Chester H. King Diaries, 1875-1883.: Finding Aid

Summary Information

Call number: C1510
Repository: Princeton University. Library. Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections
Manuscripts Division
One Washington Road Princeton, New Jersey 08544 USA
Size: 0.2 linear ft.
1 box
Language(s) of Material: English
Abstract: Consists of three diaries, two of which chronicle Chester H. King's overland journey to the southwestern frontier from Kansas along the Santa Fe Trail from 1881 to 1883.
Location: This collection is stored onsite at Firestone Library.
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**Biography/History**

Chester H. King, who was born circa 1855, lived and went to school in Kankakee County, Illinois; for a time, King also lived in Earl Park, Benton County, Indiana, and Kansas. He was a member of the Grant Park (Kankakee County) Good Templars Lodge; and beginning in 1876, wrote for the *Kankakee Gazette*.

A self-described "Easterner" suffering from rheumatism and neuralgia, King sought recuperation and invigoration in the southwestern frontier. He documented his overland journey from Kansas along the Santa Fe Trail, which he began around the summer of 1881. "A distinguished journalist once said 'go West young man, go West' and poor as that advice is I sorrowfully prepare to follow it," writes King. "The Terminal of the A. & P. R.R. in Arizona is at Sanders at present and that is my destination." (Fall 1881)

**Description**

This collection consists of three diaries, two of which chronicle King's overland journey to the southwestern frontier from Kansas along the Santa Fe Trail. They include observations about various towns that King passes through and important landmarks, such as Starvation Rock and the Great Salt Lake, as well as commentary on various ethnic groups, including Native Americans, Scots-Irish immigrants, Mexicans, and Mormons, and the clashes between them. The diaries also include self-described "field notes," sketches, and illustrations.

**Access and Use**

**Access**

No materials were separated during 2015 processing.

**Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information**

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. Permission to publish material from the collection must be requested from the Associate University Librarian for Rare Books and Special Collections.

**Acquisition and Appraisal**

**Provenance and Acquisition**

Purchase, 2015. (AM 2015-100)

**Appraisal**

No materials were separated during 2015 processing.
Preferred Citation
Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Chester H. King diaries, Box and Folder Number; Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Processing Information
This collection was processed by Faith Charlton in June 2015. Finding aid written by Faith Charlton in June 2015.

Encoding
This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2015-06-30T09:57-0400

Descriptive Rules Used
Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

Subject Headings

- Frontier and pioneer life -- West (U.S.) -- 19th century -- Diaries.
- Travel -- Health aspects -- 19th century -- Sources.
- West (U.S.) -- Description and travel -- 19th century -- Sources.
- West (U.S.) -- History -- 1860-1890 -- Sources.
- Diaries -- 19th century.
- Western Americana
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diary, 1875 February-1876 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Characteristics: Pages are very fragile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description: Documents a two-year period that predates King's travels to the southwest and covers various topics. King includes information about his residences in Kankakee County, Illinois and Earl Park, Indiana; some travelling that he did in the area, including a trip to Washington Island (Wisconsin); and his studies and interests. At the beginning of the diary, King explains that similar to a previous diary he kept, this one includes &quot;a little of everything in it, Travels, History, Chronology and Poetry.&quot; Includes an index.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diary: &quot;The Travels of Chester King in the South West&quot;, 1881 August-1882</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description: Includes observations about various towns that King passes through and important landmarks—Starvation Rock, the Great Salt Lake—as well as observations about various ethnic groups, including Native Americans, Scots-Irish immigrants, Mexicans, and Mormons, and the clashes between them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diary: &quot;Field Notes in Arizona and New Mexico&quot;, 1882 April-1883 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description: Includes detailed information about people, landmarks, animals, and vegetation.</td>
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