

C Wheeler, James Henry (1831-), Diaries, 1874-1916
3861 14 volumes, 1 folder

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INTRODUCTION

The diaries of James H. Wheeler date from 1874 to 1886, and 1916. They contain his writings on social, business and church events in Hannibal and Kansas City, Missouri. There is one folder containing miscellaneous letters, programs and receipts.

DONOR INFORMATION

The James H. Wheeler diaries were donated to the State Historical Society by Mary E. Pypes on February 5, 1987 (Accession No. 2641).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James Henry Wheeler was born on January 14, 1831, to John C. and Maria Wheeler. As an adult he was in partnership with H.J. Straight in Hannibal, Missouri, until January 8, 1875. Wheeler worked for several railroad companies at various times: the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad; Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad; Missouri Pacific Railroad; and Kansas City, Fort Scott and Galveston Railroad. He married Roxanne H. Delaney on July 28, 1875, and they had two children: Walter Austin, born on April 25, 1876, and Bertha, born on September 30, 1880. The Wheeler family moved to Kansas City in 1881. Wheeler was still living there in 1916.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Wheeler recorded business and social events in his diaries. He wrote about church services, choir practices, Sunday school, church elections, church gatherings, and church problems. He commented on the financial difficulties of the Congregational church from July 1879 to July 1880. After the church was bankrupt he did not attend services as often, but increasingly attended the Lodge of the Knights of Honor. Wheeler wrote of town elections, business meetings, social gatherings and visits with family and friends.

In business matters, his long hours and problems with the railroad companies were regular occurrences. Wheeler commented on the weather, ice in the river, and steamboats while in Hannibal. Wheeler commented on the hiring of black household employees and black politics in 1876.

His entries became less frequent with fewer details around 1881. There is more information on life in Hannibal than in Kansas City. In Kansas City he continued working long hours for the railroad. He still attended church and the Knights of Honor, but became increasingly involved with the Philharmonic Society. Wheeler ceased writing about sermons or church events, rather he wrote about weather, family visits, school events, and funerals.

His diary for 1916 has very few entries except for recording a trip his family took from June 14, to August 31, 1916, to Colorado Springs, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Diego, and San Pedro, coming home by way of Oakland, Denver and Kansas City. Wheeler briefly describes where they went, whom they visited and various church services. He describes weather, renting, home repairs, the gas meter and church services. All

the diaries have accounts of his yearly expenses and income.

FOLDER LIST

Diaries

- v. 1 Hannibal, 1874
 - v. 2 Hannibal, 1875
 - v. 3 Hannibal, 1876
 - v. 4 Hannibal, 1877
 - v. 5 Hannibal, 1878
 - v. 6 Hannibal, 1879
 - v. 7 Hannibal, 1880
 - v. 8 Hannibal and Kansas City, 1881
 - v. 9 Kansas City, 1882
 - v. 10 Kansas City, 1883
 - v. 11 Kansas City, 1884
 - v. 12 Kansas City, 1885
 - v. 13 Kansas City, 1886
 - v. 14 Kansas City, 1916
- f. 1 Miscellaneous material, 1875-1891

INDEX TERMS

Subject	Other
Black household employees, 1876	v. 3
Blacks--Political activity, 1876	v. 3
Churches, Missouri	v. 1-14
Diaries	v. 1-14
Hannibal and St. Joseph Railway	v. 1-4
Kansas City, Fort Scott and Galveston Railroad	v. 11, 12
Knights of Honor, Missouri	v. 6-13
Missouri Pacific Railroad	v. 7-10
Missouri, Hannibal	v. 1-9 v. 1
Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad	v. 2, 5-7
Missouri, Kansas City	v. 2, 3, 8-14 v. 1
Steamboats	v. 3-8
Wheeler family	v. 1-14; v. 1
Wheeler, James H. (1831-)	v. 1-14; v. 1