

**Journal as Historical Resource:
The Mark Shively Journal 1881-1894**

**by
Marion Lois Huffines**

I presented a program on my recently published book, *Mifflinburg and the West End*,¹ at the West End Library in the fall of 2012. Afterwards I spoke with Gary Fluke of Laurelton, who showed me a journal that had been among the books he had purchased at a local estate auction several years ago. Gary kindly offered to lend me the journal and permitted me to describe its contents for this article. The journal of almost daily entries begins in 1881 and runs through 1894. It was hand-written by Mark M. Shively.

Mark M. Shively was born on December 24, 1866, and died on Mary 31, 1948, at the age of 81. Mark grew up on the family farm near White Springs, Limestone Township. He attended Cedar Run School near his home, Central Pennsylvania College in New Berlin, and Brethren Normal College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. He taught school in Mifflinburg and nearby townships for many years and served as a borough councilman for 20 years. He regularly attended church and participated in church activities throughout his life. He lived with his wife Sadie and children at 266 Green Street, Mifflinburg, from 1892 until his death.

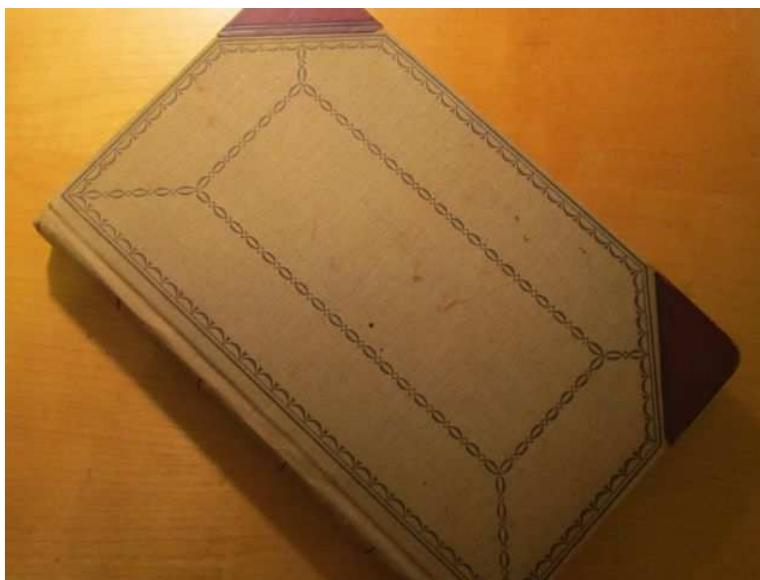
Private journals or diaries are invaluable historical resources. Typically they tell the detailed story of one individual at the time of writing. That story provides important information regarding family history, not only of who begat whom, but also an inside view of the family's life and times. For some, this information resolves family mysteries and fills in lost pieces of information about personality, interests, and events that shaped the family's life. Daily journals go far beyond the story of an individual family. In the daily accounts, readers learn the tenor of the time—how life was lived day by day, how people

¹ Marion Lois Huffines, *Mifflinburg and the West End*. Images of America Series. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012.

survived challenges and disappointments, and how families came together to form communities. Journals bring national history down to the individual and to a single locale, where the larger sweep of history is experienced and played out. Mark Shively's story describes his life journey through more than a decade.

The Mark Shively Journal

The Shively journal is a bound book, similar to a ledger, measuring 7.5 inches wide by 12 inches long by 1 inch thick and consisting of 376 numbered pages. The handwriting is clearly legible, written in ink by a steady, consistent hand. Comments inserted in the margins or between lines are few. Because the handwriting is so consistent, it is likely that Mark copied into the journal from notes he had made earlier. This is supported by a few pieces of paper found in the journal with notes in pencil and entries in a rougher handwriting not yet written into the journal. Each entry is identified by date and day of the week. One page often suffices for a month of entries. Somewhat less than half of the 376 pages contain entries. All other pages are blank except for a three-page book list and rough figuring in pencil on two pages. Mark often uses alternate spellings of people and place names, and his use of commas, periods, and capital letters varies from standard orthography.



The journal resembles a ledger with 396 lined pages. (Photo by Author)

Mark Shively identifies himself in the journal in only one place, after the last entry for the year 1882:

End of the Year of our Lord One thousand Eight hundred, and
Eighty-two.

M. M. Shively.

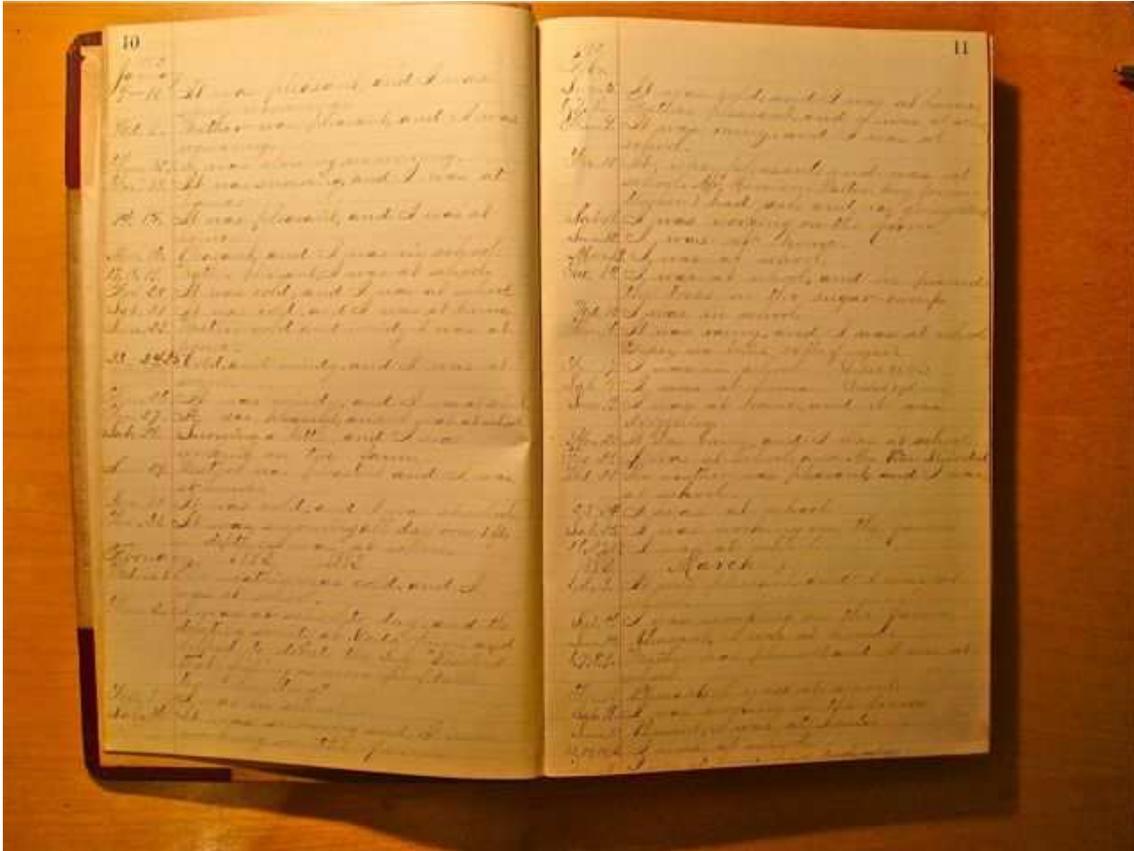
We learn M. M. Shively's first name indirectly. Two loose papers found in the journal were monthly grade reports during the time he attended the Brethren Normal College in Huntingdon, PA. On the top of each, one reads "Mark M. Shively."

The journal provides a day-by-day account of Mark's activities. Born on December 24, 1866, Mark begins the journal on July 2, 1881, when he was almost 15 years old. It begins on the day President James Garfield was assassinated, an event that seems to have affected Mark more than almost any other. He records it in a lengthy and formal entry:

In the year of our Lord 1881 July 2, President James A. Garfield was assassinated, while in the depot at Washington D.C. by Charles Guiteau, shooting the President twice, one bullet passing through his arm, and the other through his body the bullet lodging a little to the right of the naval entering on the back. After a great amount of suffering by the beloved president, and loosing a vast amount of physical ability. The government doing all in her power to restore their beloved president to perform the duties of the greatest office of this our free country, the United States, which he had so faithfully performed for a short time. his physician thinking that the moist air of the Atlantic might be of benefit to him. that government made proper arrangements, (by building railroad etc.) to convey him to Long Branch but the change did him no good and the president greatly weakened physically by long suffering departed this life at Long Branch on the 19 of September after lying in state at Long Branch on the 20th the remains of the martyr were taken to Washington, lying in state their [sic] for one day. it was removed to Cleveland, Ohio on the 23 where he was lying in state for two days.
(July 2, 1881)

Most of the journal's entries begin with a description of the weather. Some follow with a general brief statement, such as, "It was raining a little, and I was working on the farm." Or "It was cold, and I was at school." Many entries are more specific as to activity: "It was pleasant, and I was spreading manure in the orchard." Mark also mentions individuals in the area who have died or were

injured. Only occasionally are regional or national events related. The month of April 1886 and the year March 1887 through March 1888 have no entries although blank pages would have allowed for those entries to be written in later.



These pages continue the entries for January 9 through Mar 17, 1882.

(Photo by Author)

Farming

Mark's journal provides a detailed look at the farming work cycle as, year by year, he relates tasks that seem as endless as they are varied. Cleaning the stables and hauling and spreading manure are constants throughout the years. Fieldwork, in its season, demanded harrowing, plowing, sowing and cultivating, harvesting, reaping, threshing, binding, and still more hauling, whether the work took place on Mark's family homestead or on that of a relative or neighbor. Even when at school or away during the week at college, Mark had "Saturday work" at home, which always included cleaning the stables. He never worked on Sunday.

Mark begins recording his farm chores in September 1881. September and October ends the cycle of harvesting. Dominating these months are chores related to picking apples and making cider, boiling apple butter, hauling wood, cleaning fence corners, burning brush, and hauling fence post rails. Fieldwork included cutting off corn fodder, and sowing timothy and rye. Sample entries illustrate Mark's terse writing style and the variety of his work activities. They are given below, as written.

It was pleasant, and I was reaping cloverseed this A.M. and mowing this P.M. with the cradle. (September 18, 1883)

I was working on the farm. (This morning we had a heavy frost injuring the corn in some parts around us.) (September 10, 1883)

November and December are the months devoted to butchering hogs and beef, sawing wood, hauling away fences, and cleaning clover seed.

I was making a broom out of water birch the first I attempted to make this A.M. and cleaning the stables this PM (December 20, 1882)

Cold, windy and was putting away apples this A.M. and to Swengel for coal this P.M. (November 21, 1885)

January and February have the least number of mentioned farm chores, but Mark still needed to cut wood and shell corn, and he reports smoking meat. The Shivelys also owned what they called "Sugar Camp," a small island in Penns Creek with a number of very large maple trees. The island often flooded, and Tony Shively, its current owner, describes how his father, William Shively (b. 1924), as a child, saw small cabins on the island chained to trees to keep them from floating away at high water times. Mark reports that he and his family "pierced the trees on the Sugar Camp" at the end of February into March and "boiled sugar." When the sap would no longer produce sugar, the family made syrup or molasses.

It was rainy, and I was at school. (today we boiled 24 lbs of sugar) (February 16, 1882)

The first fine spring day for this season and I was helping to scatter the straw stack, clean the stables and get kindling from the saw mill. (March 22, 1884)

In April the work load picks up: plowing, digging the garden, sowing clover seed and oats, and planting early potatoes. He reports trimming apple and cherry trees and also “making fence.” Typically all these activities were carried out by working along with other members of the family. At the end of April, they “put the troughs on the Sugar Camp into the shanty.”

I was helping to haul manure on the potato-patch and finished plowing the corn stubble. (April 10, 1882)

It was windy, and I was helping to haul rails and make fence. (April 25, 1883)

It was pleasant and I was helping to pick stones and plow. (April 26, 1883)

In May and June, the number of farm activities increases substantially. For these months, Mark reports planting corn, getting wood for posts, and boring posts to make fence. The cattle are turned into the pasture. He white-washes the fence, prunes apple trees in the orchard, plows in the orchard, and replants corn where it failed to come up. He catches potato bugs, mows grass and grinds the reaper knives.

It was pleasant, and I was helping to get the truck-patch ready to plant and hauling brushes this evening. (May 23, 1882)

Pleasant, and I was cultivating corn, hauling shingles, and doing other work. (June 11-14, 1884)

It was raining part of the time and I was reaping etc. this A.M. and helping to patch the barn roof this P.M. (June 25, 1884)

He also does road work, working along with others under the direction of the road supervisor.

Farm activities seem to peak in July and August. Mark mows grass, hauls in loads of hay, cuts rye and wheat, and binds the cut grain “after the reaper.” He picks blackberries, cherries, and huckleberries, and continues to haul in loads of hay, wheat, oats, and rye. He reports thrashing and cleaning the wheat and flailing rye. He also shells corn and then takes it to Mifflinburg.

Messrs. Augustus and Levi Pick were cradling grain on the bottom-hill and father and I were binding. (July 14, 1882)

It was pleasant, and I was in Mifflinburg. took the spring wagon in to get it painted. (August 29, 1882)

Pleasant I was helping to wash and grease the gears and harvest this A.M. and and [sic] Frank to put away hay this P.M. (July 16, 1886)



The Shively family homestead was built in 1796 by Christian Shively, Mark's great grandfather. Mark's father, Jacob S. Shively, stands behind the fence on the left.

(Courtesy of Tony Shively)

Weather

Weather is a big concern, so much so that Mark reports it in almost every journal entry. Most often, Mark describes it as “pleasant” and says little else. He reports rain and in the winter the amount of fallen snow, but seldom gives the temperature in degrees. Big weather events, local and national, are reported in some detail. His longest entry regarding the weather is given to the flood of 1889, which today is referred to as the Johnstown Flood. He writes:

The Great Flood along Penn's Creek was the highest doing an amt of damage that can hardly be estimated. it took all our fence along the bottom and washed the corn and ground all from one field. it also took all the fence and tent troughs off the Sugar Camp and Rearick's two saw-mills. about 8000 10,000 people were drowned at Johnstown, Pa. and a vast amt. of damage done along many other streams. (June 1, 1889)

Education and Early Career

Perhaps the highlight of the journal for many readers will be the journey that this young farm boy takes that leads him to become a dedicated teacher. The journal begins when the 15 year-old Mark is attending school.

The winter term of the public school was opened by D. M. Sampsell and I was there at Cedar Run. (October 31, 1881)

The school year ran until the end of March:

I was examined in my studies and we the scholars of Cedar Run had an exhibition in the evening, had music by the Centerville Cornet Band. I had some dialogues. (March 30, 1882)

In October 1882, the teacher Oscar L. B. Thompson opened school, but Mark is unable to attend until almost a month later, on November 20, 1882. But he must have done well. On January 4, 1883, Mark reports teaching part of the day, and in March he does so again:

I was teaching this A.M. and Miss J. Thompson was teaching this P.M. and I was there. (March 26, 1883)

In the school years 1883-84 and 1884-85, Mark again does not start the school year until mid-November. This time Henry Filman is the teacher. In August 1885, Mark takes the teachers' examination. On February 20, 1886, Miss Emma Beaver, the teacher at Cedar Run, resigned teaching because of poor health. Mark reports:

I was at school and Prof. B. R. Johnson Co. Supt. Was here and gave me and Mr. J. F. Brouse a permit to teach the remainder of the term. (March 3, 1886)

The term had only one month remaining, but he must have worked very hard at it. The entries for March 1886 are very terse, and although the school year ended on March 25, there are no entries at all for April 1886. That summer Mark attended the Central Pennsylvania College in the building formerly occupied by the Seminary in New Berlin, which closed in 1883. Over the week of June 7, 1886, he was examined in grammar, geography, physiology, arithmetic, orthography, history, penmanship, and drawing—two subjects each day. He reports being in the teacher's examination in Lewis Township and in Limestone Township in 1886 and receiving a certificate. He taught at Cedar Run School for two years, in 1886-87 and 1887-88. His brother Greene was among his students.

His commitment to teaching was firm. He began attending semi-monthly local educational meetings, which were held in various school houses throughout the county. The teachers came together for what one would call today continuing education or in-service training. In January 1887, at the White Springs school, teachers discussed "Should supplementary reading be in our schools?" and Mark gave a recitation on the physiology of digestion and the effect of alcohol on it and a second recitation on hygiene. He presided at another meeting when the topics discussed were whether Limestone Township should have a graded school and how to obtain the attention and gain the interest of pupils in their work. At other meetings, various teachers gave sample class sessions:

Pleasant. I was teaching this A.M. and went to Pheasant Point to an Educational meeting. Gave a class drill in Geography and "map drawing" my method of the teaching the subject. The following were in the Class. Clyde C. Beckley, Emma M. Zimmerman, Gertie A. McClintic, Lottie J. McClintic, Lizzie C. Moyer. (February 25, 1887)

School closed on March 22, 1887, and on March 28, he was on his way to the Brethren Normal College in Huntingdon, known today as Juniata College.

The journal picks up again one year later, when on March 26, 1888, Mark went again to Huntingdon to attend the Normal College. His studies for the spring term included grammar, algebra, reviewing arithmetic with the senior class, the last book in elocution, bookkeeping, literature, and a vocal singing class. He was also a member of the Eclectic Literary Society.

THE NORMAL COLLEGE,
HUNTINGDON, PA. 7-

MONTHLY REPORT.
Scholarship, Diligence, Department, and Absence
of Mark W. Shively
for the month ending *April 27, 1888.*

FRANCHISE	TERM (PARTS)	GRADE (GRADE)	FRANCHISE	TERM (PARTS)	GRADE (GRADE)
Orthography			Zoology		
Elocution, Theory			Geology		
Practice	69		Physiology		
English Grammar	69		History, General		
Pennmanship			Biblical Antiquities		
Drawing			Composition	7	
Painting			Letter-writing	48	
Vocal Music	7		Punctuation		
Instrumental Music			Rhetoric, Style		
Book-keeping	7		Invention		
History, U. S.			Logic		
Constitution, U. S.			American Literature		
Political Geography			English Literature	7	
Map Drawing			French		
Written Arithmetic	72		German		
Mental Arithmetic			Etymology		
Algebra	7-		Latin		
Geometry			Greek		
Trigonometry			Latin Prose		
Surveying			Greek Prose		
Analytical Geometry			Mental Science		
Calculus			International Law		
Astronomy			Political Economy		
Physical Geography			Science of Teaching		
Physics			Bible Class		
Chemistry			Evidence of Christianity	7	
Botany			Ethics		

SCALE OF MARK FOR SCHOLARSHIP - A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z, 100, 90, 80, 70, 60, 50, 40, 30, 20, 10, 0.

Diligence, 7
Department, 7

J. W. Dumbaugh

The monthly report for Mark Shively of grades earned at the Brethren Normal College, dated April 27, 1888.

(Photo by Author)

On August 15, 1888, Mark signed an agreement at the Green Grove schoolhouse and began teaching at Green Grove on September 5, 1888. He attended the annual teacher's institute in December and heard lectures from various instructors, including "An hour with the old Romans," "The Pennsylvania Germans and their peculiarities," and "From acorn to oak." One local institute teachers' meeting was held in his home during which each teacher read a paper on how morals and manners should be taught in the schools. Another local institute at his home discussed how teachers could secure the cooperation of parents.

I was teaching this A.M. and this P.M. and evening we had a local institute at the Green Grove house. Each teacher had a class drill viz. Orthography by Miss I.A. Yearick of White Spring School, "Reading" by C. F. Sanders of Cedar Run Sch. "Physiology," by E. E. Mench of the Turkey Run Sch., "History" by C. C. Moyer of the Switzer " " "Arithmetic:" by C. M. Sanders of New Berlin School

“Grammar,” by J. F. Brouse of Penn’s Creek School,
 “Geography,” by M. M. Shively of Green Grove School.
 Supt. B. R. Johnson was there during the exercises. (March 1,
 1889)

In April 1889, Mark and his brother Greene attended the spring term of Central Pennsylvania College in New Berlin. Mark’s classes included grammar, algebra, rhetoric, and typewriting. He delivered an oration on “American Enterprise” at a CPC public entertainment. In July, he took the teacher’s examination at Green Grove and at Swengel. On October 7, 1889, he began teaching at Swengel. The school year at Swengel closed on April 2, 1890, and as usual at the end of the school year, he reports scrubbing the schoolhouse.

The journal picks up again in July 1890. On July 13, he attended the teacher’s Examination at Green Grove and got a certificate with “the best average given there,” the only time Mark mentions his grades. He reports that he was “employed for the Zeller school in East Buffalo District this AM and at Milmont this PM.,” but on September 29, 1890, he “commenced teaching at the Mt. Vernon School in East Buffalo District,” having 11 pupils.

The journal at this point, after a decade-long run, ceases its day-by-day entries. Mark begins summarizing the years. In the winter 1891, he taught in Lewis Township at the Penn’s Creek school house for six months at \$30 per month. In the summer of 1892, he had hoped to earn money by canvassing for books, but he experienced a heavy financial loss when he paid for books that the company never sent to him. He taught the following year again at Penn’s Creek School for 6 months, also at \$30 per month. On September 11, 1893, he began teaching at Pontius School in Buffalo Township, and he lists his students there by name. He began the next school year in 1894 at White Deer Township, but after teaching three weeks, he was appointed by the director of Mifflinburg to teach School No. 4 of the borough. Mark ends the journal with this description of his colleagues:

The Principal of the Mifflinburg school is Mr. C. R. Neff and the rest of the teachers were No. 1. Mrs. Irene Ringler, No. 2. Mrs. Frances Ruhl, N. 3. Mr S. B. Hoffman No 4 Myself. No. 5 W. E. Wise and Miss Helen Heckman assistant to the Prin. Salary \$30 per mo.

Prin[cipal] \$70 term 8 mos. A Reading Circle was formed in January. With Mr. Neff Chairman and Miss Heckman Sec'y., meeting once a month, admission \$.50 and .10 cts per mo. only teachers as members.

It should be noted that Mark did not turn away from farming. Each summer throughout these years he performed farm work of all sorts, working at home and for farmers who hired him. Also, while teaching, he often spent Saturdays helping out on the farm.

Personals

Mark Shively writes almost nothing of a personal nature in his journal. He never reveals his feelings or complains about people, work, or bureaucracy. His lengthiest entries report the assassination of President James A. Garfield and the death of Rev. James Guinter, President of the Brethren Normal College. Longer entries describe teaching institutes. He seems solicitous regarding the health of his parents, but seldom mentions his family except for his brother Greene. It comes, therefore, as a surprise to read the following three entries:

Pleasant and I was in Mifflinburg this AM and married to Miss Sadie F. Ruhle this evening in Lewisburg by Rev. L. L. Sieber. (November 17, 1890)
 Pleasant and Wife and I went to Philadelphia and Stopped at the Washington Hotel. (November 18, 1890)
 I was in Philadelphia and Wife and I were in the Zoological Garden and at various other places. (November 19, 1890)

Mark makes no other reference to his wife. He does not record the birth of their first child, Mary, on June 8, 1891, but in the final summarizing entry he does mention the birth of a second child, Ralph, on December 4, 1893.

A discrepancy in later records exists regarding his teaching career. His obituary states that he taught 17 years in Mifflinburg and nearby townships. The Shively family genealogy reports that he was "a teacher in the public schools for about 40 years, a mechanic, and a member of the Mifflinburg Borough Council for many years. He lived at 266 Green St., Mifflinburg, Pa."² His service on

² Judith S. Wagner, A History of the Christian Shively Family. Mifflinburg, PA: privately published, 1987.

Borough Council stretched for 20 years. Mark purchased the lot on the northeast corner of Third and Green Streets in the winter of 1892 and moved in the spring of 1892.



Mark Shively purchased the lot for this home at 266 Green Street in Mifflinburg during the winter of 1892. He moved in during the spring and lived there until he died in 1948.
(Photo by Author)

Journal entries indicate that he regularly attended Sunday school and “preachings” and frequently attended the Thursday evening German Baptist (Brethren) love feast. It was probably after his marriage that he joined St. John’s Evangelical and Reformed Church, where he served as elder and taught Sunday school for more than 60 years. Journal entries also indicate that he supported the temperance movement and the Republican Party.

Mark M. Shively, son of Jacob S. Shively and Sally Boop, died on May 31, 1948 at the age of 81 years. His wife, Sarah “Sadie” F. Ruhl, daughter of Jack and Mary (Grove) Ruhl, was born November 26, 1870 and preceded Mark in death by about 5 months. They had two children. Mary I. Shively, born June 8, 1891, died July 29, 1986, at the age of 95. Mary never married and had no children. She had been employed by the Kurtz and Son Overall Factory and Kool-Tex Knitting Mills, both in Mifflinburg. She taught Sunday school for 50 years at St. John’s United Church of Christ in Mifflinburg. It was at her estate sale that the journal surfaced and was purchased by Gary Fluke of Laurelton.

Mark's and Sadie's son Jacob Ralph Shively was born on December 4, 1893 and died September 20, 1908. He was 15 years old.



Mark M. Shively (left) and Greene Shively in their later years pose for the camera. Mark lived to be 81 years old and Greene to be 84 years old. (Courtesy of Tony Shively)

The Journal/Diary as Historical Resource

Journals are primary historical resources, i.e. eyewitness accounts of personal experiences of everyday work, life, social interactions, challenges, and achievements. As in Mark's journal, one often finds descriptions of weather events, funeral customs, the educational system, and the role of religion. Individual descriptions of local events pile up, and taken altogether, they ultimately explain large social movements in both the regional and national arenas.

In his journal, Mark reflects little on his life and times. He reports events in the home and community, and he describes his work on the farm and his teaching responsibilities, but readers never learn what these events and his work mean to him. He never uses the journal to work out solutions to problems or pose philosophical questions, or reflect on his religious beliefs. This lack of self-reflection is, perhaps, the most frustrating and surprising aspect of the

diary, which otherwise offers an eye-witness account of the daily life of the generation following the Civil War.

Readers also never learn why Mark wrote the journal. Was it to keep an account of his achievements? He brags only once of any specific accomplishment (having made the highest average on a teacher's examination). There is no evidence that he intended the journal to be read by others. The journal was important enough to his daughter Mary that she kept it; at least she never disposed of it. It is likely that as Mark aged, the journal languished in the back of a closet, but for readers today, it fills a tiny space of history that would have otherwise been lost: daily rural life from 1881 to 1894 in this corner of central Pennsylvania.

The journal reflects larger social movements of the time. Mark reports that several neighbors and relatives moved west, to Illinois, Nebraska, and Iowa, and the community received brief visits from those who had already settled in the west. One learns that local residents themselves built road and bridges; that teachers met together and learned from each other on how to improve their teaching; and that visiting, also called "neighboring," was highly valued as was sharing labor and equipment. Another trait characterizes this community: In the home, Mark's parents always spoke Pennsylvania German, also known as Pennsylvania Dutch. Pennsylvania Germans often settled in groups, making it unnecessary and difficult, especially for the women, to learn English well. Mark does not mention it, but his transition from home to grade school must have been a difficult one, as his brother Greene reports for himself in his own journal.³ That his first language was most probably Pennsylvania German makes the quality of the writing and expression in this journal all the more remarkable.

Journals tell the story of survival, of inter-connectedness, and of the effort to build a better life. Journals show the strength of character and the discipline needed to achieve goals and the piety that elicits a moral and good life regardless of the burdens and difficulty. Although Mark does not share his feelings in this

³ Jacob G. Shively, *A Brief Biography of Elder Greene Shively 1870-1954*. Millmont, PA: privately published, 1965.

writing, he describes the events that occurred on the very ground on which the communities of today now stand: the lifestyle of almost 150 years ago that formed the basis from which the people and the community of today grew. There is no other place to find the answers to questions of how and why families and communities became what they are. These reasons live in the journals of yesteryears, journals like the one written by Mark M. Shively.

