

Solomon Wilson Gleason diary and other materials

Descriptive Summary

Repository:	Georgia Historical Society
Creator:	Gleason, Solomon Wilson, 1821-1876.
Title:	Solomon Wilson Gleason diary and other materials
Dates:	1838-1876
Extent:	0.08 cubic feet (4 folders)
Identification:	MS 1577

Biographical/Historical Note

Solomon Wilson Gleason (1821-1876) was a prominent machinist of Savannah. Born in Coleraine, Massachusetts, Gleason married Miss Susan Kellogg of Montague, Massachusetts. The two had three children while living in Massachusetts: a son, Solomon B. (b. 1849), a daughter, Susan (b. October 13, 1852), and another son, Marion (b. February 25, 1858), and may have had more children later in life. Sometime prior to the Civil War, the Gleason family moved to Savannah, Georgia. The family originally resided at a home on Gaston Street. By 1871, however, they had moved to 155 Liberty Street, where Mr. and Mrs. Gleason resided until their deaths.

Following the Civil War, Solomon Gleason worked as a machinist for Linville & Gleason, Iron and Brass Founders and Machinists. This iron works, located on Liberty Street, was a precursor to Gleason's own foundry. By 1871, S.W. Gleason & Company operated the Savannah Machine Works at 195 Liberty Street. S.W. Gleason & Company were also agents for Wood & Mann Steam Engines. In January 1872, Captain James Manning became an investing partner in Gleason's foundry.

Gleason was a member of numerous social organizations. In 1869, he served as one of the managers of the Savannah Port Society. He served on the Board of Directors for both the Industrial and Mechanical Association and the Savannah Library Association in 1871. Gleason's greatest interest though was music. He served as Music Director of the Independent Presbyterian Church for numerous years and was praised for his work often. Additionally, Gleason founded a Choral Association in the 1870s.

Gleason's eldest son, Solomon died of typhoid fever on October 26, 1869 in Savannah, Georgia at the age of 20. He was originally buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah, but his remains were moved to Bonaventure Cemetery, also in Savannah, Georgia on June 8, 1870. Mrs. Gleason died on December 17, 1875 of chronic diarrhea and was buried next to her son in Bonaventure. In the late summer and early fall of 1876, a yellow fever epidemic hit Savannah. Solomon W. Gleason died of yellow fever at the age of 55 on October 3, 1876 and was buried next to his wife and son. His remaining children survived the yellow fever epidemic because they were out of town when the disease hit.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of the 40 page diary of Solomon W. Gleason, which he kept from July 9, 1870 to September 28, 1876 (five days before his death). The diary was kept almost daily, and the entries are usually brief. They often include a daily weather report, a list of whom Gleason visited or who visited him, and any other news of interest on that day. The diary provides a great glimpse of life in Savannah, Georgia during the first half of the 1870s. Gleason mentions events such as a run on the banks in September 1873 and the establishment of the Confederate Monument in May of 1875. In the last two months of the diary, Gleason details the yellow fever epidemic that hit Savannah and its effects on society.

Also included in the collection were three items found enclosed in the diary. These items include a January 16, 1865 letter from the Provost Marshall of Savannah allowing Gleason to take his wife and child to New York and return alone, an autograph album belonging to Susan Kellogg Gleason (1840-1843), and an 1838 book of poems and songs by Solomon Gleason.

Index Terms

Autograph albums.
Commonplace books.
Diaries.
Epidemics--Georgia--Savannah.
Gleason, Marion, b. 1858.
Gleason, Solomon B., 1849-1869.
Gleason, Solomon Wilson, 1821-1876.
Gleason, Susan Kellogg, d. 1875.
Gleason, Susan, b. 1852.
Machinists--Georgia--Savannah.
Poems.
S.W. Gleason & Company (Savannah, Ga.)
Savannah (Ga.)--Social life and customs--19th century.
Savannah Machine Works (Savannah, Ga.)
Songs (document genre)
Yellow fever--Georgia--Savannah.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Unknown.

Preferred Citation

[item identification], Solomon Wilson Gleason diary and other materials, MS 1577, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Acquisition Information

Unknown.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

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Sponsorship

Encoding funded by a 2012 Documenting Democracy grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Container List

Fldr

1 Letter, 1865

Fldr

2 Commonplace book, 1838

Fldr

3 Autograph album, 1840-1843

Fldr

4 Diary, 1870-1876