ABSTRACT

“DOMESTIC MEMORY”: THE JOURNALS, CORRESPONDENCE AND ARTIFACTS OF HENRIETTA MGCUFFEY HEPBURN

by Erin Toothaker

This work accompanies the exhibit “Domestic Memory,” curated and installed in the Walter Havighurst Special Collections of King Library at Miami University in the spring and summer, 2013. Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn lived a long and rich life from 1832-1922, during which she witnessed tremendous social, political, and cultural changes in American life from within the domestic world she sustained for her family. “Domestic Memory” displays objects from the McGuffey and Hepburn homes, together with written reflections on those artifacts. The collection focuses on connections between individuals, their material possessions, and the larger societies in which they lived. Hepburn’s written records from 1851 to 1910 provide a lens through which we can look anew at the Victorian Cult of Domesticity during an extensive period in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United States. This work examines the methodology of presenting this project in the form of an exhibit.
“DOMESTIC MEMORY”: THE JOURNALS, CORRESPONDENCE AND ARTIFACTS OF HENRIETTA MGCUFFEY HEPBURN

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Introduction

“A Small World Re-created for Us”¹

Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn lived a long and rich life from 1832 – 1922, a period during which she witnessed tremendous social, political, and cultural changes in American life from within the domestic world she created and sustained for her family. She was born in Oxford, Ohio July 10, 1832 to Harriet Spining McGuffey and William Holmes McGuffey. Her marriage to A.D. Hepburn spanned the years from 1857-1921; decades that encompassed the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Gilded Age, and into the Progressive Era. She and her husband had two children, Charles (1858-1929) and Henrietta (Etta) (1859-1932).² This exhibit on “Domestic Memory” displays domestic objects from the McGuffey and Hepburn family homes, together with written reflections on those artifacts. The collection focuses on the connections between individuals, their material possessions, and the larger societies in which they lived. Written records of Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn’s life as an Ohio woman during the years between 1851 and 1910 provide a unique lens through which we can look anew at the Victorian Cult of Domesticity, a set of womanly attributes defined by “four cardinal virtues - piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity.”³ As historian Barbara Welter argued almost fifty years ago, the Cult of Domesticity dominated white middle class culture in the nineteenth century and Henrietta Hepburn’s life clearly exemplifies the ideals of domesticity and piety. We can see this in her writings and personal associations, in the diaries of other family members, and in extant financial records.

“Domestic Memory” underscores the role of tradition, the dominant cultural values of femininity in the United States, and the influence of figures like Catharine Beecher and Hepburn’s own father, William Holmes McGuffey, in the formation of domesticity during an extensive period in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in

the United States. By examining the everyday sensory experiences of domestic life across time and place, this collection of documents and material objects demonstrates how prosaic tactile experiences were loaded with cultural significance. As historian David Blight has written such representations of connection provide a context for examining the past, for: “Without context, we can end up with only objects to examine; we risk simple, single, casual explanations of the past.”

Hepburn’s journals, diaries and other written records, in the framework of nineteenth century cultural expectations for true womanhood, provide such a context for domestic memory.

Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn recorded daily events with a serenity that belied the tremendous challenges within the communities and nation that she lived in. Hepburn remembered and preserved her experiences through her diaries, letters, personal reminiscences, a family history, photographs and material objects. Historians including Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora have viewed history and memory as different ways of interpreting the past. Other historians have asserted that the common collective interpretation of the past and history have a more interconnected relationship than previously concluded. The rich resources Hepburn left- decades of writings, material objects, and photographs- allow us to discern the meanings attached to material objects and items of sentimental value by Henrietta Hepburn and women like her in small-town America in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Domestic memory is the memory of basic tactile and sensory experiences in one’s life, such as touch, sound, and smell. Domestic memory includes many different aspects of life within the family and home. These memories are some of the earliest and most basic ways that individuals begin to form their connections to the world around them and their place within it. These memories include the feel of textiles used in the home, the sound of a child’s voice, the smells of home cooking or garden herbs and flowers, as well as the way these experiences are remembered and reflected upon across subsequent generations. Henrietta Hepburn’s diaries focused upon daily events, the weather, and the preparation of food and the details of running a home. The diaries describe basic aspects of domestic life. Henrietta Hepburn’s life was focused on the comfort and health of the

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members of her family. Her labor ensured that her family was well fed, and carefully
dressed, educated in both intellectual and religious teachings, and cared for in times of
need. Through her writings we learn what she did and where she was at certain points in
time, but more significantly we can understand the domestic memory of Henrietta
McGuffey Hepburn and the particular pride that she took in loving her husband, caring
for her children, furnishing her home, or sewing sturdy or attractive clothing for her
family. In this context, objects take on meaning that transcends their utilitarian use.

Hepburn described a particular sort of domestic experience. The feminine role
that she prided herself on fulfilling was defined in newly professionalized terms. The
domestic world by which she defined herself was in response to cultural changes that
were a response to the industrial revolution and capitalism. Some historians have defined
this new realm of feminine power as a sphere separate from the professional public life of
men. More recent interpretations, however, have determined that the power that women
held was not separate from the workings of their male counterparts. Historian Catherine
Allgor’s *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a
Government* argues that “middle-class and elite women used a veil of respectability to
work aggressively towards their political goals” during the early American period in
United States history. Her work contributes to an ongoing body of literature that
suggests that power in this era of American history was held by both men and women,
women’s influence was not separate from male power, but operated in a much more
complicated and nuanced power structure. Male and female influence was woven
throughout both public and private American life. Hepburn did not appear interested in
advocating for a dramatic political agenda. However, living her life within the tenants of
the Cult of Domesticity seems to have led her to take her life’s work very seriously.
While she seemed to be writing about a quiet peaceful life seemingly unaffected by
national tension or regional fractures, she was advocating a revolutionary form of family
life. Because the values of the Cult of Domesticity privileged a quiet, orderly, respectable
family life linked to idealized national traditions these experiences, like the political
influence that Allgor described decades before, “were not seen as feminist, radical

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victories but as family work of conservative wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters.”

Disentangling the influence of the Cult of Domesticity from Hepburn’s own desires and values requires a close reading of documents and can prove frustrating as she seems to have never stepped outside of these cultural boundaries of behavior prescribed for middle or upper-class women.

Themes

Gender

Gender has become an essential framework for interpreting the past. Daphne Spain provided a useful definition of the term gender: “Gender’ refers to the socially and culturally constructed distinctions that accompany biological differences associated with a person’s sex. While biological differences are constant over time and across cultures (i.e. there are only two sexes), the social implications of gender differences vary historically and socially.” While the meaning of the term continues to be refined with the findings of historians and the influence of scientific findings, gender, as Joan Scott asserted in her influential article on the topic, “becomes a way of denoting ‘cultural constructions’- the entirely social creation of ideas about appropriate roles for women and men. It refers to the social origins of the subjective identities of men and women.” In more recent scholarship, Scott describes gender as a relational construction of identity that may include biological sex, but may not determine how one sexually expresses their biological state. Gender is constructed and performed in many different ways. Gender studies have given historians a framework to understand sex, sex roles and cultural expectations that are far more varied and accurate than many interpretations of sex and gender that had dominated western history, especially since the nineteenth century. Gender provides a framework to examine how culturally determined social organizations are articulated. Gender provides insight into the roles that men, women, and children have performed in the past. Historians have used gender to understand sex roles in

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society and why value has been ascribed to performing gender in culturally determined ways. Henrietta Hepburn performed gender within a social space where, in Judith Butler’s words, the “reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulate[d] and constrain[ed].”\(^\text{10}\) Beginning in the 1850s women’s roles in society shifted as, their role as caregivers, teachers, and homemakers was invested with increased cultural importance.

Henrietta Hepburn would not have interpreted gender in the same way that historians evaluate her experiences and those of women like her. However, constant reminders of the ways that she was expected to adhere to the conduct and values attributed to her sex during her lifetime would have surrounded her. She would have received these messages from books and magazines designed for women, from her family members such as her father and her older sister and from her friends and acquaintances in the behavior they presented and the conduct that they did not approve of. She lived in a time when the Cult of Domesticity reinforced masculine and feminine behaviors. Though society changed dramatically during her lifetime and many of the standards of gendered behavior were relaxed or changed by the time she was an elderly woman, Henrietta believed in the values that she had been taught as a young woman and continued to practice her role as she had learned it.

Historian Debra Reid believed that interpreting the role of gender in house museums, like the William Holmes McGuffey Museum, could influence broader work. She argues that historians need to examine how women’s roles in the home influenced relations in the broader community, “[r]ecognizing the role that women played in constructing and sustaining a home can help researchers move the understanding of gender relations in the past beyond the traditional ideas of women at work in the kitchen and men at work outside the home.”\(^\text{11}\) Reid’s work showed that incorporating gendered perspectives into the house museum provides greater insight into the lives of people who lived in the home, “The domicile” she writes “provides the perfect site to interpret gender


\(^{11}\) Debra Reid, “Making Gender Matter: Interpreting Male and Female Roles in Historic House Museums”, 83.
and its influence.”¹² The small house museum provides historical insight into the home. But gender also shaped interactions in the home at the time and fostered divisions in labor that continue to influence interpretation and representation of the past.

The gendered aspects of the physical space of the home created differences in the experiences of domestic daily life. Daphne Spain, wrote in *Gendered Spaces*, that the gender implication of spacial arrangements in the home, the space in which experiences occur, should be examined. Gendered expectations of how physical spaces should be used by men or woman in daily life impacted how these spaces were represented in the home and community. Gendered expectations of the use of space affected the types of items that were in use by men and women in domestic spaces and the broader community during their lifetimes. Both A.D. Hepburn and William Holmes McGuffey have buildings named for them, but their existing correspondence focused largely on career and university events and did not examine their domestic experience. Henrietta’s beautifully crafted diaries and reminiscences are the only voice that recorded the domestic world that she and they inhabited for decades of their lives. This also impacts which items have been preserved, and are displayed or saved to show Henrietta and Andrew’s lives. Their experiences were not unique; the gendered use of spaces within the home or community were indicators of the broader experiences of many men and women of similar class and economic circumstances. Spain quotes Brinton on the interplay of institutions and then continues on to say, “Equally important are the spaces in which institutional activities occur. Families must be analyzed in the context of dwellings.”¹³ Spain’s work provides a useful introduction to gender’s spacial implications, which are essential to a richer understanding of the contemporary experiences of the Hepburns and their subsequent representation in museums.

The physical arrangement of objects and furniture in the home reified gender roles and duties. Some spaces were portrayed as more private, while other spaces have been characterized as public or more formal. The gendered space of the home held implications for both Henrietta and A.D. Hepburn. As Spain notes, “According to feminist geographers, a thorough analysis of gender and space would recognize that

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¹² Ibid, 87.
definitions of femininity and masculinity are constructed in particular places—most notably the home, workplace, and community—and the reciprocity of these spheres of influence should be acknowledged in analyzing status differences between the sexes.”

The rooms in nineteenth-century homes were arranged to best accommodate the tasks of home management. Women’s labor, depending upon class and status, could take place in the kitchen, dining area, or parlor. Some homes were arranged with specifically designated male spaces such as a study or library. Spain asserts that investigating the nature of these spaces can provide material evidence of gendered values in the nineteenth-century: “Our understanding of the tenacity of gender inequalities…can be improved by considering the architectural and geographic spacial context in which they occur.” Understanding the gendered reasons behind seemingly mundane spacial arrangements in the nineteenth century home as Spain suggested can provide a useful starting point.

Andrew’s labor was largely removed from the domestic space of the home. His role as minister required that he call upon various members of the community and congregation. As Henrietta recorded shortly after their marriage, “Andrew left this morning to make some pastoral visits he will be back tomorrow.” Most of his labor as a minister took place in the public space of the church, or in taking an active role in the community. Most of his work as a professor also took place outside of the home.

Nancy Cott has described how the Victorian values fostered specialization and the division between male and female roles in home and family. This created division between public and private, she argues, appeared as if it were the natural course, “The shift of production and exchange away from the household and a general tightening of functional ‘spheres’ (specialization) in the economy and society at large, made it seem ‘separate’. But a cultural halo ringing the significance of home and family—doubly brilliant because both religious and secular energies gave rise to it—reconnected woman’s ‘separate sphere with the well-being of society.”

Many cultural and economic changes

14 Ibid, 7.
15 Ibid, 3.
in the nineteenth century contributed to a codification and professionalization of the articulation of the values of the Cult of Domesticity. Proponents of these new domestic ideals presented them as an articulation and enactment of traditional values. Their rhetoric effectively professionalized new ideals of home life while presenting them as a

However, the distinction between domestic life and community were blurred when dinner parties with university administrators took place in the home. Here a space that could be considered private was reframed; the domestic act of providing a nice meal became more public. Henrietta was careful to note the variety of dishes that were served and the flowers that adorned the table on such occasions. In this situation, domestic female activity served to support the professional male labor of a university professor.

Henrietta lived in a world that required complicated negotiations of the division between public life and private space. In a nineteenth century world bounded by home and church, Henrietta Hepburn’s experiences show the ways that national events impacted how women and families lived within the broader nineteenth century culture. 

As Annette Adkins wrote in *We Grew Up Together: Brothers and Sisters in Nineteenth-Century America*, Distinctions between public and private life became more fixed as stronger governments were able to meet needs previously filled by families or charities such as “…education, poor relief, care of the mentally sick and feeble.”

Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn’s writings, correspondence and material objects provide insight into the significance of gender and its influence in the spaces in which her she lived and how the memory of these spaces was recorded.

*Labor*

If a woman’s home life was similar to the domestic ideal of the nineteenth century, their expectations and presentation could disguise the actual work and thought that fostered the home. As Cott writes, “Women’s domestic occupations have been confused with leisure because of the contrast they offered to men’s occupations outside the home and because of the conflations of the two contrasts, work/leisure, work/home.

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But only the small elite who could employ numerous servants had leisure to speak of."\textsuperscript{20} Women’s work has not always been evaluated in a way that considers the intentionality and labor involved. For much of American history women’s labor in home, fields or a marketplace was essential to the survival of the family. In the nineteenth century the labor of caring for a family became more specialized. As the market economy moved the production of most goods out of the home and into specialized workplaces nineteenth century married women’s work continued to be centered in the household\textsuperscript{21} Families began to rely more upon money but as Nancy Cott has argued “The doctrine of woman’s sphere opened to women (reserved for them) the avenues of domestic influence, religious morality, and child nurture. It articulated a social power based on their special female qualities rather than on general human rights.”\textsuperscript{22} Although recent scholarship has expanded and refined her interpretations of women’s power as shown in the home, her ideas still prove useful in understanding power and the role of women in the nineteenth century.

Brownlee and Brownlee articulated the cultural rather than economic origins of such specialization, writing: “Nothing inherent in the philosophy of capitalism restricted the role of women to that of raising children within the context of the nuclear family. The choice of the Victorians was the product of cultural assumptions they derived independently of the force of the market.”\textsuperscript{23} Furthermore, gender roles in the family changed as a result of the pressures of society, “as families became more urbanized and industrialized the father increasingly took over the families economic responsibilities, whereas the emotional responsibilities of family life became women’s work... they expected to develop what historians have called a ‘companionate marriage,’ a marriage of companionship rather than economic partnership”\textsuperscript{24} Domestic life and family were essential to Hepburn but the cultural values that she ascribed to were challenged and

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 43.
\textsuperscript{24} Annette Atkins, \textit{We Grew Up Together: Brothers and Sisters in Nineteenth-Century America} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 22.
refined by the changes in the labor market and the professionalization of the values of
domesticity and domestic education by figures like Catherine Beecher. In the nineteenth
century domesticity was constructed as a societal ideal and women’s labor was an
integral part of life within the home and family. As Michael Kimmel wrote of married
women’s work as it had been defined by the Cult of Domesticity, “Women were not to be
excluded from participation in the public sphere as much as exempted from participation
in such a competitive and ugly world.”25 As the nineteenth century continued, although
the strict economic necessity of women’s labor within the home decreased, dependence
on the emotional, cultural and spiritual work of women with the home remained a
dominant construction.

Gender had a strong impact on the labor that Henrietta and Andrew Hepburn
engaged in during their lifetimes and on the objects that have been preserved from their
lifetimes. Henrietta and Andrew Hepburn, for example, engaged in different kinds of
labor based upon their sex and the different expectations of their gender. Their labor was
largely influenced by the gendered expectations of nineteenth-century American culture.
Henrietta’s labor was focused on the management of the home and maintaining the
family’s respectability within their community. Andrew worked as a Presbyterian
minister, a university professor, and eventually as a university president, which were
male professions during his lifetime. As E. Anthony Rotundo wrote of men’s work in the
nineteenth century, “The power to create the social position of one’s family raised the
stakes for the nineteenth-century man. No wonder he identified himself so fully with his
work, in a social sense, he was what he achieved-and so were those he loved.”26 Much of
their daily social activity was determined by these expectations of dress, behavior, and
conduct. Gender divisions in labor and use of space were established and fostered in new
ways in the nineteenth century. As Spain has argued, “Women and men typically have
different status in regard to control of property, control of labor, and political
participation. A variety of explanations exists for the persistence of gender

26 Rotundo, E. Anthony. *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the
Regardless of when and where gendered divisions of labor first emerged, they profoundly influenced the specific tasks and status association with femininity or masculinity. Henrietta managed the home, but a trust left to her was managed by her uncle and extant records appear to indicate that it was Andrew who managed the family finances and recorded their household items in an account book. Gendered expectations influenced and reinforced acceptable behavior for both Henrietta and Andrew.

Hepburn’s life is representative of those middle class women who lived in the small communities of the rural Midwest in the nineteenth century. In Oxford, Ohio a town largely influenced by educators and religious figures, Henrietta Hepburn’s labor largely centered on management of the home and caring for the health and comfort of her family. Across the decades of her long marriage, almost every aspect of Hepburn’s experience that she chronicled in her diaries was influenced by gendered expectations. Her labor created a comfortable domestic space was very important to her, her husband, their children, and the community in which she lived.

Domesticity

Henrietta Hepburn experienced a life at the intersection of history and memory. She was a homemaker and mother in nineteenth century decades where this role was considered crucial to the political and cultural survival of America. These decades were also filled with tremendous cultural and technological changes that transformed how the labor of homemaking and motherhood was completed. Catharine Beecher, well known to Henrietta’s father, and others, including Catharine’s sister Harriet Beecher Stowe, were professionalizing the craft of homemaking and child rearing. Catharine Beecher described the significance of the roles she ascribed to American women, especially to mothers and women engaged in home-making, in her *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*. In this well-known handbook, Beecher wrote, “No women on earth have a higher sense of their moral and religious responsibilities, or better understand, not only what is demanded of them, as housekeepers, but all the claims that rest upon them as wives,

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mothers, and members of a social community.” The Cult of Domesticity encouraged women to adhere to strictly gendered ideals of their role in society. The ideals of this way of life were best suited to middle-class and upper-class families. Middle and upper class women were encouraged to serve as the primary caregivers for children, while at the same time, they were considered delicate and expected to adhere to strict standards of virtuous conduct. Women were encouraged to labor within the home and refrain from paid work. They were expected to serve as submissive companions to their husbands and focus their attention on the management of the home, care of their children and religious matters. Henrietta Hepburn’s ideals of home life were informed by these beliefs, those that she learned in her religious community and saw embodied in the households around her.

Domesticity, especially the domestic ideal that Catherine Beecher promoted, included a complicated set of values, expectations and behavior that drove the daily experiences of many nineteenth century women and families. Shaping private family life was considered one of the most important things that women could do and the values that society ascribed to them were designed to build upon what were considered the unique strengths of the female sex, including the ability to be civilizers. According to the Cult of Domesticity, women’s duties within the home were constructed for society’s good and a woman’s most tangible source of power. Contemporary publications, including periodicals like *Godey’s Lady’s Book* and domestic manuals like *The American Woman’s Home*, encouraged women to live fully as wives and mothers and to create comfortable physical and emotional domestic spaces and routines for their husbands, children, and extended family members. The cultivation and presentation of a home was considered of the utmost importance for individual families and society as a whole.

Fulfilling this domestic ideal was considered the mark of an accomplished wealthy or middle class woman during the first seventy years of Henrietta Hepburn’s life. Proper women were expected to adhere to the four main virtues of the Cult of

Domesticity. These values propagated conformity within the context of cultural respectability. The Cult of Domesticity and its virtues particularly influenced Henrietta Hepburn. What records remain of A.D. and Henrietta Hepburn’s assets indicate that they would be described as a middle class, possibly occasionally upper middle class, but certainly never wealthy. She was a traditional woman and in many ways Henrietta’s life was prototypical for nineteenth century white middle-class women who worked to care for their families in small towns across the Middle West and South. Her journals seem removed from the political, military and economic conflicts of the broader national narrative. Rather, Hepburn’s writings present a quiet domestic life filled with contentment and pride. Most entries mention her beloved husband, her children, sewing, and the weather.

Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn measured her domestic success in terms of the managing her household, in supervising her servants well, and in providing her family with carefully made clothing and other necessary items. Her earliest diary as a married woman included references to working closely with a woman who was likely hired to provide domestic help. After spending the majority of her life as a wife and mother, she wrote in her seventies “can get breakfast without much trouble. The frying of a small pork steak does not seem such a hard thing to do as it did three days ago then I fairly dreaded to attempt it could hardly sleep at night for thinking of that pork steak that was to be cooked for breakfast.” Successful management of her home required different skills at different stages in her life. The ability to adapt well to circumstances that changed in the household was an important characteristic of women that was balanced with an adherence to a woman’s core values and beliefs about the attributes that were crucial to


30 These references include many every day aspects of household management “Maria put my room in order while I was at breakfast. I hope she will not continue to do it as it will take from me most of the exercise I have,” January 9th; Helped Maria get breakfast,” April 15th; “Maria came up early this morning … so I handed over the key and gave up housekeeping,” April 20th. Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn, Journal, November 21, 1857-August 19, 1862. Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn, Journal, January 17th, 1908, Journal 1857-1862, William Holmes McGuffey Family Papers. Walter Havighurst Special Collections, Oxford, Oh. Transcript: pages 15, 34, 35.

her enactment of femininity. Henrietta Hepburn’s management of her home included many of the same aspects that occupied other women. Her values were not only informed by the Cult of Domesticity but were also informed by some of the values of respectable Southern womanhood that she would have encountered as a young woman in her father’s household or while she was living in North Carolina. Historian Laura Edwards described some of the nuanced meaning that southern woman invested their domestic activity with, “Devoting themselves to their husbands, overseeing their children’s moral physical, and mental development, putting well-prepared meals on the table, banishing dirt and dust, selecting tasteful interior decorations, and maintaining a cheerful supportive atmosphere— all these things were the measure of a woman’s worth and quality. All these things also separated worthy women from those who were not.”32 These values were important to women in different ways over the course of the nineteenth century.

Nicole Tonkovich, editor of the early twenty-first century edition of Catherine and Harriett Beecher Stowe’s, The American Woman’s Home, wrote that the book “shows us precisely how a sense of national identity can be built and maintained, not through acts of public heroism such as running for political office or serving in the armed forces, but through daily and everyday acts of household management and practice.”33 Women were expected to fulfill what was considered one of the most important functions of society, but their education had not kept pace with changes in technology and was in many cases focused on ornamental aspects of education. By the 1840’s the education of girls was the object of many reformers with the authors of women’s books seeking to correct educational literature and properly orient it to addressing women’s role in society. Women like the Beecher sisters believed that in addition to improperly preparing women for motherhood and domestic duties in regard to their family, the effects of such gaps in the education of women left them improperly prepared to guide their servants in


domesticity. Nineteenth century economic historians viewed the Cult of Domesticity in terms of Victorians “demand[ing] education for women because of their value as the carriers of civilization- as child readers who bore the responsibility for teaching democratic values to the young.”

Nineteenth century figures like the Beecher sisters responded to rapid societal changes by idealizing middle class respectability.

Gendered expectations of domesticity influenced Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn’s experiences and the material objects with which she invested personal significance. She lived in a community highly influenced by educators and religious figures, including her own father, who repeatedly reinforced Gendered expectations for men and women, boys and girls, in school lessons and sermons. As a devoted diarist, Hepburn chronicled her experiences over many years, from 1851-1910 and through this act she re-scripted the gendered expectations of her community by putting into her own words the powerful discourse that shaped and regulated her life and work.

Hepburn was connected to the tactile and emotional experiences that she wrote about in her diaries in ways that correspond closely to Pierre Nora’s ideas on memory.

“Memory is life” Nora writes, “always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to appropriation and manipulation and capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be suddenly reawakened.”

Many, but not all, of the ideals that guided her in creating a pleasant domestic space have softened or changed in subsequent generations and interpreting her domestic experiences requires reinterpretation of the seemingly familiar, as well as a careful examination of distant constructions of even the most basic aspects of daily life.

Space

Many historians have talked about the nature of the set of womanly attributes known as the Cult of Domesticity, but fewer have closely examined how these values were represented physically in the spaces of daily life in the nineteenth century. These

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36 Ibid, 3
values were so influential that historian Amy Kaplan paused in the midst of her work on empire and American culture to explain and define the influence of the “well-known nineteenth-century ‘Cult of Domesticity’ or ideology of ‘separate spheres,’ which held that woman’s hallowed place is in the home, the sight from which she wields the sentimental power of moral influence.” 37 But it is important to examine how these cultural values established and supported different, gendered, uses of space. As Elizabeth Blackmar wrote in her examination of housing in New York, “Historians who have adopted nineteenth-century categories to oppose ‘private’ and ‘public’ spheres all too often overlook the intersection of class values of respectable home life and new government policies.” 38 These cultural values of domesticity and the role of public and private life were dominant in the United States and were enacted in many homes. Family groups that had sufficient resources strove to enact these values in idealized homes. These households reflected changing national values and policy, but by reflecting these values and modeling their homes and the division of labor upon this model they firmly established these family patterns as the ideal for several decades.

Henrietta Hepburn articulated a conventional and gendered use of domestic space throughout her marriage, despite the fact that at times she and her husband occupied non-traditional living spaces. The Hepburns moved several times over the decades of their marriage and there is no evidence that the couple ever owned their home. They rented spaces or homes throughout their adult life. However Henrietta engaged in similar labor in their various home and regularly commented on regional difference in domestic labor and the quality of available servants. They occupied a duplex in Oxford, Ohio for many years. As he grew older, A.D. expressed fears of the family becoming homeless as his age advanced and eventually, due to recurrent financial problems in the later decades of their life, their rent was paid by through a fund that was collected from friends of the Hepburns since they could not afford to pay it from their own funds. 39 By 1911, rent

39 Andrew Dousa Hepburn Papers, Miami University Archives, 4HE F. 44 “Dr. J.W. Withrow 22 Seventh St. West Cincinnati O April 24, 1908 and 219 N. 6th St. Hamilton, Oh,” postmarked Mar 3 1910. “I have never felt that I had the slightest claim on any of my friends. I am sure that I have no way of repaying it. So all I can do is to give you my thanks. “Thanks, you know, is the only treasury of the poor.”
money was being collected on behalf of Dr. Hepburn.\textsuperscript{40} This financial instability affected not only the homes that the Hepburns occupied, but also the materials that were preserved for subsequent generations. However, Henrietta’s focus remained upon domestic issues and labor that secured the comfort of her family despite the family’s financial instability. Even while the family struggled financially or occupied non-traditional domestic spaces such as living in the old North Dorm, her labor was largely centered upon the home.\textsuperscript{41}

Hepburn’s diaries, letters, and reminiscences chronicled the everyday, mundane, tactile experiences that would have deeply affected her family in “the home, the space in which males and females regardless of age communicated intimately.”\textsuperscript{42} Examining the complicated workings of gender in the spacial arrangement of the nineteenth century home can provide a much greater understanding of how the cultural values of the Cult of Domesticity were enacted in the private spaces of the home.

\textit{Frameworks of Cultural Memory}

It is especially important for historians to consider the influence of collective memory in museums and other forms of memory for as Michael Kamman has argued, “critics adhering to diverse ideological persuasions have suggested that societies in fact reconstruct their pasts rather than faithfully recording them.”\textsuperscript{43} Historical representations rely upon the collective memory of the society in which a historian researches an event, even as these representations shape new collective memories. Within the context of contemporary debates over the interpretation of historical events, narratives, and representations in a museum context, public historians face the challenge of how best to portray gendered spaces and labor. As Howard Shuman and Amy Corning claimed, “Public opinion about the past can be regarded as a form of collective memory, and both opinion and memory can be studied not only in terms of texts and symbols, but at the level of individuals who make up a collectivity, whether it is a small group like a family

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\textsuperscript{40} Andrew Dousa Hepburn Papers, Miami University Archives, “4HE F.51 Letter to Senator W.F. Eltzroth – April 3, 1911”
\textsuperscript{41} For the full anecdote see W.H. Nutt letter in Bertha Boya Thompson, “The History of Miami University from 1873 to 1900: A Thesis,” (Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 1954), 98.
\textsuperscript{42} Debra Reid, “Making Gender Matter: Interpreting Male and Female Roles in Historic House Museums”, 82.
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or a vast one like a nation.” Different constructions of group memory contribute to a richer understanding of the past. Increasingly historical interpretations of events have relied upon the frameworks of cultural memory such as in Pierre Nora’s work, and in Maurice Halbwachs’ exploration of the intersection and influence of individual and collective memory.

*Respectability*

This exhibit on “Domestic Memory” shows how value was ascribed to respectable behavior among upper and middle-class citizens who had the resources and time to devote to activities not essential to economic survival. The lifestyle that women created, apart from their actual economic condition, was one of the most important aspects of successfully performing domesticity within the context of a family. There were many fictional stories written to reinforce these values for women or girls that describe families in reduced economic circumstances still faithfully living within the prescribed standards for conduct or dress. Although the Hepburn family may not have always had the economic resources to qualify for middle-class or upper-class status, they carefully kept their valuable books, the family silver and other important artifacts that reflected their priorities and maintained their respectability. “Domestic Memory” engages the ramifications of what it meant for women to live within the framework of the Cult of Domesticity and considers the importance of their domestic roles. Catharine Beecher described the importance of these idealized values and duties of American Women during Hepburn’s lifetime when she wrote: “But are not the most responsible of all duties committed to the charge of woman? Is it not her profession to take care of mind, body, and soul? And that, too, at the most critical of all periods of existence? And is it not as much a matter of public concern, that she should be properly qualified for her duties, as that ministers, lawyers, and physicians, should be prepared for theirs?”

During Henrietta Hepburn’s formative years and the majority of her adult life women were charged with creating homes that prepared moral citizens for life within a growing nation. Respectability entailed proper behavior within the home and in public

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settings. The culture of respectability required adherence to modest and conservative
dress and behavior. Henrietta was a woman with traditional values who lived at a time of
tremendous social and cultural change that challenged former constructions of family life.
A successful domestic space provided shelter, training in social norms and morality and
was one of the best signifiers of an accomplished woman.

Henrietta Hepburn’s life represents the experiences of a large segment of
nineteenth and early twentieth century respectable middle class women, but at the same
time there is evidence that she felt restricted by some of the gendered expectations that
drove social obligations. For example, she wrote at one point in 1858, “I have been tried
considerable today with some of the country people complaining that I do not visit
enough. They will learn after awhile. I hope that I do not intend to visit the whole
congregation that is not my business.”

Visiting various members of the congregation
represented one example of the gendered social obligations of her role as homemaker, a
middle-class woman, and especially as the wife of a minister. Part of her role as wife and
mother was essential to her husband’s successful completion of his ministerial duties. As
Reid stated, “family and social responsibilities consumed women’s energies but
contributed to a viable household economy at the same time.”

Although Henrietta did not always enjoy such duties, she was very aware of them.

Sewing

Mastery of sewing was an important skill, class cue and representation of the
values of the Cult of Domesticity. It was a highly visible form of female labor and
women prided themselves on their handiwork. An accomplished woman was expected be
proficient at creating necessary items of clothing for her family, as well as delicate
fancywork. Historian Laura Edwards has written of women who were Henrietta’s
contemporaries, arguing that, “Clothing- or the lack thereof-established both class
standing and womanhood.” In a similar vein, Catharine Beecher wrote, “the woman

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46 Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn’s Journal, November 21, 1857-August 19, 1862
Wednesday 17th (likely 1858) 1857, William Holmes McGuffey Family Papers, Walter Havighurst Special
Collections, Oxford, Oh, Transcript, 23.
47 Debra Reid, “Making Gender Matter: Interpreting Male and Female Roles in Historic House Museums”,
95.
48 Laura F. Edwards, Scarlett Doesn’t Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era (Urbana:
University of Illinois Press, 2000), 76. For more on this topic see Sarah Katherine Stone, Brokenburn: The
who, in her retired chamber, earns, with her needle the mite to contribute for the intellectual and moral elevation of her country...while her faithful services sustain a prosperous domestic state; -each and all may be cheered by the consciousness, that they are agents in accomplishing the greatest work that ever was committed to human responsibility.”

Henrietta’s descriptions of her sewing projects and other duties of domesticity and womanhood were often interspersed with some of the most significant events in her life. For example, when she wrote, “Father leaving, letter received, looking at Mary Harrison’s wedding things. Got up this morning at four ½ o’clock to tell father good by. After breakfast practiced; drew more than two hours, got on (as I thought) quite well with my leaves. After that sewed until dinner time.”

The practice of regular sewing was made difficult or impossible by the privations of the war years, but still remained a significant part of how women ordered their lives and defined their experiences.

**Piety**

Piety was an important social quality for nineteenth century women and Henrietta Hepburn life illustrates the centrality of this attribute. She was raised in a home where the cultural values of piety, familial respect, and propriety were of utmost importance. Much of nineteenth century religious culture required the outward expression of religious conviction and many social clubs and organizations were organized by women within specific denominations or congregations. Henrietta Hepburn’s life represented the experience of a large segment of nineteenth and early twentieth century respectable middle class women. On Sunday, Feb. 12th, for example, she was deeply worried about Andrew, who had been ill, and she expressed her fears in deeply pious language: “I have not yet heard from A. and my heart is very very anxious...Oh God, grant that he may get

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49 Although this handbook was initially published in 1842 it was so well-known during Hepburn’s life that it provides useful context here. Catharine Beecher profoundly affected the way that nineteenth century women perceived their role. She made a career of promoting educational and domestic ideals that she asserted were uniquely American. Henrietta was probably very familiar with Beecher’s thoughts on domesticity and womanhood. Beecher’s book was reprinted frequently from the 1840s through the 1870s. Several members of the Beecher family and William Holmes McGuffey, Henrietta Hepburn’s father, had been members of the same Cincinnati area literary society. Catharine Esther Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* (New York: Source Book Press, 1970), 14.

well… Thou has kindly given him to Oh and me my Heavenly Father, if it be thy will let him be permitted to remain with me a while longer. Help me my God to submit to Thee in all things.”

For Henrietta Hepburn, piety was a crucial part of how she enacted her role as a respectable woman. She often wrote about religious issues, especially in the earlier journals. For example, “Went to town to prayer meeting. Mary Jane’s baby is very sick it may not live until morning poor girl servant though she is she has the feelings of a mother and loves this little child. God’s ways are not as our ways it seems strange to us that a child should be brought into this world to live a few days in suffering and then to depart.”

She often reflected upon sermons and church services in her diaries and related to what Cott has delineated as common practice for women who followed the Calvinist tradition of self-examination. Cott’s work underscored the way diary-keeping helped individual women and she argued that “An individual’s written record of her life aided her in monitoring her progress towards salvation.”

Hepburn’s father was an influential university professor and Presbyterian minister and piety was a virtue that he tried to reinforce in his children. Proper behavior within the Cult of Domesticity and its four virtues meant that throughout her life Henrietta took comfort in religious convictions and drew meaning from daily events within a religious context.

The Regional Context

Henrietta Hepburn’s domestic memories would seem to be complicated by having lived in both the North and South. Historians have often described strong sectional political and social divisions within the United States, but Henrietta’s life tells a different story. She moved between these two regions with social boundaries that seemingly remained fluid and flexible. Her experiences in this regard seem neither unique nor unusual for in 1869 when Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher published The American Woman’s Home, they “emphasized that common possessions, habits, household practices and values could transcend sectional difference and geographical

The domestic world, they argued, was one that required consistent performances of a culturally determined role that was more nationally than regionally defined. Considerable evidence indicates that the Beechers aspired to this sort of continuity of domestic values across sectional divisions and Hepburn’s writings align with this ideal. Henrietta Hepburn was educated in Ohio, but spent formative years as a young adult in Virginia. During the American Civil War she lived in the South and supported the Confederate troops while her husband served among them as a chaplain. However, Henrietta Hepburn rarely wrote about sectional conflict and the Civil War, and when she did so the focus was on the impact of the war on her family. For example, when Henrietta wrote about the declaration of war, she did so within a description of when she decided to have her son Charles, or Charley, wear his first outfit with trousers. She wrote, “These trousers that belonged to the white waist were at buff colored scalloped with white I have them yet I had almost finished the waist but needed some edging for the neck when I heard of the declaration of war.” In 1862 she wrote while living in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, “Our town is full of refugees from Norfolk, Newbur [sic], and two or three other places. What a terrible thing is this war I am feeling anxious as to what we are to do for a living next session if the University will hardly be kept up and there is nothing for a man to do these days but go into the army I hope & pray my dear husband may never have to fight.” She went on to write of the fear that the war had caused for her three year old son, Charles, “The little ones are well & sleeping soundly. My dear little boy in his prayer tonight asked God to keep the “Yankees” from him and his mama and papa poor child this sad war has troubled even his young heart.”

Her focus in her journal and later in the Reminiscences was upon her family and the impact of the war upon their domestic life. Her focus in later writings returned to her family, but she also wrote at length about the difficulties of getting supplies and of her success in prudently outfitting her family in good clothing, even during the height of war.

She reflected, "We had only been at the University one year before war was declared between the North and South. ...Fortunately we all had a good supply of clothing so we did not suffer for want of things to wear even the last year of the war. ...An acquaintance said well it does not look like wartimes with you." Keeping her family outfitted in good usable clothing during the war was a significant accomplishment. In her recollections, relative domestic tranquility existed for her family during the war, despite the real fears and anxiety generated by the terrible conflict.

Primary Sources

This project relies upon resources from the Miami University Archives, William Holmes McGuffey Museum Collection, the Walter Havighurst Special Collections, and Smith History Library records. The items selected for “Domestic Memory” have never before been exhibited together. The exhibit highlights items that were in daily use in Henrietta Hepburn’s household and evaluates them in the context of relevant entries from her diary, and in the broader context of American life. Henrietta Hepburn’s writings are a rich resource of information about her life in Southwestern Ohio, Virginia, and North Carolina. Her reminiscences, correspondence with family members, and her son’s diaries, provide additional information about her domestic life. We see the influence of the Cult of Domesticity woven throughout her life, in her attention to and reflections on domestic life, sewing, the ideal of piety, and her experiences of homemaking in both the Middle West and the South.

Journals and Diaries

Henrietta Hepburn’s most extensive written records are the journals that she kept for most of her life. Nineteenth century women’s journals, like Hepburn’s are a valuable source of information about social meaning and daily life. Women were encouraged to chronicle their lives in diaries and it is in this space that historians can begin to understand the myriad ways that broader cultural values gave meaning to daily events and provided women with guidelines of behavior to which they could compare their families. Journals were an established and popular medium of the time and often these

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journals were intended for a broader audience. Historian Michael O’Brien has described the journal as a genre of literature in its own right which by “the late eighteenth century…encouraged young ladies to keep still more journals.”

Amy Wink concluded her examination of six women’s lives through their diaries by noting that, “In each of these journals, these women wrote for themselves and others. Even though diaries are generally regarded as personal and private, they stand as evidence of their writer’s corporal existence in their current incarnations as now public documents…In this writing moment, these women were declaring their existence to their future readers whether they be family members or some unknown future reader.”

Hepburn’s diaries, family stories, and a few carefully preserved material possessions are the only remaining material evidence of her life. The journals and her later Reminiscences are the most substantial record of her voice and perspective on her life. As historian Nancy Cott asserts, their use enriches understanding of women’s lives and contributes to a sympathetic portrayal by historians, “The more historians have relied on women’s personal documents the more positively they have evaluated the women’s sphere.”

Cott’s work further suggests that as a Presbyterian woman Henrietta’s propensity towards diary keeping was part of a broader framework of expected Protestant female behavior.

Henrietta’s journals were written with an awareness of her public role as a nineteenth century woman. Understanding the journals requires examining Henrietta’s diary, as a public document not a private one. As Annette Atkins argues in her nineteenth century cultural history, the events that women chose to describe in their diaries were intentionally selected. This very selection indicates that these events were of significance. As Adkins writes, “People tend to write about what is unusual. We do not generally write about eating breakfast or brushing our teeth or going to work unless something out of the


62 Henry David Thoreau wrote, “There is no such thing as pure objective observation. Your observation, to be interesting i.e. to be significant, must be subjective.” Henrietta’s journal provides subjective insight into her experiences which were influenced by American ideals of domesticity in her lifetime. However, the way that these values were enacted was dictated by her intentional decision to interpret and enact the values in her own way. Arthur M. Eastman, General Editor, The Norton Reader, An Anthology of Expository Prose, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 4th Edition), 134.
For Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn, the things she chose to record in her diary included important events and ordinary happenings that together made up an intentional record of her life. Henrietta was disciplined. She chose to relate daily or weekly events in her diary for a significant portion of her life. She frequently paused in the midst of domestic responsibilities to write about the things that she wished to remember. As she matured, her journals became more reflective of her personality and impressions. The later journals are of greater value because as Arthur Eastman described, in “a carefully kept journal covering a long period and varied experiences, we have the pleasure of a small world re-created for us.” Her diaries include detailed and engaging records of things and events she considered important in her life. Her writings consistently articulated the importance of her family’s experiences and created a permanent record for succeeding generations.

**Reminiscences**

As an elderly woman, Henrietta Hepburn used her diaries to revisit decades of her life that she had recorded on a day-to-day basis. She then expanded some of the diary material or described periods that she not previously chronicled. Henrietta wrote these pieces in a narrative form and labeled them Reminiscences. Henrietta Hepburn reframed her experience in these Reminiscences, performing what scholar David Glassberg describes as “autobiographical memory.” He writes, “At the most intimate of levels, we can talk about autobiographical memory and reminiscence, how individuals in reviewing their past experiences form a coherent personal identity and sense of self. We can also talk about communications about the past within families.” Hepburn wrote numerous vignettes and short stories that described significant events in her life, and in the process she shaped her own identity and sense of self. Merrill Peterson described the nineteenth century practice this way, “Reminiscence, in its nature, is the recollection of past persons and events largely without benefit of historical documents. Its authenticity depends upon the memory of the remembrancer. But memory fades and as everyone knows, is subject

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to tricks: of vanity and conceit, of partiality, error, and displacement. In a literate culture, reading corrupts or displaces memory." Henrietta reflected upon her experiences in forms that were both culturally valued and appropriate for her gender and status. By choosing to recall her experiences in this format she was both reflecting the values that would have been communicated to her by respected authorities, and translating them into her own voice. She chose to leave a record of her articulation and interpretation of her role as a wife, mother, and as a writer.

Correspondence

Henrietta Hepburn also corresponded with many people throughout her life. The university has a number her letters. Hepburn often mentioned writing to “A” as she called Andrew in her diaries during their courtship. She described the anticipation of waiting for a letter from him, and the concerns of illness or injury that she experienced when he was unable to write frequently, or when his letters were delayed. It is clear that correspondence was one of the ways that she and Andrew grew closer to each other prior to their marriage. They were rarely apart during their marriage and unfortunately their correspondence during his time as a Confederate chaplain and while he was studying in Berlin are not extant. The best examples of their correspondence are the letters that she wrote to her husband and to a family friend, “Frankie” in Oxford while she was caring for her dying father in Virginia in 1873. These letters provide insight into their married life and character at a time of great emotional difficulty.

Andrew Dousa Hepburn, Henrietta’s husband adopted modes of communication and commemoration that reflected the practices of many nineteenth century American men. He kept a diary around the time that he was studying in Berlin in 1865, but quickly abandoned the practice. Debra Reid has shown that male perspectives on their domestic and family experience are often absent from the historical record. She argues, “Less is known about men and their perceptions of kinship, intimacy, and home life. This makes it difficult to balance interpretations of the male and female experiences." Both the contemporary and historical expectations of masculinity impact the roles that men were

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expected fill and the way that they expressed their experiences. Neither Andrew Hepburn, Henrietta’s longtime spouse, nor her father, William Holmes McGuffey, left accounts that compare to Henrietta’s reflections upon her domestic life. A. D. Hepburn’s “Account Book” shows that his attention to domestic matters was businesslike. He rarely preserved thoughts on domestic life focused on individuals and he placed more significance on people and experiences, rather than investing household objects with meaning. Andrew corresponded frequently with Henrietta’s father, William Holmes McGuffey, and although this correspondence was lengthy and intimate, it was focused on professional advice and fatherly concern. Andrew’s father-in-law encouraged him to focus on culturally approved areas of masculine interest. They did not write about the domestic and religious issues that were of such concern to Henrietta and their correspondence is a tangible enactment of gendered modes of expression in the nineteenth century.

**Material Objects**

Individual and collective memories form connections to the past and reinforce each other. Some aspects of collective and individual memory are represented by the material objects that are deposited into museums. The objects that historians choose to preserve in museum collections dictate which objects are used to create exhibits and to construct the narratives that visitors to a museum develop about the past. Museum collections articulate the importance of certain events by creating collections that simultaneously represent the past and show that these events or objects matter. Exhibits frequently demonstrate the ways that past lives were both similar to and different from what contemporary visitors have experienced. As museum scholar Susan Crane has written, “Being collected means being valued and remembered institutionally; being displayed means being re-incorporated into the extra institutional memory of the museum visitors.”

Collections of objects preserved in the museum setting articulate that specific events, individuals, and gendered groups mattered. Preserving items in this type of setting means that they represent important elements of a particular history. As certain experiences or items are marked as those that should be remembered, absences declare

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that other events or individuals can be forgotten. In this regard, it is important to note that museums have often privileged a gendered narrative that told the stories of prominent male figures. By placing Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn’s diaries, reminiscences, and material objects front and center, the “Domestic Memory” Exhibit works as a counterbalance to more traditional museum narratives that draw heavily on the artifacts and documents of well-known American men.

The roles that both Hepburn’s enacted influenced the way that they reflected upon or chronicled their experiences. Henrietta’s diaries and objects available for historical study from her lifetime show that multiple aspects of home management occupied her attention. Memories of family life that she described in her Reminiscences often included details about sturdy clothing, or heirloom items that had been passed down through family members. As Reid has shown, “status, rites, culture- these intangible concepts become concrete when reflected in things.”69 As Reid proposed, Henrietta Hepburn’s items were carefully preserved or described because they were tied to important family events or cultural values. Hepburn’s most direct area of consumption for her own satisfaction was still influenced by gendered expectations. She sewed items for her own use, to provide for her family, and as an activity that reinforced social connections throughout her life. This pattern continued throughout her life and part of her account of the Civil War centered on community and social efforts in domestic spaces to support the Confederacy.

Gender also influenced Andrew Hepburn’s experiences and the material objects with which he invested personal significance. There are no records of A.D. reflecting upon his home or heirlooms that he wished to preserve. The Miami University William Holmes McGuffey Museum collection includes a parlor chair and a photograph of A.D. in the chair with one of his grandchildren. With this exception, there are few personal items that belonged to A.D. that have been collected by a museum or archive. Men were not encouraged to focus their attention on domestic affairs. Rather they tended to focus on career-building and financial matters. A rich record of A.D. Hepburn’s career is

contained in the Miami University Archives, where his many years as a professor and the university president are carefully documented. Many of the books that had been passed down from his father-in-law and were part of the family library were donated to the university for student use in the libraries. These remain in the Walter Havighurst Special Collections.

Henrietta and her family chose to preserve specific household objects which they had invested with significance. Henrietta Hepburn, her father, and subsequent generations carefully preserved family silverware which had been engraved with her initials or the McGuffey name. Henrietta makes many references in her later diaries to having family photographs taken or preserved in different ways. Henrietta often wrote about sewing items for personal use or for her family. She wrote of her grandson being photographed in his father’s clothing. Though some aspects of the domestic experience remained constant throughout Hepburn’s life, many of the objects that would have surrounded her changed considerably with the advent of various new technologies, such as more efficient tools to prepare meals, indoor plumbing, gas and electricity. The importance of the parlor in the home and the goal of making guests comfortable with appropriate table settings and ornamentation would have remained similar throughout her life. The rooms inhabited and objects used by the McGuffey and Hepburn families served not only a private family audience but fulfilled a public role as well. Examination of these tangible objects fits within the interdisciplinary framework of materiality and material culture. This approach examines not only the cultural meaning of the spaces and objects that Henrietta Hepburn wrote about or used in her home, but the actual physicality of these objects. The use and careful preservation of these material objects permits a kind of connection to the physical objects of the past that cannot be achieved by merely reading about the objects and their use.

Henrietta Hepburn’s descendants further reinforced the inherent value of items donated to the university or museum collections, knowing that they would be added to a museum that represents the life and experience of Hepburn’s famous father, William Holmes McGuffey. Extant material objects can provide insight into the gendered attributes of objects in the home. Items that were in daily use in the home were preserved as costly objects of sentimental value. Material objects can be altered, stained or broken
through their use. The condition of these objects in the realm of public history and memory can show much about how they were used; if they were carefully preserved and displayed, their pristine condition can serve as a marker of their value in the home and family.

The Exhibit

*Goals and Challenges*

The goal of “Domestic Memory” was to show many of the ways that the Cult of Domesticity and other gendered cultural values were reflected in the written records and objects belonging to Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn. One challenge of this particular exhibit has been drawing materials from multiple collections across the Miami University campus. Many of the objects that Hepburn would have used in her daily life were widely available and were not as likely to be passed down to descendants or donated to the university collections. Dishes, some linen, sewing ephemera, and the clothing that she produced are generally passed along matrilineal lines. Though the university has remained in contact with several of Hepburn’s direct descendants, this communication only involves a portion of the family. Some McGuffey and Hepburn items have been donated by family members and are carefully preserved, but other items that could serve as a useful archive have remained with descendants. Unlike the focus of other McGuffey-Hepburn collections, this exhibit created a space that reflects Henrietta Hepburn’s central role in her home and family. While other collections tell the story of her father, William Holmes McGuffey, and his role as an educator and author, or that of her husband, A.D. Hepburn, as a university professor and president, this exhibit puts Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn front and center as the subject of her own life.

Although sewing was a dominant theme that Henrietta reflected upon throughout her adult life it was difficult to locate her handiwork. Although Henrietta wrote of carefully preserving the family’s clothing during the years of the Civil War it is difficult to determine if the textiles located in the Miami University Museums were her work, because garments were not typically signed or marked by the women who made them.

There are significant periods when Henrietta did not write in her diary. One such example is in her 1857-1862 journal, she wrote frequently during her pregnancy, and
commented carefully upon a week’s absence from writing. After her son’s birth, there is a gap from August 18th, 1858 until June 15th, 1859. She wrote “It is almost a year since I last wrote in this journal. The little one whose birth I was expecting in three weeks when I last wrote was born in about 25 hours after I put aside my pen. I had but just closed my journal when the pains of child birth came upon me and for 25 hours I suffered greatly.”

Despite such periods of silence, her diaries spanning six decades of her life remain a rich and useful source.

Hepburn did not explicitly express her opinions about the conflicts that led to the Civil War. As discussed above, her writing about the conflict was firmly rooted in her family’s experience. She described making pincushions and needle books for men from Chapel Hill, where her family lived during the war. When she wrote critically of a supporter of the Confederacy, Mrs. Ashe, the neighbor who had recruited her to sew for the cause, it is not clear whether this stems from personal dislike or some broader reason, “Of course Mrs. Ashe was the hottest of rebels” she wrote, “. . . at the very beginning of the war [she] put on wooden shoes that she had gotten made for her and she went thumping about feeling very loyal.”

Henrietta Hepburn described another female supporter of the Confederate cause in similarly critical terms: “Mrs. May she was a very hot ‘rebel’ her father was a Yankee and who had lived in the South for a long time her husband took rheumatism immediately after the battle of Bull’s [sic] Run and remained at home all during the war.” Although Hepburn did reflect upon some of her experiences during the Civil War, the record she left remains largely silent about the conflict that would have disrupted even the most basic aspect of her daily responsibilities, her care for her family and her management of her home.

The Process of Installation

The label-writing process was one of the more challenging pieces of the exhibit installation. Initially I had written very short labels that did not provide enough

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interpretation or information for exhibit visitors. Midway through the process of installation I returned to the text that I had planned for the labels and re-wrote them almost completely. I continued to edit information throughout the process of installation and consulted historians Dr. Helen Sheumaker and Dr. E. Claire Jerry who were trained in public history. I sent all label text to Dr. Laura Henderson, former curator at the Art Museum, for stylistic, grammar and content review. I chose to incorporate many, but not all, of their suggestions. I chose not to label the individual cases, but to produce both narrative and individual object labels, as well as an introductory exhibit poster to guide visitors through the space and a brochure to provide additional information about the exhibit.

I was fortunate that the library was willing to let me use all of the cases in the Special Collections area. This meant that I was able to represent various stages in Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn’s life and highlight several key themes. The cases themselves are designed to display books, but by changing the background, removing many glass shelves, dropping the bottoms of some cases to make a level surface, and by experimenting with different mounts, I was able to achieve some variety in the arrangement of the cases. Displaying original documents posed a particular challenge. The journals and diaries were in good enough condition to display open on various mounts that the library had in stock from other exhibits. Ms. Ashley Jones, the preservation librarian, was more than willing to help with the presentation of objects that posed a particular challenge. By enlarging scans of many original items I was able to highlight key passages and themes while still maintaining the integrity of the primary resources. I included a bodice from the period of Hepburn’s life and displaying this posed quite a challenge. I was fortunate that the current curator at the Miami University Art Museum, Laura Stewart and Laura Henderson, the former curator, were willing to lend their expertise to attractively display the bodice while minimizing potential strain or damage to the delicate silk garment.

The Brochure

Writing the brochure (see Appendix Three) was a part of the installation process that came together well. Writing the prospectus and drafting the paper to support this exhibit had forced me to articulate my ideas about this project at various stages in the
process. Although the format of these written pieces was very different, I was able to draw heavily from the written materials I had already produced to craft a brochure that provided historical meaning and social context for the various audiences of students, faculty, and alumni that regularly view exhibits in Miami University King Library.
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Appendix One
List of Objects in “Domestic Memory”: The Journals, Correspondence and Artifacts of Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn

Miami University Archives
8McG 1839-1987 Box 2, Folder 19 McGuffey Hepburn Birthday Book
Images from the Miami University Archives Items
Henrietta and Her Grandchildren, 1903
Samuel Benedict Hepburn, b. 1892
Henrietta Hepburn, b. 1894 Janet Douglas Hepburn, b. 1895
Andrew Hopewell Hepburn, b. 1898
William McGuffey Hepburn, b. 1900

Photograph of Henrietta Hepburn’s Grandchildren, ca. 1895
This photograph is of Samuel Benedict Hepburn and Henrietta Hepburn.
Snyder Full Length Images of Henrietta, two poses in white dress, undated
Hepburn Family Photo, ca. 1894-1895
This appears to be a multi-generation photo and is one of the ways that Henrietta and her family chose to commemorate their experiences.
Top Row:
Julia Benedict Hepburn
Charles McGuffey Hepburn
Middle Row:
Andrew Dousa Hepburn
Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn
Henrietta Williamson Hepburn
Bottom Row:
Samuel Benedict Hepburn
Henrietta Hepburn
William Holmes McGuffey Museum Objects

Velvet rope barrier

Snyder photograph, original Andrew Hepburn, likely early 20\textsuperscript{th} century from Hepburn family files

Original of Card D Viste, Henrietta (Etta or Ettie) Hepburn as a young girl from case in history room

“Floral Offering”

MG.2002.9 Limoges China set tea, cup, saucer, dessert plate and pitcher, creamer and sugar.


MG.2010.17 Queen Anne Style Chair

MG.2010.189 Silverware; Engraved Silver Spoon (small)

MG.2010.2EA Silverware; Engraved Silver Fork belonging to H.M.H

MG.2010.222e Silverware; Engraved Silver Spoon belonging to H.M.H

MC.2010.1 6. E; F; G Silverware; Engraved Silver forks belonging to Wm. H. MCG

MC.2010.1 0 Silverware; engraved silver spoon belonging to Wm. H. MCG

MC.2010.11a Silverware; engraved silver spoon belonging to Wm. H. MCG

MG.2010.216b Silverware; engraved silver spoon belonging to H.M.H

MG.2010.2.70 Silverware; engraved silver serving spoon belonging to H.M.H

MG.2010.27 q Silverware; engraved silver fork belonging to H.M.H

MG.1997.30 Towel embroidered McG

McGuffey Museum Towel embroidered McG

Images from William Holmes McGuffey Museum Objects

Andrew in his office from Miami University Recensio 1907

Card D Viste, Henrietta (Etta or Ettie) Hepburn as a young girl

Detail of the Floral Offering

Henrietta (Etta) Hepburn and Samuel Benedict Hepburn, 1892

Photograph of Andrew Dousa (A.D.) Hepburn

Portrait of William Holmes McGuffey

Portrait of Harriet Spining McGuffey
Henrietta Hepburn as a Young Woman (North Carolina)

Objects from the McGuffey Family Collection
Box 3 Folder 10, Journal 1907-1908
Box 3, Folder 3, Journal 1857-1862
Box 3 Folders 8, Journal 1902
Box 4, Folder 2 Reminiscences 2

Scans of original images included in the exhibit:
Box 1 Folio4, 18A 201-Dates of the events in the lives of the McGuffey family.
Box 2 Folder 3 (203-24 A) McGuffey Family history written by Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn
Box 1, Folder 3 36-1F (111) August 22nd, 1855 –Letter from Wm. Holmes McGuffey to Henrietta Hepburn and enlarged excerpt
Box 1, Folder3 18-1G (127) January 30, 1870 Letter to Andrew Dousa Hepburn from William Holmes McGuffey and enlarged excerpt

Images taken from Special Collections Items
Mutton Steak, *The Virginia Housewife; Or, Methodical Cook, 1836*
Mashed Potatoes and Peas, *Young Housekeepers Friend, 1859*
Pineapple; description and illustration, *Science in the Kitchen. A Scientific Treatise on Food Substances and Their Dietetic Properties, Together with a Practical Explanation of the Principles of Healthful Cookery, and a Large Number of Original, Palatable, and Wholesome Recipes, 1892*

Special Collections Objects


Clarke, Samuel,. A Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of God: The Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation ... Being Sixteen Sermons, Preach'd in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, in the Years 1704, and 1705, at the Lecture Founded by the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq. London: Printed by W. Botham for James and John Knapton, 1725. BT130.C53 1725

Child, Josiah. A New Discourse of Trade: Wherein Are Recommended Several Weighty Points, Relating to Companies of Merchants; the Act of Navigation, Naturalization of Strangers, and Our Woollen Manufactures. the Balance of Trade, and Nature of Plantations; with Their Consequences, in Relation to the Kingdom, Are Seriously Discussed ... to Which Is Added, a Short ... Treatise of Interest. London: J. Hodges, 1740. HC254.5.C55


Kames, Henry Home. Elements of Criticism. New York: Published by Collins and Hannay no. 230 Pearl Street, J. Oram, printer, 1819. PN81 .K3 1819 v.1

Leaflets of Memory. New York: Leavitt & Allen, 1850. AY11.L43b


Private Collection Items
Scan of early image of Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn, Private Collection of Jeanne Rogow
Glass Darning Egg, mid-19th C. Private Collection of Laura Henderson
Perfume bottle with Stopper and Sterling Silver Collar, 19th C. Private Collection of Laura Henderson
Powder Jar with Sterling Silver Lid, 19th C. Private Collection of Laura Henderson
Victorian Repoussé Mirror, Sterling Silver, 19th C. Private Collection of Laura Henderson
Button hook, Sterling Silver Handle, 19th C. Private Collection of Laura Henderson
Button Hook, Celluloid Handle, ca. 1910 Private Collection of Laura Henderson
Silver Shoe Horn, 19th C. Private Collection of Laura Henderson
Manicure Tools with Sterling Silver Handles:
Nail File, Cuticle Trimmer, Nail Cleaner, mid-19th C. Private Collection of Laura Henderson
Large Wood Darning Egg and Small Double Darning Egg, 19th C. Private Collection of Laura Henderson

Miami University Art Museum
MG 1997.130 Black Silk Bodice with Jet Bead Trim, 19th C.
Without Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn's journals, this exhibit would not be possible. Henrietta kept journals for most of her adult life, from 1851 to 1910. Her journals changed to reflect her concerns and the tasks that occupied her attention as she grew older. Eventually she began to struggle with limited eyesight. Her beautiful script in the earlier journals contrasted with her writing in later volumes shows how dramatically her vision problems began to affect her life.

Although she was not able to write every day and there were periods of her life when she did not keep journals, this carefully kept document provides a lens into her world and can provide insight into the domestic lives of similar individuals.

Women were encouraged to chronicle their lives in diaries. Journals provide a point of reference for historians to understand the ways in which broader cultural values gave meaning to daily events and provided women with guidelines of behavior for themselves and their families. Journals were an accepted and popular medium of the time for Henrietta to express her ideas and describe her life. Often journals like Henrietta’s were intended for a broader audience than the author herself, such as descendants or other family members.

Domestic Memory:
The Journals, Correspondence and Artifacts of
Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn

May 28-July 26, 2013

Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn

Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn lived a long, happy, and productive life from 1832 to 1922. She was born in Oxford, Ohio to William Holmes McGuffey and Harriet Spining McGuffey shortly before they moved into their brick home, which still stands, on Spring Street.
Hepburn saw tremendous social, political, and cultural changes over the course of her life. She married Andrew Dousa (A.D.) Hepburn in 1857 and they had two children, Charles (1858-1929) and Henrietta (Etta) (1859-1932). Her marriage spanned the antebellum, the Civil War, the reconstruction years, and early decades of the twentieth century. Although she lived in Virginia and North Carolina, most her life was spent in Ohio.

The written records of her life as a woman during the years between 1851 and 1910 provide a unique lens through which we can newly examine the framework of the Victorian “cult of domesticity,” of defining womanly attributes. This set of values dominated white middle class culture in the nineteenth century, and Henrietta Hepburn’s life particularly exemplifies the ideals of domesticity and piety.

This display consists of domestic objects from McGuffey and Hepburn family homes and from local museums or historical collections. Together with her written reflections, these artifacts represent the connections between individuals, significant material possessions, and the larger societies in which they lived.

Labels designated with a * were printed on cream colored paper rather than the simple black and white design used for the other labels to draw attention to the labels that highlight the unifying concept of the individual case.

*Domesticity
Henrietta Hepburn was a homemaker and mother in nineteenth century decades when this function was considered crucial to the political and cultural survival of America. These decades were also filled with major cultural and technological changes that altered how the labor of homemaking and motherhood was completed. Catharine Beecher, well known to Henrietta’s father, and others were transforming the roles of homemaking and childcare.
*Domestic Memory
Domestic memory is the memory of basic tactile and sensory experiences in one’s life, such as touch, sound and smell. The tactile quality of textiles used in the home, the sound of a child’s voice, the smells of home cooking and garden herbs and flowers are all part of the memory of a family home. Henrietta Hepburn’s diaries were focused upon daily events, the weather, the preparation of food and the details of running a home. The Hepburn journals or diaries describe basic aspects of domestic life at that time.

*Cult of Domesticity
The Victorian “cult of domesticity” was a set of moral and behavioral values for women which had significant impact upon Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn and other women like her. Her written records of her life provide a unique lens through which we can newly examine the framework of the four cardinal virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity.

*Sewing
Mastery of sewing was an important skill, class cue and talisman of respectable womanhood. Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn took particular pride in sewing sturdy or attractive clothing for her family. Sewing was a dominant theme that Henrietta reflected upon throughout her adult life. She was often proud of the clothing that she made for her husband, her children or herself.

*The Art of Dinner Giving
During Henrietta Hepburn’s lifetime properly hosting a dinner was a crucial part of her role as a wife and homemaker. She needed to be aware of the appropriate flowers to use as a centerpiece. The menu, a fresh array of different dishes, would have been thoughtfully planned. The recipes her mother might have used to teach Henrietta to cook as a young girl in the 1830s were different from those in later cookbooks. Recipes that she used as an adult reflected national changes in taste and readily available foods.
*McGuffey and Hepburn Family History

*Gift Books
These literary annuals were very popular in the mid-nineteenth century. Gift books were beautifully illustrated and were often designed to be given as gifts to and from women. They represented ideals of womanhood that corresponded to the Victorian cult of domesticity.

*The Community of Miami University
Most of Henrietta’s life was lived in communities influenced by universities, as both her father and husband were university professors and presidents. Although Henrietta and A.D. Hepburn’s experiences were consistently defined by their connection to the university, they would have seen growth and decline in enrollments and relative changes in prosperity. As the college expanded and evolved, old buildings were demolished to make room for the new needs of the growing institution. Much of the new construction reused names from older buildings. Although the physical appearance of the space changed considerably, many aspects remained familiar and Henrietta often mentioned the university or people connected with it in her journals.

*Photographs
Henrietta Hepburn was very interested in preserving family photographs. She made many references to having portraits of family members taken, framed, or displayed. Although technology improved significantly in her lifetime, having a photograph made continued to be an event that she considered important. Photographs provide some of the best insight we have into the way that the Hepburn family dressed and chose to present themselves on formal occasions. The family often posed for photographs with specific family members, making a permanent record of close family relationships.

*The Family Library

_Walter Havighurst Special Collections_
Henrietta and A.D. Hepburn donated many of their books to the Miami University library for students to use. Some of these books would have been in her home as she grew up.
Throughout her life she wrote about reading. These books were passed down from her father, and many of the books have both her husband’s and father’s signatures.

Secondary Context Labels
A ladylike demeanor was very important to women like Henrietta Hepburn. She would have been very careful to present a well-groomed outfit whether working in her home or conducting social calls. An immaculate outward appearance was considered a reflection of a woman’s character. Some of the grooming tools that women would have had in their homes have changed dramatically since Henrietta Hepburn’s lifetime, while others do not appear to have changed greatly.

Reminiscences
As an elderly woman, Henrietta Hepburn returned to the journals that she had recorded on a day-to-day basis and expanded some of the diary material or described periods that she had not previously chronicled. These pieces are written in a narrative form and have been labeled ‘Reminiscences.’ Henrietta Hepburn reframed many of the experiences she had described in her journals in these ‘Reminiscences.’

Correspondence
Henrietta Hepburn’s correspondence provided another source for this exhibit. Many members of her family corresponded extensively. Some of the letters that she wrote are part of the Walter Havighurst Special Collections, and others can be found in the Miami University Archives. Letters from her father that are also in university collections provided more information about her life and values.

Transcriptions
Sewing in the nineteenth century was not without its challenges, however. She recalled her early years of learning to sew useful items for her father to wear:

“Oh the weary hours I spent over those shirts there was no such thing in those days as ready-made shirt bosoms that could be bought and put into the shirt. No, if a person
undertook to make a shirt they had to make it out and out a ready-made shirt such as can be bought now (1893) had never been thought of. Shirt making was almost considered a fine art to get a shirt to fit comfortably around the neck was a most difficult task of course shirts were made to order but they were expensive $30 a doz.”

Henrietta Hepburn’s Reminiscences

*Walter Havighurst Special Collections*

She wrote about staying with her sister for an extended period of time in 1855:

“My life that winter with my sister was different from anything I had been used to having lived in Virginia from the age of 13 thirteen I had never done any house work or work of any kind except some sewing. Housekeeping in Ohio is hard no servants to be gotten a great deal of the time and in different ones when you do get them. Sometimes for weeks we had no servant I helped with the work all I could and often felt more tired than I ever had done in my life. Sunday was indeed a welcome day of rest for then we did just as little as possible. ”

Henrietta Hepburn’s Reminiscences

*Walter Havighurst Special Collections*

“On the 10th of July I was married to Mr. Hepburn. The marriage was a very quiet one on account of Anna’s recent death. Only the members of the Faculty were invited it was about 10 o’clock Friday morning July 10th 1857. It may seem strange that Friday was the day ______ Mr. Hepburn wished it on that day because it was my birthday. His father and mother had come on to see us married his mother disliked our being married on such an unlucky day. There had been a severe storm the night before but the 10th was dry and hot the earth steamed with the moisture I never will forget how hot the sun shone as we walked to the book store just at the foot of the University grounds where we were to take the cars. My traveling dress was a very fine French merino dark drab my bonnet was white straw trimmed with very wide green and black ribbon.”

Letter from William Holmes McGuffey
Henrietta’s father retained an active interest in his adult daughter’s life and advised her and her sister, Mary, on how best to fulfill their roles as young women:

“I am sorry that Mary and company are not likely to visit us, but tell her confidentially that she ought to use every precaution, and exert all her prudence (and she has her full share) not in any degree to disoblige her husband’s friends. Both he (the Dr.) and she are sure of us all here. But any thing that might look like displeasing any of the Dr.’s connections, nor by possibility to seem willing to leave him, or to incline him to do anything that would risk her health or damage his business. (All this is for you and her alone).”

Later in the letter he wrote:

“Write often – Are you not rather short of capitals in your font of type? And of Periods (.)? Your sentences are revisited by (?) commas”

Dr. Benton received a letter from the Carnagie [sic] Fund saying if Mr. Hepburn accepted the Fund it would have to be done at once. Mr. Hepburn had understood he would not have to give up his work in Miami until June 1909 but now he finds he will have to give it up next June. This is sudden and we all feel depressed. What will we do where go of course we can’t decide just now to give up one’s life work is hard I know Mr. Hepburn feels it very much although [sic] he bears up bravely.

“ President Benton and his young secretary Mr. Kay dined with us today, six o'clock [sic] dinner. Mary Cheeks waited on the table and did it well. We had mutton steaks, tiny green peas, mashed potatoes and a tomato salad. Used my fine plain white china and my McGuffey silver. The table looked very pretty. Had the fine french [sic] gilt band coffee cups for the coffee a glass bowl in the center of the table filled with nasturchans [sic]
looked pretty it was Mary Cheeks / (page break) that suggested having the flowers and
gathered them from her own gardens. We are much pleased with Dr. Benton, he is a
young man of 38 years a whole soul hearty go ahead kind of a man we think he will make
a good president. I forgot to write that we had cake and sliced pineapple for dessert.”

Letter from William Holmes McGuffey to A.D. Hepburn, January 3, 1870

Walter Havighurst Special Collections

Henrietta’s father retained a close relationship with her and her husband throughout her
adult life. He often wrote to family members advising them on their conduct and kept an
interest in the daily aspects of their lives long after they had grown. He took a special
interest in advising A.D.’s career.

“I am disappointed, I must confess – in the small success of the M. U. I wish you were
out of it, but just now I do not know of a better place to be had in church or college.”

Detailed Object Labels

Parlor Chair, ca. 1880

William Holmes McGuffey Museum

This parlor chair belonged to the Hepburn family. Families furnished and decorated their
parlors to reflect American middle class values. This room was a formal space for the
family to entertain visitors and hold weddings, funerals, and other important events.

Towels, late19th-early 20th C.

William Holmes McGuffey Museum

Both of these towels are monogrammed with the letters “McG”. These letters were used
to represent the family name on everyday objects that also served to ornament the home.

“The Ladies' Guide to Needle Work, Embroidery, Etc.:
Being a Complete Guide to All Kinds of Ladies' Fancy Work.” 1887

Walter Havighurst Special Collections
Many books were printed in the nineteenth century that included instructions for fine sewing and patterns for ornamented items for the home. Henrietta would have used or read similar books as she was learning how to sew or while she was teaching her daughter how to create fine items.

**Black Silk Bodice with Jet Bead Trim, 19th C.**

*Miami University Art Museum*

This late nineteenth century bodice with jet bead trim is part of the McGuffey Museum collection of textiles at the art museum. Henrietta Hepburn often wrote about repairing items of family clothing, or of passing down the clothing her children wore to her grandchildren for their use. Many women who sewed clothing were careful to get as much use out of the items as possible. When something could no longer be worn, the cloth itself could be remade into a new garment and the buttons and lace could be reused. Many of the buttons and the collar and cuffs of this garment have been removed and likely were reused.


*Walter Havighurst Special Collections*

Catharine Beecher and other influential women published many guides on new domestic ideals and instructed women how to manage their homes. They did so to aid women in adhering to the values of the “cult of domesticity” and to instruct them on how best to take advantage of the technological advances of the nineteenth century.

**Photograph of Henrietta Hepburn as a Young Woman**

*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

Henrietta Hepburn lived in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, during the Civil War. Her husband taught at the university and was a chaplain for the Confederate Army. Henrietta wrote about her concerns for her family and her efforts to manage the household and provide them with comfortable clothing.
McGuffey Silver Fiddleback Forks and Spoons, 1840s-1850s

*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

These are the utensils that Henrietta would have used while she was growing up. These silver forks and spoons were of fine quality and were carefully engraved with the family name. The forks were made by McGrew & Beggs (1836-1841) and the spoons are hallmarked Beggs & Smith (1848-1861). Articles pertaining to the home, such as linens, china, silverware and glassware, were often passed down to women. Because of the close relationship between McGuffey and A.D. Hepburn, it probably would have pleased McGuffey for the silver to be in the Hepburn household.

McGuffey Silver Spoons, ca. 1883

*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

These spoons were made much later than the fiddleback pattern forks and spoons. Henrietta Hepburn appears to have carried on the family tradition of having elegant silverware engraved with the family name. This is the kind of silver that she would have used when entertaining as an adult woman in Oxford.

Alexander Hamilton McGuffey Plate, 19th C.

*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

This gilt-edged McGuffey plate belonged to Henrietta Hepburn’s uncle, Alexander Hamilton McGuffey. She might have used this plate when she visited with family members.

Hepburn Family Photo, ca. 1894-1895

*Miami University Archives*

This appears to be a multi-generation photo and is one of the ways that Henrietta and her family chose to commemorate their experiences.

Top Row:
Julia Benedict Hepburn
Charles McGuffey Hepburn
Middle Row:
Andrew Dousa Hepburn
Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn
Henrietta Williamson Hepburn

Bottom Row:
Samuel Benedict Hepburn
Henrietta Hepburn

McGuffey Hepburn Birthday book, 1882
Miami University Archives
This is another way that someone in this family recorded dates that were important to the family. This was compiled in a book specifically for that purpose, rather than in the front of a family Bible as was often the case with American families in the nineteenth century. The handwriting appears to be Henrietta’s in several entries in the book.

McGuffey Family History, ca. 1880
Walter Havighurst Special Collections
In this letter, written on Hamilton Hotel stationary, Henrietta wrote about the history of the McGuffey Family. This was another way that she recalled the past. She ended the history with the McGuffeys, and did not write about the Hepburn family or where they lived.

Photographs
Henrietta Hepburn was very interested in preserving family photographs. She made many references to having portraits of family members taken, framed, or displayed. Although technology improved significantly in her lifetime, having a photograph made continued to be an event that she considered important.
This book included various ways to prepare mutton. When they were young, Henrietta used a recipe similar to the section in this book on foods available for use in the home. It is likely that Harriet used a similar cookbook to teach her daughters about cooking.

List of Events in the Lives of the Members of the McGuffey Family

*Walter Havighurst Special Collections*

There is no author’s name on this list of dates, but it represents significant birth dates. It was originally written in ink but has been updated in pencil to include subsequent important events such as marriages and deaths. Someone in the family believed that this record was important enough to continue to add to as the family grew and changed.

“Floral Offering,” 19th c.

*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

This book is representative of the cult of domesticity and the Victorian interest in botany. Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn owned this book, which was part of a large body of published work on the language of flowers.

Cookbooks, 1836-1880

*Walter Havighurst Special Collections*

This assortment of recipes from various cookbooks published during the nineteenth century illustrates that there were many changes in cooking techniques, technology and foods available for use in the home.

*The Virginia Housewife; Or, Methodical Cook, 1836*

It is likely that Harriet used a similar cookbook to teach her daughters about cooking when they were young. Henrietta used a recipe similar to the section in this book on various ways to prepare mutton.

*Young Housekeepers Friend, 1859*

This book included recipes for mashed potatoes and for the proper way to serve peas.

*Science in the Kitchen. A Scientific Treatise on Food Substances and Their Dietetic Properties, Together with a Practical Explanation of the Principles of Healthful Cookery, and a Large Number of Original, Palatable, and Wholesome Recipes, 1892*
This book included instructions for serving pineapple, and illustrations of the fruit which were not found in the earlier cookbooks examined for this project.

“The Ladies' Vase, or, Polite Manual for Young Ladies: Original and Selected,” 1849
Walter Havighurst Special Collections

“The Magnolia: Or, Gift-Book of Friendship” 1851
Walter Havighurst Special Collections

Henrietta and Her Grandchildren, 1903
Miami University Archives

Family remained very important to Henrietta throughout her life. Although her daughter Etta never married, her son, Charles McGuffey Hepburn, married Julia Benedict and they had a large family. Both Henrietta and Andrew sat for photographs with their grandchildren. The grandchildren in this photograph include:

Samuel Benedict Hepburn, b. 1892
Henrietta Hepburn, b. 1894
Janet Douglas Hepburn, b. 1895
Andrew Hopewell Hepburn, b. 1898
William McGuffey Hepburn, b. 1900

Photograph of Henrietta Hepburn’s Grandchildren, ca. 1895
Miami University Archives

This photograph is of Samuel Benedict Hepburn and Henrietta Hepburn. Henrietta Hepburn was a proud grandmother who loved children, especially her grandchildren. She had deep affection for “Little Sister,” her granddaughter and namesake. She looked forward to spending time with her granddaughter and eagerly wrote about her memories of her.
Since Andrew taught English at Miami University for many years, the university remained important to Henrietta. Her husband was the president of the college from 1871 to 1873, a position that would have added many social obligations to her duties as his wife. Although the family left Oxford while the university was closed, they returned later and lived in the area until their deaths.

Henrietta McGuffey as a Young Women, 19th c.
Personal Collection of Jeanne Rogow

This undated portrait of Henrietta Hepburn was likely made prior to her marriage to Andrew Hepburn.

Henrietta (Etta)Hepburn and Samuel Benedict Hepburn, 1892

William Holmes McGuffey Museum
Photograph of Andrew Dousa Hepburn (A.D.) in His Office

William Holmes McGuffey Museum
This is taken from the Recensio, the Miami University student yearbook. The original photograph is on display at the McGuffey Museum.

Object Identification
Glass Darning Egg, mid-19th C.
Private collection

Perfume bottle with Stopper and Sterling Silver Collar, 19th C.
Private collection

Powder Jar with Sterling Silver Lid, 19th C.
Private collection
Victorian Repoussé Mirror, Sterling Silver, 19th C.
*Private collection*

Button hook, Sterling Silver Handle, 19th C.
*Private collection*

Button Hook, Celluloid Handle, ca. 1910
*Private collection*
The handle is fashioned from an early form of plastic called Celluloid.

Manicure Tools with Sterling Silver Handles:
Nail File, Cuticle Trimmer, Nail Cleaner, mid-19th C.
*Private collection*

Large Wood Darning Egg
and Small Double Darning Egg, 19th C.
*Private collection*

McGuffey Silver Fork, ca. 1883
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

Crocheted Doily, 19th C.
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

Crocheted Doily, 19th C.
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

“The Art of Dinner Giving: And Usages of Polite Society,” 1880
*Walter Havighurst Special Collections*
Limoges China Tea Service, 19th C.
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*
This tea service includes a tea cup and saucer, a pitcher, creamer and dessert plates.

Crocheted Doily, 19th C.
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

McGuffey Silver Sugar Spoon, 19th C.
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

Photograph of Andrew Dousa (A.D.) Hepburn
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

Portrait of William Holmes McGuffey
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

Portrait of Harriet Spining McGuffey
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

Photograph of Henrietta (Etta) Hepburn as a Young Girl
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

Doilies, 19th C.
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*

Doilies, 19th C.
*William Holmes McGuffey Museum*
Appendix Three
Exhibit Brochure

This exhibit would not be possible without extensive collaboration between the Miami University Art Museum, William Holmes McGuffey Museum, Walter Havighurst Special Collections, and the Miami University Archives. For further reading on Henrietta Hepburn please see the McGuffey (William Holmes) Family Papers at the Walter Havighurst Special Collections, and the Andrew Deese Hepburn Collection 1846-1944 at the Miami University Archives.

Exhibit curated by Erin Toothaker, Hinsley Graduate Student

Dr. Sarah Butler, Mr. James Bricker, Ms. Lori Chapin, Ms. Valerie Elliott, Dr. Mary Frederickson, Mr. Stephen Gordon, Dr. Kimberly Hamlan, Ms. Laura Henderson, Dr. E. Claire Jerry, Ms. Jacky Johnson, Ms. Ashley Jones, Mr. Marcus Ladd, Dr. Bob Schmidt, Dr. Helen Shumaker, Ms. Elizabeth Britz, Ms. Kimberly Yulay, Ms. Laura Stewart, and the amazing volunteers at the McGuffey Museum, have all contributed tremendously to this project.

These photographs are believed to represent three generations of women named Henrietta in the Hepburn family.

The photographs in this brochure are from the William Holmes McGuffey Museum, Walter Havighurst Special Collections, and the Miami University Archives collections.

Domestic Memory: The Journals, Correspondence and Artifacts of Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn

May 28-July 26, 2013

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Henrietta McGeffy Hepburn lived a long and rich life from 1832 - 1922. She was married on her birthday, July 10th, 1857, to Andrew Duvan (A.D.) Hepburn and had two children, Charlie (1858-1920) and Henrietta (Hettie) (1859-1932). She saw tremendous social, political, and cultural changes over the course of her life.

Henrietta Hepburn's life was focused on the comfort and health of the members of her family. Her labor ensured that her family was well fed and carefully dressed, educated in both intellectual and religious teachings, and cared for in times of need. Through her writings, we learn what she did and where she was at certain points in time, but more significantly we can understand the domestic memory of Henrietta McGeffy Hepburn and the particular pride that she took in loving her husband, raising her children, furnishing her home, or sewing sturdy or attractive clothing for her family. Henrietta Hepburn paused in the midst of domestic responsibilities to write about the things that she wished to remember. As she matured, her journals became more reflective of her personality and impressions.

We see the influence of the cult of domesticity woven throughout her life, in her attention to and reflections upon domestic life, sewing, the ideal of piety, and her experiences of homemaking. The cult of domesticity was a complicated set of values, expectations, and behaviors that drove the daily experiences of many women and families. It was distinguished by four cardinal virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Private family life in the nineteenth century was considered one of the most important things that women could do and the values that society ascribed to them were designed to build upon what were considered the unique strengths of their sex. Women's duties within the cult of domesticity, in the home were constructed as for society's good. This was the case in both the Middle West and the South, regions of the United States perceived by most historians as strikingly different during the decades of Henrietta Hepburn's life. Her journals indicate a conventional respectable experience of homemaking, despite the fact that the couple moved and sometimes occupied unconventional homes.

Though some aspects of the domestic experience remained constant throughout Hepburn's life, many of the objects that would have surrounded her changed considerably with the advent of various technologies and the importance of the parlor, and of entertaining with appropriate table settings and ornamentation. Even Henrietta Hepburn's handwriting tells a story. Her early journals are written in clear, practiced handwriting. In the nineteenth century, especially for women, neatness was an indication of character. Henrietta would have carefully practiced her handwriting to achieve her best possible script. Later journals clearly show deterioration in the way that she wrote. Her vision began to fail as she grew older and her journals and correspondence became much harder to read.

This exhibit highlights the importance of items that were in daily use in Henrietta Hepburn's household and evaluates how these items and relevant entries from her diary reflect the values of the cult of domesticity. Henrietta's journals are a rich resource of information about her life in Southeastern Ohio, Virginia, and North Carolina. Her reminiscences, correspondence with family members, and her son's diaries provided additional information about her domestic life.

Henrietta Hepburn often wrote about her family life. Her materials indicate that her values were largely influenced by the ideas of the cult of domesticity. Henrietta raised children, cared for her family, and was active in her church and community. This exhibit, "Domestic Memory", examines the everyday sensory experiences her domestic life across time and place, showing that sensory tactile experiences were loaded with cultural significance.
Domestic Memory: The Journals, Correspondence and Artifacts of Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn will be located at the Walter Havighurst Special Collections from May 28-July 26, 2013.

The cases where the exhibit is located are on the 3rd floor of Miami University’s King Library.

King Library is located at 151 S. Campus Ave. Oxford, Oh 45056.

The Special Collections summer hours are: 8am-4pm Monday through Friday

You can call the Library to confirm hours on the day of your visit at 513 529 4141.