

E.C. Smith, Student, Diary Regarding Experiences While at West Virginia University, 1874 A&M 5125

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Scope and Contents

Diary by E.C. Smith, a student at West Virginia University (WVU), regarding his experiences in 1874. Activities documented include academic (preparing papers, Greek and Latin studies, reading Charles Darwin, etc.), literary society (elections, debates, recitations), military cadet (drills, lectures, marching), and Methodist Episcopal Church events (including sermons and other activities). He also attended a commencement (June 18). Recreational and social activities are also recorded, including baseball, boating, swimming, croquet, and amateur musical performances; and picnics, dances, visiting friends from the Morgantown Female Seminary, and eating at restaurants. Names of professors and fellow students are recorded. Alexander Martin, the first President of West Virginia University, is reported to have delivered two sermons, and a lecture on astronomy. There are references to carriage, railroad, and steamboat travel, and to the towns and cities of Morgantown, Fairmont, Grafton, Parkersburg, Ravenswood, Point Pleasant, Spencer, and Harper's Ferry. Includes transcript of 108 pages.

Recreational activities include baseball, boating on the Monongahela (June 3 and 6), skating (December 19 and other dates), swimming, and croquet (June 22-24, and October 13). Baseball games recorded include May 16 (Preps vs. Sophmores), May 22, August 22; October 3 (College Nine vs. Highlanders), and October 12 (Cadet Baseball Club vs. Charleston Nine). Amateur musical performances are also recorded (including July 22, September 26, October 7, and a brass band on December 31).

Social activities include picnics (June 25 and other dates), dancing (October 12 and other dates), visiting friends from the Morgantown Female Seminary, and eating at the 'ice cream saloon,' Stym's Oyster Saloon, and Leizher's Saloon (June 17), among other locations.

Names of fellow students and their activities are recorded; names of professors are also recorded. Smith reports seeing Alexander Martin, the first President of WVU (April 3, 1867 - August 12, 1875), speak publicly three times, including a sermon at the Methodist Episcopal Church on February 1, a baccalaureate sermon in the University Chapel on June 14, and a lecture on astronomy regarding the transit of Venus on November 20. Governor John Jeremiah Jacob is reported delivering an address to the cadets of WVU at a luncheon in Charleston on October 13.

There are references to carriage travel ('hack' or hackney vehicles on June 18 and 19 and other dates), train travel (June 18 and 19 and other dates), and steamboat travel, including mention of the packet ships Katydid, Rankin, Clara Scott (October 14), and Tom Hackney (October 14). ('Way's Packet Directory' references the Katydid, Clara Scott, and Tom Hackney.)

Towns and cities mentioned include Morgantown, Fairmont, Grafton, Parkersburg, Ravenswood, Point Pleasant, Charleston, Spencer, and Harper's Ferry. Aspects of these localities are sometimes described.

Of special interest is the participation of WVU cadets at the centennial ceremonies commemorating the Battle of Point Pleasant (or Battle of Kanawha), fought during Dunmore's War on October 10, 1774 (see diary entry for October 10, 1874).

Keywords

Morgantown (W. Va.)

Ohio River and Valley.

Point Pleasant (Mason County, W. Va.)

Horse-drawn vehicles -- West Virginia

Literature -- Societies, etc

Point Pleasant, Battle of, W. Va., 1774.

Railroads -- West Virginia

Steamboats

West Virginia University -- Students

West Virginia University - Student organizations.

West Virginia University

Jacob, John Jeremiah.

Martin, Alexander.