



Abigail Gawthorn 1757-1822

Diarist

Born Abigail Anna Frost she was educated at a Nottingham private school until she was 10 when she went to a boarding school in Clapham. On her return to Nottingham her social education continued with music lessons, riding, dancing and visits to fashionable resorts.

She was herself wealthy having annuities of £6705 when she married Francis Gawthorn in 1783 whose father and grandfather had had businesses in Nottingham. They owned eighteen houses in Broad Marsh and Drury Hill and themselves had a handsome house on Low Pavement – recently Jamie's restaurant.

Abigail started to write her diary in 1808 and she transcribed earlier writings going back to 1751 recording various events and happenings in the lives of middle and upper-class people in Nottingham. She records the threefold increase in Nottingham's population and the growth of the slum areas of the Narrow Marsh behind her fine Georgian house on Low Pavement. Her diary documents the minutiae of home life with 13 references to dances, 43 to a Ball and Assemblies and there are also recordings of rioting, executions, funerals, illness and local scandals.

The diaries were discovered in a bookshop in Norfolk and were bought by Notts Public Libraries and are now in the Archives and have been transcribed and published by the Thoroton Society. She is buried in St Mary's church.