

James Fergus Family Papers, 1857-1971

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Fergus, James, 1813-1902
Title	James Fergus Family Papers
Dates	1857-1971 (inclusive) 1857 1971
Quantity	5 linear feet of shelf space
Collection Number	MC 28
Summary	The James Fergus Family papers are divided into four subgroups: James Fergus; Andrew Fergus; Fergus Live Stock and Land Company; and miscellaneous. Papers (1857-1971) include biographical materials, incoming correspondence, outgoing correspondence, general correspondence, financial records, legal documents, subject files, and miscellany.
Repository	Montana Historical Society, Research Center Archives Montana Historical Society Research Center Archives 225 North Roberts PO Box 201201 Helena MT 59620-1201 Telephone: 406-444-2681 Fax: 406-444-5297 mhslibrary@mt.gov
Access Restrictions	Collection open for research.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

James Fergus was born October 8, 1813, in Lanarkshire, Scotland. At the age of nineteen he emigrated to Quebec and, three years later, to the United States. He lived in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota where he built and managed saw mills, powder mills, a foundry, and a paper mill, and invested in property. James Fergus married Pamela Dillin in Moline, Illinois in 1845. The couple had four children: Andrew (b. 1850), Mary Agnes, Luella (married Stephen Collins Gilpatrick), and Lillie (married Frank H. Maury). While in Minnesota in the late 1850s, Fergus became involved in politics and ran for office. In March 1860 he journeyed to Pike's Peak where he unsuccessfully prospected for gold until he returned to Minnesota in September 1861. In the spring of 1862 Fergus traveled with the Fisk Expedition to the Beaverhead gold mines near what was to become Bannack, Montana Territory. Moving to Virginia City in 1863, Fergus had modest success in finding gold. He was elected to serve as judge of the first miners' court and as the city's first recorder, and was appointed the first county commissioner for Madison County. Fergus' family, including his recently married daughter Mary Agnes and his new son-in-law Robert Stavely Hamilton, joined him in Virginia City in 1864. Fergus moved to Helena in 1865, where he engaged in ranching and was elected to two terms as county commissioner and one term in the territorial House of Representatives. Fergus' son Andrew was much involved in

the ranching business; he officially bought (for one dollar) one-third of the stock in 1878, and, in 1879, acquired one quarter of James Fergus' property, livestock, and farm machinery. In 1880 James and Andrew Fergus bought land in the Judith Basin on Armells and Box Elder Creeks, and Andrew started ranching there. James Fergus and his wife Pamela joined Andrew the next year. Eventually they raised cattle, horses, and sheep, and also did some farming. The ranch operation became one of the biggest in the territory, operating first under the name of James Fergus and Son (established in 1879) and later as the Fergus Live Stock and Land Company (established in 1895). James Fergus was elected as a delegate from Meagher County to the 1884 Constitutional Convention and to the territorial Council where he was instrumental in the creation of Fergus County. Pamela Dillin Fergus died in 1887. James Fergus died in 1902. Andrew Fergus married Hazel Akley in 1910 and continued to ranch at Armells until his death in 1928.

Content Description

Papers. 1857-1971. 5 linear feet. This collection is divided into four subgroups: James Fergus; Andrew Fergus; Fergus Live Stock and Land Company; and Miscellaneous. The James Fergus Subgroup includes biographical material (undated); incoming correspondence (1860-1900, undated) consisting of both personal and business correspondence; outgoing correspondence (1861-1899, undated), including letters to family, friends, and newspaper editors; financial records (1857-1897, undated), consisting of two ledgers of the Cone Butte and Moccasin Roundup (also referred to as the Moccasin and Cone Butte Roundup) which was a local cattlemen's association organized in 1884 for which Fergus served as secretary and president; legal documents (1884-1910); subject files (1889-1904), concerning the distribution of James Fergus' estate and the purchase of John H. Ming's horses; writings (1876-1892); miscellany (1858-1898, undated), including notebooks which include a wide variety of entries such as a list of fruit trees planted, descriptions of daily events, a list of hired men, costs of purchases, shopping lists, etc.; and clippings (1899, 1900, undated). The Andrew Fergus Subgroup includes incoming correspondence (1881-1918, undated) containing both business and personal correspondence; outgoing correspondence (1886-1916); court papers (1910, 1919); minor financial records (1878-1911); legal documents (1879, 1906-1916) which are primarily crop leases; and miscellany (1879-1900), consisting primarily of notebooks which include brief entries of daily activities and counts of cattle by brand. The Fergus Live Stock and Land Company Subgroup includes general correspondence (1908-1923); financial records (1859-1931); legal documents (1895-1934); minutes (1895-1931); and miscellany (1898-1908). The subgroup contains material which pertains to James and Andrew Fergus' business interests including small amounts of financial material concerning James Fergus' business in Minnesota and the Fergus' ranching operations near Helena and in the Judith Basin. In addition to this financial material, the subgroup contains a small amount of correspondence and legal documents which concern the Company generally. Correspondence and legal documents which are addressed or pertain specifically to James or Andrew Fergus are filed in the appropriate subgroup. See particularly the correspondence in the Andrew Fergus Subgroup from Harry H. Marks. The Miscellaneous Subgroup is divided into eight series: incoming correspondence (1884-1912, undated), which is primarily personal correspondence of the Fergus and Gilpatrick families; outgoing correspondence (undated) of George Gilpatrick; miscellaneous correspondence (1887-1912), neither to nor from the Fergus family, or unidentified; financial records (1870-1872); legal documents (1898, 1921, 1929); writings (undated); miscellany (1881-1931); and clippings (1870-1928, undated).

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

Researchers must use collection in accordance with the policies of the Montana Historical Society. The Society does not necessarily hold copyright to all materials in the collection. In some cases permission for use may require additional authorization from the copyright owners. For more information contact an archivist.

Preferred Citation

Item description and date. Collection Title. Collection Number. Box and Folder numbers. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives, Helena, Montana.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Arranged by subgroup and series

Location of Collection

1:3-2

Acquisition Information

Acquisition information available upon request

Separated Materials

One map has been transferred to the Library Map Collection. Photographs have been separated to the Photo Archives.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection

James Fergus

Container(s)	Description	Dates
<hr/>		
Box/Folder		
1 / 1	"Some of the reasons why I am not a Christian" [typescript]	undated
<hr/>		
Box/Folder		
<hr/>		

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1 / 2	A (includes American Society for Psychical Research; Ancient Order of United Workmen [AOUW]; O.L. Anderson)	1885-1892
1 / 3	Bank of Fergus County	1887-1894
1 / 4	William Berkin	1885-1888
1 / 5	B (includes J.C. Bain; S.L. Bennett; J.J. Bowles; Broadwater, McNamara and Company; H.P. Brooks; R.D. Brown; Massena Bullard)	1881-1897
1 / 6	C (includes W.D. Cameron; William Cantrell; T.H. Carter; Daniel M. Crowley)	1884-1894
1 / 7	D (includes George Dillin; James Dillin; W.T. Dillin; L.B. Divers; John Dolan; Richard Dunn)	1882-1892
1 / 8	E (includes Mary Earle; R.S. Ells; N.M. Erickson; A.M. Esler)	1885-1889, undated
1 / 9	Andrew Fergus	1885-1894
1 / 10	Pamelia Dillin Fergus	undated
1 / 11	William Fergus	1884-1888, undated
1 / 12	Fergus County Argus (Charles S. Fell and J.M. Vrooman)	1884-1889
1 / 13	F (includes George H. Fairchild; Fergus County; First National Bank, Helena; Freethought, a Liberal Journal; Freethought Federation of America)	1885-1894
1 / 14	Collins Gilpatrick; George Gilpatrick; S.C. Gilpatrick	1887-1889
1 / 15-17	Luella Fergus Gilpatrick	1882-1892
1 / 18	G (includes Charles Gardner; Henry Gardner; [N.J.?] Giltinan; J.A. Goodhue)	1885-1894, undated
1 / 19	Mary Agnes Fergus Hamilton	1887-1888, undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1 / 20	Sten Hanson	1894
1 / 21	H-J (includes R.S. Hamilton; Robert Hamilton; Thomas M. Hamilton; Russell B. Harrison; Cornelius Hedges; Sewell S. Herrick; David Hilger; William Huntley; Judith Cattle Company; Judith Wool Growers Association)	1885-1894, 1900
1 / 22	K-L (includes William Kidd; James J. Kimberling; Newton L. Landru; Mattie S. Lawrence; Theodore Lindsey)	1885-1889, undated
1 / 23	Lillie Fergus Maury	1885-1889, undated
1 / 24	M (includes P.W. McAdow; J.H. McKnight and Company; D.A. Meagher; John O. Ming; Montana Recorder of Marks and Brands; Montana Board of Stock Commissioners; Montana Stockgrowers Association; Thomas F. Morgan; Phillip J. Moule)	1885-1894
1 / 25	N (includes National State Historical Publishing Co.; Dora Neill)	1888-1889, 1894
2 / 1	T.C. Power (includes T.C. Power and Co.; T.C. Power and Bro.; Power Mercantile Co.; and personal)	1885-1894
2 / 2	P-Q (includes William W. Parrott; J.L. Perkins; Frank Pick; W.G. Preuitt; A.C. Quaintance)	1887-1892
2 / 3	N. Richardson	1887-1894
2 / 4	Lew Roberts	1885
2 / 5	R (includes Roberts and Glassman, Cheyenne Saddle Shop; Albert Ronne; Nettie Rosenbaum; Louis Rotwitt)	1885-1894
2 / 6	W.F. Sanders	1885-1888
2 / 7	Granville Stuart	1885-1888
2 / 8	S (includes T.C. St. Amour; Daniel Searles; Katty Shea; A.C. Shufelt; James D. Slater; Frank E. Smith; W. and T. Smith, Geneva Nursery; W.L. Steele; George Stephens; Cyrus Stiles; Julian Stuart; Mary Stuart; R.N. Sutherlin)	1882-1894
2 / 9	T (includes J.K. Toole; C.B. Towers; Eugene Townsend; C.A. Tuttle)	1885-1900, undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
2 / 10	U-V (includes Joel Vigus; Rudolf Von Tobel)	1889-1894, undated
2 / 11	W (includes Wade, Toole and Wallace; John D. Waite; William Wallace; James Walsh; John E. Wasson; Marion F. Wheeler; Frank Wocasek)	1884-1894
2 / 12	Unidentified fragments	undated
Box/Folder		
2 / 13	Miscellaneous (includes Andrew Fergus; Pamela Fergus; William Fergus; Conrad Kohrs; W.F. Sanders; letters to editor)	1861, 1883-1887
2 / 14	Miscellaneous (includes Granville Stuart; J.L. Stuart; Katty Shea; Janet Simpson; T.C. Power; J.C. McNamara; McLaughlin; Moccasin and Cone Butte Roundup; John Brooks; letters to editor)	1888-1899
2 / 15	Miscellaneous (includes M.H. Watson; letters to editor; unidentified)	undated
Box/Folder		
2 / 16	Accounts, expenditures	1890-1894
2 / 17	Bills, receipts, notes, etc.	1857-1892, undated
3 / 1	"Settlement with Andrew" [includes material in oversize folder]	1888-1889
Box/Folder		
3 / 2	Abstracts of title, agreements, bill of sale, etc.	1884-1910
Box/Folder		
3 / 3	James Fergus' funeral and the distribution of his estate	1902-1904

Container(s)	Description	Dates
3 / 4	Purchase of John H. Ming horses (includes correspondence with John O. Ming; E. Swope; Jack Rowley; Thomas C. Bach; lists of horses)	1889-1892
Box/Folder		
3 / 5	"Leaf of Diary...Fiske Emmigration Party, 1862"; "Memorandum for Luella"; "What to leave behind me for Brother"	1876, 1889, 1892
3 / 6	Memoranda re proposed legislation, Council Chambers	1884
Box/Folder		
3 / 7	Notebook	1858
3 / 8	Notebooks (2)	July 1879- November 1880
3 / 9	Notebooks (2)	November 1880- July 1882, July 1883- August 1887
3 / 10	Notebooks (2)	April 1880- April 1886, January 1889- July 1893
3 / 11	Notebook	September 1893-August 1894
3 / 12	Memo on cattle; Does Ranch memo; list of lands owned; interview re defeat of Granville Stuart; etc.	1881-1898, undated
Box/Folder		
3 / 13	Miscellaneous	1899-1900, undated

Andrew Fergus

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
3 / 14	A-B (includes E.C. Abbott; Frank Anderson; Bean Brothers)	1884-1916
3 / 14	C-D (includes L. Capprelli; C.J. Carey; George Caulfield; Cook-Reynolds Company; Roy C. Cromer; J.Q. Cunningham; Robert O. Deming)	1884-1916
4 / 1	James Fergus	1885-1889, undated
4 / 2	Pamelia Dillin Fergus	1881
4 / 3	F (includes Nellie H. Fergus; First National Bank of Lewistown; J. Fisher; D. Foreman)	1892, 1910-1918
4 / 4	Luella Fergus Gilpatrick	1887-1912, undated
4 / 5	G-L (includes George Gilpatrick; Clarence Grove; R.E. Hamilton; Agnes Fergus Hamilton; Hilger Commercial Club; David Hilger; Hilger Loan and Realty Company; Grace Hunton; Judith Club; Lewistown Employment and Commission Agency)	1887-1916
4 / 6	Harry H. Marks	1910-1911, undated
4 / 7	Lillie Fergus Maury	1887, 1889
4 / 8	M-R (includes Lena Marsh; Carrie Martin; Claude Maury; George Osborne; Harold Osborne; Lewis Penwell; T.C. Power; A.L. Randall; Rank Russell)	1887-1918
4 / 9	Ada E. Stephens	1886-1893
4 / 10	S-Y (includes Josie Skagg; W.B. Smith; J.L. Stuart; John Thomas; William O. Ulrich; Fan Van Nort; A. Wistervelt; Martin Wold; Finn Wyant; unidentified)	1887-1916, undated
Box/Folder		

Container(s)	Description	Dates
4 / 11	Ada E. Stephens	1886-1889
4 / 12	Miscellaneous (includes J.L. Stuart; Lillie Berntheisel; George Osborne; U.S. Land Office; R.S. Hamilton; E.C. Abbott; family members)	1886-1916
Box/Folder		
4 / 13	U.S. vs. Henry E. Pollard; New York Bargain Store bankruptcy	1910, 1919
Box/Folder		
4 / 14	Bills, receipts, notes, etc.	1878-1911
Box/Folder		
4 / 15	Agreements, contract, crop leases, etc.	1879, 1906-1916
Box/Folder		
4 / 16	Notebooks (2)	April 1879- February 1881, Jan-June 1883
4 / 17	Notebooks (2)	June 1880- March 1884, 1883
4 / 18	Notebooks (2)	January 1886- August 1888
5 / 1	Notebooks (2)	September 1888- June 1889, September 1899- September 1900
5 / 2	Miscellaneous (includes Montana Club invitation; gravestone inscription; map of air corridors east of Billings)	1889, undated

Fergus Live Stock And Land Company

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
5 / 3	Miscellaneous (includes Fergus County Wool Warehouse Association; Rudoph Von Tobel; Hilger Loan and Realty Company; Wells and Dickey Company; Fergus Live Stock and Land Company; R.S. Hamilton)	1908-1923
Box/Folder		
5 / 4-6	Daybooks [3 books, 1882-1886 book also includes some ledger entries for 1859-1862]	1878-1886
6 / 1-3	Daybooks [3 books: also includes ledger entries, 1881-1884]	1886-1895
7 / 1-3	Daybooks [3 books]	1897-1902, 1909-1910, 1925-1926
7 / 4	Ledger (includes memoranda) [other ledger entries included in daybooks]	1880-1891
8 / 1-2	Ledgers	1892-1902
8 / 3	"A list of property put in to the Fergus Live Stock and Land Co."; statement; contractor bill	1895-1913
Box/Folder		
8 / 4	Minute book (includes minutes, articles of incorporation, legal documents) [book previously used as journal and ledger, 1884-1890]	1895-1913
9 / 1	Minutes [scattered typescript copies]	1913-1924
9 / 2	Miscellaneous (includes articles of incorporation, bylaws, stock receipts, deeds, etc.)	1895-1923

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
9 / 3	List of lands owned, list of men, etc.	1898-1908

Miscellaneous

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
9 / 4	To Hazel Akley Fergus (correspondents include Viola Cole; U.S. Land Office)	1912, undated
9 / 5	To Pamela Dillin Fergus (correspondents include Luella Fergus Gilpatrick; James Dillin; Mrs. D.P. Shafer; U.S. Land Office)	1884-1889
9 / 6	To William Fergus (from R.S. Tingley)	1885
9 / 7	To Luella Fergus Gilpatrick (correspondents include Ada Stephens; Collins Gilpatrick; George Gilpatrick; James Fergus; Lilly Fergus Maury)	1886-1889
9 / 8	To Stephen Collins Gilpatrick (correspondents include Charles Cram; R.S. Ells)	1886-1899
9 / 9	To Mary Agnes Fergus Hamilton (from Mary E. Dow)	1888

Box/Folder		
9 / 10	George A. Gilpatrick	undated

Box/Folder		
9 / 11	Miscellaneous (neither from nor to members of the Fergus Family)	1887-1912

Box/Folder		
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Container(s)	Description	Dates
9 / 12	Julius D. Daniothy will; William H. Cluver will; William Fergus will	1898, 1921, 1929
Box/Folder		
9 / 13	List of maps transferred to Library map collection	
Box/Folder		
9 / 14	List of photographs transferred to Photo Archives	
Box/Folder		
9 / 15	Biographical sketch of Pamela Dillin Fergus by Luella Fergus Gilpatrick [in OVERSIZE FOLDER]; biographical sketch and obituary of Stephen Collins Gilpatrick	undated
Box/Folder		
9 / 16	Notebook (includes cattle counts by brand, daily entries briefly describing ranching activities, lists of purchases of food and ranching supplies)	April-September 1892
9 / 17	Notebooks (one includes lists of tasks to accomplish, lists of purchases; the other includes count of cattle by brand taken for the Cone Butte and Moccasin Roundup)	1897-1898
9 / 18	Quotes; notes; story on John Eaughbough by John K. Standish, Platteville, Wisconsin; school reception program	1881, 1910-1931
Box/Folder		
9 / 19	Gilpatrick family, etc.	1971, undated
9 / 20	Scrapbook (includes poetry; funeral notices; obituaries of James Fergus, Pamela Dillin Fergus, Andrew Fergus, and Ellen Farrar Hauser; writings by James Fergus; Gilpatrick Family items)	1870-1928

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Cattle raising--Montana
Fisk Expeditions, 1862-1871
Frontier and pioneer life--Montana
Horse industry--Montana
Overland journeys to Montana
Ranches--Montana
Retail trade--Montana
Roundups--Montana
Scottish Americans
Sheep ranches--Montana
Land companies--Montana

Personal Names :

Fergus, James, 1813-1902
(creator)

Geographical Names :

Armells (Mont.)
Cone Butte (Mont.)
Fergus County (Mont.)--Agriculture
Helena (Mont.)--Commerce
Judith Basin County (Mont.)
Moccasin (Mont.)

Finding aid prepared by MHS Staff
2004



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