

**McLean County Museum of History**

**Diaries Collection**

Processed by  
Jim Hall & Carol Straka  
Fall 2016-Summer 2023

**Collection Information**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 box
COLLECTION DATES:	1848 - 1960
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	Past Perfect #2023.0027

## Brief History

Diaries, from the Latin *dies* (day), are records of daily life and opinions organized by date. The art of personal diary-keeping became popular in the 18th century, reaching its pinnacle during the Victorian era. While diaries, often also called journals, were usually meant to record the private thoughts of the diarist, they now give us important insights into historical events and the everyday life of the culture in which the diarist lived. People have been creating daily records for business purposes for hundreds of years, but the concept of a diary or journal in which the writer also records their thoughts took longer to develop.

Until the 18th century, most diaries were kept by men and were usually daily notes about business or farming. Others kept spiritual diaries of sorts, in which they counted their blessings and confessed their sins. Literacy rates rose and the cost of paper dropped about the same time as people became more aware of the self in the 18th century; consequently, diarising became more popular. By mid-19th century, diaries were far more popular with women than with men, and diarising was often considered by men to be silly and frivolous. However, diarising or journaling has continued to be a popular past time. Personal diaries and journals offer historians invaluable information regarding firsthand accounts of historical and events, as well as minutiae of everyday life.

[from *The History of the Diary, the Original Blog* by Colleen Welsch, July 5, 2017.  
<http://theoldtimey.com/history-of-the-diary>]

## Scope

Diaries from 1848-1960, information on diarists, and supporting documents.

## Box and Folder Inventory

- Folder 1: Edward Lee Flesher**
- 1.1 Obituary, *Pantagraph*, 23 May 1954
  - 1.2 Information from Ancestry: Keifer Family Tree (12 Mar 2012)
  - 1.3 Journal from 1945 containing weather observations, farming tasks
- Folder 2: Mary “Polly” Duke Wight Fleming**
- 2.1 Obituary with biographical sketch from funeral home
  - 2.2 Description of donation by Hope N. Pinkerton
  - 2.3 Bound diary from 1 Jan 1920 – 23 Jan 1920
- Folder 3: Jennie Bowen**

3.1 Bound diary, 1872. Contains entries on select days plus a few financial transactions.

**Folder 4: Book handwritten in German**

Bound book which appears to be an individual's reflections on various literary, historical, philosophical, etc. materials. No date or writer's name identified.

**Folder 5: Christina Rich Correll**

- 5.1 Obituary, *Pantagraph*, 5 November 1973.
- 5.2 Bound brown covered diary from 1 Jan-Dec 31, 1958.
- 5.3 Bound green covered diary. 1 Jan 1959-Dec 31, 1960.

**Folder 6: Cornelia B. "Nellie" Daniels (1830-1902)**

Maiden Name: Cornelia B. Sleeper

- 8.1 Journal and letter, c 1848-1857.
- 8.2 1-page highlights, typed.

**Folder 7: Farmer's Journal, 1899-1901**

- 8.1 Bound journal by unnamed farmer, who also was a musician. Several references to Wolcott, IL. April 1899-Nov 1901. 1891-1898 employment history on final page.

**Folder 8: Alphabetical Listing**

November 2001 compilation of biographies of the diarists whose diaries were part of the archives and in the library of the McLean County Museum of History.

**Folder 9: Richard M. Britt Farm Diary**

- 9.1 Bound diary, approximately 150 pp. April -August 1865 detailed farm activities plus accts and financials for 1867-68.  
New Kentucky in Mt. Hope Township. Includes many references to farm hand George Wallace
- 9.2 1870 census & 1927 death record.

**Folder 10: Eugene Francis Baker**

- 10.1 Bound diary with four months of daily entries from 11-year-old Bloomington boy, 1937.
- 10.2 *Pantagraph*, June 28, 1930, news article on his birthday party.

**Folder 11: Eleanor Bicknell**

- 11.1 Bound diary with brief entries, 1900 -1937.
- 11.2 Typed transcription of entries 4pp.

**Folder 12: Clinton L. Burkholtz**

- 12.1 2 memo books with brief diary entries, 1920-22 & 1926-28

- 12.2 Brief biography & notes on diaries for Payne Place resident (Normal) and Ku Klux Klan member.

**Folder 13: Wellington W. Fehr**

A Normal resident, Fehr worked as a Railway Mail Service employee for C&A.

- 13.1 Bound personal journal, July 1907 to Oct 1909.  
13.2 Obituary, *Pantagraph*, 27 Dec 1956.  
13.3 Gift agreement, 2001.

**Folder 14: Nancy Jane Hays**

- 14.1 Feb-Apr 1866 diary entries for travel from Concord, IL, home to Kansas. 4pp typescript published in *McLean County Genealogical Society Gleanings*, Summer 1996.

**Folder 15: Martha E. Havens**

Martha E. "Mattie" Trimmer Havens of Hudson

- 15.1 Bound diary, Jun-Oct 1858.  
15.2 Summary sketch of diary & diarist, 4pp typescript.

**Folder 16: Hudson Diary, Anonymous**

Appears to be written by a young woman living in or near town.

- 16.1 Pages from original diary, Dec 4-30, 1868.  
16.2 Typed transcript, 7pp.

**Folder 17: Albert C. Jones**

El Paso, Gridley Township, IL.

- 17.1 Bound diary, recording select events from 1880-1907.  
17.2 Photocopy of typed transcription prepared by granddaughter Delora North Steffen Griffin, 26pp.  
17.3 Obituary, July 32, 1947.

**Folder 18: Morton Lake**

Farmer in Martin Township. Includes ticket for World's Columbian Exposition, Oct 9, 1893.

- 18.1 Paper tablet diary, May 1893-Mar 1894.  
18.2 Obituary, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Jul 10, 1953.

**Folder 19: Rev. W. H. H. Moore**

- 19.1 Bound sermon and travel diary and cash records for Methodist Bloomington district, 1867. Front cover loose.

**Folder 20: Esther Powell**

At the time of this diary, she lived at 816 E. Front St, Blm, and worked as a secretary for Morrisey & Morrisey law firm.

- 20.1 Photocopies of pages, Jan-Dec 1931.  
20.2 Typed note on Powell, her job, and family members.

**Folder 21: Henry Saar**

Twenty-one-year-old Saar made the trip from Delevan, IL, with two friends from high school days in another car, Dave Bailey & Wes Faulkin.

- 21.1 Bound diary of motor trip to California in Ford Model T, Sep 25-Oct 14, 1921.
- 21.2 Handwritten notes on diary from his daughter.
- 21.3 Obituary, *Pantagraph*, Jan 11, 1993.

**Folder 22: Amanda Stanger**

Ellsworth, IL.

- 22.1 Leather bound diary, Jan 1-Dec 31, 1886.
- 22.2 47-page transcription with summary commentary by H.K. Holingshead, 1997.
- 22.3 Note from Hollingshead, July 28, 1997.
- 22.4 Brief obituary, *Wichita Eagle*, April 15, 1918.

**Folder 23: Sarah Withers**

- 23.1 Bound diary, Jan 1860-May 1861. Fragile. Please use transcription in Library.
- 23.2 Obituary, *Pantagraph*, Jan 5, 1897.
- 23.3 Biography from Early Illinois Women website, accessed 2001.

**Folder 24: Eloise Wood**

A Trinity (Catholic) High School student in Bloomington.

- 24.1 Composition book diary, Aug 19, 1927- Sep 2, 1928.

**Folder 25: Mahala Yoder**

An invalid, Yoder lived with her father at this time on a farm in Dry Grove Township near Bloomington.

- 25.1 Photocopies of typed transcription & brief commentary, 1871-1876, 52 pages.
- 25.2 Copy of 1870 census.

**Folder 26: Expansion**

- 26.1 abc

**Folder 27: Expansion**

- 27.1 abc

**Folder 28: Expansion**

- 28.1 abc