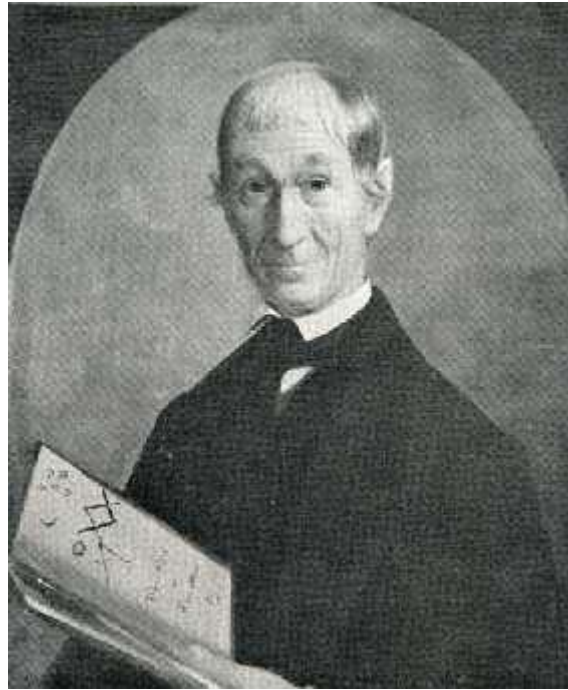


New Hampshire State Library



Dudley Leavitt (1772-1851)
Manuscripts, Notes, and Books



Call#: ARC 920 L4391mnb
Finding Aid
Prepared by Linda Kent
Technical Services, NHSL
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Scope and Content Note: The collection includes books, manuscripts, notes, and correspondence. The notebooks and manuscripts contain mathematical and astronomical calculations, as well as expositions of grammatical principles, all with examples and problems, apparently intended for use by his students. There are also newspaper clippings of current events and politics.

Included with the collection is Dudley Leavitt, Jr.'s diploma dated 1839 from Dartmouth College, with its original cylindrical case.

Biographical Background: Leavitt was born in Exeter, New Hampshire in 1772 and was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy. He was a newspaper editor and school teacher in Gilmanton, later moving to Meredith where, in 1797, he began publishing his well-known almanac, a publication which rivaled the Farmers Almanac and continued in publication until long after his death.

First and foremost a mathematician, astronomer and teacher, Leavitt filled notebooks with problems, examples, and drawings illustrating principles and axioms for his students and as a guide for his own further studies. He also devoted himself to the elucidation of the principles of English grammar. In addition, he was a farmer and was active in his town as a selectman. He and his wife Judith (nee Glidden, of Gilmanton) had 11 children.

Leavitt died in September of 1851, in his 79th year.

[Information and cover illustration taken from Wikipedia, 1/31/2013,
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dudley_Leavitt_\(publisher\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dudley_Leavitt_(publisher))]

Provenance: The collection most probably came to the New Hampshire State Library as a gift; there is no record on file. Two of the published volumes in the collection (Complete directions for parsing the English language: the rules of grammar made easy; and, The scholar's review, and teacher's daily assistant: being a compendium of literary and scientific works, original, improved and selected ...) had been cataloged separately in 2006. The remaining items had long been stored in a wooden file cabinet in the library's basement. They were uncovered again in an unrelated search; all the various parts were brought together in one collection in 2013 and stored in the library's temperature controlled archives room.

Span Dates: 1811-191[3], and undated; most from early-mid 19th century.

Collection Strengths: The precision and clarity of Leavitt's mind are revealed in the pages of his carefully written and very detailed notes and manuscripts as well as in his published works. Here are the writings of a man intensely curious about the world around him and devoted to the passing on of useful and interesting information. The collection highlights Leavitt's extraordinary devotion to the pursuit and transmission of knowledge, especially of mathematics, astronomy, and grammar.

Collection Size: The collection is housed in one legal sized upright Hollinger box, one archival book box, and a folio.

Copyright Status and Access: The collection is owned by New Hampshire State Library. It does not circulate but is accessible to patrons at the library upon request.

Subjects:

Astronomers—New Hampshire—19th century
Astronomy—Study and teaching—19th century
Mathematicians—New Hampshire—19th century
Mathematics—Study and teaching—19th century
English grammar—Study and teaching—19th century
Publishers—New Hampshire—19th century
Teachers—New Hampshire—19th century
Almanacs—New Hampshire—19th century

Arrangement and Description: There was no apparent order in the collection as found. The documents are organized into seven series by subject: manuscripts, notebooks, correspondence, news clippings, Meredith town records, published volumes, and diploma. Arrangement is at the item level.

Container List:

Box 1

Series I: Manuscripts:

- Folder 1.** "D. Leavitt's mathematical manuscript: written several years ago, by the owner, for the amusement and instruction of himself" [includes news clippings pasted inside front and back covers].
2. "[English grammar made plain and easy]: Part III"
 3. "Chymistry"
 4. "Reduction of decimals"
 5. "Influence of the study of history on ambition" (August 8, 1835).
 6. "Gentlemen and ladies Arithmetick, made plain and easy, being a new and improved system of that science for the use of schools and academies in the United States", by Dudley Leavitt, teacher of mathematics, etc. (March 31, 1831).

Series II: Notebook and Notes:

7. Battles on the land between the Americans and the British during the War of 1812" [includes tally of losses among Americans, British, and Indians]
8. [Lunar and tide calculation notebook]
9. [Fragments of notes on lunar calculations]
10. List of titles on music theory and harmony
11. [Notes on a wide variety of topics], e.g. slavery, triangles, liberty, artificial earthquakes, weather, "political arithmetic".
12. [[Mathematical problems]

Series III: Correspondence:

Folder 13. 16-page letter dated September 4, 1824, written from New Durham to unknown addressee, concerning Bonycastle's Diophantine problems. [Most probably, he is referencing *Bonycastle's introduction to algebra; containing the indeterminate and diophantine analysis, and the application of algebra to geometry. Revised, corrected and enlarged by James Ryan. To which is added a large collection of problems for exercise, original and selected by John F. Jenkins.* By Bonycastle, John, 1750?-1821., Ryan, James. ed., Jenkins, John F.; Published in Philadelphia in 1811.]

Series IV: News Clippings

14. "Gleaning and extracts (D. Leavitt)" (scrapbook of undated clippings)
15. Loose clippings published after Leavitt's death, dated 1883 and 191[3]. Their relevance to Leavitt's life is unclear.

Series V: Meredith Town Records 1840-1877

16. Meredith Town record ledger 1840-1877

Series VI: Published Volumes (by Leavitt and others)

Folder 17. *New ciphering-book, adapted to Pike's arithmetic abridged: containing illustrative notes; a variety of mathematical tables, etc. with blank pages of fine paper sufficient for writing down all the more interesting operations,* [by Dudley Leavitt].
Published in Concord, N.H. by Jacob B. Moore, 1826.

Cylindrical case for Dartmouth diploma (diploma shelved separately).

Box 2

The scholar's review and teacher's daily assistant, by Dudley Leavitt.
Published in Portland, Me. by A. Lyman & Co., 1811.

Complete directions for parsing the English language or, the rules of grammar made easy, being a new grammatical essay designed as a supplement to Lindley Murray's grammar, for the use of students as soon as they begin to parse, by Dudley Leavitt.
Published in Concord, N.H. by Jacob B. Moore, 1826.

Institutes of natural philosophy, theoretical and practical, by William Enfield, LL.D., with some corrections; change in the order of the branches; and the addition of an appendix to the astronomical part, selected from Mr. Ewing's Practical Astronomy, by Samuel Webber.
2nd American edition published in Boston by Thomas & Andrews, 1811.

The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.
New series, published in London by Charles Knight & Co., 1842.

Folio

Series VII: Dartmouth College diploma, 1839.

Diploma of Dudley Leavitt, Jr. [Diploma case inside Box 1]

Other Resources at NHSL:

Heald, Bruce. *New Hampshire learnin' days: Dudley Leavitt, "Master" (1772-1851): an historic review.* Meredith, N.H.: Heald Enterprises, 1987.

920 L4391h

"Library announces gift of Dudley Leavitt Collection", 1941.

[Meredith Public Library acknowledges receipt of gift from Dudley Leavitt of some books and manuscripts which had belonged to his grandfather Dudley Leavitt, the noted NH teacher and astronomer.]

974.2 L4395

Moulton, Ruth. *Dudley Leavitt.* Meredith, N.H.: Meredith Historical Society, [1867].

920 L4391

The New England Calendar, or almanack for the year of our lord...

ARC 529.5 L439

Noyes, Emily Florence Leavitt. *Leavitt [genealogy of Dudley and Leavitt families].*

Published in Tilton, N.H., 1941. 5 volumes.

G 929.2 L4391

Prescott, Polly A. *Some memories of Dudley Leavitt.* *In Granite Monthly: a magazine of history, biography, literature and state progress.* Volume 20, pp.

265-66, 1896.

BV 051 G759 v. 20, 1896.

Internet Resources:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dudley_Leavitt_\(publisher\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dudley_Leavitt_(publisher)) [biography]

<http://www.stoppingpoints.com/nh/Belknap/Dudley+Leavitt+1772-1851.html>

[historic marker]