



# **The Journal of Ann McMath: An Orphan in a New York Parsonage in the 1850s (Excelsior Editions)**

*Ann McMath*

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## **The Journal of Ann McMath: An Orphan in a New York Parsonage in the 1850s (Excelsior Editions)**

Ann McMath

*An account of an ordinary young woman coming of age in the "Burned-Over District" of Western New York during the Second Great Awakening.*

In 1851, fourteen-year-old orphan Ann McMath was sent to live with her uncle and his family in their parsonage in Horseheads, New York. Lonely and full of self doubt, anxious to establish female friendships in a new place, and questing for intellectual and moral perfection, she began keeping journal when she was seventeen and wrote in it regularly for the next five years, until she was married. A fascinating example of “biography from below,” McMath’s journal offers a rare glimpse of life in the 1850s as it was lived by ordinary women, told in the authentic voice of a young woman coming of age in the Burned-Over District of Western New York. In addition to the journal itself, the book includes an introduction by editor C. Stewart Doty, as well as a genealogy, notes on the text, and a section entitled “People in the Life of Ann McMath,” which gives brief biographies of everyone mentioned in the journal.

“We get a close look at the loneliness of living in a farming community. The daily struggle to live and survive and the ever present specter of death. [Ann] is just your average woman; the closest she gets involved in politics is listening to the occasional lecture at their church. Stewart Doty has done an excellent job putting together this journal and preserving it as a future source for students and scholars.” — *San Francisco Book Review*

*C. Stewart Doty is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Maine. He is coauthor (with Dale Sperry Mudge and Herbert John Benally) of Photographing Navajos: John Collier Jr. on the Reservation, 1948–1953 and of Acadian Hard Times: The Farm Security Administration in Maine’s St. John Valley, 1940–1943. He has written extensively in the field of American history in various journals and other books.*



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