

John H. Carey Papers
1960.2
1960.2.1
Jonathan Kirkwood
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Description and Provenance

Provenance

Mrs. Carey Kermit donated the papers in 1960. Roger Van Bolt received them. The day and month Carey donated them remains unknown.

Scope and Content

The collection contains numerous books, diaries, and documents relating to the life of John H. Carey and his descendants. Those concerning him predominantly come in the form of thirty-six diaries written between 1871 and 1909 excepting 1900, 1905, and 1906. Enclosed documents removed from the diaries had been placed into non-archival plastic bags and identified to specific diaries. These were removed from the bags and placed into folders. Other records include several yearbooks from 1899, 1900, 1908, and 1942, and programs for events at the old Flint High School.

Carey wrote in cursive brief entries in ink and pencil often no more than a dozen words long of his days as a farmer and other events in his life. Some entries include more than a dozen words but none take more than one page. Entries occurred on a daily basis. No entry reveals details of his life before beginning the diaries. Some writing in diaries from the 1870s is faded. Misspellings are common throughout many entries. Illegibility is another common problem, though most entries may require an examination of a few minutes to understand how Carey wrote.

Carey's entries reflect his life as a farmer of land in Clayton Township, just north of the city of Swartz Creek. His responsibilities were many. Planting and harvesting of crops were two mentioned often, but usually during seasons when both activities occurred. Carey chopped and sawed wood, sowed oats, shelled corn, oiled harnesses, drew out manure, slaughtered hogs, and occasionally hunted as time allowed. These were done in all kinds of weather and throughout the year, including holidays. Carey usually refrained from working on Sundays. He often traveled to Flint to make purchases and to sell crops and slaughtered animals. He wrote frequently of receiving help from neighboring farmers and traveling to their farms to help them. The work involved was usually labor-intensive, such as sowing or

harvesting crops or aiding in construction of buildings. Stories in the Flint Journal from the 1890s mention what could have been an unofficial compact of farmers in Clayton Township to assist one another. Or the practice could have been a custom among farmers. The lack of details in many entries makes it difficult to know.

Carey was spare in providing personal details of his life beyond farming. He traveled to Flint for the occasional fair or for meetings of what he called the "covenant." He was a regular fixture at church and participated in Sunday school. He was elected the assistant supervisor of Sunday school in 1881. He voted Republican, though never provided reasons why. He was married with children, but rarely mentioned either his wife or his children beyond that one had performed a chore, baked or cooked a meal, was sick, or had attended school for at least part of the day.

The yearbooks represent student activities from the old Flint High School. Those from 1899, 1900, 1903, and 1908 show numerous similarities in content: portraits of faculty and editorial student staff, poems and short stories, reminiscences of events, calendars of events, and coverage of school sports. Of the final, baseball and football receive the most coverage. The yearbook from 1942 is more expansive. Every student of every grade has a photograph. Student clubs are listed and photographed with students identified. African American students maintained their own club, "Booker T. Washington." Their advisor, Robert Richardson, was white. Other clubs were white with the occasional African American present. Sports teams were integrated. The yearbook also mentions the formation of the War Council, founded by students to do projects in support of the war effort.

Other records include an account book kept by Lucy Chase in 1887, a booklet detailing ownership of a property in Flint from 1819 to 1916, and a program of events for the graduating class of 1903 from Flint High School.

Language of Materials

English.

Dates of Creation or Accumulation

1871 – 1942.

Related Publications

None.

Condition and Physical Description

Physical Characteristics

Three legal length and full body Hollinger boxes house the collection. Acid-free folders house photographs, newspaper clippings, and other records that had been removed from the diaries. The predominant media in the collection is paper. The diaries have leather covers, many with "Excelsior Diary" embossed in gold paint on their covers. Pages of diaries and yearbooks are clay-coated. Some of these records were placed in Mylar enclosures to provide greater protection. Diaries and yearbooks remain outside of folders.

General Condition Notes

The overall condition of the collection is good. Spines of the diaries remain strong with no detached pages found. The leather covers are cracked and peeling in many locations, but they remain fixed to the diaries. Pages have yellowed to varying degrees. Writing from ink and pencil is slightly faded in diaries from the 1870s. The diaries occupy the latter two boxes in the collection. They can be identified with acid-free bookmarks. Acid-free tissue paper was placed between them.

The condition of the yearbooks is better. Pages of all remain firmly fixed to their spines. Dirt stains some covers, but the covers show no signs of cracking or peeling. No yellowing is present on the clay-coated pages.

The newspaper clippings are frail and prone to flaking. They were placed into Mylar sleeves to better protect them. Photographs were also placed into Mylar.

Extent of Contents

1.25 linear feet.

Location

SMOD: Manuscripts: Row A: Unit 1

Rights and Restrictions

Conditions Governing Access

No restrictions. Contact the Collections Department to arrange use for research.

Conditions Governing Reproduction

No restrictions. Reproductions are done and charged in accordance with Sloan Museum Archives Fee Service Policy.

Subject Headings

People

Algoe, Margaret, T.
Beckman, Frank
Bourne, William A.
Burgess, Henry S.
Carey, Elizabeth
Carey, John H.
Chase, Lucy
Clukey, George F.

Cody, A.N.
Fuller, Florence
Gold, Mary E.S.
Gregg, Jessie L.
Hathaway, F.R.
Henrietta, Lewis
Hull, Warren C.
King, Bartley

Nutt, Harry D.
Peavy, George W.
Sissons, Claude E.
Sloan, N. Bert
Stevenson, Alfred
Thompson, Harry
Wade, C.G.
Wilder, H. Louise

Subjects

"F" Club
33rd Michigan Volunteers
Agriculture
Delta Sigma Nu
Diary
Excelsior Diary
Farming
Flint High School

Flint High School Cadet Corps
Flint High School Lyceum
Flint High School Oratorical Club
Insurance
Lambda Phi
Pierson Printer
War Council

Classification

None.

Search Terms

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33rd Michigan Volunteers
Agriculture
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Container List

Box 1: SMOD: Manuscripts: Row A: Unit 1: Shelf 5

Senior Seignorie, 1899
Saga of 1900
Aristos: The Senior Annual of 1903
Prospectus, 1908
Prospectus, 1942
Deceuninck's West Addition, 1819 – 1916
Lucy Chase: Accounting, 1887
Flint High School 1903 Program and Events
1885 Diary Enclosures
1886 Diary Enclosures
1890 Diary Enclosures
1891 Diary Enclosures
1892 Diary Enclosures
1895 Diary Enclosures
1896 Diary Enclosures
1897 Diary Enclosures
1898 Diary Enclosures
1899 Diary Enclosures
1901 Diary Enclosures
1907 Diary Enclosures
1908 Diary Enclosures

Box 2: SMOD: Manuscripts: Row A: Unit 1: Shelf 6

Diary, 1871
Diary, 1872
Diary, 1873
Diary, 1874
Diary, 1875
Diary, 1876
Diary, 1877
Diary, 1878
Diary, 1879
Diary, 1880
Diary, 1881
Diary, 1882
Diary, 1883
Diary, 1884
Diary, 1885
Diary, 1886

Diary, 1887
Diary, 1888
Diary, 1889

Box 3: SMOD: Manuscripts: Row A: Unit 1: Shelf 6

Diary, 1890
Diary, 1891
Diary, 1892
Diary, 1893
Diary, 1894
Diary, 1895
Diary, 1896
Diary, 1897
Diary, 1898
Diary, 1899
Diary, 1901
Diary, 1902
Diary, 1903
Diary, 1904
Diary, 1907
Diary, 1908
Diary, 1909