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## Guide to the Amos Keyes Stearns Diaries, 1857-1888

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**Collection number: MS 84**

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Meriam Library  
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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Amos Keyes Stearns Diaries,

**Date (inclusive):** 1857-1888

**Collection number:** MS 84

**Creator:** Stearns, Amos Keyes, 1813-1888

**Extent:** 14 diaries

**Repository:** Meriam Library  
California State University, Chico  
Chico, California 95929-0295

**Language:** English.

**Access**

Collection is open for research.

**Publication Rights**

The library can only claim physical ownership of the collection. Users are responsible for satisfying any claimants of literary property .

**Preferred Citation**

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**Biography**

Amos Keyes Stearns was born in Rutland, Ohio on March 5, 1813. He majored in medicine at Athens College and began his practice as a general physician. In 1845 he married nineteen-year-old Charlotte Durgin and they had four children--Charles, Ezra, Amos, and Elida. (Amos and Elida both died in their early twenties, Elida leaving a husband and at least one child.) Between 1845 and 1852 the family lived in Exeter, Wisconsin and St. Mary's, Ohio where the doctor practiced. A strongly religious man, Amos was an elder in St. Mary's Presbyterian Church.

Dr. Stearns decided to come west to pursue his fortune in mining. His wife refused to go with him until there was a railroad, so for the next sixteen years Amos made periodic visits to Ohio. Out west, Dr. Stearns became a miner and was superintendent of the Willard Mine when the famous fifty-four pound gold nugget was found. He also continued his medical practice, though to a much more limited degree. His diaries are filled with remedies and recipes for such ills as diphtheria, consumption, hemorrhoids, even cancer-many of them "sure cures." His medical practice covered the area from Nimshew to Pentz, though Stearns lived in Magalia. Dr. Stearns led a busy but lonely life until his family joined him. At night he read the Bible, baked bread, sang songs, and greased his boots. When his family came out, they lived at the

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Tom Neal claim, north of Magalia. In December 1888, Amos Keyes Stearns died after having had many physical problems for several years. He diagnosed his own condition as "Neuralgia of the vitals and of the whole water works."

**Scope and Content**

Dr. Stearns kept diaries and accounts of his life and money troubles during the years 1857-1883. In 1973 the Library at California State University, Chico obtained permission to photocopy these diaries. They are listed as close to a chronological order as possible as photocopied.

Year of 1857 and Year of 1869

Year of 1869 (Account book)

Years of 1863-1867

Year of 1871 (personal accounts and business matters)

Year of 1872 (personal accounts, notes, money and travel)

Year of 1873 March-April (personal accounts and travel)

Years of 1873-1876 (private accounts)

Year of 1875 (private accounts)

Year of 1876 (personal accounts in Magalia, California)

Year of 1884 (personal accounts-final one before his death)

Years of 1868, 1869, and 1770 (personal accounts, notes, curealls, and receipts)

Years of 1863, 1883-1888 (business accounts, addresses, tax receipts)

Years of 1863-1864, 1881-1883 (personal accounts and beginning of illness)

Years of 1876-1878 (almanac, personal accounts)

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