Title
George W. McCormick collection

Dates
1903-1914

Extent
.25 cm textual material

Biographical History
George W. McCormick (1867 – 1945) was born in Ohio to an American father and German mother. In 1893 he began working copper mines in the Lava Canyon / Palisades Creek area of the Grand Canyon. The mines did not provide him with enough income to sustain himself and he became involved in less honorable means of income. It was believed that he salted the mines to attract investors and his son later admitted that his father drove rustled horses between Utah and Arizona over the Tanner and Nankoweap Trails and inferred stolen horses were traded in both directions. A moonshine still was also found in Lava Canyon during prohibition.

On 27 May 1903 George McCormick took over Tanner's mine at Palisades Creek, calling it Copper Blossom Mine; associates were Fred Hensing, George Bailey, A.T. Switzer, and E.O. McCoy.

McCormick eventually moved to Flagstaff and married a woman named Caroline. They had three children, Cecil C., Melvin, and Bertha.

In 1924, McCormick, convinced the State of Arizona and the Forest Service to pay him to orchestrate a deer drive, in which he planned to route an overabundance of starving deer on the North Kaibab Plateau down the trail and up another on the South Rim to where there was more grazing land. The Western novelist, Zane Grey, and director, D.W. Griffith, accompanied McCormick hoping to document the feat. The plan was a disastrous failure because the deer refused to be herded and rampaged against the army of men hired to drive them across the river. No film was shot of the Great Kaibab Deer Drive, but the event was repurposed by Grey in his fictionalized, The Deer Stalker.

McCormick passed away in 1945 in Flagstaff.
Scope and Content
Collection contains 2 mining claims, Hermit No. 2 and Copper Giant 2, filed by McCormick that were found in the Grand Canyon. One claim belonged to McCormick and the other to Lee, [Burbir], Nelson, and Fuller.

Physical Access
Documents are very brittle and require specialized handling.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition
Claims found between 2 pieces of wood by Zeer Reches, a geologist from Stanford University, and donated in 1974 (Accession #MS-197).

Publication Note
McCormick is fictionalized as the character, Bill McKay, in the novel:


Description Control
Finding aid written by Eileen Hogan using DACS, 28 July 2010

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LCSH Access Points
Grand Canyon (Ariz.)
Mining claims
Palisades Creek (Ariz.)