
Guide to the Oscar M. Henry Diaries

Collection number: MS-R 63

Special Collections and Archives
The UCI Libraries

University of California
Irvine, California

Processed by:
Alexis Schwarz

Date Completed:
1998

Encoded by:
James Ryan

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Oscar M. Henry Diaries

Date (inclusive): 1885 -1915

Collection number: MS-R063

Creator: Henry, Oscar M., 1851-1916

Extent: Number of containers: 2 document boxes
Linear feet: .8 linear feet

Repository: University of California, Irvine. Library. Special Collections and Archives.
Irvine, California 92623-9557

Abstract: This collection of diaries serves as a window into the life of Oscar M. Henry, a California rancher, farmer and miner. Henry wrote the diaries on his farm in Amador County, California from 1885 to 1915. In daily entries, Henry documented his social and business dealings, listed daily and weekly visitors, and reported the weather. He also recorded the various tasks he completed from day to day, from slaughtering hogs and hauling wood to plowing, gardening and maintaining the fences. The diaries reflect his attention to detail; for example, he cited from whom and for how much he bought the books he used as his journals. In general, the journals illustrate the life of a prosperous Californian in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Language: English

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Oscar M. Henry Diaries. MS-R 63. Special Collections and Archives, The UCI Libraries, Irvine, California.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Elizabeth R. Annis in 1995.

Processing History

Processed by Alexis Schwarz in 1998.

Biography

Oscar M. Henry was a farmer and mine owner in Amador County, California during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Henry family first arrived in the United States in the 1720s from Scotland, settling first in Virginia, then in Tennessee. Oscar Melbine Henry was born on October 21, 1851 in Cherokee County, North Carolina. The extent of his education is unknown.

As a young man, Henry relocated frequently, moving to Arkansas, Wyoming and Idaho. In 1876 he settled in Amador County, California. In 1879, he married Amanda Jane Bean Dicken. The couple had three children: Mary Ida Henry (1880), Rose E. Henry (1884), and Samuel Oscar Henry (1886), in addition to three boys from Amanda's previous marriage.

Henry and his family often traveled into Volcano, Sutter Creek, Jackson and Amador City to engage in various business dealings, including gold mining. He was primarily a farmer and rancher. On his small family farm, he grew hay, wheat, barley, and fruits. He also raised livestock, including cattle and hogs, owned a vineyard and sold timber. He prospered, even purchasing land beyond the homestead, an unusual accomplishment for the typical land-owner. He owned a few houses and also invested in property in Oakland.

Oscar Henry was also a prominent community figure. He founded a school on his ranch land and served on the school board. His distinction in the community is reflected in the diary in which he makes note of numerous visitors to his home.

He died on January 25, 1916, while working on his farm. His farms were inherited by his son Samuel, who bequeathed the property to his wife, who then sold it.

The biographical information was gleaned from verbal recollections of Henry's granddaughter Elizabeth R. Annis, who donated his diaries to the library.

Collection Scope and Content Summary

This collection of diaries serves as a window into the life of Oscar M. Henry, a California rancher, farmer and miner. Henry wrote the diaries on his farm in Amador County, California from 1885 to 1915. In daily entries, Henry documented his social and business dealings, listed daily and weekly visitors, and reported the weather. He also recorded the various tasks he completed from day to day, from slaughtering hogs and hauling wood to plowing, gardening and maintaining the fences. The diaries reflect his attention to detail; for example, he cited from whom and for how much he bought the books he used as his journals. In general, the journals illustrate the life of a prosperous Californian in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The diaries are organized in chronological order. Four diaries in the collection are originals, and the remainder are photocopies of originals not held by UCI. The container list indicates which diaries are originals.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects

Agriculture--California--Amador County--Archival resources.

Farm life--California--Amador County--Archival resources.

Ranch life--California--Amador County--Archival resources.

California--Archival resources.

Genres and Forms of Material

Diaries--California--Amador County--19th century.

Occupations

Farmers--California--Amador County.

Ranchers--California--Amador County.

Index Terms Related to this Collection

Annis, Elizabeth R., former owner.

Online Archive of California.

Genres and Forms of Materials

Diaries--California--Amador County--19th century.

Occupations

Farmers--California--Amador County.

Ranchers--California--Amador County.

- Box 1, Folder 1 **January 1, 1885-December 1, 1885 (original)**
- Box 1, Folder 2 **January 1, 1887-January 10, 1888 (original)**
- Box 1, Folder 3 **January 1, 1888-January 2, 1889**
- Box 1, Folder 4 **January 3, 1889-December 31, 1889**
- Box 1, Folder 5 **January 1, 1890-January 3, 1891**
- Box 1, Folder 6 **January 1, 1891-December 31, 1891**
- Box 1, Folder 7 **January 1, 1893-February 1, 1894 (original)**
- Box 1, Folder 8 **January 3, 1894-January 23, 1895 (original)**
- Box 1, Folder 9 **January 4, 1895-December 31, 1895**
- Box 1, Folder 10 **January 1, 1896-December 31, 1896**
- Box 1, Folder 11 **January 1, 1897-December 31, 1897**
- Box 1, Folder 12 **January 2, 1898-December 3, 1898**
- Box 2, Folder 1 **January 1, 1899-January 3, 1900**
- Box 2, Folder 2 **January 1, 1900-January 3, 1901**
- Box 2, Folder 3 **January 1, 1901-December 31, 1901**
- Box 2, Folder 4 **January 1, 1902-December 31, 1902**
- Box 2, Folder 5 **January 1, 1906-December 31, 1906**
- Box 2, Folder 6 **January 1, 1909-December 31, 1909**
- Box 2, Folder 7 **January 1, 1910-December 31, 1910 (original)**
- Box 2, Folder 8 **January 3, 1913-December 31, 1913**
- Box 2, Folder 9 **January 1, 1915-December 31, 1915 (original)**