

**Finding aid for the M.C. Church
(M. Clay Church) diaries
Collection 211**

Finding aid prepared by Brian Anderson

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
February 1998
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Summary Information

Repository	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department
Creator - Author	Church, M Clay, 1877-1966
Title	M.C. Church (M. Clay Church) diaries
Date [inclusive]	1898-1957
Extent	0.9 Linear feet Two boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>M. Clay Church (1877-1966) was a businessman from Grand Rapids, Michigan. He worked for his father's company, the Couple Gear Co., which produced the worlds first truck trailers and designed a truck with a motor for each wheel. Church lived in Massachusetts from the late 1920s through the early 1960s, operating the Church Motor Company. Later, he worked as an insurance executive. A majority of his diary entries relate to his business dealings: what happened at the factory, who he had meetings with, different ideas he was thinking through and records of business transactions. Other entries describe family events and evenings with friends, descriptions of sunrises and various written musings. Also included are lists of addresses, prices of purchasable goods and a stock certificate.</p>

Biographical/Historical note

M.C. (Melvin Clay) Church (March 1, 1877-October 1966) was the son of Melvin B. Church (1849-1924), an inventor and founder of the Couple Gear Co. in Grand Rapids, Michigan. M.C. also had a brother, Clifford (1880-1965), who was an inventory of toys.

M.C. Church began in his father's company in Grand Rapids, Couple Gear Co., which produced the worlds first truck trailers and designed a truck with a motor for each wheel. Near the end of 1927 M.C. left for the East Coast, settling in Massachusetts. There he opened up the Church Motor Company that produced parts for trucks. Amma, his wife, is mentioned throughout the diaries. Also mentioned are sisters, cousins and other relatives. While much of Church's life can be inferred from the diaries other facts remain undocumented.

Scope and Contents note

The collection contains two boxes of folders containing photocopies of Church's diaries or notebooks. The folders are organized chronologically from 1898 to 1957, with small and large gaps in the holdings. See box list for specific holdings documentation. Church, evidently, was not always a consistent writer, but also some diaries may have been lost over time. The Church family's inventions are of particular interest: Alabastine paint and plaster, truck trailers, toys, trucks with a separate motor for each wheel, wheelchairs and other vehicular inventions. The diary entries near the end deal more with Church's personal life: family, health and activities. Church includes notes to the reader, explaining his methods and purposes for writing a diary.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids History and Special Collections Department February 1998

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Kathy VanderWeid, 1996, accession number 1996.006

Controlled Access Headings

Genre(s)

- diaries

Geographic Name(s)

- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History

Personal Name(s)

- Church, M Clay, 1877-1966

Biographical Files

Collection Inventory

Biographical Files		
	Box	Folder
Reference copies	1	0.5
Diaries 1898-1957		
	Box	Folder
Oct. 10, 1898-June 30, 1899	1	1
July 1-August 30, 1899	1	2
Sept. 1-Dec. 31, 1899	1	3
Jan. 1-Feb. 12, 1900	1	4
Mar. 15-July 26, 1900	1	5
July 26-Dec. 1, 1900	1	6
Dec. 1, 1900-April 12, 1901	1	7
June 25-Sept. 30, 1901	1	8

Diaries

Oct. 30-Dec. 21, 1901	1	9
Nov. 21, 1902-Feb. 20, 1903	1	10
April 6, 1905 - History of the previous 16 months.	1	11
April 2-Oct. 22, 1905	1	12
Nov. 10, 1905-Jan. 11, 1906	1	13
Dec. 25, 1908-Jan. 3, 1909	1	14
Jan. 11-Dec. 9, 1911	1	15
Jan. 8-Dec. 31, 1912	1	16
Feb. 5-April 30, 1918	1	17
May 1-June 30, 1918	1	18
April 20-July 15, 1920	1	19
July 16-Aug. 29, 1920	1	20
Oct. 2-22, 1920	1	21
Oct. 22-Dec. 2, 1920	1	22

Diaries

Dec. 2, 1920-March 31, 1921	2	1
April 14-Aug. 28, 1921	2	2
Aug. 24, 1926-July 3, 1927	2	3
Aug. 1935 - Address Book.	2	4
July 26, 1937-June 28, 1942	2	5
Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 1939	2	6
Aug. 2-17, 1947	2	7
Sept. 1948-May 1949	2	8
Dec. 1949 - Address Book.	2	9
March 31-Dec. 27, 1950	2	10
Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 1951	2	11
Jan. 1-Dec. 24, 1953	2	12
Jan. 5-Dec. 30, 1954	2	13
Jan. 5-Dec. 24, 1955	2	14

Ephemera

Jan. 1-Dec. 25, 1956	2	15
Feb. 11-Oct. 27, 1957	2	16
Ephemera		
	Box	Folder
Stock Certificate (photocopy), Holson Motor Patents Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. March 5, 1904. Issued to Margaret Fern Church by M. Clay Church, Secretary. M.B. Church, Chairman.	2	17