

Charles Morgan Collection

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Collection Information

Volume of Collection:	3 boxes
Collection Dates:	1896-1952
Restrictions:	Some items brittle
Reproduction Rights:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History.
Other Finding Aids:	None
Location:	Archives
Notes:	See also—Oversize objects collection (

Brief History

Charles Morgan, a carpenter by trade, started his diaries in 1896. In his earliest days he was an itinerant farm worker and wanderer. He describes this as "Life Among the Out-of-door People." In 1889 he moved to Bloomington and taught himself his trade. In 1917 he became a coachbuilder for the Chicago and Alton R.R. After working there for a few years he again became an independent tradesman until the depression. Through those times and after, he seldom had work. During those times his diaries become more reflective and observant of the nature of the times and present a chronicle of a dispossessed man.

At the outbreak of W.W.II he records the headlines of the daily newspapers and speculates on the war. After the war he again becomes reflective and continues his diaries until failing eyesight forced him to stop on New Year's Day in 1948.

Many of his diaries are illustrated in the manner of an almanac, choosing a seasonal theme for a specific date. He died in Bloomington on March 9, 1952.

Scope Note

This collection contains 85 items, including diaries, poetry, drawings, and fiction. The collection of diaries was deposited by Charles Morgan in 1950.

Box 1 18 items

Books 1 and 2, January 1, 1896-January 14, 1898

Weather details, hired man on farm, freight hopping to Kansas City, "Life among the Out-of-Door Populace" (transcribed by author 1944)

Book 3, October 8, 1899-June 8, 1901

Working as coach carpenter at the Chicago & Alton Railroad shops, weather details, cycling, Bloomington Fire, Knights of Pythias, Trip to Vandalia area, social life

Book 4, June 9, 1901-November 3, 1902

Working as house carpenter, weather detail, social life, cycling, music, plays, date illustrations, religion, looking for work, trip to Vandalia, trip to California, new girl friend

Book 5, November 4, 1920-October 17, 1905

Working as a house carpenter, weather detail, social life, date illustrations. Playing music for dances, religion

Book 6, October 18, 1905-December 26, 1907

Working as a carpenter, marriage, weather detail, social life, religion, landscaping home, gardening, date illustration, birth of child

Book 7, December 27, 1907-January 5, 1910

Working as a carpenter, birth of second child, weather detail, date illustration, gardening and local events

Book 8, January 6, 1910-November 10, 1912

Working as a carpenter, weather detail, local events, move to country and remodeling, farming (Transcription by Author)

Book 9, November 11, 1912-February 24, 1914

Barn building, gardening, farming, working as a carpenter, moved back to Bloomington (transcription by author)

Book 10, February 25, 1914-December 11, 1915

Working as carpenter, weather detail, date illustration, movies, religion, jury duty

Book 11, December 12, 1919-July 9, 1917

Working as carpenter, weather detail, social life, movies, gardening, working at C.U. Williams garage, inflation, war

Book 12, July 10, 1917-December 31, 1918

Working as carpenter, weather detail, war, gardening, working at C & A RR shops, movies coal shortage, union activity, Spanish influenza, date illustration

Book 13, January 1, 1919-May 10, 1920

Working at "My Store", weather detail, gardening carpentry around the house, poetry, date illustration, religion, coal shortage, inflation, unions

Book 14, May 11, 1920–February 7, 1921

Working at “My Store”, weather detail, gardening, date illustrations, poetry, religion

Book 15, February 8, 1921–December 17, 1921

Working at “My Store”, weather detail, religion, date illustrations

Book 16, December 18, 1921–September 26, 1922

Working as carpenter, weather detail, movies, religion, date illustration, poetry, unions.

Book 17, September 27, 1922–March 20, 1924

Working as carpenter, weather detail, death of father, working on short story, gardening, movies, poetry, date illustration.

Book 18, March 21, 1924–August 8, 1925

Working as carpenter, weather detail, working on story, religion, gardening, current events.

Book 19, August 9, 1925–November 18, 1926

Working as carpenter, weather detail, working on story, religion, gardening, current events.

BOX 2 16 items

Book 20, November 19, 1926–April 14, 1928

Working as carpenter, date illustrations, weather detail, building new house.

Book 21, April 15, 1928–November 30, 1929

Working as carpenter, date illustration, local events, national events, working on new home, weather detail

Book 22, December 1, 1929–July 3, 1931

Working as carpenter, local and national events, working on home, weather detail

Book 23, July 4, 1931–December 31, 1932

Depression, some work, social life, gardening, local and national events, writing Christmas story, evicted from house, weather detail

Book 24 January 1, 1933–August 11, 1934

Depression, some work, drought, garden, charity, wife’s illness, local and national events, weather detail

Book 25, August 12, 1934–April 8, 1936

Depression, severe cold, local and national events, weather, social life

Book 26, April 9, 1936–March 1, 1938

Depression, local and national events, weather detail, social life, writing

Book 27, March 4, 1938–August 31, 1939

Depression, local and national events, weather detail, new buildings, writing, sketching, social life

Book 28, September 1, 1939–March 14, 1941

Date illustrations, sketching, writing, working some as a carpenter, broadcasting, conscription, weather detail, local and national events, buildings

Book 29, March 15, 1941–May 17, 1941

War, social life, buildings, local and national events, broadcasting, rationing, weather detail

Book 30, May 18, 1942–December 3, 1942

War news, social life, weather detail, some work as carpenter

Book 31, December 4, 1942–May 19, 1943

War news, social life, weather detail, local and national events

Book 32, May 20, 1943–September 7, 1943

War news, social life, weather detail, local and national events

Book 33, September 8, 1943–January 13, 1944

War news, social life, weather detail, local and national events

Book 34, January 14, 1944–May 7, 1944

War news, social life, weather detail, local and national events

Book 35, May 8, 1944–August 20, 1944

War news, social life, weather detail, local and national events.

BOX 3; Diaries, Poetry, Fiction

Book 36, August 21, 1944–November 17, 1944

War news, social life, weather detail, local and national events, rationing

Book 37, November 18, 1944–February 7, 1945

War news, social life, weather detail, local and national events, rationing

Book 38, February 7, 1945–May 3, 1945

War news, social life, weather detail, local and national events, rationing

Book 39, May 4, 1945–August 14, 1945

War news, social life, weather detail, national and local events

Book 40, August 14, 1945–November 16, 1945

War news, social life, weather detail, national and local events, date illustrations

Book 41, November 16, 1945–May 2, 1946

Headlines, social life, price controls, local events, weather detail, date illustration

Book 42, May 3, 1946–January 1, 1948

Headlines, social life, living condition, death of wife, failing eyesight, local events, weather detail, date illustrations

Poetry

78 pages of poetry illustrated by author; 1933–1940

Folder 1: Morgan, Charles Correspondence

10 items; correspondence regarding work, letters from Congressman Arends, and to the L.E. Waterman Company

Folder 2: Morgan, Charles, Miscellaneous

10 items; newspaper cartoons, short stories, song lyrics, correspondence from the Social Security Agency, and obituary

Folder 3: And a Child Shall Lead Them

117 pgs. MS, Fiction

Folder 4: Mountaineer

135 pgs MS, Fiction

Folder 5: The Trail to Cloudy Lake

144 pgs MS, Fiction

Folder 6: The River Rat

24 pgs. short story, fiction

Folder 7: Once I was Kidnapped

19 pgs. short story, fiction

Folder 8: The Story of the Yukon

8 pgs. short story, fiction

Folder 9: Poems from Nature and Home Ties

9 pgs. brief biography of Charles Morgan

Folder 10: A Hoosier Christmas Celebration

18 pgs. short story

Oversize

39 items, drawings of tombstones, parks, and houses (located with the objects curator)