovered that two of the children in my class did not know as much as much as I gave them credit for. As a result I was obliged to change my plan quickly and try to adapt myself to the conditions.

Wednesday, Oct. 7.

To-day my teacher gave a short talk to the children on “Truthfulness. [no end quotes] The children seemed to give the best of attention and they also appeared to feel that what Miss – said was for their own good.

I have noticed that Miss – is exact in everything she does and says. This I think goes a great ways in teaching the children to be so. If she makes a promise, I have noticed that she is faithful in carrying it out. If she makes a threat she sees to it that she carries it out to the very end.

It seems to me that Miss – trys [typo] to set a good example to the children in all that she says or does.
Thursday, Oct. 8.

To-day, for the first time Miss – introduced a new feature into the school work. That is, it was new to these children.

It (new feature) consisted of a reward in the form of a star to be placed after the name of each child who behaved nicely during the day.

The fact the children were to receive stars pleased them very much. “They were going to work for a star”. This seemed to be a great inducement from the out set.

When it came time to go home to-night, there were but three children who were allowed to receive stars. Miss – made known these children and then she put on the stars after their names before all the children.

At this point the children became eager, and at first I feared jealousy would arise, but I found that no such case occurred.

A number of the children cried out, “To-morrow, I’m going to get a star, because I’ll be awful good”.

I was very much pleased along this same line to notice, that not one of the three children who received the stars became conceited.

Friday Oct. 9, 1903.

Yesterday, when E– came to school, I noticed that his face and hands were very dirty, in fact they were so dirty that I spoke to him privately about it. When the afternoon session began he came into the schoolroom with very clean hands and a clean face. I commended him for this and he seemed very much pleased.

To-day he came to school early and I noticed that his hair was very slick. When school began I had occasion to pass his desk. He had placed both his hands on the top of his desk and as I approached him he kept turning them over in order that I might see that they were clean. I am anxious to see how long he will continue to keep his face and hands clean. I understand his parents are negligent in this matter.

Week Ending September 18, 1903, Florence A. Case, grade 4 Grafton Street Miss Mary Thompson

Friday, Sept. 11, 1903.
I spent most of my time to-day, watching my teacher, or trying to get some idea of the kind of pupils I am going to have.

I think I shall enjoy my work here, not because I have an ideal school, for i think some of the pupils are far from being ideal. I think I shall like it because the school is made up of an entirely different class of children from any I have taught.

For instance, there are children here I think, who often go without a meal and think nothing of it. Very few of them have more than the bare necessities of life. I think this has perhaps done them more good than harm, for they appreciate anything that is done for them, and they are bright and wide awake.

The children look up to their teacher, and i have noticed that they feel thoroughly ashamed when they know they have done something which has hurt her feelings.

Tuesday 15, 1903

In my reading class to-day, the children used books that were used in the second grade where I apprenticed. These children could not read as well as second grade children, and at the end of the lesson I saw that they must get second grade reading lessons.

Before the lesson I did not take into consideration the fact that some of the children do not see a book, or at least an English book all summer. They hear little or no English read at home, and very little spoken.

When I thought of this, I felt that the children were not to blame for their poor reading, and I resolved to help them as much as possible. They need good sharp word drills and training in expression.

Wednesday, Sept. 16.

I was rather surprised to know that we have a girl truant. She has been at school about half the time.

My teacher decided that it was about time to stop it. She sent a child to tell her parents of the truracy, and received a note in broken English, asking her to do what she could for Jennie, as they would do nothing with her at home.

My teacher thinks the work in the grade is far above the child and that school is dull for her because she understands nothing that is going on.
She thinks the best way to stop the truancy, is to put her in the second grade perhaps, where she will understand the work, and consequently become interested and so want to go to school.

Thursday, Sept. 17.

I began to give geography to-day. I am taking up China. At the back of the room are charts which have on them, pictures of Chinese people houses or other things relating to China.

These were brought by last year’s children, but my teacher told me if they were hung up, these children would be interested to look at home, to see if they could find similar things.

When I gave my lesson to-day I asked the children to bring in anything they had relating to the subject. Several promised things, and this noon I had some pictures brought in which showed different Chinese costumes. A bamboo cane was brought in also.

Before school this afternoon the children were grouped about the charts examining things, and telling each other all that they knew about China.

I think this way of taking up the subject will make things real, and in the end the children will really have some idea of the Chinese and how they live.

Friday, Sept. 18.

I carried on to-day’s geography lesson, in the same way that I did yesterday’s. That is I tried to get the children interested in China by having them see things about China, or anything representing Chinese life.

I showed the children the things which other children had brought in, and I praised them for what they had done.

I brought chop sticks, and the children knew what they were, and they told how they had seen Chinamen using them. One little boy showed us how they were used. I think this plan is going to work well, as the children were interested, and eager to tell me all they knew.

Week Ending September 18, 1903, Winifred M. Geary, grade 5 Winslow Street Miss E. G. Goodwin

Friday, Sept. 11.

I am back in my old place, but everything seems so different. At the first glance the school appeared to be as quiet as before, but after I had been there a short time I could see a great
difference. Before everything went like clockwork. The children seemed to know just what to do and they asked but few questions. Now the children question every few minutes and about everything. Although I know most of the ways of the school, many of their questions about details puzzle me, because I had seen the results, and did not know how they had been led up to.

The children have not yet learned Miss –’s ways and do not always do as she says. I have noticed many little instances to-day of attempts on the children’s part to rebel a little. Firm as Miss – was, I noticed that the children seemed puzzled rather than angry when they found that she always persisted.

Tuesday, Sept. 15. [“5” written over “4”]

The children have got used to my being here now and have already begun to try me. I have my hands full, because there are so many little ways in which Miss – gets order. I am continually being surprised by the ways on which she treats particular cases. She never seems at a loss as to what to do, and I think that is why she accomplishes so much and the children can never get away from her. So fat I have found that my greatest trouble is that I can never think quickly enough what to do.

Wednesday, Sept. 16.

Miss – has a definite way for doing everything and the children cannot use their own fancy in very many ways. There are certain ways for arranging papers, and for writing the different lessons. All must be alike as far as the general plan goes. This trains the children in attending to what the children says, because Miss – not only gives directions, but she persists in those directions and will not give up until they have been followed out to the very letter. Often she is very quiet and gentle about it, not seeming to be especially anxious about it, but nevertheless she gains her point, and the child knows it too. Even in these few days I have noticed a marked change in two or three children. They now obey Miss – directly, where before they hesitated and tried to evade work.

Thursday, Sept. 17.

The first sewing lesson was given to-day. The children expected to begin sewing at once, but instead, the teacher talked about the proper position for sewing and the different fingers and movements of the hands. The children were surprised and amused at this. – It seemed to them like some game, at first they were too much surprised to answer the questions asked, and I was afraid the teacher would think them very dull. After they had been given needle and thread they
waked up and were ready to talk. They got no further than making a knot. The lessons promise to be very interesting and I am looking forward to the next one.

Friday, Sept. 18.

There are two boys in the room, who have shown no great interest in anything – I was much surprised as I watched them this morning when Miss – was explaining about the thermometer, weather-vane and weather ? signals. These boys seemed to know more about those things than any of the others and looked pleased and interested throughout the lesson. After the lesson was over they became the same rather chill boys again. I shall watch them during my general lessons next week and see if this interest holds good for all subjects.

Week Ending November 20, 1903, Julia L. Buckley, grade 3 Grafton Street Miss Fleming

Tuesday, Nov. 17.

I have been especially pleased with Miss –’s manner while I have been at this school, and I think I have learned a great deal from her in regard to teaching, and also in regard to discipline.

She does not seem to hold herself a very great ways from the children, but is always ready to enjoy a joke with them.

However, she does not for a minute lose her control over the children; and even though she does appear at times rather friendly with them they always seem to regard her authority, and do not take advantage of this familiarity.

Wednesday, Nov. 18.

To-day in my reading lesson I found that almost all the children were confusing the words: “picture” and “pitcher,” so I drew a picture of each on the black board, and put the names under them in colored chalk.

Then I had the children sound each word according to the phonics to see if they might remember them by that means.

When I asked some of the other children about these words I found that they had the same trouble. I then decided that this would make a language lesson that would be helpful to the children.
I left the pictures of each on the board, and drilled them on the meaning of the two words; as for instance, for one feature of the drill I would have a child come to the board, and write the word that we would get water in; and I found I could easily introduce a great deal of variety.

After this I put about ten sentences on the board as: We hang a _____ on the wall, and we get water in a _____; and had the pupils copy them putting the right word in the space left for it.

Thursday, Nov. 19.

To-day I helped my teacher in a few new ways. I took charge of the Register and Day Book, and I am going to have charge of them every day while I am at this school.

I helped Miss – to-day also in making out the children’s reports, and I enjoyed it very much, because I had never done anything like this before, and I had a chance to learn how to do it.

In order to fill out the reports the children’s eyes and ears had to be tested. Miss – took a child out into the hall, and showed me how to test his eyes; and then I took out the rest of the children.

Tuesday I am going to test their sense of hearing. I like to do this because it gives me a chance to see what children have imperfect sight and hearing.

I was surprised to find that many children who I thought had perfect sight had imperfect sight.

Friday, Nov. 20.

I have been interested in watching David. He is a somewhat nervous child, and frequently gets fits of laughing. Any little affair that may occur in class, and which might cause only a smile from the majority of the children will always start David laughing, and then he finds it very hard to stop.

At first I did not know that this laughing was due to nervousness, and I told him if he did not stop it he could not stay in the class.

Later I had a talk with him, and I decided that it was harder for him to stop than I had thought. To-day I noticed in class that he was trying very hard to stop laughing, but that he could not do so when he looked at any of the other children so I called on him to read.

After this I had him tell me about what he had read, and I was glad to see that this changed his thoughts, and as a result his laughing was checked.
Tuesday.

I have been interested and much amused to read the letters which my children wrote to one of those classmates who has been out of school sick for three weeks. I gave the lesson on lesson-writing and after teaching the correct form, we spoke of the different spirits which prompted letter-writing. I spoke of a kindly spirit which often prompted us to write a letter to wish our friends well or to sympathize with them in trouble or illness, and I tried to make them feel as though they would like to write to Josie as I did not like the idea of making the lesson compulsory and thus distasteful, possibly. The result was just what I had hoped for, and I could tell from the frank and sympathetic manner in which they wrote that the exercise was a pleasant rather than an irksome task. They told what they had to say openly and just as if they were talking to her.

The form was well followed and the thoughts were well expressed. Some of the English was not good and there were many mistakes to be criticized, but on the whole I was very well pleased with the fruits of my lesson.

Wednesday.

I have been interested in what a wonderful response my teacher gets to any suggestion she makes. It is a ready response and the children never seem to let the slightest suggestion go unnoticed.

The children have been working out designs for pin-cushion covers, in ink on white paper, for drawing. When these were done, my teacher suggested that instead of paper they might use linen or silk and fill in the design with silk thread instead of ink. I thought this might interest a few of the children but I found that half the school took the suggestion and some of the girls worked out the designs and they were very pretty. This is simply an instance of the way any suggestion of my teacher is worked upon by these children and I might cite a dozen others I have noted since I have been here.

A great deal of this is caused by the general ability of the children to do something in the line suggested because my teacher has a way of explaining herself very carefully and giving very helpful helps. She is the same way with me that she is with them and helps me a great deal.
These children have been studying Africa in their geography, so I thought I would use their knowledge of Africa as material for letter writing for my language lessons. I put this outline on the board:

1. Egypt
   1. Nile - crocodiles, pyramids, sphinx.
   2. Cairo - streets, stores.

2. Sahara.
   1. Caravan, camel
   2. Oasis, date-palm
   3. Desert

3. South Africa.
   1. Cape Colony - Table Mt.
   2. Ostrich farming, diamonds

Then I explained that I wanted them to imagine they were travelling in Egypt and write an interesting letter home to one of their Worcester friends, telling all about the sub-topics I had on the board, using their knowledge for material. Many of the children took Egypt for their subject and headed their letters, Cairo, Egypt.

Some of the more imaginative children pictured a desert journey and told all about the “ship of the desert”, and the great oasis owned by France. These letters were fine.

The others preferred South Africa and diamond fields and ostrich farming was the subject treated. I thought that this might be the favorite topic because these children had just had a geography lesson in which these last two subjects were taught and this material was freshest in their minds. But very few took South Africa, Egypt being the favorite country to travel through. The children seemed to enjoy writing these stories and they were very fine letters.

Friday.

In the past few days a little whispering has been going on in this room. The children never before thought of whispering during school hours but suddenly a different state of affairs prevailed. Now the children have not had any fear of whispering. This is due to one of two things. Perhaps
it was started by one boy, a large, useless sort of lad, who doesn’t do very much in school but annoy. This is the probable cause.

Then these children have been taught to use their lips a great deal. Instead of loud couvert work the children here whisper their lessons in couvert. More couvert work is used in this school than in any other I know of.

From whispering in couvert they have naturally grown to whisper to themselves and this would give a disorderly appearance to a room even tho’ there was no real disorder.

Now they whisper to each other and my teacher has very quickly stopped this by punishing severely the offenders she has found. It is interesting how a thing like this will work in and if nipped in the bud, disappear as quickly as it appeared.

[end of diary]