

Inventory of the

**Johnson Family**  
Stephenson County, Illinois

Diaries

In the

Regional History Center

**RC 305**

## INTRODUCTION

Siblings Jean Graves, Dennis Johnson, and Elwood Johnson Jr. donated the Johnson Family Diaries to the Regional History Center on October 20, 2010.

Property rights in the collection belong to the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: .5  
Number of containers: 2  
Northern Illinois Regional History Center  
Collection 305

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Johnson Family Diaries consist of five diaries and one typed transcript of the first four diaries. The 1843 diary of William Wright recounts the journey from Union County, Pennsylvania to Freeport, Stephenson County, Illinois. The 1882-1909 Margaret Heise Wright Johnson diaries chronicle the life of then 16 year-old Margaret as she comes of age in Illinois at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A photograph of Margaret (undated) was found behind the cover of the first diary volume along with tracing paper drawings that are tucked into volumes 1 and 3. The Charles E. and Alma R. Johnson diary from 1920 until 1955 documents aspects of family life on the Johnson's Fostoria, Iowa farm. The typed transcription is for both William Wright and Margaret Heise Wright Johnson's diaries and also includes Johnson family genealogical information.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Wright family was a founding and influential family in Pennsylvania since John Wright came from England sometime after the year 1667. The Wright family founded the town of Columbia, Pennsylvania where the majority of the Wright's lived until William and John (Margaret's father) along with their parents migrated west to Freeport, Stephenson County, Illinois in 1843. John Wright married his first cousin, Mary Bethel Heise, in 1862 and their only child, Margaret Heise Wright, was born in 1867. Margaret taught school for the five years prior to marrying a Swedish immigrant named Charles E. Johnson in 1898. Her diary begins New Year's Day 1882 during her recovery from Scarlet Fever and continues to chronicle her life until 1909. The diary contains several passages about Margaret's experiences visiting the World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago, Illinois in 1893, the meeting and courtship of her future husband, Charles E. Johnson, and the birth announcements of the couples 4 children, Karl, Elwood, Bethel, and Alice. The couple lived in Freeport and Cedarville before purchasing a farm and moving to Fostoria, Iowa where she lived until her death in 1917.

SUBJECT TRACINGS

Diaries, 1840-1869  
 Diaries, 1870-1909  
 Diaries, 1910-1960  
 Johnson Family, Stephenson County  
 Stephenson County  
 Wagon Train

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
		Diaries:
1	1	William Wright Wagon Train, May 25 - June 11, 1842
	2	Margaret Heise Wright Johnson, Volume 1, January 1, 1882 - November 18, 1886
	3	Margaret Heise Wright Johnson, Volume 2, August 6, 1887 - June 3, 1890
	4	Margaret Heise Wright Johnson, Volume 3, June 4, 1890 - May 30, 1909
2	1	Charles E. And Alma R. Johnson, January 3, 1920 - May 11, 1955
	2	A Portion of the Johnson Family History (2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition), June 1990 (transcription of William Wright and Margaret Heise Wright Johnson's Diaries and Johnson family genealogy)