

Van Buren Christy Diaries

MS – 235

Wright State University
Department of Special Collections and Archives

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Introduction

The diaries of Van Buren Christy were accessioned into the Wright State University Department of Archives and Special Collections in December of 1991. The collection was donated by the Montgomery County Historical Society.

The diaries in this collection date from 1864 to 1926 and consist of 16 file folders contained in two Hollinger boxes.

There are no restrictions on the use of this material.

Brief Biographical Sketch

Van Buren Christy was born on January 23, 1841 in Pickaway County, Ohio. At the age of 23, he enlisted in the 100 day service at Fairfield, Iowa, in 1864. His physical attributes were as follow: five feet five inches tall with dark complexion, dark hair and light blue eyes. His diaries after 1864 would indicate that he was a preacher.

Van Buren Christy died at 12:35 A.M. on July 7, 1923 at the age of 82 in his parsonage home of 33 years. Although the place of his death is not made certain by the portion of the 1923 diary written by his daughter, an approximate vicinity maybe established via the references made to surrounding locations, such as his having attended church at St. Johns in Dayton, his attending to errands in Miamisburg, and his medical doctors Doan and West being of Dayton.

Scope and Content

Although the dates of the Van Buren Christy diaries range from 1864 to 1926, the years 1865-1868 are not included. It is not clear as to whether the diaries for 1865-1868 were never written or that they are missing. Also, from the later part of 1923 to 1926, the writing is that of one of Van Buren Christy's children, Blanche. This section of the diary has no entries for the year 1924.

It should be noted that the legibility of the writing in the diaries from 1864 - June 8, 1923 is somewhat poor and therefore makes ascertaining definite information difficult.

The diaries can possibly be divided into three parts, with the diary for year 1864 being the first, 1869-June 8, 1923 being the second, and June 9, 1923 – September 5, 1926 being the last.

The 1864 diary primarily deals with Van Buren Christy's time in the service. This diary starts with some information about Christy prior to his enlistment into the 100 day service, such as where he was born, when he was born, etc. However, the aforementioned poor legibility of the diaries makes determining the definite spelling of the information difficult. The 1864 diary continues with entries pertaining to Christy's daily duties within the service, as well as his activities when off duty.

The 1869-June 8, 1923 diaries essentially consist of Christy's day to day account of his activities, such as preparing for sermons, reading, visiting, working in garden, writing letters, receiving visitors, etc. Some of the diaries contain sections for recording cash accounts of prices paid for items such as butter, oil, shoes, etc. Also, it should be noted that Christy began most of his diary entries with a comment on the day's weather conditions (cold, hot, snowy, rainy, etc.). Inserted into some of the diaries are old newspaper clippings, portions of letters, receipt tickets, and clerical tickets which allowed for reduced train fair rates for the clergy.

The June 9, 1923-September 5, 1926 diary appears to have been written by one of Van Buren Christy's children; his daughter, Blanche Christy. The writing in this diary is comparatively quite legible and offers an assessment of Van Buren Christy's failing health up to the time of his death. Mentioned in the 1923 diary are the names of some relatives such as aunts, uncles, and children who visited Van Buren Christy during his last moments. In addition, various locations such as Brookville and Miamisburg are indicated. Blanche ends this diary with some 1925 and 1926 entries which speak of her mother's, Susan M. Christy's, last days.

This collection would be beneficial to any descendents of the Van Buren Christy family for the purpose of genealogical research. In addition, it could be helpful to those wanting information regarding life in the 1800's (food prices, transportation modes, daily activities, weather conditions, etc.).

Container Listing

<u>Box 1</u>		
File 1		1864, 1869-70
File 2		1871-1873
File 3		1874-1876
File 4		1877-1879
File 5		1880-1883
File 6		1884-1887
File 7		1888-1891
File 8		1892-1895
<u>Box 2</u>		
File 1		1896-1899
File 2		1900-1903
File 3		1904-1907
File 4		1908-1911
File 5		1912-1915
File 6		1916-1919
File 7		1920-1923
File 8		1923, 1925-1926