Francis T. Howard Diary, 1858-1946

Overview of the Collection

Creator
Howard, Francis T., 1830-1863.

Title
Francis T. Howard Diary

Dates
1858-1946 (inclusive)
1858 1946
1858-1859 (bulk)
1858 1859

Quantity
0.08 cubic feet, (1 box)

Collection Number
MSS Howard

Summary
The Francis T. Howard Diary is comprised of journal entries written by Oregon pioneer Francis T. Howard recording his life as a farmer and mill operator outside Mulino, Oregon between January 1858 and June 1859. Also included are newspaper clippings and other ephemera documenting the Howard family between 1863 and 1946.

Repository
Oregon State University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives Research Center
Special Collections and Archives Research Center
121 The Valley Library
Oregon State University
Corvallis OR
97331-4501
Telephone: 541-737-2075
Fax: 541-737-8674
scarce@oregonstate.edu

Access Restrictions
The collection is open for research.

Languages
English

Historical Note

In 1846, Maryland native Richard Rutter Howard (born 1797) migrated with his wife and six children to Oregon where he claimed 640 acres of land southeast of Oregon City. In 1848, he constructed a sawmill on Milk Creek, a Molalla River tributary. Three years later, he constructed one of the area's first grist (flour) mills on the same creek. In reference to Howard's mill, the area was later named "Mulino," an Anglicization of the Spanish word for "mill."

Richard's son, Francis T. Howard (born 1830), married Augusta Ann Wingfield in 1851. The couple remained in the Mulino area where Francis built a working farm and assisted in the operation of his father's grain and lumber mills. In February 1863, Francis and Augusta drowned while attempting to ford the Molalla River. They left behind three young children: Edwin, Juliet, and Eugenia. Despite the tragedy, the Howard family remained in the area and continued to operate the Milk Creek mills and even expanded to excelsior (wood wool) and shoddy (reclaimed wool) production.

Howard's Mill, listed as Howard's Gristmill in the National Register of Historic Places, is recognized as the oldest standing industrial building in Oregon.
Content Description

The Francis T. Howard Diary is comprised of nearly two hundred diary entries created from January 1, 1858 through May 21, 1858 and May 9, 1859 through June 20, 1859 by Francis T. Howard; more than a dozen newspaper clippings; and a deposit receipt from the Bank of Oregon City.

Francis T. Howard's diary entries contain weather observations and brief descriptions of his daily activities which included work at the Howard family grain and lumber mills; ploughing and planting (carrots, beets, parsnips, rutabaga, turnips, timothy hay, etc.) on his property near Mulino, Oregon; management of livestock (horses, oxen and sheep); social visits with neighbors and relatives; and trips to Mulino and Oregon City. The diary also includes references to Howard's attendance at National Democrats gatherings; prayer meetings; and his participation in the Beaver Creek Debating Society where members discussed topics such as proper diet (meat-eating or vegetarianism), the best field of study (history or geography), the most esteemed occupation (statesman or general), and the optimal human pursuit (knowledge or happiness).

Howard's diary entries also document the birth of his daughter, Eugenia (born 1858); the health of family members and neighbors; his efforts to prevent the construction of a county road across his claim; local and national events (including mention of the Utah War); and repeated references to the danger of fording the Molalla River (where he and his wife would lose their lives in 1863).

The diary also contains newspaper clippings pasted in after the death of Francis in 1863. Included is a short article on the origin of the Howard family name; an etching of General O. O. Howard; a reference to Francis' marriage to Augusta Ann (printed "Ann Angenta") in 1851; several notices regarding the social activities of Eugenia Howard and Anthony Wayne Howard (brother to Francis, 1861-1924); a history of Howard's Mill from The Enterprise, an Oregon City newspaper; an 1896 report of a fire at an excelsior and shoddy mill in West Linn; and obituaries for Francis (1830-1863) and Augusta Howard (1835-1863), Charles T. Howard (1841-1923), and Anthony Wayne Howard. Also included is a notice celebrating the 45th anniversary of the Bank of Oregon City; a clipping featuring a photo of Maria S. Caufield; and an obituary for Edwin G. Caufield (1859-1934), an Oregon City banker. The Bank of Oregon receipt documents a deposit made by Eugenia Howard in 1885. The diary also contains a 1946 interview with Edwin Howard (son of Francis, born 1856) from the Molalla Pioneer which includes details on the constructions of Howard's Mill, the lives of the Howard children following Francis and Augusta's deaths, and life in 19th century rural Oregon.

Additionally, the volume contains a note from Eugenia Howard referencing a pocket book not included in this collection.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

Francis T. Howard Diary (MSS Howard), Oregon State University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Research Center, Corvallis, Oregon.

Administrative Information

Francis T. Howard Diary, 1858-1946
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv32376
Acquisition Information
The Francis T. Howard Diary was donated to the Oregon State University Libraries by Kenneth and Bonnie Miller. The volume now resides in the Special Collections & Archives Research Center.

Related Materials
Related Materials
Published accounts of pioneer life in Oregon can be found in the History of the Pacific Northwest Rare Book Collection. Materials relating to early settlement and infrastructure-building in Oregon are located in the Oregon Pioneers Oral History Collection (OH 01) and the Yaquina Bay Wagon Road Company files of the E. E. Wilson Papers. Photographs of Howard’s Gristmill are located in the Marshall Family Collection at the Oregon Historical Society and at the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. A digital copy of the image held at the Preservation Office can be found in the University of Oregon’s online collection Building Oregon: Architecture of Oregon & the Pacific Northwest.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:  
Agriculture--Oregon.  
Frontier and pioneer life--Oregon.  
Gristmills--Oregon.

Personal Names:  
Howard, Augusta Ann Wingfield, 1835-1863.  
Howard, Eugenia E., 1858-

Geographical Names:  
Molalla River (Or.)  
Oregon City (Or.).  
Oregon Territory.

Form or Genre Terms:  
Diaries.  
Scrapbooks.

Finding aid prepared by Trevor Sandgathe  
2015

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