

C Mendenhall, Willard H. (1832-), Diaries, 1853-1864, n.d.
3866 4 volumes, 1 folder

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INTRODUCTION

The diaries of Willard H. Mendenhall record his life on a farm near Lexington, MO, during the Civil War.

DONOR INFORMATION

The Willard H. Mendenhall Diaries were donated to the State Historical Society by Sally R. Mendenhall on January 19, 1990 (SHS Accession No. 2770).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Willard Hall Mendenhall was born on January 7, 1832. He owned a farm and a shop near Lexington, Missouri, and was married to Mary Margaret Kavanaugh who was known as Mollie. She was born on February 10, 1836. They had five children, William Kavanaugh, born March 6, 1859; Mary Ada, born November 30, 1863; and Frank, Fannie, and Tommy, whose birth dates are unknown.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Mendenhall's diaries from 1862 to 1864 contain his observations on family life, farming, local events, the Civil War, bushwhackers, and the oppression and violence of soldiers. His feelings towards the war were primarily southern as were his views on slavery. He wrote about not paying the military tax for not enlisting, his fears of imprisonment and swearing an oath of loyalty. Mendenhall also commented on military battles, prisoners of war, General Price, ironclad boats, the soldiers' raiding, and the tension and suffering of local inhabitants. Mendenhall wrote about the problems with runaway slaves and their stealing around Lexington. He also told of visiting, town elections, church meetings, gossip, steamboats, crops, and his family.

Volume one dates from 1862, though the year on the cover is 1859. It also has a few entries from 1858 to 1861 which reflect earlier efforts to keep a diary. Volume two begins with the accounts of the Lexington Thespian Society from 1856 to 1858. Volume three contains financial accounts from 1853 to 1856. Goods include stock, farming equipment, lumber, work, and miscellaneous items. The volume also has a listing of the members of the Mendenhall and Dumble families. Volume four has missing pages and one entry for 1855.

Folder one consists of a poem found in volume four and some later photographs of the Mendenhall family, including photographs of portraits.

These diaries have been transcribed and are available for purchase from the State Historical Society of Missouri under the title *Missouri Ordeal, 1862-1964: Diaries of Willard Hall Mendenhall*, transcribed by Margaret Mendenhall Frazier.

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