

Clark University

Clark Digital Commons

Undergraduate Student Academic Spree Day and Fall Fest

Oct 21st, 12:00 AM

The Help at Salisbury Mansion

Anna-Li St. Martin

Clark University, AStMartin@clarku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.clarku.edu/asdff>

St. Martin, Anna-Li, "The Help at Salisbury Mansion" (2021). *Undergraduate Student Academic Spree Day and Fall Fest*. 46.

<https://commons.clarku.edu/asdff/ff2021/Posters/46>

This Open Access Event is brought to you for free and open access by Clark Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Student Academic Spree Day and Fall Fest by an authorized administrator of Clark Digital Commons. For more information, please contact larobinson@clarku.edu.

The Help at Salisbury Mansion

Anna-Li St. Martin '22 – (Sponsor: Professor Amy Richter)



CLARK
UNIVERSITY

The Salisbury Mansion Internship

My internship with the Worcester Historical Museum (WHM) focused on researching female housekeepers, live-in and hired help to contribute to the WHM's YouTube series, with hopes to attract and educate the public about the Salisbury Mansion. During my internship, my supervisor, Robert Stacy, and I had weekly meetings discussing various topics on 19th century New England in relation to Worcester and the Salisbury family.

My topic explored the daily lives of female housekeepers, live-in, and hired help during 19th century New England. While researching people who have lived in the Salisbury Mansion, almost only names from government censuses were recorded. By looking at women's diaries during and around the 1830s, I was able to piece together what the daily lives of the help would have looked like. Doing research for a museum gave me the opportunity to give a voice to those who are not always remembered. It was difficult to find detailed information on the help, let alone female help, as women's accounts are sparse. Although I did not expect to find a vast amount of information on individuals who lived and worked at the mansion, my goal was to increase the appreciation of the work of these low-income women in the preservation of the Salisbury Mansion that is still standing today.



Fig 2: Photograph of Salisbury Mansion

WORCESTER
HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Fig 1: Image of Worcester historical Museum's Logo

About the Worcester Historical Museum

The Worcester Historical Museum, founded in 1875 as the Worcester Society of Antiquity, is the only institution devoted entirely to local history and artifacts. Their collection ranges from over 7,000 titles of colonial to 20th century artifacts, consisting of manuscripts, textiles, paintings, and ceramics. Worcester's history is interpreted through a calendar of exhibitions, educational programming, tours and publications.

About the Salisbury Mansion

Salisbury Mansion, Worcester's only historic house museum, is owned and operated by the Worcester Historical Museum. Built in 1772, the Salisbury Mansion was first utilized as a house and store but has since gone through a lot of changes. Today it is restored to the condition it would have been in the 1830s, home to the widow Elizabeth Tuckerman Salisbury, wife to Stephan Salisbury I and original owner.

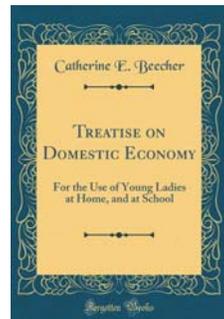


Fig 4: Image of *A Treatise on Domestic Economy For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School* by Catherine Ester Beecher

The Help

In my research, I found there were various acclimations the "help" had to make when it came to the seasons of New England while doing laundry or chopping wood for the season. By speaking about the hardships people from 19th century New England faced, we recognize daily difficulties that we do not have to worry about today due to the advancement of technology.

Although there are limited accounts of women's perspectives on working for a family like the Salisbury's, I created an outline of a list of categories that should be included when it comes to discussing the housekeepers, live-in, and hired help. By discussing the hard, repetitive work that these people had to do will not only revive the "unsung heroes", but also show the difficulties that people experienced during 19th century New England.

While reading up on women of the household and their duties to keep the help in line, some chapters from *A Treatise on Domestic Economy For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School* by Catherine Ester Beecher were helpful, as it provided details on the perspective of the woman of the household. It discusses how ladies are expected to treat their staff and what is expected of the staff. Through my internship, I provided fundamental research that contributes to the current projects of the WHM to increase awareness of the Salisbury Mansion and the unappreciated help.



Fig 3: Image of *Our Own Sung Fireside* by Jane C. Nylander