
Hattie M. French Diaries MS-0435

Special Collections & University Archives

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Contributing Institution: Special Collections & University Archives

Title: Hattie M. French Diaries

Creator: French, Hattie M. (Hattie Mary French)

Identifier/Call Number: MS-0435

Physical Description: 0.20 Linear Feet

Date (inclusive): 1874-1878

Date (bulk): 1874, 1878

Language of Material: English .

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of two diaries kept by Hattie French on two separate family summer vacations.

The first volume dates from July 9-August 13, 1874, and chronicles a beachside holiday on the Atlantic coast when Hattie is 15 years old. Her vacation is spent with her mother, father, sister and extended family, and filled with swimming, clam bakes, boating, ice cream, and dancing at Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and New Bedford. The family journeys from their home in Buffalo, NY with a stop in New York City, where Hattie briefly describes Central Park. She details her friendship with Jessie Taylor, who she met on the beach. The two exchange autograph albums and have minor adventures together.

The second diary details Hattie's summer trip from July to September in 1878. This journey was undertaken "for her health" and shared with companions Grace Milles, Emma Hitchcock, cousin Fannie French, and sister Abbie (Daisy) French. They sailed from Buffalo to Minnesota on a northern route on Lake Superior and the River St. Marie to Duluth. Their final destination was Faribault, MN, to stay with extended family. In this volume, Hattie writes about a variety of travel adventures, including getting stranded briefly on a sandbank in the low Mississippi River, dancing with other passengers on the boat while entertained by African-American musicians, and seeing a number of attractions, such as the chapel at the Shattuck-St.Mary's School, and the local asylum for the deaf and dumb. Hattie and her friends pass the time by looking at stereoscope pictures, "tramping" around on local bluffs to admire scenery, archery, writing letters home, and sending and receiving postals (or postcards).

Hattie's uncle in Faribault seems to be a photographer, as he runs a "Gallery" at which the girls often "sit" to have their pictures taken; there is also mention made of her uncle taking "parody pictures," entering his pictures in the (presumably county) fair, and photographing the famous horse "Rarus."

The 1878 is significantly age-toned around the fore-edges of the notebook, and the writing in these margins is frequently unreadable.

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

Identification of item, folder title, box number, Hattie M. French Diaries, Special Collections and University Archives, San Diego State University Library.

Processing Information

March 2010; separated from previous "Rarities" collection

Biographical Note

Hattie French was born in Buffalo, Erie County, New York in 1859, and died 28 December 1923. Her parents were Edward French and Abigail Furman, and she had one sister, Abbie. Her sister married Frank Crowell and relocated near Lakeside, California, and Hattie and her mother followed soon after. Hattie and Abbie adopted the orphaned children of a relative. The family was active in the formation of the Lakeside Presbyterian Church, and were members of the church for many years.

Accruals

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Subjects and Indexing Terms

Personal Papers

Minnesota--Description and travel--Sources

Martha's Vineyard (Mass.)--Description and travel--Sources

New York (State)--Description and travel--Sources
