

John Reckard [Rickard] Diaries (1864-1912)
Mss 131
1.50 Linear Ft.

Biographical

John Reckard was born on January 13, 1842 in Leeds, Ontario, Canada. He lived for most of his life in Brier Hill, a small village outside of Morristown, New York. During his life John worked as a Wheelwright for a blacksmith in Brier Hill by the name of Byron Carter. He joined the United States Army on August 3, 1863 and served in the 14th Regiment of the New York State Heavy Artillery Division. John was married twice. He married his first wife, Louisa Plantz, on September 22, 1871. John and Louisa were married for twenty-one years when Louisa died on April 16, 1892 at the age of forty-one. He then married Mary Gadd on January 24, 1893. John and Mary had one son, Rowland Coonrad [Conrad?] Reckard, but he died seven months after birth on December 7, 1895 of Whooping Cough. John died on February 18, 1915 at the age of seventy-three years old; he is buried in the Morristown cemetery in Morristown, NY.

Scope & Content

The majority of this collection is made up of the diaries of John Reckard. The earliest diary is dated December 6, 1864; about sixteen months after he joined the army, and they stop December 31, 1912. The diaries cover a span of forty-eight years but about fifteen years worth of diaries are missing. The diary of 1869 is not in its original form but is instead in transcript form.

The diary of 1864 contains some brief information about John's daily routine while in the army. The rest of the diaries describe events that occurred during the course of his daily life. For instance, who he did work for, who he talked to, how much money he received for services, and how much he spent on goods. Almost everyday begins with a brief description of the weather. In the back of every diary, with the exceptions of 1870 and 1912, there is an account of John's yearly expenses broken down into each week or sometimes each day.

This collection also contains copies of John's personal papers, such as his death certificate, Last Will and Testimony, records of his Company Muster Role while in the army, the death certificate of his first wife Louisa, copies of the his pension papers and the death certificate of his second wife Mary. In addition to these papers there is a collection of original receipts given to John when he purchased items and some original photographs of John's family and friends. This collection also contains two censuses of Morristown, one from 1865 and another from 1920. Along with these censuses there are maps and guides to both Brier Hill and Morristown in the mid to late 1800's and early 1900's. There are also some miscellaneous items in this collection such as a copy of half a newspaper article about the early life of Mary Gadd, a brief interview with a woman who knew John Reckard and other related items.

Provenance

This collection was a gift of Mary Smallman, Hermon, NY, May of 2001.

Series Note

- I. Diaries of John Reckard, 1864-1912
- II. Personal Papers of John and Mary Reckard
- III. Original Receipts of John Reckard
- IV. Censuses of Morristown, 1865 and 1920
- V. Maps and Guides
- VI. Photographs
- VII. Articles and Correspondence

Description of Series

Box

1 Series I. John Reckard Diaries

Dec. 6, 1864 - Nov. 25, 1865	Jan. 1, 1883 – Dec. 31, 1883
Nov. 25, 1865 - July 11, 1866	Jan. 1, 1885 – Jan. 6, 1886
Transcript- April 19, 1869- Dec. 31, 1869	Jan. 1, 1886 – Dec. 31, 1886
Jan. 1, 1870 - Dec. 31, 1870	Jan. 1, 1887 – Jan. 1, 1888
Jan. 1, 1871 – Dec. 31, 1871	Jan. 1, 1888 – Dec. 31, 1888
Jan. 1, 1874 – Dec. 31, 1874	Jan. 1, 1892 – Dec. 31, 1892
Jan. 1, 1875 – Dec. 31, 1875	Jan. 1, 1893 – Dec. 31, 1893
Jan. 1, 1877 – Dec. 31, 1877	Jan. 1, 1894 – Dec. 31, 1894
Jan. 1, 1880 – Jan. 4, 1881	Jan. 1, 1895 – Dec. 31, 1895
Jan. 1, 1881 – Dec. 31, 1881	Jan. 1, 1897 – Dec. 31, 1897
Jan. 1, 1882 – Dec. 31, 1882	Jan. 1, 1899 – Dec. 31, 1899

2 Jan. 1, 1900 – Dec. 31, 1900	Jan. 1, 1907 – Jan. 17, 1908
Jan. 1, 1901 – Dec. 31, 1901	June 7, 1908 – Nov. 26, 1908
July 5, 1903 – Dec. 31, 1903	Jan. 1, 1909 – Dec. 31, 1909
Jan. 1, 1904 – Dec. 31, 1904	Jan. 1, 1911 – Jan. 10, 1912
Jan. 20, 1905 – Jan. 9, 1906	Jan. 1, 1912 – Dec. 31, 1912
Jan. 1, 1906 – Dec. 31, 1906	

3 **Series II. Personal Papers of John and Mary Reckard**

This folder contains such personal papers as John's Will and Last Testimony, his death certificate along with the death certificates of his first and second wife, his pension papers and his Company Muster Role taken during his service in the army.

Series III. Original Receipts of John Reckard

This part of the collection contains sixteen original receipts that were given to John Reckard from 1911-1913.

Series IV. Censuses of Morristown, NY; 1865 and 1920

1. This folder contains a census of Morristown, NY during the year 1865. A modern day historian by the name of Mary Smallman did the work for this census.
2. This folder contains a census of Morristown, NY during the year 1920. The historian Mary Smallman also did this census.

Series V. Maps and Guides

This folder holds copies of maps of Morristown and Brier Hill, along with a street guide to Brier Hill. All of these maps and guides are taken from sources that date from the mid to late 1800's to the early 1900's. Mary Smallman did all of the work coping these maps and guides.

Series VI. Photographs

This folder contains original photographs of John, Mary and friends. Along with the original photographs there is an original postcard of John and Mary outside of their house with two children by the names of Perry and Marguerite Hadlock, who were neighbors of John and Mary. There is also a picture of a memorial to John and photocopies of pictures that depict local inns and houses along with a copy of a railroad advertisement.

Series VII. Articles and Correspondence

1. This section of the collection contains a letter written by Marguerite Hadlock, which gives a brief description of what it was like to know John Reckard personally.
2. There are also three articles dealing briefly with topics that relate to John Reckard and his family.