

Mary Edith Rusk diary

Ms. Codex 1781

Finding aid prepared by Donna Brandolisio.

Last updated on May 09, 2019.

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	Rusk, Mary Edith, 1862-1956
Title	Mary Edith Rusk diary
Call number	Ms. Codex 1781
Date [inclusive]	1894-1895
Extent	1 volume
Language	English
Abstract	The diary of Mary Edith Rusk (1862-1956) kept during her European tour from December 1894 to May 1895.

Cite as:

Mary Edith Rusk Diary, 1894-1895, Ms. Codex 1781, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Born in Viroqua, Vernon County, Wisconsin to Elizabeth M. Johnson (1838-1919) and Jeremiah McLain

Rusk (1830-1893). Mary Edith Rusk was raised in the world of Wisconsin and United States politics. Her father, Jeremiah McLain Rusk, was a stage coach driver, a farmer, served as a high-ranking officer in the U.S. Civil War, elected as a Congressman to Wisconsin from 1871 to 1877, was the Governor of Wisconsin from 1882 to 1889, and was appointed Secretary of Agriculture by President Benjamin Harrison in 1889. Rusk held the cabinet appointment until 1893. Mary Edith never married and lived with her mother and brother Blaine in Wisconsin. She was one of seven children from Rusk's two marriages. The first was to Mary Martin who had three children: Lycurgus born in 1850; Charity born in 1851, died in 1913; and Mary J. born in 1853; died in 1854. Elizabeth M. Johnson, a Norwegian immigrant and Rusk's second wife, had four children: Alonzo A. born in 1858, died in 1862; Ida born in 1859; died in 1885; Blaine David born in 1874; died in 1906, and Mary Edith. Sometime after 1924 Mary Edith relocated to Los Angeles, California and is buried in Vernon County.

Scope and Contents

A burgundy, leather volume with graph paper leaves containing the diary of Mary Edith Rusk kept during her European tour from December 1894 to May 1895. Rusk departed from New York on December 8, 1894 aboard the S. S. *Furst Bismarck* with her traveling companion Mrs. Campbell. The diary provides a daily record of Rusk's journey with detailed descriptions of landscapes from sea such as Gibraltar and Algiers and of the cities she visited. She wrote of people she met on board, dinners, and other travelers touring Europe. Prior to arriving in Naples, Italy Rusk discussed her acquaintance with Mr. Reid who was Sir Robert Gillespie Reid (1842-1908), a railway contractor and bridge designer. Rusk and Mrs. Campbell began their journey in Naples and traveled through Europe. They toured Rome, Capri, Sorrento, Amalfi, La Cava, Florence, Bologna, Milan, and Venice, Italy. They then journeyed to Vienna, Austria; Dresden and Berlin, Germany; Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Antwerp and Brussels, Belgium; and lastly, Paris, France. Rusk described the many museums, architectural landmarks, paintings, historical sites they visited in great detail throughout the diary; including an aquarium in Naples. Some of the items Rusk and Mrs. Campbell purchased while shopping have been recorded. She wrote of people they met and dined with from the United States and England. Rusk mentioned the tour guides who drove them to several sightseeing locations. She wrote of receiving and writing letters to her mother, sister Charity, and her brothers. Rusk also wrote of her correspondence throughout the journey with young man named Henry. She met Henry in Paris and to her despair never heard from again. Rusk and Mrs. Campbell sailed from Paris on the S. S. *Paris* returning to the United States on May 3, 1895. There is a newspaper clipping laid in the volume regarding her father Jeremiah M. Rusk. Written on a leaf at the end of the volume is a list of hotels and cities visited along the journey. "Mary Edith Rusk, December 1894" is written on the first endpaper.

Administrative Information

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Access Restrictions

This codex is available for research.

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Source of Acquisition

Sold by Michael Brown Rare Books (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 2016.

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Codices (bound manuscripts)
- Diaries
- Manuscripts, American--19th century

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- Europe--Description and travel--19th century

SUBJECT(S)

- American diaries--19th century--Specimens
- American diaries--Women authors--19th century

Collection Inventory

	Volume
Mary Edith Rusk diary, 1894-1895.	1