

Press Contacts

Patrick Milliman
212.590.0310, pmilliman@themorgan.org
Sandra Ho
212.590.0311, sho@themorgan.org

**THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM PRESENTS MAJOR
EXHIBITION DOCUMENTING THE PRACTICE OF DIARY KEEPING
BY WRITERS, ARTISTS, AND OTHER CELEBRATED FIGURES**

*SHOW INCLUDES EXAMPLES OF JOURNALS KEPT BY HENRY DAVID THOREAU,
SIR WALTER SCOTT, CHARLOTTE BRONTË, JOHN STEINBECK, TENNESSEE
WILLIAMS, BOB DYLAN, AND MANY OTHERS*

**In an Age of Blogs and Social Media, the Exhibition Explores the Motivations Behind
the Enduring Drive by Individuals to Record Their Thoughts and Actions**

The Diary: Three Centuries of Private Lives Opens January 21, 2011

****Press Preview: Thursday, January 20, 2011, 10 a.m. until noon**
RSVP: (212) 590-0393, media@themorgan.org**



Diaries of Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), 1837–61, with pencils made by J. Thoreau & Co., the Thoreau family pencil factory. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909.

New York, NY, December 10, 2010—Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855) relied on her diary to escape stifling work as a schoolteacher; Tennessee Williams (1911–1983) confided his loneliness and self-doubt; John Steinbeck (1902–1968) struggled to compose *The Grapes of Wrath*, and Bob Dylan (b. 1941) sketched his way through a concert tour.

For centuries, people have turned to private journals to document their days, sort out creative problems, help them through crises, comfort them in solitude or pain, or preserve their stories for the future. As more and more diarists turn away from the traditional notebook and seek a broader audience through web journals, blogs, and social media, a new exhibition at The Morgan Library & Museum explores how and why we document our everyday lives. Drawn from the Morgan's own extraordinary holdings, *The Diary: Three Centuries of Privates Lives* is on view from January 21 through May 22, 2011.

With over seventy items on view, the exhibition raises questions about this pervasive practice: what is a diary? Must it be a private document? Who is the audience for the unfolding stories of our lives—ourselves alone, our families, or a wider group? The diaries on view allow us to observe, in personal terms, the birth

of such great works of art as Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel *The Scarlet Letter* and Gilbert & Sullivan’s opera *The Pirates of Penzance*. Momentous public events, from the Boston Tea Party to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, are marked by individual witnesses. Many diarists, such as Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) and John Newton (1725–1807), former slave trafficker and author of the hymn “Amazing Grace,” look inward, striving to live with integrity. Three great artists in their twenties, all on the brink of fame—Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), Charlotte Brontë, and Kingsley Amis (1922–1995)—hone their considerable talents in their private writings. And century after century, many individuals—from the famous diarist Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) to Abstract Impressionist painter Charles Seliger (1926–2009)—capture memory and mark time by keeping a daily record of the substance of everyday life.

“The museum is noted for its holdings of manuscripts, sketches, letters, drawings, and other items that speak to the creative mind at work,” said William M. Griswold, director of the Morgan. “Diaries are particularly useful and revealing. They offer a real-time glimpse of the ways individuals of various eras and backgrounds have chosen to document their lives, thoughts, and personal struggles.”

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

The centerpiece of the exhibition is the seminal journal of Henry David Thoreau, whose dozens of marbled-paper-covered notebooks record his well-examined life. Like many diarists writing over many centuries in a variety of forms, Thoreau sought “to meet the facts of life—the vital facts—face to face.” Thoreau’s monumental journal stands alongside the beautifully printed first editions of the confessions of St. Augustine (354–430) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), both transformative figures in the history of self-examination and self-revelation.



Diary of Sophia Peabody Hawthorne (1809–1871), 1862. Gift of Lorenz Reich, Jr., 1980.

The exhibition illustrates that even before the era of web diaries, many writers envisioned (or invited) an audience. The marriage notebooks of American author Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864) and his wife, Sophia (1809–1871), for example, were interactive documents. The newlyweds made entries in tandem, reading each other’s contributions and building a joint narrative of their daily lives, from Nathaniel’s first contribution—“I do verily believe there is no sunshine in this world, except what beams from my wife’s eyes”—to Sophia’s breathless declaration “I feel new as the earth which is just born again.” Later, their young children added naïve drawings to the pages of their parents’ notebooks, transforming the marriage diary into a family affair.

Anaïs Nin (1903–1977)—one of the twentieth century’s most prolific diarists—made a thick copy of her astonishingly intimate personal account, presenting to a friend “this uncut version of the Diary in memory of our uncut uncensored confidences and faith.” Nin is one of several featured examples of diarists who sought a wide audience through traditional publication before the advent of the web. William S. Burroughs (1914–1997), a prolific diarist, published one of his journals during his lifetime—*The Retreat Diaries* (1976), a dream log he kept during a two-week Buddhist retreat in Vermont. Even Queen Victoria (1819–1901) released a volume of excerpts from her journals; a signed copy of her 1868 bestseller *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands* is on view.

Some diarists turn their private writings into shared memoir. Fanny Twemlow (1881–1989), a British woman imprisoned in a civilian internment camp during World War II, recopied the illustrated diary that she kept secretly and transformed it into a cherished family memento. Lieutenant Steven Mona, who led a police rescue and recovery team after the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, recast his private diary as a letter in order to share his experience with family and friends. “I don’t think I will ever look at anything in life the same way,” he wrote.

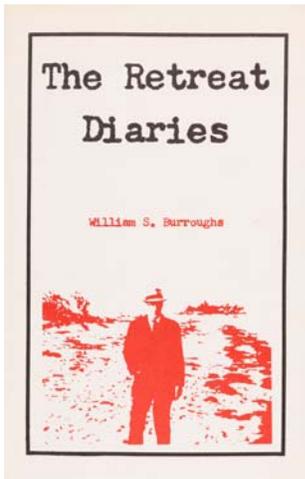
The diary has long served individuals as a place of emotional haven. Twenty-year-old Charlotte Brontë, working as a schoolteacher at Roe Head School in 1836, wrote diary entries in a minuscule script on loose sheets of paper, combining autobiographical narrative with flights of fictional fantasy that helped her endure emotional isolation. Some years later, sitting in a classroom in Brussels, she opened a geography textbook and scrawled a diary entry on one of the endpapers, confiding her loneliness and bitterness: “it is a dreary life—especially as there is only one person in this house worthy of being liked—also another who seems a rosy sugarplum but I know her to be coloured chalk.”

Tennessee Williams, too, relied on his diary in times of loneliness. In February 1955 he made his first entry in a cheap Italian exercise book with a cover featuring white polka dots on a blue background: “A black day to begin a blue journal.” With *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in rehearsal and a new production of his acclaimed play *A Streetcar Named Desire* about to open in New York, Williams was nevertheless full of anxiety and increasingly dependent on drugs and alcohol. At the height of his literary success, he carried the journal from New York to Rome, Athens, Istanbul, Barcelona, and Hamburg, recording physical and emotional distress,



Illustrated memoir by Fanny Twemlow (1881–1989), a British woman in a World War II internment camp in France, 1940–41. Gift of Julia P. Wightman, 2006.

frequent sexual encounters, and a debilitating creative impasse. “Nothing to say except I’m still hanging on,” he wrote.



William S. Burroughs (1914–1997). *The Retreat Diaries* (first edition, inscribed by Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg). New York: City Moon, 1976. Gift of the family of Carter Burden.

The great Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) did not begin a diary until late in life, when he was already one of Europe’s most famous men, and shortly before a countrywide financial crisis forced him to spend the rest of his life writing himself furiously out of debt. Over a period of six years, the journal became a crucial outlet for the feelings of despair—the “cold sinkings of the heart”—that had agonized him from the time of his youth. Even as he revealed his most intimate feelings, Scott made clear that he had decided to “gurnalize” (as he called it) not only for his own benefit but also for “my family and the public.”

One of those who read and benefited from Scott’s revealing journal was English art critic John Ruskin (1819–1900), who kept a diary in 1878 leading up to a severe mental collapse. After he recovered, he meticulously re-read his diary, marking it up and indexing it in search of warning signs to help him anticipate future breakdowns. He left several pages dramatically blank, heading them with just a few words—“February to April—the Dream”—an allusion to the nightmarish visions he had endured over several months.

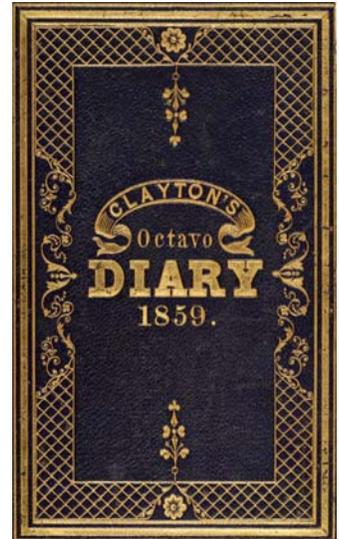
The diary as a stimulus to creativity is represented by an extraordinary illustrated journal of American painter Stuart Davis (1894–1964), working journals of novelist John Steinbeck, a journal/sketchbook of English painter Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), and a travel diary of Albert Einstein (1879–1955) that is full of mathematical jottings. A diary of Nathaniel Hawthorne includes this idea for a story subject: “The life of a woman, who, by the old colony law, was condemned always to wear the letter *A*, sewed on her garment, in token of her having committed adultery.” Hawthorne, of course, later developed this germ of a story—first documented in his diary—into one of the most celebrated of American novels.

While today’s new media facilitates ever more frequent diary entries—sometimes updated hour by hour—the exhibition features examples of diarists similarly committed to continuous life documentation. In Bob Dylan’s verbal and visual diary of his 1974 concert tour with The Band, he sketched a hotel room in Memphis and added a line of poetry: “Exploding galaxies of the red white & blue pulsing in the night of the big eye.” Abstract Expressionist painter Charles Seliger (1926–2009) kept over 150 notebooks over many decades, rarely allowing a day to go by without recording activities, thoughts, and opinions, until his death in 2009. Seliger wrote in the tradition of the most famous English diarist—Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) —

whose record of daily life in seventeenth-century London became a nineteenth-century bestseller. The Morgan holds the corrected proofs for the first published edition of Pepys's diaries—evidence of the long-standing human impulse to read other people's diaries.

In his working journal for *The Grapes of Wrath*, on view in the exhibition, John Steinbeck articulated the challenge of presenting an uncensored version of oneself: "I have tried to keep diaries before, but it didn't work out because of the necessity to be honest." While today's online diaries and social media profiles encourage the creation of carefully managed self-portraits, the impulse to deliberately craft one's identity in the diary is nothing new.

The exhibition is accompanied by free weekly podcasts of readings from the diaries and an active blog that explores issues related to diary keeping both past and present.



Diary of Amelia Sturges, (1835–1862), the first wife of Pierpont Morgan, 1859. Purchased on the Acquisitions Fund, 1983.

DIARIES AT THE MORGAN

In 1909, at a single stroke, financier and collector Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913) became the keeper of the most extraordinary stash of American literary manuscripts ever assembled in this country. For the sum of \$165,000, he purchased the collection assembled by Stephen Wakeman, which included dozens of notebooks kept by Henry David Thoreau and eighteen diaries of Nathaniel Hawthorne (two of them kept together with his wife, Sophia Peabody Hawthorne). Since Pierpont Morgan's day, The Morgan Library & Museum has continued to acquire diaries of note, sometimes directly from their authors. Recent acquisitions include diaries of Tennessee Williams, Stuart Davis, and Charles Seliger.

ORGANIZATION AND SPONSORSHIP

The Diary: Three Centuries of Private Lives is organized by Christine Nelson, Drue Heinz Curator of Literary and Historical Manuscripts at The Morgan Library & Museum.

CASTLEROCK MANAGEMENT This exhibition is sponsored by CastleRock Management.

As a long-time supporter of the The Morgan Library & Museum, CastleRock Management is pleased to sponsor *The Diary*. We are an investment company with deep respect for great creative minds and appreciate the opportunity to help the Morgan bring this outstanding exhibition to the general public.

Generous support is provided by Liz and Rod Berens and by The William C. Bullitt Foundation.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Lectures

Living the Wired Life

Gordon Bell

What if a diary could capture and store everything an individual experiences in his or her lifetime? Tech luminary Gordon Bell, principal researcher at Microsoft, has spent over a decade working on the MyLifeBits project, an exploration of various aspects of digitizing life, also known as lifelogging. Co-author of *Total Recall* (recently republished as *Your Life, Uploaded: The Digital Way to Better Memory, Health, and Productivity*), Bell will speak about the history of MyLifeBits and the impact technology has had on the enduring drive to document our lives.

Wednesday, February 2, 6:30 PM*

Dear Diary: Dramatic Readings from *The Diary*

Join us for an evening of dramatic readings inspired by the compelling personal stories found in the manuscripts featured in the exhibition *The Diary: Three Centuries of Private Lives*. Actors Paul Hecht (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, 1776*) and Barbara Feldon (*Get Smart, Smile*), will perform selections from the diaries of Charlotte Brontë, Sophia and Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sir Walter Scott, Henry David Thoreau, and Tennessee Williams. Commentary will be provided by Christine Nelson, Drue Heinz Curator, Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts, The Morgan Library & Museum.

Thursday, April 21, 7 PM*

*The exhibition *The Diary: Three Centuries of Private Lives* will be open at 6 PM especially for program attendees.

Films

The Diary on Screen

To coincide with the exhibition *The Diary: Three Centuries of Private Lives*, the Morgan is screening two films adapted from the diaries of famous historical figures.

MASTERPIECE Classic's *The Diary of Anne Frank*

(2010, 100 minutes)

Director: Jon Jones

Join us for a screening of one of the most poignant and well-known diary stories. This recent MASTERPIECE Classic production draws on Anne Frank's own words in the most accurate-ever adaptation of the revered memoir. The film stars newcomer Ellie Kendrick as Anne, with Iain Glen and Tamsin Greig as Anne's father and mother, Otto and Edith Frank. Presented in partnership with MASTERPIECE Classic, WGBH Boston.

Friday, February 11, 7 PM

The Story of Adele H.

(1975, 98 minutes)

Director: François Truffaut

Adapted from the real-life diaries of Victor Hugo's daughter (which are on view in the exhibition *The Diary: Three Centuries of Private Lives*), this film tells the story of Adele H., whose pursuit of a handsome and womanizing British lieutenant takes her across an ocean and eventually sparks her spiral into madness. Isabelle Adjani received an Oscar nomination for her portrayal of the title character in this haunting portrait of obsession and desire. Bruce Robinson, Sylvia Marriott, and Joseph Blatchley also star. Distributed by MGM Home Entertainment Inc.

Friday, April 15, 7 PM

Family Program

Bound to Write: Build Your Own Journal

Join book artist and educator Stephanie Krause and learn basic bookbinding techniques to create, decorate, and begin to fill your own journal. Following a brief tour of the exhibition *The Diary: Three Centuries of Private Lives*, families will explore beautiful art materials while binding a double signature pamphlet book with a tied wraparound cover. Appropriate for ages 6-12. This workshop is limited to families with children. There is a limit of two adult tickets per family.

Saturday, February 26, 2–4 PM

Gallery Talk

The Diary: Three Centuries of Private Lives

Christine Nelson, Drue Heinz Curator, Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts, The Morgan Library & Museum

Friday, February 18, 7 PM

The Morgan Library & Museum

The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today, more than a century after its founding in 1906, the Morgan serves as a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. In October 2010, the Morgan completed the first-ever restoration of its original McKim building, Pierpont Morgan's private library, and the core of the institution. In tandem with the 2006 expansion project by architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan now provides visitors unprecedented access to its world-renowned collections of drawings, literary and historical manuscripts, musical scores, medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, printed books, and ancient Near Eastern seals and tablets.

General Information

The Morgan Library & Museum

225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405

212.685.0008

www.themorgan.org

Hours

Tuesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; extended Friday hours, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. The Morgan closes at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Admission

\$15 for adults; \$10 for students, seniors (65 and over), and children (under 16); free to Members and children, 12 and under accompanied by an adult. Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop.