

**U DX95**

**Diaries of William Hay and other papers**

**1636-1969**

**Biographical Background:**

William Hay was born in Lincolnshire in 1826 and attended the Hull and East Riding School of Medicine and Anatomy. In 1846 he acquired the druggist's business of Thomas Kirkus at 4 Salthouse Lane and lived there with his mother and siblings. In 1861 the family dispersed and in 1870 William built new premises at 4 Regent's Terrace in Anlaby Road, Hull. He borrowed heavily, including from his family, and the house and shop cost more than anticipated. However, the new premises were spacious with mahogany fittings and reflected Hay's success. In turn, his success may be described as a reflection of the sudden popularity of pharmaceutical products. Between the 1840s and the 1860s druggists quadrupled in number and in 1863 the Hull branch of the United Society of Chemists and Druggists was formed. One of their attractions was that they pulled teeth using nitrous oxide and new instruments and William Hay was no exception to this, advertising, for example, the removal of 'tri-fanged stumps' with an instrument made for the purpose.

Hay's continuing success came about from specialising in a particular product. While many druggists in Hull took advantage of the thriving fishing industry and began producing cod liver oil, Hay perfected various aerated waters, especially of ginger. His first aerated beverage appeared in 1875. The product was so popular that he had to hire a manager for that side of his business and he moved the manufacturing to Walmsley Street to a site he acquired in 1887. He also produced soluble essences and he bought a flour mill in Grosvenor Street to make 'Hay's Food for Infants and Invalids'. Hay married late in life and he and his wife, Agnes, had two sons and a daughter.

The diaries make an interesting study in a man consumed with a range of nineteenth-century health obsessions. On Sunday 1 January 1865 he recorded '8 a.m. Got up. Flatulent.' The diaries continue in this manner; Hay records personal consumption habits, dyspepsia, 'sexual weakness' and so on. Though the temperance movement contributed to the booming success of his non-alcoholic beverages, the diaries tell us that he, personally, was not worried about having the odd glass of whisky.

In 1890 William Hay moved his family to 6 Leonard Street, but the combination of this move and the failure of his infant food production to survive the 1890s depression meant the collapse of his business at the end of his life. He was forced to sell his Hygeian Flour Mill, as well as a stud farm in Lincolnshire, to leave his family solvent. He died at the age of 75 after a short illness in 1901. However, his son continued to make mineral waters, ginger beer and essences and the company celebrated its centenary in 1948.

**Custodial history:**

Deposited by Capt. A.J.C. Hildyard, Winestead, Sep 1974 [U DX95/1-18] and Feb 1975 [U DX95/19]

**Description:**

The ten diaries of William Hay were donated by Captain A.J.C. Hildyard, whose family held the lordship of Winestead from at least the fifteenth century and owned the manor and the Georgian Red Hall that was demolished in 1936. Captain Hildyard bought the White Hall (built by the Maister family) from William Hay, son of the diarist, perhaps explaining how he came into possession of this valuable personal record of a Hull druggist. They cover the years 1865-7, 1869-71, 1898-1901. The final diary was continued by his wife from 14 Jun after his death. They include customer accounts, expenses and takings, but are also filled with personal details.

Hull History Centre: Diaries of William Hay and other papers

**Extent:** 17 volumes, 1 file & 5 items

**Access conditions:**

Access will be granted to any accredited reader

U DX95/1	Diary of William Hay of Hull, druggist Includes accounts (takings, expenses) 1 volume	1865
U DX95/2	Diary of William Hay of Hull, druggist Includes accounts (takings, expenses) 1 volume	1866
U DX95/3	Diary of William Hay of Hull, druggist Includes accounts (takings, expenses) 1 volume	1867
U DX95/4	Diary of William Hay of Hull, druggist Includes accounts (takings, expenses) 1 volume	1869
U DX95/5	Diary of William Hay of Hull, druggist Includes accounts (takings, expenses) 1 volume	1870
U DX95/6	Diary of William Hay of Hull, druggist Includes accounts (takings, expenses) 1 volume	1871
U DX95/7	Diary of William Hay of Hull, druggist Includes accounts (takings, expenses) 1 volume	1898
U DX95/8	Diary of William Hay of Hull, druggist Includes accounts (takings, expenses) 1 volume	1899
U DX95/9	Diary of William Hay of Hull, druggist Includes accounts (takings, expenses) 1 volume	1900

Hull History Centre: Diaries of William Hay and other papers

U DX95/10	Diary of William Hay of Hull, druggist Includes accounts (takings, expenses). Continued after his death on 14 Jun by his widow 1 volume	1900
U DX95/11	Volume of press cuttings relating to North Sea Ferries 1 volume	Mar-Jul 1965
U DX95/12	Volume of press cuttings relating to North Sea Ferries 1 volume	Apr-Dec 1965
U DX95/13	Volume of press cuttings relating to North Sea Ferries 1 volume	Jan-May 1966
U DX95/14	Volume of press cuttings relating to North Sea Ferries 1 volume	Jun 1966- Mar 1967
U DX95/15	Volume of press cuttings relating to North Sea Ferries 1 volume	Apr 1967- Dec 1968
U DX95/16	Volume of press cuttings relating to North Sea Ferries 1 volume	1969
U DX95/17	Volume of press cuttings relating to North Sea Ferries 1 volume	1970
U DX95/18	File. North Sea Ferries passenger and freight advertisements 1 file	1967-1969
U DX95/19	Photographs of plan of the lordship of Winestead, by George Osborne. 2 of whole plan on reduced scale; 3 of sections, full scale 5 items	1636