



Gabriel Furman Papers

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Subject Index to Furman's *Notes and Memoranda, Vol. 6 and Vol. 7*

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Introduction

In 2010, Brooklyn Historical Society volunteer Woody Woodruff read the Gabriel Furman journals, totaling approximately 4,000 handwritten pages, for the purpose of documenting the content of each journal. Following is a summary of the content and layout for two of those journals, those titled *Notes and Memoranda, Vol. 6* and *Notes and Memoranda, Vol. 7*, followed by a more detailed subject index for each. (The summary and index for *Vol. 7* begins on page 6.) The page numbers in the index indicate where an entry for a subject begins in the journal, not necessarily the page range for longer entries. The longer or most substantive content is noted in the summary comments.

Researchers should be aware that this content description is not necessarily comprehensive in that no attempt was made to index every specific entry or historical item Furman noted. In particular, emphasis in the indexing was placed on identifying subjects relevant to Brooklyn and New York history or those matters observed and commented on by Furman himself. Less emphasis was placed on indexing Furman's many entries recording facts of ancient European history or of Shakespearean plays, bibliographic references, aphorisms, etc. Further, the date range used in the description is based on the dates Furman made the entries to the journals, not to the dates of the historical items transcribed or summarized by Furman (e.g., a date range for a journal with transcriptions or other reference to colonial laws of the 1600s and 1700s will have a nineteenth century date range, not one reflecting the earlier centuries). Nonetheless, the description is intended to facilitate research use of the journals by describing the types of subject matter one will find in the journals and the specific location of the more notable and representative topics, again, especially for Brooklyn/New York research.

Researchers interested in getting a broader perspective on the entire set of Furman journals held by Brooklyn Historical Society, as well as other Furman archival material at BHS, should refer to the document *Guide to the Gabriel Furman Papers*, which is also available on-line in the Emma catablog under the entry for Furman.

Summary of content for *Notes and Memoranda, Vol. 6*:

Date range of journal: circa 1831-circa 1832, 1842. An entry on page 4 is dated 1831. Pages in the vicinity of 104 are clearly dated 1832. The volume includes a long description of the cholera epidemic of 1832. Page 176 contains a note, added after the original was written, dated 1842.

Furman includes an index in the front endpapers and on page 205, with an emphasis on various cures – probably a good overview of the state of folk medicine at the time. In addition to his usual topics – a seemingly random collection of data on almost everything – in this volume Furman reveals a profound faith in Divine Providence (82, 107) and an ability to describe nature with remarkable eloquence (118). He also gives extensive information on what it was like to live through the cholera epidemic of 1832 (starting about page 126.)

Content terms/keywords for *Notes and Memoranda, Vol. 6*:

Albany	Furman trip to, 1832.	104
Ants	Infestations of.	81
Arsenic poison	Tobacco a cure for.	190
Aurora Borealis	Description of.	109, 111
Autumn	Furman waxes poetic about.	118
Bachelors	Court ruling punishing.	24
Bank run	Caused by fear of the world ending because of a comet.	101
Birds	Dates of first appearances of, 1819 – 1829.	84
Boston	Theatre being illegal in early Boston, entrepreneurs promoted “moral lectures.”	8, 33
Boston	Early history of.	8
Cancer	Cure for.	3
Cancer	Cure for.	197, 201, 204, 206
Castle Garden	“Noah’s Arc” is displayed at, 1825.	172
Cholera	Furman relates unusual weather, ant infestations etc. to.	120
Cholera	Ad interleaved after page 126: Cholera used as a headline to sell lottery tickets.	126
Cholera	News of its arrival in North America, June 15, 1832.	126
Cholera	Moves south from Canada into New York.	129
Cholera	Furman speculates on causes of: color of the light, mist, few thunderstorms, pale skies.	129
Cholera	Thunderstorm clears the air, and deaths decline. Furman thanks Providence.	136
Cholera	Furman convinced that the lack of electricity in the air is a distinguishing atmospheric characteristic of the existence of this disease.	136
Cholera	Of an epidemic on board the ship <i>Brutus</i> .	140
Cholera	Dr. Rhinelander’s observations on.	144

Cholera	Furman: There can be no question that this pestilence is Atmospheric.	147
Cholera	Announced to be in New York City, July 1, 1832.	149
Cholera	Disputes with the Board of Health: it denies the presence of cholera.	151, 159
Cholera	An appeal to President Jackson to declare a day of prayer; he declines on the basis of separation of Church and State.	155
Cholera	Episcopal Bishop Benjamin Onderdonk asks mayor to declare day of prayer. He does.	157
Cholera	Whether or not to celebrate the Fourth of July.	158
Cholera	Complaints about burials at new Potter's field.	161
Cholera	Society ignores reports, boards at farmhouses instead.	162
Cholera	Inconsistencies in Board of Health reports.	163
Cholera	Caused by fruits and vegetables.	164a
Cholera	Danger of, from exposure to night air.	164b
Cholera	The Cholera Year: Famous people who died.	165
Civil War	Furman's prayer that God prevent it.	123
Cold	Cure for.	202
Colic	Cure for.	6
Comet	Strange responses to the feat of.	100
Comets	Their effect, or lack thereof, on the seasons.	125
Connecticut	Charter of.	20
Consumption	Cure for.	199
Cures	List of.	181
Cures	Index to, in other volumes.	205
Curiosities	Short notes on miscellaneous topics.	22
Curiosities	Short notes on various topics.	170
Dates	First cultivation of in North America.	21
Death	Test for.	196
Diarrhoea	Cure for.	194, 201
Drowning	Prevention of.	182
Drunkenness	Cure for.	200
Eclipse	Description of, 1831.	93
Eclipses	Dates of early ones.	98
Fever	Cure for.	201
Fuel	High prices of, 1831-1832.	107
God	Furman praises for managing the crops & weather.	107
Grapes	Cultivated on Long Island.	77
Hartshorn, Spirits of	For bites of venomous snakes.	181
Hoarseness	Cure for.	192
Hudson River	Dates when it was closed by ice.	97
Hull's Bilious Pills	Recipe for making.	204

Hydrophobia	Cure for.	191, 193, 197, 209
Indian Summer	Described.	113
Insect wounds	Cure for.	209
King Charles 2d's Drops	How to make.	198
Lamps, smoking	How to prevent.	203
Lapland	Seasons in.	116
Liver	Cure for liver complaints and bile.	194
Lock jaw	Cure for.	181, 197
Lockjaw	Cure for.	2
Locusts	Notes on.	80
Longevity	Notes on.	123
Lord's prayer	Various translations of.	41
Manufacturing	Of woollens, Rhode Island, 1777.	7
Marriage settlement	A rich one, in Boston.	18
Maryland	Description of.	10
Metonian cycle	19-year lunar cycle described.	103
Natural phenomena	Notes on earthquakes, blazing stars, snow. Various terrible winters and hot summers (from 763). Days turned to night.	49
Natural phenomena	Herring falls from the sky.	116
Natural phenomena	Massive die-off of herring.	117
Navigation	Notes on.	13
New York	Population of.	14
Old age	Extension of.	112
Orchards	Notes on peach and apple trees.	76
Pennsylvania	Determination of its extent at time of purchase from the Indians.	15
Pittsburgh	Growth of.	35
Planets	That their movements affect the weather.	96
Poem	On cholera.	166
Post offices	Increase of.	45
Prayer	Furman's, that God will prevent another infestation of ants.	82
Prayer	Furman's, that God will ameliorate the cold weather.	123
Prayer	Furman's, that God will preserve the union.	123
Prayer	Furman's, that God will save the country from cholera.	127
Prices	Various, in New York, 1770 – 1815.	12
Prices	High prices of fuel, 1831-1832.	107
Prices	Of whitefish, 1816-1842.	175

Progress, prediction of	By Oliver Evans, 1790.	14
Rheumatism	Cure for.	4
Rhode Island	Government of.	9
Roses	Sales of rose leaves.	79
Scalds and burns	Cure for.	194
Settlers, early	Mrs. Ann Winslow, of Gardiner, Maine.	19
Ships	First ships built in New England.	18
Smallpox	Objections to inoculation.	34
Sore throat	Cure for.	203
Spring	Signs of unusually early arrival, around the country.	87
Steam boats	Spanish invention of, in 1543.	45
Strawberries	Cultivation of, in Brooklyn.	78
Tax	On lawyers and physicians, in Ohio.	22
Teeth	Care of; article tipped in.	194
Trees	Various notes on.	176, 182
Typhus	Cure for.	181, 199
Upset stomach	Cure for.	193
Virginia	Opposition to Cromwell.	11
Wasp stings	Cure for.	191, 192
Weak eyes	Treatment for.	200
Weather	That planetary movements affect it.	96
Weather	In England, 1799.	186
Weather	In New Haven, 1794.	189
West	Growth of population in.	5
Whooping cough	Cure for.	200
Williams, Rev.	Description of his house with secret doors in Lebanon, Ct.	1
Wine, apple	How to make.	203
Wounds	Cure for.	203
Yeast	How to make.	202

End of summary and index for *Vol. 6*. *Vol. 7* starts on next page.

Summary of Content for *Notes and Memoranda, Vol. 7:*

Date range of journal: circa 1832-circa 1840. The account of the cholera epidemic of 1832 seems to be contemporaneous, with the first dated entry July 27 (page 5). Other entries are dated 1833 and 1834. Page 219 begins a (brief) journal dated 1831. Page 226 is dated 1835, and page 227 is dated 1832. The last dated entry is December 20, 1840. As is frequently the case in Furman's notebooks, the pages are not in chronological order, and there are actually two separate sets of entries for much of 1837.

The discussion of the cholera epidemic of 1832 continues from *Volume 6*. In addition to the usual notes on a wide variety of topics, Furman includes a somewhat haphazard personal journal for 1833 and 1834. Most of Furman's observations from 1836 are gloomy reflections on earthquakes, floods, crop failures, nasty weather, and a world he considers to be seriously out of order. He also, for the first time, comments on the lower classes and the rabble rousers who are inspiring them to cause trouble.

Throughout, he discusses the weather – too hot, too cold, too wet, too much ice in the rivers. And an occasional beautiful day. But Furman was definitely not in a good mood when he wrote most of this volume.

He covers the extent and effects of the financial crisis of 1837, and his trips around the Albany area when he was a senator there in 1840.

Content terms/keywords for *Notes and Memoranda, Vol. 7:*

Abolition	That it has been occasioning great excitement; "The result cannot be foreseen."	605
Aurora Borealis	Descriptions of, in New York.	260, 271, 331, 346, 359, 390, 444, 448, 482, 512, 570
Aurora Borealis	Discussion of.	410
Automaton	Maelzel's marvelous mechanical chess player and trumpet player.	211
Bank of the United States	On the evils to be expected from the General Government taking its funds away from the Bank of the United States.	335
Bank profits	"Exorbitant."	396
Beggars	Proliferation of, and why Furman gives them money.	420
Boerum	Recollections of the old house and an aunt.	226
Books	Furman's love of his collection; partial catalog.	414, 454
Bubble	Furman predicts, in real estate.	336
Canada	Possible independence of, discussed.	408
Canadian loyalists	Attack steamboat Caroline and kill Americans.	385

Caterpillars	Infestation of.	470, 518
Chatham Square	Improvements to.	429
Cholera	Notes on the epidemic of 1832, continued from Volume 6.	1
Cholera	Preventive advice from the Special Medical Council of the City of New York: “Be moderate, be cheerful and rely on Divine goodness.”	1
Cholera	Death statistics from various cities.	5
Cholera	Days of prayer for, in various states.	8
Cholera	That it should convince any reasonable man of the truth of the Christian religion.	12
Cholera	The day of fasting and prayer, and discussions pro and con of its suitability.	13
Cholera	A letter about its appearance in Philadelphia.	15
Cholera	Request to the clergy to urge congregations not to buy “Empyrical remedies.”	18
Cholera	Militia meetings canceled because of.	18
Cholera	Furman sees swallows, takes it as an indication that the pestilential state of the atmosphere is wearing off.	20
Cholera	Tale of a woman who had it and discharged a worm from her mouth.	21
Cholera	Diminution of urination during.	22
Cholera	75% of attacks between midnight and dawn.	22
Cholera	Prevented by burning lamps.	23
Cholera	A letter describes how water left in a bedroom overnight became tainted; peculiar behavior of a candle.	25
Cholera	Of the dead who really weren’t.	30
Cholera	Extraordinary natural phenomena related to.	31, 33, 39
Cholera	Caused by telluric miasmas in the water? (That’s pretty close to accurate.)	32
Cholera	Furman convinced it was caused by a want of electricity or a state of the atmosphere that caused the electric fluid to pass off rapidly from the body.	34+
Cholera	How southerners don’t want to admit it’s causing the deaths of their blacks.	36
Cholera	Deaths from, and from other causes, in New York.	37, 47
Cholera	Animal deaths apparently from.	40
Cholera	Bad treatment of a sick old man with.	45
Cholera	Deaths from	47
Cholera	Malt liquor brewers lobby Board of Health for a statement that they are not harmful to the health.	61
Cholera	From New Orleans: It is not a disease of the poor and filthy only.	66
Cholera	Death totals from around the world.	74

Cholera	Remedies for.	102
Cholera	Fruits and vegetables thrive during.	139
Cholera	Return of in 1834.	201
Christmas	Furman rails at Presbyterians for not observing it.	398
Comets	Their effect on the weather.	89
Construction	List of buildings built in New York, 1836 – 37.	480
Corn, Hot	Negro vendors of.	324
Cotton, Charles C.	Suicide and character sketch of.	157
Crop Failures	In various places.	308, 321
Cure	Of cancer.	220
Cure	Of cuts or bruises.	222
Cures	For Quinsey.	452
Cures	For rattlesnake bite.	489
Delmonico's	A fashionable spot.	179, 478
Derangement	Of the world, due to eclipses, earthquakes, etc.	302, 370
Disturbances	In upstate New York.	626
Dogs	Systematic killing of, in New York.	319
Drinking	Dangers of doing it during the day, in hot weather.	598
Dutch records	Furman's efforts to preserve.	450
Earth	Speculation that the center of it is a mass of fire.	409
Eclipse	Description of one witnessed by Furman.	246
Eclipse	Thoughts on the evil influence of.	276, 300
Eclipse	Causes severe weather.	287
Education	Statistics on the lack of.	299
Electro Magnetism	Fad for, 1838.	507, 589
Emigrants	How the British are sending their poorest people to America.	294
England	Ancient attachment to.	223
Erie Canal	Great increase in tolls on.	214
Financial crisis	1838, people out of work. Furman blames the government.	176
Financial crisis	Furman predicts one, soon. (1836).	337
Financial crisis	In New York. Merchants failing, no money available.	342
Financial crisis	A list of bank and business failures.	365
Financial crisis	Goods returned to Europe because there is no specie to pay the customs duties.	369
Financial crisis	Extent of, 1837.	433, 435, 437, 441, 445, 461, 463, 465, 472, 478, 593
Financial crisis	Caused by the General Government's Specie Circular.	447
Financial crisis	Description of, 1839.	622, 628
Fire	Frequent fires in New York.	330

Fires	List of, in various places.	495
Fisheries	Becoming worthless. Scarcity and high cost of shad.	438
Foreigners	“An ignorant, self conceited, bad hearted, miserable set of men.”	402
Fulton Street	Its Democratic and Aristocratic sides.	337
Furman, Gabriel	Residence on Willow Street. At 103 Willow Street.	271, 368, 580
Furman, Gabriel	His gloomy outlook.	431, 433, 434, 450, 459
Furman, Gabriel	In Albany serving as Senator.	544
Garden	Furman’s; hummingbird in.	525, 533
God	That Americans should pay Him more respect.	516
Gold, Mrs.	Advertises particularly special viands for particular gentlemen.	195
Harrison, William Henry	Elected President.	651
Heat wave	July, 1834; people die from drinking cold water.	203
Hickory	Poles of, erected by Jackson men before the election of 1832.	242
History	The need for a respect for, and a love for the principles of their fathers.	350
Hoboken	Trip to and description of.	173
Hudson	Trip up, 1832, to attend Whig Convention in Schenectady.	227
Hudson River	Closing by ice, 1804 – 1840	605
Improvements, mechanical	List of.	396
Ireland	Starvation in, 1836.	275
Johnson, Philip	Painter; discussion with.	232
Landscape	Description of; Furman’s enthusiasm for.	182
Landslide	In Troy, New York.	355
Liberty Poles	Erection of, by Whigs.	244
Loco Focos	Rabble rousing against the Whigs.	338
Locusts	Appearance of and ruminations on.	191
Long Island Rail Road	Furman attends groundbreaking for, at Jamaica.	268
Longevity	An example of.	221
Maelzel	Furman marvels at his diorama of Moscow in flames, chess playing Automaton and trumpet player, diorama of Rheims.	210
Maelzel	Secret of his chess playing automaton discovered.	586
Mayhem	Murders and fires in New York; “We have fallen upon evil times.”	402
Meteors	Observations on.	373

Michigan	Admitted as a state, "in utter disregard of all Constitutional principles."	412
Miscegenation	Ohio law prohibits.	605
Money	Scarcity of; high interest rates.	430
Moral Decay	Furman laments.	316
Murray's Hill	Excursion to.	190
Mysterious Lady	Describes what she cannot see.	187
Natchez	Hurricane in, damage described.	557
Natural Phenomena	Short notes on comets, earthquakes, farmers and crops, etc.	162
Naval Power	In the Mediterranean, described.	653
Negroes	Canadian Negro troops cause trouble with Americans.	616
New York	Businesses take over down town, residences move north.	280
New York, old	Synagogue, Blue Bell tavern, changes in the streets.	178
Patent Office	List of what was destroyed in recent fire.	424
Patterson, NJ	Furman trips to, statistics on.	174
Paupers	Influx of, from Europe.	469
Penny publications	The evils of.	351
Phenomena, remarkable	List of.	504
Pine Orchard	Furman visit to.	538
Plague	Furman's fear of.	452
Plagues	Accompanied by comets and other natural wonders.	137, 150
Poem	On autumn.	184
Politics	Observations on. "We are in the midst of a great revolution."	615
Prices	Hickory wood \$6.50 per load, oak \$4.50 per load, 1831.	219
Prices	Rents for commercial space in New York, 1836.	279
Prices	Flour at \$9 a barrel and rising, due to shortages. (1836.)	316
Prices	Poor oak, 19 shillings a load; Coal, \$11 per ton. Both very high.	321
Prices	Butter, in Boston, 40 cents a pound.	326
Prices	Butter in New York, 2s 9p per pound, a most extravagant price.	334
Prices	Bread, six cents a pound. Flour, \$14 or \$15 per barrel.	389
Prices	At New Orleans, chickens \$2 a pair, beef 37 ½ cents a pound, butter 75cents a pound and eggs 75 cents a dozen.	390
Prices	Steamboat from New York to Albany, \$1 or 50 cents, due to competition.	611
Prices	Farm produce prices declining (1839). Flour may come down to \$5 per barrel.	623

Prices	At Christmas, 1840: ice cream, 75 cents per quart; plum cake, 25 cents per pound. And in Albany, plum cake 3s, iced plum cake 3/6 per pound.	650
Rabble Rousing	Furman deploras as overly “democratical.”	340
Rabble Rousing	In the park in front of City Hall. Flour being scarce, rioters destroyed several hundred barrels of it to get even with the flour dealers.	362, 420
Secession	Seems inevitable (1836).	327
Slavery	Note of a petition to Congress to provide husbands for women who protest slavery, to improve their attitudes.	372, 477
Specie	Specie payments stopped by all New York banks, May 10, 1837.	367
Specie	Payments in, stopped nationwide.	461
Specie	Payment in, suspended by the Bank of Philadelphia.	593
Steam boats	Accidents on.	499
Street Improvements	Streets widened in New York.	344, 618
Street Scenes	Negro vendors of hot corn.	324
Street Scenes	Christmas in New York.	399
Street Scenes	The fashion of decorating with life-sized bronze animals.	429
Street Scenes	A walk around the “Burnt District” of New York.	478
Street scenes	A walk up Broadway.	632
Stuyvesant	His pear tree noted.	563
Suicides	Increase of, following the cholera.	148
Tammany Hall	Of the infidels there.	419
Tapestries	Description of a display of.	197
Tappan, Arthur	Stops payment.	459
Trees	Long discussion in praise of.	563, 595
Trinity Church	Bogardus claims against, dismissed.	652
Unions	Cause trouble in New York, 1836.	296
Van Rensselaer	Furman visits old Van Rensselaer hours on the Hudson.	547
War	Furman predicts.	571
Weather	Index to notes on, in Volume 10.	Front endpapers
Weather	Discussion of, with list of temperatures in various places.	254
Weather	A man who can predict it.	422
Whigs	Furman attends convention of.	228
Willow Street	Furman residence on, at 103 Willow Street.	271, 368, 580