

Arvazena A. Cooper papers, 1845-1900

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Cooper, Arvazena A., 1845-1929
Title	Arvazena A. Cooper papers
Dates	1845-1900 (inclusive) 1845 1900
Quantity	0.25 linear feet, (1 folder)
Collection Number	CB C784
Summary	Arvazena A. Cooper (1845-1929) traveled the Oregon Trail with her family in 1863 and settled in the Willamette Valley. The collection contains her reminiscences of that journey and biographical information about her life in Oregon.
Repository	University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives. UO Libraries--SPC, 1299 University of Oregon Eugene OR 97403-1299 Telephone: 541-346-3068 Fax: 541-346-3485 spcarref@uoregon.edu
Access Restrictions	Collection is open to the public. Collection must be used in Special Collections & University Archives Reading Room.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Historical Note

Born in Kentucky in 1845, Arvazena A. Cooper spent her formative years in southwestern Missouri. At sixteen, she married Daniel Jackson Cooper (May 1861) and eight months later, their first child arrived. Cooper described the violence that plagued them in Missouri during the Civil War and cites this as the reason she and her husband decided to move to the Far West. In 1863, Cooper, her husband, father-in-law, and infant set out by wagon for the state of Oregon. The family settled in the Willamette Valley.

Cooper settled near Corvallis, Oregon, and performed the duties expected of mid-nineteenth-century wives and mothers. She bore thirteen children in Oregon (and one en route). She managed her growing household by caring for and nursing her children and her husband; she prepared their food and made their clothes. Cooper's commitment to child rearing extended beyond her own family. Cooper contributed to the building of Farm Home, a Corvallis receiving home for orphans. She saw her fifteen children grow to adulthood as well as some of her grandchildren. Cooper died in 1929 and is buried in The Dalles, Oregon.

Content Description

The Arvazena Cooper Papers contain several documents relating to Arvazena Cooper's pioneer life. Included is a biographical sketch by Mrs. F. W. Bayley, Cooper's handwritten reminiscence of her 1863 migration to the state of Oregon, and a typewritten copy of the reminiscence, which includes a preface by L.W. Peters. This collection is unique in terms of its first-hand, personal narrative of one woman's "pioneering" experience. Cooper offered detailed information on her move from Missouri to Oregon, including her impressions of the land, her child's antics, problems mobilizing the wagon train, and encounters with Native Americans along the way. Cooper describes various wagons that joined and left their train as well as the friendships and discord that close proximity produced.

Cooper wrote her narrative in 1901. Sometime thereafter someone, perhaps L. W. Peters, made a typed copy of the manuscript. The Cooper Papers also include biographical information on Arvazena Cooper. This information directs researchers who are looking for more information on the Cooper family to Cooper's sister J. C. Cooper (born Melzena Parallee Spillman).

The State Historical Society of Missouri appears to include a copy of this family narrative. The Typescript Collection (collection # C0995) contains the following entry: Item #229. "Cooper, Nan P., 'Mother's Trip Across the Plains,' 1901 (Account of a journey by wagon train from Lawrence County, Missouri, to Oregon in 1863, told by Arvazena Angeline Cooper.)"

Use of the Collection

Alternative Forms Available

Available in microfilm as part of: *Women's lives. Series 3, American women missionaries and pioneers collection* (MICROFILM BV3703 .W66 2006, reel 80); Primary Source Microfilm, 12 Lunar Dr., Woodbridge, Conn. 06525.

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If a researcher finds sensitive personal information in a collection, please bring it to the attention of the reading room staff.

Preferred Citation

Arvazena A. Cooper papers, 1845-1900
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv52684>

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Collection is organized into the following series:

- Series I: Biographical information
- Series II: Original manuscript
- Series III: Typed manuscript

Location of Collection

Collection is located with other small manuscripts collections.

Processing Note

Collection processed by Richelle Riddle and Veta Schlimgen, Manuscripts Processors, January 2006.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Biographical Information

Description

Biographical sketch of Arvazena A. Cooper

Series II: Original manuscript, May 5, 1973-November 5, 1973

Series III: Typed manuscript, May 5, 1973-November 5, 1973

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Frontier and pioneer life--Oregon
Overland journeys to the Pacific
Women pioneers--Oregon

Personal Names :

Cooper, Arvazena A., 1845-1929

Geographical Names :

Oregon National Historic Trail--Description and travel

Form or Genre Terms :

Overland journals

Finding aid prepared by Finding aid prepared by Richelle Riddle and Veta Schlimgen

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