

Collection #
M 0452,
F 1698

JAMES ANDREW GUIRL DIARIES, 1861-1863

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Processed by

Kim Rivers
June 1986

Revised by Pamela Tranfield and Glenn McMullen
30 January 2003

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

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| VOLUME OF COLLECTION: | 1 manuscript box, 1 roll microfilm |
| COLLECTION DATES: | 1861-1863 |
| PROVENANCE: | Gift of H. Norman Taylor, 3208 St. Charles Ave., #6, New |

Orleans, Louisiana 70115, in the name of Mrs. Leanna
Bushman, Midland, Indiana, 4 June 1986

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1986.0408

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James Andrew Guirl was born in Mt. Union, Ohio, on 6 July 1841. He was the son of Isaac (1813–79) and Jane (Reddick) Guirl (1813–88). His siblings were: William McGowan (b. 1830), William H. (b. 1835), Charles Augusten (b. 1836), and Abner Judson Guirl.

Guirl moved to San Jacinto in Jennings County, Indiana, in 1859 and spent most of his life there until joining the Union Army on 4 July 1861. Originally enlisting with Captain Goody's company at Mt. Vernon, Indiana, he later transferred to Captain Dailey's 22nd Regiment of Indiana Volunteers because of illness. Evidently of weak constitution and possessing a game leg, Guirl seems to have spent most of his army career in the hospital, including the New Military Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri, during the fall of 1861.

He was discharged at some point during that fall and returned home to recuperate. He passed the next year reading, writing short stories, and visiting friends. Rejoining the army in July 1862, he reached Pittsburgh where he contracted cholera, and returned home once again. However, he was ordered back into the army in September of the same year and sent to Memphis, Tennessee. Here, while still suffering from ill health, he deserted the army by catching a train to Madison, Indiana, under the pretext of going into town to buy drawing paper.

Guirl began attempts to be excused from service in early September 1862. A diary entry from 30 August 1862 (folder 6) mentions receipt of a letter from General W. S. Rosencrans in which he is ordered to return to his post. Guirl notes in the entry that he “does not quite know what to do about it.” On 2 September Guirl mentions writing a letter to Rosencrans, but does not provide details of its contents. He was officially discharged from the army due to his disability on 8 August 1863. Information in the military records, as reflected in *Report of the Adjutant General to the State of Indiana* (Indianapolis: A. H. Connor [etc.] State Printer, 1865–69) refers to Guirl as *Guire*.

Besides reading and writing stories, Guirl chiefly passed his time painting and even had some war sketches published by *Harpers Weekly*. This was the extent of his professional artistic career. His autobiography (folder 10) describes an attempt made in September 1859 to gain employment as an artist in Cincinnati, but he managed only to be cheated out of a contract by James Golding, a house painter, and was forced to make a dangerous river journey home. After the war, he also made a trip to Butler County, Pennsylvania, to visit his Uncle T. J. Meyres and to work in the oil fields. He died a few years later on 20 December 1868, in Benville, Indiana.

- Sources:
- Material in the collection.
- 1860 Indiana Census, Every Name Listing. Reading Room Collection: rrF525.I54 1987
- Adjutant General's Office. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana*. Vol. IV, p. 501. Indianapolis: A. H. Connor [etc.] State Printer, 1865–69. General and Reference Collection: E506.2.I39 T4 1865
- Ancestry Plus (<http://www.gale.ancestry.com>). Indiana State Library Database. Accessed 21 November 2002
- Civil War Database and Genealogy Index. (www.civilwardata.com). Accessed 21 November 2002
- Taylor, Herman H. Letter. 4 June 1986. Indiana Historical Society, Accessions file. Accession no. 1986.0408

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Guirl's nine diaries comprise a more or less complete continuum from 1 January 1861 to 11 February 1863, with breaks from 28 September 1861 to 1 February 1862, and from 30 April to 31 May 1862. Part of the almanac in folder 9 was copied into the diary in folder 10. However, the last ten pages contain writings not recorded elsewhere (4 February to 30 April 1862). The almanac is dated 1860, but Guirl's entries were made for dates in 1861 and 1862. Beyond a daily record of most of 1861, the diary in folder 10 contains a short, introductory autobiography laying out his childhood, his permanent injury to his leg, and his unsuccessful attempt to gain employment in Cincinnati. It also holds several short stories. His writing before the war concentrates on his intellectual and artistic pursuits, never failing to mention the current book being read, story written, or picture painted. He also relates the progress of his friendship with the "Little Antiquary," William Manning of North Madison.

His army diaries continue in the same vein with the added attractions of camp life. His off-duty exploits make fun reading, and he often refers to major battles like Bull Run, mentioning their effect on morale. Never seeing action himself, he nonetheless traveled to Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Memphis with the army, and his work vividly portrays these sometimes harrowing journeys. It also brings out the tedium of camp life and the often unorganized nature of the army leadership. After his account of his desertion from the army in Memphis, Guirl moves on to talk about his trip to Pennsylvania and his work there.

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| Diary, 31 May–4 July [1862] | Box 1, Folder 4 |
| Diary, 5 July–1 Aug. [1862] | Box 1, Folder 5 |
| Diary, 2 Aug.–10 Sept. 1862 | Box 1, Folder 6 |
| Diary, 11 Nov 1862–11 Feb. 1863. Includes: short story, "The Englishman's Adventure." | Box 1, Folder 7 |
| Bills of Sale taken from Diary (folder 10), pages 300–301 | Box 1, Folder 8 |

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| Franklin Almanac Diary, 1860 (used in 1861–62) | Box 1, Folder 9 |
| Diary, 1 Jan. 1–14 Aug. 1861 (recopied into volume 1); 4 Feb.–30 April 1862 | Box 1, Folder 10 |
| Microfilm of collection | F 1698 |

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://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its call number using the letter or letters designation and four digits (in this case, M 0452).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.