Emily: the Diary of a Hard-Worked Woman

ISSN 0003-4827
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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.9324

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a tale as to how they obtained the journals" (173). The other two jour-
nals Mr. Purdy secured from two great-granddaughters of Sylvester
Daniels.

For this volume to be of greater value to individuals interested in
the history of the West at the end of the nineteenth century more re-
search on Sylvester Daniels and his family needs to be done. Most im-
portant, the volume needs commentary on how typical or atypical
Sylvester Daniels was in comparison with others who made the trek
west in the 1870s.

COE COLLEGE

ROSEMARY F. CARROLL

$18.95 cloth, $7.95 paper.

On New Year’s Day, 1890, a divorced Colorado woman—and former
Iowa resident—began keeping daily accounts of her working and fam-
ily experiences. For the next year forty-seven-year-old Emily French
used her diary to record her feelings about the menial duties she per-
formed as a nurse and domestic servant; her frustrations in trying to
support herself, her sister, and two of her children; and her attempts to
build a respectable home for herself in the Denver community.
Lecompte reproduces French’s remarkable diary entries in full, alter-
ing them only by adding appropriate punctuation. Lecompte divides
the diary into four seasonal sections and includes a brief introduction
to each section as well as a general introduction and epilogue to the di-
ary, which provide additional information about French’s life and a
context for the events that French recorded.

French’s diary provides a rare glimpse into the life of a female day
laborer in the nineteenth century. Despite her lack of education, the te-
dious nature of her work, the numerous demands on her time, and her
general fatigue, French left behind a vivid account of her life as a single
working woman. Lecompte’s introductory essays and epilogue add to
that portrait and provide a fine methodological model for other histori-
ans in her reconstruction of French’s life from manuscript census data,
local newspaper accounts, and homestead and court records.

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