



Walking by Faith: The Diary of Angelina Grimke, 1828-1835 (Women's Diaries and Letters of the South)

Angelina Emily Grimke

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The diary that Angelina Grimke (1805-1879) kept from 1828 through 1835 offers a window into the spiritual struggles and personal evolution of a woman who would become one of the nation's most fervent abolitionists. A native of Charleston, South Carolina, and an heir to a family enterprise dependent on slave labor, Grimke was an unlikely supporter of emancipation. Only after years of inner turmoil did she leave the South to join her sister Sarah in the crusade against slavery. While Grimke's public persona has been widely studied, the private spiritual and intellectual journey that preceded her public career and pushed her to the forefront of the abolitionist movement is chronicled for the first time in *Walking by Faith*. When Grimke began this diary in January 1828, uncertainty about her place in the world and her life's work occupied her thoughts. For the next seven years she recorded her most intimate concerns. Her diary entries follow her shift in religious affiliation from Episcopalian to Presbyterian to Quaker; her changing views on abolition; her conclusion that living as a Quaker in Charleston would be impossible; and her decision to establish an existence independent of her family. An excellent example of the confessional diary, usually associated with New Englanders, Grimke's writings offer a psychological and spiritual self-portrait that prefigures the image later seen by the world. Editor Charles Wilbanks, in his introduction to the volume, considers how Grimke's private persona informs our understanding of her public rhetoric. Suggesting that it is not coincidental that her diary ends just as her public life begins, he contends that the construction of her journal provided the necessary bridge from the intuitive to the rational and from the contemplative to the active.

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