

Collection #
M 0922

**JOHN CUSTER
DIARIES, 1871–1887 (BULK 1871–1875)**

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

Kathryn Wilmot
July 2007

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box

COLLECTION
DATES: 1871–1887 (bulk 1871–1875)

PROVENANCE: Michael Sullivan, Indianapolis, IN, March 2003

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2003.0320

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Custer was born in August 1842 to John Custer (b. ca. 1808) and Nancy Custer (b. ca. 1810). In 1850 the family was living in Marietta, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Siblings of the younger John Custer included: Solomon (b. ca. 1831), Susannah (b. ca. 1833), Mary Ann (b. ca. 1836), Ann (b. ca. 1839), Fanny (b. ca. 1846), and Catherine (b. ca. 1847). While living in Pennsylvania, John taught school.

By 1870 John had moved from Pennsylvania to Indianapolis, Indiana. His diary indicates he lived with his sister Mary, and their sister Annie was close by. Fanny was living in Cardington, Ohio. Upon arriving in Indianapolis, John began work as a retail confectioner in the family's confectionary business located in their residence. In 1875 they lived and worked at 162 West Washington Street. They relocated their home and business to 224 West Washington Street by 1877 and to 254 West Washington Street by 1879. In 1885 they were still at this address. The city directory for 1886 shows John living in Indianapolis on Market Street, but does not mention the confectionary business. The censuses of 1900 and 1910 show John and Mary still living together.

Sources:

Information in the collection.

Ancestry Library Edition. Available at: <http://www.ancestrylibrary.com>

Indianapolis City Directory, Indiana Historical Society, Call No. F534.I55 A18

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains three diaries kept by John Custer for the years 1871, 1874, and 1875. The 1871 diary also has some notations of expenses for the years 1886–87.

In his diaries from Indianapolis, John primarily discusses the confectionary business, religion, household chores and trips to the market, illnesses, and magazines and books. He describes the renovation of the store, the installation of a

new soda fountain, daily receipts, and supplies such as cakes purchased from the Cincinnati Bakery, Wolf's, and Woelz's. John also notes when he makes ice-cream and its quality.

It appears John did not belong to one particular church; rather, he visited many Indianapolis churches including the 4th Presbyterian, Grace Methodist, and Meridian Street Methodist. He mentions noteworthy sermons and writes about periodicals he receives such as *The Sunday Magazine*, *The Christian Union*, and *The Plymouth Pulpit*.

John, his sister Mary, and his mother Nancy appear to have had health troubles as John often describes their illnesses and medicinal remedies. He suffered frequently from "sick headaches" and both he and Mary experienced depression. Other illnesses mentioned include la grippe, erysipelas, cholera, and neuralgia.

Brief mentions of the State Fair, spelling bees, and the Chicago Fire also appear in the diaries. Visits from Fanny and Nancy are noted, as are visits from neighbors such as John Benson.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Diary, 1871; 1886–87	Box 1, Folder 1
Diary, 1874–75	Box 1, Folder 2
Diary, 1875	Box 1, Folder 3

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0922).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.