Finding aid of the Austin Wiley Diaries C058791

Finding aid prepared by Michael Lange
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04/30/2014
Title: Wiley, Austin Diaries
Identifier/Call Number: C058791
Contributing Institution: Society of California Pioneers
Language of Material: English
Storage Unit: B001651
Storage Unit: C058791
Physical Description: 2.0 folders (10 handwritten diaries)
Date (bulk): Bulk, 1871-1878
Date (inclusive): 1848-1878
Abstract: Handwritten daily diaries kept by Austin Wiley covering the years 1846, 1858, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877 and 1878. The first, written in 1846, is titled “Life and Adventures of the Author with a Sketch of the Mexican War.” This diary describes leaving his home in Illinois with two of his older brothers to join the army and fight in the Mexican War. It chronicles his day-to-day activities, army movements, health, training, and conditions. The following nine diaries have brief daily entries on the weather, events and activities, and other various personal notes. They also include cash accounts. These take place while the author was living in Eureka, California.
creator: Wiley, Austin, 1823-1907
Conditions Governing Access note
Collection open for research.
Conditions Governing Use note
There are no restrictions on access.
Preferred Citation note
Austin Wiley Diaries. The Society of California Pioneers.
Donor
Gift of Mr. Rease Wiley, 1932.
Biographical/Historical note
Born in Illinois in 1823, Wiley enlisted in the Mexican War of 1846. Afterward he found his first newspaper jobs at the St. Louis Republic and the Cincinnati Times as a typesetter and reporter. He crossed the Plains to California in 1852. Austin Wiley was the second owner of the Humboldt Times, but he was with the fledgling newspaper from its inception in 1854. Wiley ran the hand press for the weekly publication during its first months of operation in Eureka. Owner Edwin Coleman soon moved the paper to Arcata, but a year later was ready to sell. Wiley, along with partner Walter Van Dyke, then purchased the Times. In 1858, it was Wiley who bought out his partner and moved the Times back to Eureka. Wiley sold the paper in 1860, and went on to serve in the State Legislature from 1862 to 1864. In 1865, he purchased a quarter interest in the San Francisco Call newspaper. Returning to Humboldt County, Wiley began working a logging claim, but printers ink was in his blood. In 1881 he established the daily and weekly Telephone newspaper in Eureka. In 1883, the Times and the Telephone merged, and Wiley was ready to move on again. That move led him back to Arcata, where he established the Arcata Union newspaper. Wiley’s sons would eventually carry on with the newspaper after his tenure. Upon his death in April 1907, the Humboldt Daily Times stated: “Nearly every Humboldter knew and respected him.”
Scope and Contents note
Handwritten daily diaries kept by Austin Wiley covering the years 1846, 1858, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877 and 1878.
The first, written in 1846, is titled “Life and Adventures of the Author with a Sketch of the Mexican War.” This diary describes leaving his home in Illinois with two of his older brothers to join the army and fight in the Mexican War. It chronicles his day-to-day activities, army movements, health, training, and conditions. The following nine diaries have brief daily entries on the weather, events and activities, and other various personal notes. They also include cash accounts. These take place while the author was living in Eureka, California.
Highlights from the diaries:
07/07/1858: “furnishing supplies for the indian hunters. they leave town about noon. two parties go out.”
04/10/1871: baby (possibly named Grace) dies of a "sickness." 05/06/1871 & 06/16/1871: earthquake noted.
07/05/1872: decides to give up drinking.
09/10/1873: Lee Force Wiley born.
03/17/1876: earthquake noted. 1877: contains newspaper clipping about Austin Wiley in the Civil War.
02/17/1878: has been storming since 01/07/1878, joined Sons of Temperance to become a better man.

**Existence and Location of Originals note**
The Society of California Pioneers, 300 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA, 94107.

**Related Archival Materials note**
Typed transcript of 1946 journal “Life and Adventures of the Author” in Biography File.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Diaries
Grand United Order of Odd Fellows
Humboldt County (Calif.)
Mexican War, 1846-1848--California.
Times-Standard.