

Martha Farnsworth diary

Section 10, Pages 271 - 280

Martha Farnsworth kept a personal diary from 1882 through 1922 with only a few gaps. The diary describes her daily activities, her first unhappy marriage to Johnny Shaw, her second happy marriage, and her involvement in social and community affairs, primarily in Topeka. Both of Martha's husbands worked for the Post Office. Martha and Fred, (sometimes called Teddy) taught a class of boys at the First Christian Church in Topeka. They continued to teach the same class as the boys grew up and these young men and the girlfriends became a surrogate family. This particular volume covers the years 1917 and 1918 during which a number of the boys in the Sunday School class served in the Army. They frequently gathered at the Farnsworth house and the class took an annual camping trip. There are emotional statements about the "enemy" as well as constant concern about "her boys." Martha did not show her diary to anyone during her lifetime so many of the entries are personal and show her emotions. She, at times, is judgmental of others. Martha was an avid amateur photographer and this diary included references to taking and printing pictures. She also makes reference to traveling by car, meaning a street car. She generally makes a distinction if she is traveling by automobile. A searchable transcription is available under Text Version below. Thanks to volunteer Erica Hare for preparing the transcription.

Creator: Farnsworth, Martha 1867-1924

Date: 1917-1918

Callnumber: Martha Farnsworth Coll. #28 Box 3

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 212795

Item Identifier: 212795

www.kansasmemory.org/item/212795



272

December 1918

Thurs. 5 A splendid winter day; dry and warm and sunny - no need of fire, and all the house wide open. I cleaned up my house again today then "wasted" the rest of the day. I went to Mrs. John Tulloch's for a wool skirt, to give to Police Matron, Mrs. McGrath, who wants it for a poor, neglected girl in the Reformatory School.

I got a pair of shoes from Mrs. E. Remington, a waist from Frances Finney, stockings, corset hat, muff and a full suit from Mrs. Sheldon 613 W-10-st. I have had a busy day yet do not find time to do all I want to do, so feel as if I did little worth while.

Fri. 6 A most pleasant day of sunshine.

Mrs. Lee Monroe (Gillian Day Monroe) came out for the afternoon, and we put together, the blocks for another, wool convalescent robe, for a War Hospital - we got it about half done then Mrs. John Dawson came in and offered to help out and took our unfinished work home to finish it for us. ~~Leah~~ ^{John} ~~Monroe~~ ^{Dawson} came out for the evening.

Sat. 7 Another fine day. Very busy with my usual baking, cleaning, mending etc. Tinting some pictures too, of some of my Soldier Boys and girls.



Martha Farnsworth diary

1918 December 1918 273
2200 W-10-st.

Sun. 8 A fine day. "Nothing doing" anywhere in town - everything closed because of Flu. So we just put in a quiet day at home, and enjoyed it. This afternoon, Ronald McGord, Robt. Simpson, Luther Davis, Frank Leonard, Margaret Officer and Jeanette Davis came out. I took pictures. And when no one came, by 9 o'clock this evening we went to bed, then Bob S. and Ron M. came with their girls, but we did not get up - they must come earlier.

Mon. 9 A splendid day of sunshine but quite windy. I washed a very large two weeks washing and then ironed all afternoon. Heavy mail prevented Fred getting home to dinner. Mrs. John Dawson came in a moment this afternoon, to bring the Club's knitted Hospital robe she had been working on.

Tues. 10 A sunny morning, but cold and cloudy in afternoon. After dinner I walked over to Mrs. Robt. Maxwell's 715 Home for a call, but the children have the "Flu", so I could only visit a moment on the Porch then I walked over to 620 Lincoln to call on Mrs. Melvern Bribble and she was not home, then I walked on to 305 Quinton Boulevard and spent rest of the afternoon with Mrs. Will Shaw - they have three of the loveliest children - boys. And I walked home. Edwin Jones, Carl Swanson and John Keating came in for the evening.



274

December 1918.

Wed. 11 A most beautiful day. Edwin Jones, Carl Swanson and John Keating came out this morning and I took pictures of them in their Soldier uniforms. Teddy got home in time to have some pictures taken with them. This afternoon I called at Mrs. Lee Monroe's 209 Harrison, to leave the Hospital blanket I had finished, then went out to town to do some shopping. One sees flu cards everywhere.

Thurs. 12 A dirty, nasty, sloppy day - has rained all day. Fred home to dinner on P.O. time. We do not need this rain, but never-the-less it will probably add enough to next year's crops, to help lick another "Kaiser Bill," so I do not complain - and it's a warm, gentle rain - yes, just the kind, that at this time of year, can turn to a howling blizzard, before morning, which I hope it doesn't.

Fri. 13 Has rained all day. Fred home to dinner on P.O. time, to change shoes & socks. Jack Miller and Carl Swanson came out this afternoon. This evening Jack Miller with Evelyn Parham, Mr. Bacon, Esther McArthur, Mr. ^{Emil} Parmetier with Marian McArthur and Robt. Simpson - stag - came in for the evening and danced. A mighty nice bunch of "Kiddies."



Martha Farnsworth diary

December 1918

275

Sat. 14 A day of splendid sunshine. I have been very busy all day, cleaning, baking, mending and writing letters. Have heard from most of my boys overseas, since Armistice, and all were well, so I can enjoy "Peace" to the full.

Sun. 15 Cloudy today and cool. The "flu" ban, is still on and so is no Church or Chm. School. This afternoon Edwin Jones, Carl Swanson, John Keating and Harold McLeod came out, and this evening Edwin^{3rd} Carl came again as they could not get the "Date" they wanted - the trouble is, with all the boys away to War, there are so many girls, to choose from, the boys don't know which they want.

Mon. 16 A warm, windy day. I washed, ironed and did a number of other useful things today. I never find time to get into mischief, at least.

Tues. 17 Very windy, cold too, but sunny. Have written all day, to my Chm. School, Soldier Boys "Over There".

Wed. 18 A splendid day, I spent all morning down town, shopping and came home at noon with Fred to eat a cold lunch, then I went out this afternoon to solicit Memberships for Red Cross^{3rd} and was quite successful. This evening some of our young folks came in, to dance - John Keating, Katharine Harmon, Edwin Jones, Betty Harmon, Chet Kelly, Frances Nolan, Jack Miller, Katharine Nolan, Ron McLeod and Margaret Pettijohn. We have very lovely young friends.



276

December 1918

Thurs. 19 A very cold, brisk wind, but sunny.
I worked on the "sun" or "scratch" pen, for the
chickens today - covered with oil-cloth then painted
the oil cloth, so now it is warm and cozy and
will not leak, and ought to get lots of eggs this winter.

Fri. 20 Rained a good big rain for us, and is
cold and chill. Wrote letters most all day.

Sat. 21 ^{Carl Swanson, Frank Leonard & Bob Simpson out this evening.}
Cold, damp, dark, dreary. I went over to Mrs.
Oscar Goddington's this morning to solicit her
membership for the Red Cross, but "nuthin' doin'".
They never give one penny to Red Cross - Sh-sh-h-h-h
Did mending and writing galore today.

Sun. 22 Awfully cold and cloudy and strong N.W. wind.
I "puttyed" the windows of "sun pen" at hen house
and Teddy filled in, with dirt, for it looks much
like storm and only time Fred has at home. This after-
noon, Edwin Jones, John Keating, Ronald McGord, Frank
Leonard, Robt. Simpson, Carl Swanson and Jack Miller
came out. Carl brought his drum. This evening
was very raw and cold. Moses Johnson, one of
my boys who has been in Tulsa, Okla. for long time
came in for the evening and we had a very
happy visit with him: he has grown from a boy
into a fine young man - good looking & smart.



Martha Farnsworth diary

December 1918

277

Mon. 23 Cold and snowed all day - the forenoon a dribbly snow of no consequence, the afternoon came down, fast and furious, thick, heavy and tonight is a raging snowstorm, blowing drifting blocking street-cars and stalling Railroad Trains. My poor Teddy worked in it all day without stopping for anything to eat and came home, quite worn out but a good hot bath, a bowl of hot lemonade and to bed early, he will be quite himself tomorrow. Carl Swanson came out with some pictures he wanted me to tint for him. I was too busy today, to do my washing.

Tues. 24 Cold, but sunny, and very windy - has blown and drifted the snow, badly. Mils so heavy my good Teddy worked all day again, without time to eat, and came home very tired, and "Twas the night before Christmas, and all about the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse", when the Phone rang - we were already for bed - and I answered - and, well, S-U-R-P-R-I-S-E, doesn't spell "surprise" not the kind of surprise that hit me, when I found it was Fred Jenkins (named for Fred) had just arrived, after being demobilized at Camp Funston - was on his way home to Winfield Kansas, has been in Aerial Service in England many months and was ordered to France, but Armistice was signed before they got to their Boat and were then ordered home for demobilization - Well he



278

December 1918

Came out to the house and visited with us almost an hour, then had to go, to catch the mid-night train, to his home in Winfield - ~~my~~ old home town. He told us, that during the months he was in England, he met and fell in love with a ~~Welsh~~ girl, and they were married. She is to come over in January, as he was not allowed to bring her on the Troop ship. Fred is a handsome fellow and fine, super-fine; an ideal young fellow. We had not seen him for a number of years and so much enjoyed our short visit with him - we paid a jitney \$1.50 to bring him out and take him back as the deep, drifting, snow, had street cars off schedule. Almost midnight when he left. He was a member of the 361 Aerial Squadron, came home on Empress Britain.

Wed. "Christmas"
Dec. 25 "Christmas Day" - a bright, warm, sunny day. Was down to zero this morning, but a splendid day. Fred had to work all day, again^{and} nothing to eat. I had lots to do too, for I have all the coal to carry and lots of water to the cow, feed and milk etc. I worked hard till noon when some of my boys came Edwin Jones, John Keating, Ronald McGord, Robt. Simpson and Fred Brackett, to bring me a very beautiful Christmas present of cut glass - a sugar, creamer, bon bon, and salt and pepper shakers.



Martha Farnsworth diary

December 1918

279

sure are pretty, but they should not have gotten them. Fred Brackett is home from the Great Lakes and was in his Sailor's uniform - I took pictures of all. I went down to the Church at 3:30 P.M. to the wedding of Miss Mildred Hazelrigg^{and} Mr. Frank d'Orenning atty. They were married at 4 o'clock by Rev. R. A. Schell - a very pretty, simple, wedding, and Mildred never looked more sweet and pretty - was simply charming. Mr. d'Orenning is a good man, but I have not seen anyone yet, I thought was good enough for her!

My good Teddy got home at 5:30 this evening - worked all day again with nothing to eat - awfully hard on him. He was given \$8.25, necktie, candy etc today. I cooked him a good supper, baked chicken & dressing, escalloped oysters, mashed potatoes, Pumpkin pie, lemon^{and} cherry pie, ^{and} some fine fruit cake that I made Nov. 13 when I made one to send Earl Bunce in France. We are all alone this evening and will go to bed early, that Fred may get a good rest.

Thurs. 26 Cold and a deep snow. Jennie Remington in this evening to phone and "chat" awhile about our boys "Over There". Fred is quite lame from a sore foot caused by tack in his shoe, but the P.O. won't let him off - mails very heavy, not home to dinner - worked over eleven hours straight. Charlie Clath home on furlough, called us up this evening; good to hear his voice again.



280

December 1918

Fri. 27 ^{Chas. Plath, Maud Wiede, Carrie Wiede, Isabel Shethers, Edwin Jones, Fred Boyer and Jack Miller all came in for the evening, with Charlie.} Cold and grew very much colder, toward evening.

A few flakes of snow "skipped" about and the sun shone out, a bit, but gave up and let the evening end very cold, and dark. Charlie Plath and Maud Wiede came out for dinner - I took pictures of them! They seemed very happy, yet Maud can't get over her "Contrary" acting - its her "loving" (?) way, but pretty hard on the lower and he never pays her in her own "coin" which he ought to do - They will never be happy, apart, and I don't see how they can be happy together. My good Teddy, still with a sore foot, worked more than eleven hours today and no dinner.

Sat. 28 Sun shining, but sure a cold day. And my good Teddy worked eleven hours, with nothing to eat and was very tired tonight - and looks haggard, poor fellow.

I too, have a bit to do, carrying so much coal, taking care of cow and barn and chickens. Wrote many letters today and got some good ones, from Harry Davis, Omar Ketchum and Charlie Clements, overseas!

Sun. 29 Sunny, but 19° below, is some cold. I went to Sun. School and taught Chas. Plath's class of boys. 11 present and Ferrell Moore is a Terror. Edwin Jones, John Keating, Roy McGord, Bob Simpson and Jack Miller here in afternoon - I took their pictures.

Mon. 30 Snowed hard all day. Carl Swanson here in afternoon. Teddy not home to dinner - foot getting more sore - mails very heavy.



December 1918.

281

Tues. 31 Sunny and cold. Deep snow and heavy mails and my poor Teddy had to work all day with no time to stop to get anything to eat. His foot is very sore and the P.C. authorities won't let him off to take care of it. I wish it were possible to make the Postmaster and the various Superintendents work as the Carriers do - that there could be a law passed, compelling them to go out and wade the deep snow, the same long hours without food, with the heavy loads on their backs, sick and hurt or injured - what a lesson of mercy it would teach these government task masters, who would be arrested, did they dare treat so inhumanely and overwork the mules and horses used by the government. So many of "Uncle Sam's" men of authority are brutes - that is, those connected with the P.C. - especially here in Topeka, and under Democratic administration. But a man has to be a selfish, brute to hold office under Burleson, who President Wilson seems to love (?) because he is a hell cat.

Teddy came home very tired tonight, haggard and worn. We will go to bed early that he may have a good, night's rest. So many of my dear Sun. School boys are in the Army, that I am not having a "Watch Party" this year and it is a very lonely ending to the old year.