

The Filson Historical Society

**Hardy, Lucy Davis, 1840-1924
Diaries, 1858, 1861-1865, 1903**

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Size of Collection:
0.33 cu. ft. (7 volumes)

Location Number:
Mss. A H269b

Hardy, Lucy Davis, 1840-1924
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Scope and Content Note

This collection documents the personal and social life of Lucy Davis Hardy through her diaries. Lucy's diary entries contain her day-to-day activities such as reading, visiting extended family and friends, writing letters, sewing, her health and the health of family members, attending church, and the weather. This collection is a good example of the daily life of a well-to-do woman in Civil War era Louisville, KY.

Volume I was written in 1858 when Lucy was 17 years old. The first half of the book contains her notes from Louisville Female Seminary School. Major topics of the diary include her mother buying a sewing machine, often referred to as "the machine", which was a new addition to homes in the 1850s. Lucy describes the difficulty in learning how to use "the machine" as well as her sewing projects. Lucy documents her love of reading in this diary as both for her enjoyment and education since she has aged out of school.

Volume II was written in 1861. Major topics include Lucy's courtship with James Edward Hardy, consisting of attending church together and J. Edward paying home visits to the Davis family. Lucy accepts J. Edward's marriage proposal in early March and their wedding was held on June 18th. During this time, Lucy's father, Benjamin O. Davis, died unexpectedly on March 15th.

Volume III was written in 1862. Major topics include the birth of her first child, Charlotte (Lottie) Howard Hardy Robinson. Her entries are sparse after Lottie's birth because Lucy took a long time to fully recover from labor. Lucy documents her concern of the encroaching Confederate Army taking Lexington and Frankfort, KY.

Volume IV was written in 1863. Major topics include Lucy's brother Edward Hardy joining the Union Army. Edward served as aide-de-camp to Brigadier-General R. W. Johnson. Lucy also includes a travel journal in the back of this diary, documenting her vacation in Boston with her sister, Kate, and in New York City with her husband.

Volume V was written in 1864. Major topics include the birth of her second child, Lucy Gilmer Hardy Hobbs. As with Lottie, Lucy's entries become sparse due to her long recovery time from labor. Also mentioned are Martin and Tamar, former enslaved people owned by Lucy's mother, moving to Indianapolis.

Volume VI was written in 1865. Major topics include Lucy's family celebrating the fall of the Confederate capital Richmond, Virginia and Edward returning from the Union Army. Lucy and J. Edward also move into a new home.

Volume VII was written in 1903. Unlike the previous diaries, this volume is a travel journal that details Lucy's trip to California and Salt Lake at age 62. Lucy describes cross-country train travel in the early 20th century as well as her activities in Santa Maria, Pasadena, Fort Douglas, and San Francisco.

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Biographical Note

Lucy Gilmer Davis (1840-1924), a Louisville native, was the daughter of Benjamin O. Davis (1806-1861) and Susan Fry Davis (1817-1888). Lucy's mother, Susan Fry Davis, was the daughter of Judge John Speed (1772-1840) and Lucy Gilmer Speed (1788-1874). Susan Fry Davis was given ownership five enslaved people from her father's estate in 1841. These people were Becky (23) and her three children Tamar (7), Martin (5), and Hannah (3), as well as Fanny (13). Lucy had three brothers; John Speed Davis (ca. 1842-1874), Joshua Fry Speed Davis (1847-1851), and Edward Davis (1845-1918), and four sisters; Eliza J. Davis (1839-1874), Katherine Hewitt (married 1868), Mary Davis (1849-1872), and Jane Lewis Morton (1854-1934).

Lucy married James Edward Hardy (1834-1922) on 18 June 1861. J. Edward Hardy was an only child and his maternal grandfather, John Howard, owned a farm next to Judge John Speed's land in Jefferson County. The couple had a total of ten children together. Of those ten, three died in infancy, Edward Hardy (12 April 1866-3 July 1866), Outram Hardy (29 July 1868-11 July 1869), and Jessie Adams Hardy (29 September 1876-15 May 1877). Their other children were Charlotte (Lottie) Howard Hardy Robinson (1862-1935), Lucy Gilmer Hardy Hobbs (1864-1940), William Beynroth Hardy (1870-1930), Katherine Wendell Hardy (1872-1954), Eliza Davis Lewis (1873-1966), Lewis Rogers Hardy (1875-1955), and Reverend Francis Whittle Hardy (1878-1935).

Sources:

Thomas Speed, *Records and Memorials of The Speed Family*, pp. 125-128
Ancestry.com, Birth, Marriage, and Death Records

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Folder List

Box 1

Volume 1: Diary, 1858
Volume 2: Diary, 1861
Volume 3: Diary, 1862
Volume 4: Diary, 1863
Volume 5: Diary, 1864
Volume 6: Diary, 1865
Volume 7: Diary, 1903

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Subject Headings

African Americans – History.
Betrothal – United States.
Books and reading.
Boston – Description and travel.
California – Description and travel.
Childbirth – Kentucky – Louisville.
Christianity.
Courtship.
Dating (Social customs).
Freedmen.
Health – Kentucky.
Kentucky – History – Civil War, 1861-1865.
Marriage – Kentucky – Louisville.
Motherhood – United States.
Mourning customs – Kentucky.
Moving, Household – Kentucky.
New York – Description and travel.
Photography – Kentucky – Louisville.
Race Relations – United States.
Racism – United States.
Sewing.
Speed family.
Travel – 19th century.
Travel – 20th century.
Unionists (United States Civil War).
Weather – Kentucky – Louisville.
Women – Education – Kentucky.
Women – Social life and customs.