

## Dr. Nathaniel Pendleton Introduction to his Diaries (1851 - 1874)

### Introduction to the Pendleton Diaries

Dr. Nathaniel Pendleton was a physician serving the residents of Gouldsboro, Maine from the mid-1830s until his death in 1877. He documented his daily activities and financial transactions in a "pocket diary" for an unknown number of years. Twenty-one diaries have been preserved and protected by six generations of descendants.

In August 2021, the Pendleton descendants graciously offered to have the existing fragile diaries scanned by the Gouldsboro Historical Society. The resulting PDF files are only available on the Digital Archive. The Gouldsboro Historical Society does not have physical access to the diaries.

An index by year is in progress.

The set begins in 1852 and ends in 1874. The location of the 1857 diary is unknown. Dr. Pendleton kept 1872 and 1873 in the same diary. The 1874 diary is a collection of loose pages, and is not complete.

### Context in 1852

Nathaniel Pendleton (1803 – 1877) and his wife, Eunice Grover Pendleton (1805 – 1891) moved from Islesboro, Maine to Winter Harbor in the mid-1830's with five children under the age of nine. They lived in a salt-box style house near the end of the Inner Harbor.

In addition to his medical duties, Dr. Pendleton was actively involved in land acquisition, shipping and fishing businesses, ownership of several vessels including the *Henrietta*, *Oolong*, and *Mary Jane*, as well as serving as a justice of the peace and post master.

Dr. Pendleton was 48 years old when he began the 1852 diary. Eunice was 46. They had been married for 28 years and were building a new house away from the harbor. They were financially prosperous unlike most of their neighbors.

They experienced tremendous grief after they moved to Winter Harbor. Two of their five children died in 1835. Eight more children were born between 1836 and 1845. Five died as infants, two as toddlers. Martin drowned at age 12 in 1847. All were buried near the house on the harbor. [The 1852 diary describes the removal of the children from the harbor house graveyard to a new graveyard prepared by Dr. Pendleton behind the new house. The contract for their tombstones appears on the front inside cover.]

Only three biological children were living in 1852. Solomon was 26 years old, married, and the father of a three-year-old son. Francena was 23 years old, married, and pregnant with her first child. Roderic was nine years old. Adopted son, Charles William, was ten years old.

### Content

The diaries document everyday life in Gouldsboro, Maine from the perspective of the local doctor. His "calls" to ill patients at all hours of the day and night reveal the challenges he encountered including traveling between villages (few people were treated at his house), the ability to diagnose illnesses, and limited medicinal treatments. His struggle to contain the diphtheria epidemic of 1862 is heroic and heartbreaking. Fees are noted but payment is often delayed or bartered. It is interesting to note that Dr. Pendleton does not typically discount his fees for family members, even his own daughter.

Created by Sheila Strobel Smith

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