

C      Gallaher, William Houston, (1840-    ), Journal, 1865  
3924      1 volume

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## INTRODUCTION

The 1865 journal of William H. Gallaher, kept during his journey from St. Charles, Missouri, up the Missouri River to Montana Territory, and while living in southwest Montana.

## DONOR INFORMATION

The William H. Gallaher Journal was donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Edna C. Fielding on June 14, 1995 (SHS Accession No. 3066).

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Houston Gallaher was born in 1840 to the Reverend James Gallaher, a Presbyterian minister, and Lucinda Houston, a first cousin to General Sam Houston. The family included an older brother, James, and sisters, Mary Gallaher Parks and Eliza Gallaher Ferguson. In 1865 William traveled from St. Charles, Missouri, to the Montana Territory to join his brother and his family. He returned to St. Charles in 1870 and later married Florida McElhinney.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

In March 1865, during the waning days of the Civil War, William H. Gallaher began a journal to record his journey from St. Charles, Missouri, to join his brother James in the Montana Territory. On arriving by train at St. Joseph, Missouri, Gallaher, his cousin Robert Houston Ferguson, and friends boarded the steamboat *St. Johns*. In the company of several other boats they headed up the Missouri River, through the Nebraska and Dakota Territories, bound for the river's upper reaches and Fort Benton.

Gallaher proved to be accurate and concise, if not overly elaborate, in his observations of the trip. As the *St. Johns* twisted its way upriver, his entries sketch the outlines of the frontier: daily life aboard ship and the hazards of navigation on the Missouri; the slowly passing plains landscape and abundant wildlife; encounters with the Sioux, Crow, and other Native Americans; and the U.S. military presence on the plains.

On reaching Fort Benton in June, Gallaher set out overland in wagons for the mining areas in the high elevations of southwest Montana. While he eventually staked out a claim near Gallatin, no note of prospecting is made, and descriptions of the Montana landscape, social and economic conditions, and the general lifestyle of settlers fill the diary up to the final entry of October 19, 1865.

A short introduction and map added in 1962 precede the journal. Gallaher's list of passengers on the *St. Johns*, and a chart of distances from St. Louis to points on the Missouri, and from Fort Benton to locations in Montana complete the volume.

## INDEX TERMS

Subject	Other
Dakota Territory, 1865	v. 1
Diaries--Travel, 1865	v. 1
Ferguson, Robert Houston (1846-1872)	v. 1
Gallaher, James (1822- )	v. 1
Gallaher, William Houston (1840- )	v. 1
Indians--Crow, 1865	v. 1
Indians--Dakota Territory, 1865	v. 1
Indians--Montana Territory, 1865	v. 1
Indians--Nebraska Territory, 1865	v. 1
Indians--Sioux, 1865	v. 1
McDearmon, Albert (1842- )	v. 1
McDearmon, Theodorick	v. 1
Missouri River--Description and travel, 1865	v. 1
Montana Territory, 1865	v. 1
Montana Territory, Gallatin, 1865	v. 1
Montana Territory, Helena, 1865	v. 1
Nebraska Territory, 1865	v. 1
River travel, 1865	v. 1
Steamboat, Benton	v. 1
Steamboat--Benton	v. 1
Steamboat--Deer Lodge	v. 1
Steamboat--Effie Deans	v. 1
Steamboat--Emma Eatheradge	
Steamboat--General Grant	v. 1
Steamboat--St. Johns	v. 1
Steamboat--Yellowstone	v. 1