

MS-197

The Museum of Northern Arizona
Harold S. Colton Memorial Library
3101 N. Fort Valley Road
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
(928)774-5213 ext. 256

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.

MS-197

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.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Unpublished and published manuscripts are protected by copyright. Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder.

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:

Grey, Zane. 1925. *The deer stalker*. New York: Curtis Pub.

Description Control

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

George W. McCormick collection				
File #	File Description	Date(s)	Extent	Box/Folder
MS-197-1	Mining Claims	1903-1914	.25 cm textual	Box 1

LCSH Access Points

Grand Canyon (Ariz.)

Mining claims

Palisades Creek (Ariz.)