

Jessie Louise Many Rice diaries

Ms. Codex 1777

Finding aid prepared by Donna Brandolisio.

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

September 2016

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Many, Emma J., 1850-
Creator	Rice, Jessie Louise Many, 1883-
Title	Jessie Louise Many Rice diaries
Call number	Ms. Codex 1777
Date [inclusive]	1909-1930
Extent	15 volumes
Language	English
Abstract	This collection of diaries was kept by Jessie Louise Many Rice spanning the years from 1909 to 1930. Each volume was written in a preprinted pocket calendar comprising brief daily entries by Rice.

Cite as:

Jessie Louise Many Rice diaries, 1909-1930, Ms. Codex 1777, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Rice was one of five children born to William V. (1850-1900) and Emma J. Many (1850-1930?). She lived with her mother in Washingtonville, Orange County, New York and earned a living as a steamstress. Jessie married Harry Rice probably in 1915. They had a daughter Helen Geraldine on December 3, 1915, who died three days later. Jessie's siblings are noted at the end of volume 1 as follows: Alice born 1875, William born 1878 and died in 1900, Emma born 1880, and Helen born 1873.

Scope and Contents

This collection of diaries was kept by Jessie Louise Many Rice spanning the years from 1909 to 1930. Each volume was written in a preprinted pocket calendar comprising brief daily entries by Rice. The first thirteen volumes span the years from 1909 to 1921. A gap of eight years precedes the last volume written by Rice dated June 1929 to December 1930. Rice recorded factual events throughout the diaries with scant indication of her feelings or emotions. Each daily entry begins with a brief observation of the weather followed by daily tasks and social interactions. Rice sewed nearly every day, baked bread with her mother, farmed a garden, tended to chickens, and cleaned the house. She traveled to Blooming Grove and took the train to Newburgh for shopping and selling wares. In addition, Rice delivered items she sold throughout Orange County. She noted when she attended church and who was preached. Aside from her mother, Jessie Rice had the consistent presence of her sister Alice and her Uncle C. (possibly Charlie) along with nieces, friends, and other visitors. She mentioned dinners and playing card games such as whist and rummy. In the winter she noted going on sleigh rides. Jessie attended meetings and dances at the local Grange, lectures, and movies and plays in Newburgh, and visiting the library and books she read. Jessie noted a local club named the "Bachelor girls" who gathered for dinners and games. Jessie and her mother Emma Many also worked as servers at the Athenia Club in Washingtonville. Jessie first mentioned her husband Harry Rice in 1914. She wrote of exchanging letters and seeing him occasionally. In February 1915 Jessie wrote Harry was there and "announcements came tonight." Following this entry Jessie wrote of looking at houses with Mother Rice, Harry's mother. In December 1915 Rice recorded the birth and death of their daughter Helen Geraldine. Harry Rice is rarely mentioned after December 1915, other than Jessie received letters or met him in Newburgh. Included at the end of each volume is account information, such as payments, items purchased, and monies received. A few medicinal recipes appear in some volumes. Lists of Christmas gifts received and given appear in each volume. Some of the volumes have items laid in such as, a photograph, clippings of quotations, notes, and three of her calling cards. Volume 15 was written by Emma J. Many. The volume is a 1916 pocket calendar containing sporadic entries, Christmas gift lists dated from 1916 to 1934 and lastly, a brief biography of Elias Gerow of Salisbury Mills, New York.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

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Finding aid prepared by Donna Brandolisio.

Access Restrictions

This codex is available for research.

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Custodial History note

Stamp on the last leaf of Volumes 1 and 2 reads: Nathan S. Smith Bookseller & Stationer, 16 Water Street, Newburgh, N. Y.

Source of Acquisition

Sold by Rabelais Books (Biddeford, Maine), 2016.

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Codices (bound manuscripts)
- Diaries
- Manuscripts, American--20th century
- Recipes

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- Washingtonville (N.Y.)--Social life and customs--20th century

SUBJECT(S)

- American diaries--20th century--Specimens
- American diaries--Women authors--20th century

Collection Inventory

	Volume
Jessie Louise Many Rice diaries, 1909-1930.	1-15