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October 29, 2013

Describing Archives: A Content Standard
Table of Contents

Summary Information ........................................................................................................................................ 3

Biographical Note ....................................................................................................................................... 4

Scope and Contents ..................................................................................................................................... 4

Arrangement ................................................................................................................................................... 5

Administrative Information ......................................................................................................................... 5

Related Materials ........................................................................................................................................ 6

Controlled Access Headings ......................................................................................................................... 6

Collection Inventory ...................................................................................................................................... 8
## Summary Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>Ball State University Archives and Special Collections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator - Author</td>
<td>Neely, Thomas S., 1811-1901</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Thomas Neely diaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>1867-1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>0.8 Cubic feet 2 boxes</td>
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<td>Language</td>
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#### Preferred Citation

Thomas Neely Diaries, Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries
Biographical Note

Thomas S. Neely was born on September 13, 1811, in Adams County, Pennsylvania, near the town of Gettysburg. As a child, he worked on his family’s farm and he attended school during the winters until the age of seventeen. After completing school, he apprenticed as blacksmith in Petersburg, Pennsylvania for three years. In 1831, Neely moved with his family to Miami County, Ohio. He worked as blacksmith in several Ohio towns, including Urbana and Troy, before returning to Pennsylvania to marry Matilda Wierman in 1833. Neely and his wife returned to Miami County and resided there until 1839, when they moved to Muncie.

Upon settling in Muncie, Neely started a grocery business but quickly abandoned it for a blacksmith shop, which he operated for over twenty years. Seeing an opportunity to help his business and eliminate the difficult and expensive journey to Cincinnati for iron, he played an important role in the campaign to bring the first railroad to Muncie. The Bellefontaine Railroad opened in June 1852.

Always active in community affairs and a staunch advocate of public education Neely served as a member of the Delaware County board of commissioners and as school director from 1842 to 1848. In June 1878, he was elected to the board of education and played an important role in the establishment of Muncie’s first high school.

Neely retired from working as blacksmith and opened the first photography gallery in Muncie. Located at the corner of Main and Mulberry streets, the studio specialized in daguerreotypes and later adopted more modern methods of photography. Leonidas M. Neely later assumed control of the studio.

Thomas Neely and his wife Matilda had four children that survived into adulthood: Eliza, Martha Jane (Jennie), Thaddeus, and Leonidas. Matilda Neely died on September 19, 1886. Following her death, Thomas Neely resided with his daughter Jennie. He died on August 16, 1901.

Scope and Contents

Thomas Neely began keeping a diary on January 1, 1860, and continued to make regular entries with few interruptions for almost 42 years. When his sight began to fail in 1897, his daughter Jennie continued making entries until his death until 1901. The collection contains five volumes of Thomas Neely’s diaries, dating from April 1867 to August 20, 1901. Each contains entries chronicling local happenings as well as Muncie’s response to national events. The whereabouts of the first volume (1860-1867) is unknown.
Arrangement

This collection is arranged chronologically.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Ball State University Archives and Special Collections

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Copyright Notice

Legal title, copyright, and literary rights reside with Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries, Muncie, IN. All requests to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted to Archives and Special Collections.

Custodial History

This collection was received by Archives and Special Collections as a donation from Mildred Greene in 1988. Addition received 1991/06/21 by David Meeks.

Accruals

No further additions are expected.

Processing Information

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials

Materials relating to this collection may be found in the following collections in Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries, Muncie IN:

- MSS.087: Thomas L. Ryan diary (1886)
- MSS.002: Frederick Putnam diary
- MSS.129: Mina McCormick Beckett diaries (1933-1962)
- MSS.105: Thomas Neely diaries (1867-1901)
- SC.006: Ken Trietsch diary
- SC.020: Charles Murray diary
- SC.145: John R. Kerns diary
- SC.171: J.W. Brant Civil War diary
- SC.375: David Hendrickson diary
- SC.444: Sarah A. Heinsohn diary

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- Diaries

Geographic Name(s)

- Delaware County (Ind.)
- Muncie (Ind.)
Subject(s)

- Industrialists
- Local history
- Stoeckel Archives of Local History
# Collection Inventory

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