

C O'Neill, Mary H.(1875-), Diary, 1899
3945 1 volume

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INTRODUCTION

A diary of Mary H. O'Neill, a resident of DeKalb County, Missouri, kept during 1899.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Mary H. O'Neill diary was donated to the University of Missouri by Mark L. Gardner on January 1, 1987 (Accession No. 4823).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mary H. O'Neill was born on March 3, 1875. She was a resident of DeKalb County, Missouri, during the 1890's. The O'Neills lived near Osborn, on the extreme southern edge of DeKalb County. Mary lived on a farm with her parents, siblings, grandmother, and various boarders. Her parents were married in 1869. Her father was Thomas O'Neill, and her mother's name is not known. The family raised sheep, cattle, chickens, and turkeys for their livelihood. Her father also sold dairy products to area residents and large dairy companies.

Mary's days were filled with various chores and pastimes. She took full part in cleaning the house, cooking meals, mowing the lawn, and various chores around the farm such as milking the cows. She enjoyed reading very much, reading popular American fiction as well as such foreign authors as Tolstoy. Mary also had an interest in gardening. She spent much of her time making her own clothing as well as clothing for other family members, and making items for the home such as slip covers and pillow cases. She was helped often in her work by her sister Ruth (1881-). Ruth attended school in Cameron, Missouri, during the week, and was home most weekends. Mary's brother Rex (1879-) also attended school away from home, and was only home during school recesses.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Mary H. O'Neill diary gives a good idea of what rural life was like at the turn of the nineteenth century in northern Missouri. The information contained in the diary is mainly day by day listings of weather conditions, work accomplished, visitors entertained, meals prepared, books read, family events, letters sent and received, and miscellaneous entries concerning neighbors and friends (births, birthdays, marriages, deaths). One point of interest may be brief discussions of the Maysville, Missouri, Chautauqua of 1899.

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