

LONDON BOROUGH OF LAMBETH

**LAMBETH ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT**

Servant's Day Book  
For the Woolley Household

1825-1832

IV/265

**Reference number**

IV/265

**Title**

Servant's day book for the Woolley household, an associated volume and research papers

**Covering dates**

1825 - 1831

**Creator**

An unidentified servant of the Woolley household

**Administrative history**

The day book was kept by one of the household servants at a large detached house on Denmark Hill, Lambeth which was occupied by John Woolley, a stockbroker, from 1819. He had previously resided at Stockwell Common and also owned Beckenham Lodge and land in Beckenham, Kent. He was a Surrey JP from 1827 and he died 1840 in Brighton. The 1829 rate book lists him at Denmark Hill with house and 12 acres. He was the grandfather of Alderman Charles Woolley

**Acquisition or transfer information**

The day book, another volume and some associated research papers were purchased by Lambeth Archives in July 2007 (accession 2007/12) from Mr David Cotton. Mr Cotton's father's aunt had married a Mr Furniss and it is believed that the owner of the other printed volume, Sarah Furniss, who was a servant in the Woolley household, but not the author of the day book, was related to him and that the two items descended to Mr. Cotton in this way.

**Scope and content**

The daybook gives a very detailed snapshot of domestic life in a large middle class Regency household from the servant's perspective. It details the relationships between servants and masters and the preoccupations of someone running a large house.

It also provides insights into the author's personal and spiritual life in terms of church going, sermons, spiritual reading matter and the subtle social distinctions between the churches attended by the family and the chapels frequented by the servants. There is also an occasional commentary on local and national events.

Context is provided by Mr. Cotton's research notes on the history of the Woolley family, 2004 – 2007 which includes copies of documents from Lambeth Archives, Surrey History Centre, Guildhall Library , The National Archives and elsewhere.

**Access conditions**

There are no access restrictions

**Reproduction conditions**

There are no restrictions additional to normal office policies.

**Related records**

**IV/88** Charles Woolley Papers, 1833 – 1902

Charles Woolley was the grandson of John and lived at Dulwich Road, Lambeth.

**See Also**

Strudwick Photograph collection, part of the Charles Woolley Bequest  
Douton Pottery collections, part of the Charles Woolley Bequest

## IV/265

1/ Servant's Day Book

1825 – 1831

This m.s volume was kept by one of the servants in the Woolley household. In it s/he made meticulous daily records of household and personal activity which suggest that s/he held an important position in the house. John Woolley and his extensive and extended family were living in a house and grounds on the east side of Denmark Hill. Woolley was a stock broker and a Surrey JP; the other family residence was Beckenham Lodge, Beckenham, but the family also spends time at Brighton.

The volume has accounts of rabbit breeding and beer brewing on the front endpaper and accounts for bills of cloth, 1825 – 1829, on the rear end paper. The body of the volume has 7 separate diary sequences, each running Oct 1829 – Dec 1831 with a gap for late 1830 – early 1831 when presumably the household was elsewhere.

The seven sequences are as follows:

### 'Occurrences'

This section includes details of the reordering and decoration of the house, new shelves, lamps bronzed, cleaning of carpets and curtains etc., church and chapel going, particularly to Denmark Hill chapel, but also St Matthews and Rowland Hill's chapel. The author lists titles of sermons heard and religious reading matters purchased or borrowed. There is a record of family trips to local places of entertainment - Astley's, Grove House, balloons at Vauxhall and details charitable visits by the family, 'Our people went to the asylum in the morning; they went to Brixton National school to see the children dine. Master gave us a bottle of port wine' (25/12/29). There is also an ongoing commentary on local Reform Bill agitation – 'Duke of Newcastle's burnt down' (11/10/31), 'Broke the Duke of Wellington's windows' (12/10/31), 'A regiment of horse soldiers quartered in and round Camberwell. Master went to the workhouse to swear in constables' (5/11/31). Other local events are also noted – the opening of London Bridge (1/8/30) and the first street lights on Denmark Hill (8/11/30) as well as occasional international ones – the hurricane ['Eracain'] at Barbados (10/31)

[24 pp]

### 'When the Carriage went out'

Detailed accounts of who was taken where in which of the carriages or chaises; Brixton, Beckenham, 'town', Richmond  
[22 pp]

'Friends that called'

Lists of visitors and trades people  
[5pp]

'Partys at Home and dinner hours'

Gives hour of dining & guests  
[24 pp]

'Going out to Partys'

Gives members of family and destinations  
[4 pp]

'The State of the Wether'

Brief summaries of weather a.m. and p.m., with occasional  
temperatures recorded  
[26 pp]

'Going out in General'

Shopping and churchgoing (by servants) details of sermons &  
Sarah's entertainments - 'I went to see the panoramer' and  
going to the baths at Camberwell 'for the first time'  
[14 pp]

1 m.s. volume

/2 The Young Woman's Companion or the Servant Maid's Assistant,  
London 1753

This is an instruction manual and covers writing, arithmetic  
household management and the duties of servants. It is signed  
on the flyleaf by Sarah Furniss who was a servant at the house  
and a contemporary of the author of the daybook and is mentioned  
in the text.

1 volume, printed

/3 Historical notes and copies of documents from various  
archives assembled by Mr Cotton while researching the  
life of Sarah Furniss and the history of the Woolley family  
in 2004 – 07.

1 package; m.s and photocopies