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Waldo F. Brown Collection

1851-1917

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Title: Waldo F. Brown Collection
Dates: 1851-1917
Media: Manuscripts
Quantity: 0.5 cubic feet
Location: Closed stacks

COLLECTION SUMMARY

This collection includes diaries kept by Waldo F. Brown or his family from 1853 through 1917, together with address books and account books. Ordnance papers of the 4th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry from 1863 through 1866 are also included in the collection.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Waldo Franklin Brown (1832-1907) was a nationally known agricultural writer and lecturer during the 1870s and 1880s. Born in Worcester, Massachusetts on October 24, 1832, Brown spent his early years in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. In 1838, he and his family traveled west, settling on a farm near Brownsville, Indiana. When Brown was 16, he and his family relocated to Butler County, Ohio, settling two miles north of Oxford.

In 1854, Brown entered Miami University, attending for one semester. Afterwards, Brown became a teacher for one term in the Oxford, Ohio schools; he then took charge of the school at Millville, Ohio until 1857. During the Civil War, Brown was a private in Company F, 167th Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

After giving up teaching, Brown devoted his attention to gardening and farming. He operated a mail-order seed business until 1907, earning an average of \$3,000 per year. Additionally, he grew many varieties of flowers and vegetables on his farm north of Oxford. Brown enjoyed continued success with several crops; for example, in 1863, he grew a seed gourd holding eleven gallons and three pints that was exhibited at the fair of the American Agricultural Association in New York.

Brown shared his farming knowledge with others by writing articles for various newspapers, magazines, and journals, such as the *New York Tribune*, *Country Gentleman*, *Home and Farm*, and *Breeders' Gazette*. He used several pseudonyms in his writing, including "Agricola," "Solomon Smith," and "Squire Bung." Writing under the signature of "Johnny Plowboy," Brown edited the first farm page for the *Cincinnati Enquirer* from 1872 to 1877. He was associate editor of *Ohio Farmer* from 1877 to 1897. In 1897, Brown became agricultural editor of the *Cincinnati Gazette* until his death in 1907. From 1881 until his death, Brown contributed a series of 496 "Farm Talks" to the *Indiana Farmer*. He also published a farm journal of his own called *The Christian Farmer*.

In addition to writing more than 1,000 articles on agriculture, Brown wrote several books. *Success in Farming: A Series of Practical Talks with Farmers* (1881) discusses topics including drainage and fertilization, crop rotation, farm implements, dairying, timber growing, and woman's work on the farm. In its day, *The People's Farm and Stock Cyclopaedia* (1884) was a popular, recognized authority on farm management, crops, livestock, barns, and other farm subjects. *Experiments in Farming* (1905) covers topics such as growing sorghum and alfalfa, cultivating strawberries for home use, economy in hog feeding, and advantages of using cement flooring in a hog house.

Brown lectured under the state boards of agriculture of Ohio, Indiana, and other states. He also organized the Practical Farmers' Club and clubs in several other Ohio and Indiana communities. He also suggested holding farmers' institutes. Lecturing in the Ohio Farmers' Institute, Brown traveled more than 64,000 miles during a six-year period, visiting all but five of Ohio's 88 counties.

As a result of all of these pursuits, Brown was admired for educating farmers on the most profitable farming techniques, such as how to prevent soil erosion and the importance of crop rotation. He also became well-known for his engaging descriptions of farm life. In one article, for example, Brown suggested that there were three types of farmers. First, "Peter Poverty" was known for his laziness and poor managerial skills. Second, "Sam Skinsoil" worked several farms at once, moving on to new land once his original fields were depleted of nutrients.

Finally, hard-working “William Wealthy” treated his farm, animals, and family in a loving manner.

As Brown wrote in his introduction to *Success in Farming: A Series of Practical Talks with Farmers*, “All my mature life having been spent upon the farm, and believing as I do that the life of a farmer gives full scope for the best powers of the best men, I have no higher ambition and ask no greater reward, than to be able to help my co-laborers to attain “Success in Farming.”

In 1859, Brown married Hyla J. Sample and had five children; she died in 1868 after a short illness. Brown then married Laura A. Cross in 1871 and had two children by her. Brown died July 8, 1907.

References:

Bartlow, Bert S., et al., eds. *Centennial History of Butler County, Ohio* (B. F. Bowen, 1905), pp. 761-763

McGinnis, Ralph J. *The History of Oxford, Ohio, from the Earliest Days to the Present, 1930*. Oxford: Printed by the Stewart Press, 1930, pp. 41-42.

Knepper, George W. *Ohio and Its People*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2003, p. 277.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

The collection begins with daily diaries kept by Brown or his family between 1851 and 1917. Brown’s first diary contains detailed descriptions of his planting and harvesting of fruit and vegetable crops throughout the year. He also records information about the weather, his livestock, local travels, attendance at church and Sunday School, family health, his marriage to Hyla Sample, and the birth of his first two children, Winnie and Alice.

In the second diary in the collection, Brown writes that he is expecting the proof for his book, *The People’s Farm and Stock Cyclopedia* (1884); on November 10, 1884, he states succinctly, “The Cyclopedia is out. After eighteen months of work and waiting my book has seen the light.”

The book was an accomplishment in more ways than one. Writing on May 25, 1885, Brown says:

“I went to Cin[cinnati] today and sold out my royalty in the Farm and Stock Cyclopedia. I may have sacrificed future profits by so doing but I got enough for it to pay all I owe and enable me to build a much needed barn and I have been so long in bondage to that most merciless and tyrannical monster debt that I am more than rejoiced to escape from his clutches. From this day forth I intend to

obey the apostolic injunction than 'Owe no man anything but to love one another.' What we cannot pay for we will do without.

As I look back over twenty seven years during which time I have always been in debt and suffered much anxiety I can see that it has been a good discipline for me and one which I needed and yet I rejoice and thank God for deliverance from it and believe that the time has now come when I need release from it and that a loving Father's hand has removed the burden. All the experience of my life is such that I can fully realize that God is "a present help in every time of need."

Brown also provides details of his seed business orders, and an invitation to speak at farmers' institutes on gardening and truck farming, timber growing for profit, "Farm Life: Its Influence on the Character," and "What Farmers Ought to Know."

Brown also reports on the election of Grover Cleveland as President of the United States and the presence of auctioneers at Miami University in June 1885, near the time that the university reopened, after declining enrollment and financial difficulties prompted it to close in 1873. On September 17, Brown writes of attending a meeting to celebrate Miami's opening.

Brown also demonstrates his entrepreneurship by selling cherries during Miami's reunion weekend festivities and Peach Blow potatoes during a strawberry show in Hamilton, Ohio that year.

Brown's third diary spans July 1, 1886 through June 30, 1889. On July 27, 1886, he records that he received a letter from Circleville, Ohio asking him to speak. If he goes, he states that his topic will be "Farm Life: How To Make the Most of It."

Other diary entries record details of his harvest; for example, on September 8, 1886, he observes that his four acres of potatoes yielded over 600 bushels. In April 1888, Brown records that he planted Telephone peas; the Snow Flake, Mammoth Pearl, New York Burbank, and Early Ohio varieties of potatoes; and carrot varieties, including Scarlet Stumpfoot, White Belgian, and Danvers. In May 1889, he expanded his crop to include Cattle beets, Slowell corn, Marrowfat peas, and King of the Garden lima beans.

Brown also mentions picnicking at Hueston Woods on July 23, 1887, and the election of Benjamin Harrison as president of the United States on November 7, 1888.

The diary ends with lists of subjects for Institute lectures, together with information about addresses delivered and miles traveled. It also includes a note that Brown contracted to grow 100 pounds of gourd seeds for the A.W. Livingston seed company (a business still operating in Columbus, Ohio) at 75 cents per pound, together with 50 pounds for the U.S. Government.

Brown's fourth diary chronicles the period from April 22, 1892 to May 31, 1894. Here, he lists what he plants for the growing season, recording how many nutmegs, melons, sweet potatoes, and apples he sold, and to whom.

Brown also observes helpful details of local life. For example, on September 14, 1892, he notes that Miami University opened with 120 students. Throughout the period of the diary, he also brings Western Female Seminary students home for vacations.

On Brown's 60th birthday, October 24, 1892, he writes:

"The past year has been one of blessings. Good health, profitable personal work, and fairly good crops on the farm. I have the affection and respect of my family and the great satisfaction of knowing that all my children have firm principles and are doing useful work in the world. My dear wife who I feared years ago would not live long is well now and happy. We have improved our home during the past year and made it more convenient and roomy than before. I bless God for his mercies and pray that I may ever be his loving child."

Brown also travels extensively, lecturing in Madison, Licking, Knox, Ashland, Richland and Clark counties of Ohio in December 1892. The following February, Brown observes that he lectured 42 days and traveled 2811 miles, lecturing at 23 different places and about 80 times.

On July 25, 1893, Brown writes that he and his wife went to the Chicago World's Fair. "We found the Exposition all and more than we expected," Brown said. "A wonderful exposition of the progress of the age. We roomed at McCormick Theological Sem[inary] and boarded with a private family and our expenses for the five days away from home were \$38.80. RR [railroad] fare \$14.00 Parlor car \$4.00 Room \$5.00 board 5.25 admission 3.00 street car & incidentals \$7.55. We were well pleased and felt it to be money well spent."

Toward the end of the diary, Brown records his work with putting 236 eggs in an incubator. "The outcome is that ten measley [sic] chickens hatched and 226 eggs went to the dogs or rather the hogs," Brown writes. "Such is life. We learn by experience."

The diary concludes with lists of sweet potato orders in 1894, weekly traveling expenses in the winter of 1894, miles traveled for lecturing in 1892 and 1893, and Institute lecture subjects.

Brown's fifth diary covers the period from June 12, 1905 to April 8, 1909. On June 15, 1905, Brown states that he attended Miami's commencement exercises that day, at which Secretary of War William Howard Taft delivered the address. "This was the star attraction of the day and many visitors were present from Hamilton and Cincinnati to hear this man eminent, and all but pre-eminent in the councils of the Nation," the June 1905 *Miami Student* reported. "Secretary Taft spoke discursively but with very pleasing effect on our duties as citizens of these great

United States, touching both foreign and domestic phases of this problem. It was just such a speech as could be expected from such a man. Nothing ornate or effusive but full of good hard sensible patriotism of the kind that makes for the larger growth and national uplift that distinguishes our country from others of a similar form of government," the article continued.

On September 9, 1905, Brown writes that he went to Columbus to the state fair on September 4 and stayed there until September 8. He also attended a reunion of the 167th Regiment of the Ohio Volunteer Infantry, the division in which Brown served during the Civil War.

Brown continues to report on events of the day. For example, he writes about the earthquake in San Francisco on April 16, 1906. "The shock lasted 3 minutes only but the devastation was complete and buildings fell like card houses and fire broke out on all parts of the city and the water mains were destroyed," Brown wrote. "The fire spread until the city is practically a ruin the loss is great but not estimated as yet but runs into thousands and if property into hundreds of millions."

On June 14, 1906, Brown writes that he went to Commencement and saw many of his old college friends, but he "gave out" and was not able to walk to the platform. "My sands of life are ebbing 'beyond the waking & the sleeping I shall be soon,'" Brown writes.

A different handwriting consistently appears in diary entries beginning January 1, 1907. Since Brown died in July 1907, the diarist is most likely one of his children. On June 22, 1907, the diarist provides helpful information about what the Brown crop contained that season:

"Planting south side of garden. Sunflowers, beans, sweet corn, beets, hoeing beets & sweet corn near berry patch. Put cow peas in square back of pasture. Jones beans are planted as follows. Golden crown first row N. end of row Black speck next row east end New Early Golden, W. end Black speck, next row East and Burpee's Golden Wax W. end Garden Pride Middle New Early Golden Pod. Covered all but two hills cucumbers at W. end with paper for a few days to shade and keep from drying out. Ground quite dry but in excellent condition."

Apparently, the seed business also continued after Brown's death; the diary entry for August 21, 1907 records that a check was received from D.M. Ferry & Co. for kale seed. Diary entries also reveal that the Brown family is still providing produce for local colleges. On October 31, 1907, the family sold 28 bushels of Gold Coin potatoes to Hepburn Hall, which was the women's dormitory at Miami University. The diary concludes with lists of financial accounts.

The sixth diary in the collection continues with details about annual planting and harvesting of crops. The second half of the diary provides information about wages paid to hired help, pasture records, and credits and expenses.

In addition to describing planting and harvesting crops, the collection's final diary mentions some news of the beginnings of World War I. On February 20, 1917, the diarist writes, "Germany getting unbearable. Looks very much like war with - U. S. Diplomatic relations severed. Waging a ruthless warfare on the seas since Feb. 1. War prices unprecedented."

The diary also includes groceries and other expenses recorded during the period, as well as expenses incurred with the family automobile. The diary also includes "pointers" on operating the automobile, such as "Watch brake – apt to leave it on" and "Don't try to take Western hill on high [gear]."

The diary concludes with an account of expenses incurred on home maintenance, such as painting the porch roof and wallpapering rooms, and experiences after purchasing a share in an incubator.

The collection continues with address books and an account book belonging to Brown family members.

The final series in the collection comprises ordnance papers of the 4th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, dating from 1863 through 1866. These papers include receipts of clothing issued to privates, camp equipment, receipts for purchases, lists of stores received, and even a paper for receiving an "unserviceable horse."

RELATED MATERIALS

Brown, Waldo F. *Experiments in Farming* (fourth edition). [Oxford, Ohio: W. Brown, 1905] (Spec Cov S523.B76 1903)

Brown, Waldo F. *Success in Farming: A Series of Practical Talks with Farmers* (second edition). Springfield, Ohio: R.S. Thompson, 1881. (Spec Cov S501.B88 1881)

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Access:	This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Walter Havighurst Special Collections, Miami University Libraries.
Preferred Citation:	Researchers are requested to cite the <i>Waldo F. Brown Collection, The Walter Havighurst Special Collections, Miami University Libraries</i> in all footnote and bibliographic references.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note both the box and folder numbers shown below.

Series I: Diaries

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	1	Diary of Waldo F. Brown	April 4, 1857-June 27, 1871
	2	Diary of Waldo F. Brown	July 1, 1883-June 30, 1886
	3	Diary of Waldo F. Brown	July 1, 1886-June 30, 1889
	4	Diary of Waldo F. Brown	April 22, 1892-May 31, 1894
	5	Diary of Waldo F. Brown	June 12, 1905-April 8, 1909
	6	Diary of Waldo F. Brown Family	April 12, 1909-June 29, 1911
	7	Diary of Waldo F. Brown Family	May 6, 1916-December 12, 1917

Series II: Address Books

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	8	Address Book of Florence C. Brown	Undated
	9	Address Book	Undated

Series III: Account Books

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	10	Account Book	1880-1925

Series IV: Ordnance Papers of the 4th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	11	<p>Envelope 1: Ordnance Papers of the 4th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returned supplies for the first day of April, 1864 • Ordnance to the 4th on May 21, 1864 • Ordnance lost during June 1864 • Monthly return, June 1864 • Monthly return, May 1864 • Ordnance lost during May 1864 • Receipt Roll of clothing issued to non-coms, musicians, and privates, May 1864 • List of clothing, camp and garrison equipment given to the 4th, May 20, 1864 	April 1864- May 1864
	12	<p>Envelope 2: Ordnance Papers of the 4th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordnance note • Ordnance note • Ordnance supplies condemned for use • Unserviceable equipment checked on May 12, 1864 • Property returns letter from ordnance office, June 14, 1864 • Receipt for bought goods, August 1864 • Invoice of ordnance transferred to the 4th, December 1, 1863 • Receipt for bought goods, September 1864 • Report of incoming and outgoing equipment • List of ordnance, etc. in possession of non-re-enlisted men, June 28, 1864 • Proceedings of a board of survey on the loss of arms, May 13, 1864 • Letter to Samuel Wells regarding pay, January 26, 1866 • Approving letter of ordnance supplies from ordnance office, January 22, 1864 • Proceeding of a board of survey on the loss of an arm pistol, May 13, 1864 • Paper for the receiving of an unserviceable horse, May 22, 	December 1863-January 1866

Box	Folder	Title	Date
		1864 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoice of stores, September 30, 1863 	
1	13	Envelope 3: Ordnance Papers of the 4 th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of stores lost, December 10. 1863 • Abstract of expenditures, first quarter, 1864 • 4th quarter, 1863, returns for ordnance • List of stores lost, December 3, 1863 • List of stores turned over to the 4th, December 1864 (written April 16, 1864) • 1st quarter 1864, ordnance record • List of stores received without invoice during first quarter, 1864 • Receipts for issues to Capt. C.B. Treton, February 8, 1864 • Copy of General Orders No. 15, April 23, 1865 (Farewell address of Brigadier General Eli Long) • Receipt for issues to Edwin F. Townsend, January 30, 1864 • Receipt for issues to Edwin F. Townsend, February 8, 1864 • Invoice of ordnance to Samuel Wells, December 1, 1863 • Invoice of stores, December 14, 1863 • List of stores lost on December 17, 1863 • Invoice of stores, December 17, 1863 	December 1863-April 1865
	14	Envelope 4: Ordnance Papers of the 4 th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return of clothing, camp and garrison equipment, January 1864 • Receipt, return of clothing, etc., January 24, 1864 • List of articles expended in the public service, January 1864 • Receipt, return of quartermaster stores, January 24, 1864 • Receipt, return of quartermaster stores issued to Samuel Wells, January 26, 1864 • List of clothing received to members of Co. "B," 4th O.V.C., January 1864 • List of stores received from Lt. Samuel Wells, January 31, 1864 • Abstract of articles expended, lost, destroyed in public service, January 1864 • Invoice return of clothing, camp and garrison equipment 	January 1864

Box	Folder	Title	Date
		received from Capt. J. Clarke, January 11, 1864	
1	15	Envelope 5: Ordnance Papers of the 4 th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of stores received from Lt. Wellshear, March 20, 1864 List of stores received from Lt. Wellshear, March 29, 1864 List of clothing, camp and garrison equipage received from Lt. William A. Wellshear, March 9, 1864 Monthly return, March 1864 Articles given to members of Co. "B," 4th O.V.C., March 1864 	March 1864
	16	Envelope 6: Ordnance Papers of the 4 th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of stores received from Lt. Wellshear, April 12, 1864 Monthly return of clothing, camp and garrison equipment, December 1863 Affidavit for worn out equipment Monthly return of clothing, camp and garrison equipment, December 1863 Rough draft of affidavit for worn out equipment Return of clothing, camp and garrison equipment, December 1863 List of quartermaster stores expended for December 1863 List of stores received from Lt. Wellshear, December 1863 List of expended equipment for December 1863 Abstract of articles received from officers, December 1863 	December 1863-April 1864
	17	Envelope 7: Ordnance Papers of the 4 th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplement to return of ordnance and ordnance stores, 2nd quarter, 1863 	1864
	18	Envelope 8: Ordnance Papers of the 4 th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly return, February 1864 Record of surplus and transferring of surplus, April 19. 1864 Invoice of stores turned over by Col. Robie, April 12, 1864 Invoice of stores turned over by Col. Robiel, April 6, 1864 List of clothing, camp and garrison equipage received from 	February-May 1864

Box	Folder	Title	Date
		<p>Lt. Wood, April 16, 1864</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of clothing, camp and garrison equipage received from Lt. Wellshear, April 1864 • Monthly return, April 1864 • Receipt roll of clothing issued to non-coms, musicians and privates, April 1864 • Statement of lost stores, April 13, 1864 • Abstract of articles lost for April 1864 • Receipt for issues to Lt. Muller, May 19, 1864 • Receipt for issues to Lt. Col. Robie, May 21, 1864 • Receipt for issues to Lt. Co. Robie, May 19, 1864 	
1	19	<p>Envelope 9: Ordnance Papers of the 4th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of clothing, camp and garrison equipage received from Lt. W.A. Wellshear, June 30, 1864 • List of clothing, camp and garrison equipage received from Lt. W.A. Wellshear, June 1864 • Statement of stores lost, June 31, 1864 • Statement of stores lost for 1st quarter, 1864 • Invoice of stores turned over by Lt. Col. Robie to Wells, June 30, 1864 • Statement of stores abandoned, June 1864 • Statement of stores found and taken, June 1864 • Receipt for issues to Lt. Col. Robie, June 8. 1864 • Statement of stores lost by Wells, 2nd quarter, 1864 • List of quartermaster's stores received from Lt. Miller, June 30, 1864 • List of quartermaster's stores received by Sam Wells, June 1864 • Receipt for issues to Lt. G. Cilley, July 1, 1864 • Statement of stores lost by Lt. Wells, 2nd quarter, 1864 • Receipt for issues to Lt. Cilley, July 1, 1863 	July 1863- June 1864
	20	<p>Envelope 10: Ordnance Papers of the 4th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affidavit of Lt. Samuel Wells concerning the loss of ordnance, 2nd quarter 1864 • Rough draft of affidavit of Lt. Samuel Wells concerning the loss of ordnance, 2nd quarter 1864 	1864-1865

Box	Folder	Title	Date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affidavit of Lt. Samuel Wells concerning the loss of ordnance, January 1865 • Affidavit of Lt. Samuel Wells concerning the loss of ordnance, January 1865 • Affidavit of Lt. Samuel Wells concerning the loss of ordnance, January 1865 • Statement of charges on muster and pay rolls, 2nd quarter, 1864 • Abstract of expenditures, 2nd quarter 1864 • Acknowledgment of received stores • Abstract of materials, 2nd quarter 1864 	