Oscar B. Ireland Diary, 1872

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Oscar B. Ireland Diary, 1872
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Abstract
Oscar B. Ireland (1840-1914) worked as actuary, director, and second vice-president at Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company of Springfield, Massachusetts. This pocket-sized diary documents one year in his life, including notes on his personal life and actuarial career.

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Biographical Note
Oscar B. Ireland (1840–1914) worked as actuary, director, and second vice-president at Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company of Springfield, Massachusetts. An obituary in *The Insurance Monitor* calls him, “one of the elders of the actuarial profession in this country.”¹ Ireland served in the Union Army during the Civil War² (Papers from his Civil War experience 1861-1865 are available at Duke University Libraries³); he later traveled to Cartagena, Colombia, with the Intertropical Company.⁴ (Papers from his travels 1867-1869 are available at Pennsylvania State University Library.) From 1869 until 1872, Ireland worked in the office of actuary D.P. Fuccker, where he received his education in actuarial science.⁵ In the spring of 1872 Ireland became an actuary at Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company and moved from New York City to Springfield, which is documented in the diary. Ireland remained in Springfield, marrying Jean Gordon in 1877,⁶ and climbing the ranks at Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.

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³ Correspondence, 1861-1865 [manuscript]. Ireland, Oscar Brown, 1840-1915. http://search.library.duke.edu/search?searchid=DUKE000865012
⁴ “Oscar B. Ireland papers, 1867–1869,” Finding aid at the Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA. https://www.libraries.psu.edu/findingsaids/1609.htm
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Subject Terms
Ireland, Oscar Brown, 1840-1914--Diaries.
Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.
Actuaries.

Scope and Content
This pocket-sized diary documents one year in the life of Oscar B. Ireland (1840-1914), an actuary in the early American insurance industry and a decades-long employee of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company. But in 1872, the year this diary was written, Ireland was at the beginning of his career. The first half of the 1872 diary is marked by late nights at the office, apparently still working with “D.P.F.,” and frustrations over a case known as “Brooklyn.” Halfway through the year, Ireland moved from New York City to Springfield, MA, to begin working as actuary at Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company.

In brief hand-written entries on each day of the year, Ireland documents the weather, travel in the Northeast, meetings with numerous companions, church and social events, and activities at work. He attended Unitarian Church of All Souls’ in New York and Church of the Unity in Springfield. Ireland frequently mentions singing and attending philharmonic or opera performances. Notable figures of the day appear in Ireland’s record of social events: a lecture by Anna Dickinson, abolitionist orator and polemicist, and going to “see Booth play ‘Richard III,’” likely referring to Edwin Booth of the Booth family of actors, who ran a theater company in New York at the time, and whose brother John had assassinated Abraham Lincoln seven years earlier. Interestingly, Ireland tallied the number of women he called on that year (seventeen women) in Springfield using a blank page at the end of the diary. Letters sent and received are tallied by date, using initials to identify recipients and senders.

The diary is a single bound volume measuring 7 cm x 11 cm x 1 cm with a dark blue leather cover, a flap enclosure, and gilt edging. It was printed by Francis & Loutrel of New York and includes almanac tables for 1872 in addition to the datebook pages.

Container List
Box 1: Diary, January–December 1872

Selected Entries
Sunday, January 7
Cold. —To Alex. Miss. & All Souls’. —Dr. B. preaches on Rom i. 20 & 25. —Fire in house next to Grandma’s (Lex. Av.) —Walk to W. 10th St. wi. Helen Downes. —Excitement about Hepsworth, who renounces Unitarianism.

7 See notes 1 and 4
Wednesday, February 7
At office with D.P.F. until about 10:45 P.M.: “Brooklyn” books do not quite balance. —Weed brings me translations to swear to. —See Mr. Hartt at 71 Bdway.

Monday, February 19
March dividends handed to “Bkln.” and a relaxation of pressure of work. —Eve’g. to “sing” with Em. —Dinner with R.M.S. Jr. at Cable’s.

Tuesday, April 2
C.M. Knox calls on me & talks about Actuaryship of Mass. Mut. Eve’g. at office until about 10 P.M. hunting up discrepancies in “Brooklyn” books (of Actuary) which will now agree.

Monday, April 15
Em. leaves 7 A.M. for N.Y. —Eve’g. I am elected Actuary of Mass. Mut. —Afternoon take buggy drive with M.I.

Friday, May 10
Oppressively hot. —Eve’g. with Preston Jule & Miss Lily Wilson to see Booth in “Richard III.” —I write sundries to sing here 17th. See Dr. Lord A.M.

Friday, May 31
To bed 3¾ A.M. —Finish packing. —Forget-me-nots to M.F.K.: and call at 192 W. 10th St. —By 12:15 train move to Springfield: eve’g. arrange furniture, & talk with A.M.I.

Saturday, June 1

Thursday, July 11
Warm. —Five years ago to-day I entered employ of Int’l Co. & was to have sailed for S.A. —Eve’g. write letters, & walk to P.O. —Runaway in High St. this A.M.

Monday, November 11
Several clerks off to Boston. —Hammett appeals for more salary. —Grace, Geo. and I hear Anna Dickinson on Labor questions. —Headache.

Thursday, November 21
Cool & bright. —About 8 P.M. & father arrives from New York. —New Haven R.R. has just begun using 42nd St. depot (Grand Central).

Tuesday, December 10
Cold & windy. —Mut. Life rate reduction controversy still lively. —Female clerks (2) begin work at Mass. Mut. —Eve’g. call at Howards’.