

Finding aid for the Schenck family papers Collection 387

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Grand Rapids History and Special Collections

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URL: <https://www.grpl.org/research/history/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids History and Special Collections
Title:	Schenck family papers
ID:	Collection 387
ID [Archivists Toolkit Database::RESOURCE]:	394
Date [inclusive]:	1828-1945
Date [bulk]:	1875-1892
Physical Description:	2 Linear Feet Four boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The Schenck family were early settlers and pioneers in Ada Township, Michigan. Jacob Schenck purchased land in Ada Township in 1845, with his father John and brother William following in the next few years. Jacob was a farmer and John and William were primarily carpenters, although they also farmed. The collection includes diaries and account books kept by Jacob Schenck and his son Fred, and by John Schenck. Also included are docketts from Yates County, New York and from Ada Township. The docketts were kept by the Justice of the Peace and include trial proceedings and marriage records.

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Jacob Schenck

Jacob Schenck (May 17, 1819- January 14, 1895) was an early settler and a farmer in Ada Township. He was born in Potter, Yates County, New York to John and Maria Schenck. In 1845, Jacob Schenck purchased 200 acres in Ada Township. According to plat maps, about 200 acres in Section 22 of Ada Township were owned by the Schenck family through the 1920s. The family property was located near Conservation and Dogwood, north of Ada.

Jacob married Sarah Falston in 1842. They had one son, William, who died at age 18. Sarah died in 1854. In 1855, Jacob married Catherine Brown and they had three children: John Martin, Libbie and Fred E.

J. Martin moved to Cascade Township and owned the New York Dairy farm. Fred stayed in Ada Township and was involved with the Old Settler's Association of Ada. Their yearly summer picnics were held on his property in the Village of Ada, called Schenck's Grove.

Sherman Coryell donated the material in the collection. His wife, Blanche McNaughton Coryell, was Libbie's daughter.

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John J. and Maria Schenck

John (October 28, 1791-February 9, 1861) and Maria (March 9, 1799-1888) followed Jacob to Ada. The 1850 census shows them living in Yates County, New York. In 1854 they purchased property in Ada Township. William was a carpenter and practiced his trade in New York and Michigan.

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William Schenck

Jacob's brother, William Schenck (February 29, 1829-July 1902), also moved to Ada Township from New York. William worked on the farm with his parents until he was 17, then entered into an apprenticeship in carpentry. He came to Ada Township in the 1850s and bought a 40 acre farm in Section 36.

William married Sarah Densmore in 1849. Their daughter, Emma, was born in 1850. Sarah died in 1857 and Emma in 1870. William and his second wife, Sarah R. Price, had three children. Charles D.L. was born in 1858, Elmer E. in 1860 and Carrie in 1863. Carrie married William Crowe (the son of George Crowe, another Ada Township pioneer).

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Scope and Contents

The diaries and account books show the daily life of the Schenck family. Entries are brief and usually relate the weather and activities for the day, such as which fields were plowed, social events and trips to Lowell and "the Rapids" (Grand Rapids). The Schenck family was part of a relatively small group of early Ada pioneers and the diaries and account books mention other families from the Ada area. Of particular note are entries from January 12 and 13, 1875 noting Rix Robinson's death and funeral. Receipts and scraps of paper were also kept in the diaries/ account books, these include receipts from businesses in the surrounding area.

Also included are two dockets, noting the activities of the local Justice of the Peace. The docket kept by John J. Schenck is from Yates County, New York in the 1840s. A docket from Rodolphus Chaffee covers Ada Township in the 1850s. It is unknown how the Chaffee docket came to be with the Schenck family papers. The dockets include the proceedings of local cases and also marriage records.

The miscellaneous records are of varied scope and date. They mostly consist of newspaper clippings, but also include other papers relating to various members of the family.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Sherman Coryell, transferred from the Grand Rapids Public Museum. Accession number 1980.036.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Pioneers -- Michigan -- Kent County
- Frontier and pioneer life -- Michigan -- Kent County
- Ada (Mich.) -- History
- family papers
- diaries
- Schenck (Ada, Mich.)

Collection Inventory

Series I: Diary and Account Books, 1828-1892

Title/Description	Instances	
Account Book, John Schenck, circa 1828-1853	Box 3	Folder 4
Loose papers, account book, circa 1828-1853	Box 3	Folder 3
Account Book, John Schenck, Jacob Schenck. Includes marriage records for Yates County, New York, 1841-1848, circa 1843-1875	Box 4	Folder 1
John J. Schenck 's Docket (Yates County, New York), includes accounting records., 1841-1844	Box 3	Folder 6
John J. Schenck's Docket (Yates County, New York). Includes accounting records, 1857-1860, 1844-1848	Box 3	Folder 5
Rodolphus Chaffee's Docket, Ada, circa 1850-1859	Box 4	Folder 2
Diary and Cash Account (J.S. Schenck and F.E. Schenck), 1875	Box 1	Folder 1
Loose Papers, Diary and Cash Account, 1875	Box 1	Folder 2
Diary and Cash Account, 1876-1877	Box 1	Folder 3
Loose Papers, Diary and Cash Account, 1876-1877	Box 1	Folder 4
Diary and Cash Account, 1877-1878	Box 1	Folder 5
Loose Papers, Diary and Cash Account, 1877-1878	Box 1	Folder 6
Diary and Cash Account, 1878	Box 1	Folder 7
Loose Papers, Diary and Cash Account, 1878	Box 1	Folder 8
Diary and Cash Account, 1879	Box 1	Folder 9
Loose Papers, Diary and Cash Account, 1879	Box 1	Folder 10

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Diary and Cash Account, 1880-1881	Box 1	Folder 11
Loose Papers, Diary and Cash Account, 1880-1881	Box 1	Folder 12
Diary and Cash Account, 1882	Box 2	Folder 1
Diary and Cash Account, 1883	Box 2	Folder 2
Diary and Cash Account, 1884	Box 2	Folder 3
Loose Papers, Diary and Cash Account, 1884	Box 2	Folder 4
Diary and Cash Account, 1889-1890	Box 2	Folder 5
Loose Papers, Diary and Cash Account, 1889-1890	Box 2	Folder 6
Diary and Cash Account, 1891-1892	Box 2	Folder 7
Loose Papers, Diary and Cash Account, 1891-1892	Box 2	Folder 8
Diary, 1893	Box 2	Folder 9
Diary, no date	Box 2	Folder 10
Account book, J.S. Schenck, no date	Box 2	Folder 11
Loose papers	Box 3	Folder 1

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Series II: Miscellaneous, 1855-1945

Title/Description	Instances	
Kent County Clerks office, property description errors, Cascade Township, 1906	Box 3	Folder 2
Michigan Farmer, 1855	Box 4	Folder 3
Michigan Farmer, September 9, 1905	Box 4	Folder 4
Photograph book, n.d. (Carrie's Album)	Box 4	Folder 5
High School Daily Program, Sherman Coryell, Chicago, n.d.	Box 4	Folder 6
Letter, "Dear Dad," (on American Expeditionary Force stationery), November 24, 1918	Box 4	Folder 7
Scrapbook, n.d. (medical newspaper clippings)	Box 4	Folder 8
Newspaper clippings (Detroit News, Detroit Free Press, Chicago Tribune), 1934-1945	Box 4	Folder 9
Ephemera, miscellaneous	Box 4	Folder 10
Michigan Township Officers' Guide [Book], 1906	Box 4	Folder 11

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