Augustus Caesar Buell Diary and Sketchbook, ca. 1867-1868

Collection number: Wyles SC 40

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Augustus Caesar Buell Diary and Sketchbook,
Date (inclusive): ca. 1867-1868
Collection Number: Wyles SC 40
Creator: Buell, Augustus C., 1847-1904.
Extent: .05 linear feet (1 folder)
Repository: University of California, Santa Barbara. Library. Department of Special Collections
Santa Barbara, California 93106-9010
Physical Location: Vault
Language: English.
Access Restrictions
None.
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Acquisition Information
Scope and Content of Collection
Augustus Caesar Buell was born in 1847, and fought in the Civil War as a member of Company L of the 20th New York Cavalry, having enlisted on August 21, 1863. Although he was promoted to corporal the following November, by April 1864 he had been demoted back to private. He was mustered out of service at the end of July 1865 and returned to New York. Buell was living in the area of Chittenango and Utica in upstate New York, near Syracuse, when he kept his
diary/sketchbook, which contains entries dated 1867 and 1868.

In 1890, Augustus C. Buell published a fraudulent Civil War memoir, “The Cannoneer,” Story of a Private Soldier, in which he claimed to have fought in the Battle of Gettysburg in early July 1863. He would later find fame for his mostly fabricated biographies of naval hero John Paul Jones (1900) and President Andrew Jackson (1904). A spurious account of the life of William Penn was published shortly after Buell’s death in 1904. His writings were debunked in “Augustus C. Buell, Fraudulent Historian” by Milton W. Hamilton in the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography v. LXXX (1956) and “Pursuing the Elusive ‘Cannoneer’” by Silas Felton in Gettysburg Magazine, July 1993.

The diary contains Buell’s account of some misadventures he had during a spate of burglaries, notes on the Greek language and his thoughts on the Iliad, long ruminations on topics such as the characteristics of German immigrants and the nature of self-reflection, passages written in German, Latin, and Greek, and several sketches of Civil War-era scenes. It concludes with a recipe for lemon cake filling.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog. Buell, Augustus C., 1847-1904.

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**Box**  
**Diary/sketchbook, 1867 - 1868**