

∞ The Ward M. Canaday Center ∞
for Special Collections
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ Franz Thomas Nastel, Journal 1811 ◀

MSS-021

Size: 1 Volume

Provenance: Nastel's journal appears to have been inherited by his daughter, one Frau Cramer, whom he mentioned frequently. An insert in the journal bears the late-19th-century inscription "Mr. Henry Cramer, 305 East Walnut, Germantown," which lends credence to the theory that the volume was brought to America by an immigrating descendant of Nastel. A 20th-century bookplate indicates that Nastel's journal was owned by one H. P. Weidig. The circumstances surrounding the gift of the volume to the University of Toledo, however, are forgotten.

Access: open

Collection Summary: Record of Nastel's daily activities and current financial accounts. Some items are from contemporary newspapers. Written in a reasonably legible hand in old German script.

Subjects: [Social Life and Customs](#)

Related Collections:

Processing Note:

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Completed by: Paul Gifford, May 1986

Reformatted by: Brad Sommer, February 2010; last updated: June 2014.

Franz Thomas Nastel,
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Introduction

This journal was kept from January 3, 1811 to June 14, 1811, by a teacher of French living in the Grand Duchy of Hesse. Typical entries record Nastel's daily activities and current financial accounts. The author also extracted items from contemporary newspapers. He wrote in a reasonably legible hand in old German script. His German includes frequent French borrowings, and there are also French and Latin entries. Nastel's journal offers us an intimate view of the everyday life of a Hessian burgher living under the Napoleonic regime.

Biographical Sketch

Not much can be deduced from Nastel's journal about the life of its author. He was a teacher of French who appears to have taught pupils privately. He had a daughter married to a man named Cramer, so he must have been at least forty, any probably older. Nastel probably lived somewhere between the cities of Giessen and Marburg, since he makes reference to the villages of Fellingshausen, Kesselbach, and Rodheim.

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Scope and Content Note

Franz Thomas Nastel began his journal with the rather grandiose and awkward title "Oekonomisch-Politisch-Statistisch-Litterarisch-Historisches Meine selbst eigenen Hauss und Personlichen Stadt Land und Europaischen Angelegenheiten betrachtendes Journal oder Tage-Buch im Iten Semester" ["Economic, Political, Statistical, Literary, Historical Journal or Diary of Reflections on Myself, My Own House and Personal *City*, Country, and European Affairs"]. The journal's content meets its title's expectations only in part, however.

Entries typically list Nastel's routine activities. He gave hourly French lessons in the afternoon. He frequently drank with friends in the evening. Family visits were another frequent activity. Nastel also maintained a running account of his finances. He usually recorded his purchases. These generally included food items, such as butter, cheese, and gingerbread, and liquid refreshments, such as cognac, anisette, and burgundy. Nastel also copied contemporary newspaper stories about current political affairs. He opposed Napoleonic rule, and certain entries reflect his sentiments.

The reader of Nastel's journal should not be surprised to find French words, phrases, and quotations scattered within his German narrative. Nastel also wrote some items in Latin. His German, although difficult for the American to decipher, is coherent and occasionally lively, with frequent use of quotes.