

## Information Sheet

**R**      **McCormick, John Steele, 1906-2001.**  
**877**      **Collection, 1809-2004.**  
            **One hundred twelve folders and fifteen volumes.**

This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri](http://The State Historical Society of Missouri). If you would like more information, please contact us at [shsresearch@umsystem.edu](mailto:shsresearch@umsystem.edu).

These are the personal papers, correspondence, research, and writings of genealogist and local historian John Steele McCormick, a descendant of Cyrus Russell and Rebecca Pease Russell of Iron County, Missouri. Primary topics are Crawford County, the Forest Hill neighborhood, the Russell and McCormick families, and the Goodman Wonder Show.

John Steele McCormick, the son of James W. McCormick and Florence Russell McCormick, was born in St. Louis on 5 March 1906. He was raised on his family's Crawford County poultry farm at Forest Hill near Bourbon, Missouri, and attended the Forest Hill School and Grover Cleveland High School in St. Louis. He attended Oklahoma City College, 1925-1927. He returned to Franklin County without a degree due to economic circumstances, but not before making a sight-seeing journey through fifteen southern states. Later, he graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, received a master's degree in education from the University of Wyoming (1948), and a master's in Spanish Arts from the University of San Nicolas de Hidalgo, Mexico (1951).

McCormick taught school at Forest Hill in 1932-1936, the same school he attended as a child, and at Union in 1937. He supplemented his income by playing accordion in the Rhythm Aces, a three-piece musical group formed with friends Gene Dixon and Austin Cowan at Bourbon. McCormick joined the carnival for the seasons of 1937-1940, taking a position as musician in Eddie Comstock's "Fantazma" production of the Goodman Wonder Show. He also played in the orchestra of Haury [*sic*] Mac and His Music, touring extensively throughout the upper Midwest with these traveling shows. He relocated to Colorado and Wyoming in 1939, teaching school at Dixon, Wyoming, and working for the U. S. Forest Service. He enlisted in the U. S. Navy's "Seabees" construction force until May 1942 and served on Adak Island in the Aleutians and on Okinawa. McCormick resumed teaching in Wyoming in 1946, supervising schools at Ranchester and Elk Mountain. In 1957 he removed to California and taught high school at Beaumont and Banning until retirement in 1972. McCormick died in Cherry Valley, California, on 10 October 2001. His ashes are interred in the McCormick plot in the Bourbon Cemetery.

A teacher by profession, McCormick was also a local historian and genealogist. Among his earliest writings were historical sketches of Forest Hill submitted to the Bourbon newspaper in 1935. Those articles, edited and revised, formed the core of McCormick's *History of Forest Hill and Vicinity* (Pacific, Mo.: Pacific Press, 1969). The McCormick collection includes some of his historical and genealogical work, but also his personal papers and correspondence, genealogical notes and family group charts, photographs and photograph albums, and several scrapbooks containing a wide variety of ephemeral materials pertaining to relating to the Russell, Guild, Pease, McCormick families and other related lines; the writings of C. C. Russell and Sidney Dyer McCormick; the history of Crawford County and the Forest Hill neighborhood; the Goodman Wonder Show, and travels in other states.

Folders 1-26 include biographical material on John Steele McCormick III and also his writings. The section begins with a biography of McCormick, "Gentleman John: The Man from Missouri" written in 2004 by Frances E. Hanson, a former student of McCormick's in Wyoming and the executor of his personal papers. These folders also include items from McCormick's schooling at Forest Hill and Grover Cleveland High School in St. Louis, his diary of a "tramp" through the southern states in 1927, and a manuscript of "History of Forest Hill and Vicinity," in seven parts (Part 3, borrowed and never returned to McCormick, is missing). There is also a printed index to the Forest Hill history, compiled and issued supplementally after the history was published in 1969.

Folders 27-41 contain personal papers and correspondence. Especially noteworthy are a letter from an aunt, Jean Fox, written from Paris, France in 1925; McCormick's long-term correspondence with a cousin, Sarah Russell, of Fredericktown, Missouri, 1924-1954; correspondence with William Sanders including a typescript of the minutes of the Courtois Baptist Church, 1831; and letters from Rose Alexander, a local historian and columnist in the Crawford County newspapers, 1968-1988.

Folders 42-63 contain McCormick family photographs and papers. There are portraits and snapshots of John Steele McCormick at various ages, his boyhood home and poultry farm at Forest Hill, and as a musician with the Goodman Wonder Show. Family papers include a photograph of John Steele McCormick I by W. H. Unger of Ironton, Missouri, and items representing his grandparents, Sidney Dyer and Julia (Sullivan) McCormick, of Henderson, Kentucky. Sidney D. McCormick was a minor literary figure and the collection includes examples of his poetry and writings, as well as items about him.

Folders 64-98 represent the Russell side of McCormick's ancestry. They contain considerable genealogical materials as well as *Descendants of Theodore P. Russell and Emily Guild Russell* (1963), co-authored with Howard M. Johnson; copies of Theodore Pease Russell's "Old Times" columns in the *Iron County Register*; items concerning Mary Oat Russell and Emily Guild Russell; early Pease/Russell correspondence, 1810-1935; and the diaries of Claud C. Russell, 1896-1926. McCormick and his grandfather "C.C." or "Pops" Russell, who lived near Forest Hill in the area known as Coffeyton, were especially close. Russell would spend his final days living with his grandson in Wyoming. Folder 72 contains a biography of "Pops" Russell written by McCormick (1986).

Folders 99-107 contain items concerning families allied or related to the McCormick line, including genealogical papers on the Holt, Magill, Rose, Smith, and Sullivan lines. Noteworthy are letters (1847-1853) to James W. McCormick written by an uncle, William Walker, from Henderson, Tennessee.

Folders 108-112 contain miscellaneous historical information on Crawford and Iron counties. Most useful are clippings of Rose Alexander's newspaper column, "Dowler Mill," 1965-1994, and articles on the history of Crawford County published in the *Bourbon Beacon*, by Harry H. Missey, and James King, 1991-1996.

Volumes 1-15 consist of photograph albums and scrapbooks. More than half are devoted to McCormick's travels in the late 1930s with the "Fantazma" production of the Goodman Wonder Show. They contain photographs of fellow performers and friends along the road, postcards from several Midwestern states, and many ephemeral items pertaining to traveling with the Goodman Show.

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21 July 2003

Frances E. Hanson

Gift

**Shelf List**

These are the personal papers, correspondence, research, and writings of genealogist and local historian John Steele McCormick, a native of Crawford County, Missouri, and a descendant of Cyrus Russell and Rebecca Pease Russell of Iron County, Missouri. Primary topics are Crawford County, the Forest Hill neighborhood, the Russell and McCormick families, and the Goodman Wonder Show.

**Folders 1-12: John Steele McCormick III, biography and academic records**

- F. 01: *The Man From Missouri: Gentleman John*. A biography of John Steele McCormick III, compiled and written by Frances E. (Strayer) Hanson, 2004
- F. 02: School exercises, Forest Hill School, ca. 1914
- F. 03: First writings, Forest Hill School, ca. 1914-1919
- F. 04: Report cards, Forest Hill School, ca. 1914-1919
- F. 05: Grade school certificate (Steelville, Mo.), 1920 **OVERSIZE**
- F. 06: Grover Cleveland High School (St. Louis, Mo.), 1921-1924
- F. 07: Grover Cleveland High School (St. Louis, Mo.), class photograph and diploma, June 1924 **OVERSIZE**
- F. 08: Plays written by John S. McCormick for use at Forest Hill School, n.d.
- F. 09: Play booklets for Forest Hill School entertainments, ca. 1935
- F. 10: Poems, n.d.
- F. 11: Class papers, Oklahoma City University, 1925-1928
- F. 12: Academic records and papers, Oklahoma City University, 1925-1928

**Folders 13-17: John Steele McCormick III, diaries**

- F. 13: Diary, 29 Jun—30 Sep 1920
- F. 14: Diary, 1 Oct 1922—8 Jun 1923
- F. 15: "Diary of my tramp through the south," 25 May—4 Jun 1927  
(Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama)
- F. 16: "Diary of my tramp through the south," 4 Jun—12 Jun 1927  
(Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee)
- F. 17: "Diary of my tramp through the south," 12 Jun—14 Jun 1927  
(Tennessee)

**Folders 18-26: John Steele McCormick III, writings**

- F. 18: "True Experiences. Preachers I Have Known and others," n.d.
- F. 19: History of Forest Hill and Vicinity, Parts 1 and 2 [Part 3 is missing]
- F. 20: History of Forest Hill and Vicinity, Part 4
- F. 21: History of Forest Hill and Vicinity, Part 5
- F. 22: History of Forest Hill and Vicinity, Part 6
- F. 23: History of Forest Hill and Vicinity, Part 7
- F. 24: History of Forest Hill and Vicinity, Index
- F. 25: "Ancestry of John Steele McCormick, III," Vol. 2
- F. 26: "Ancestry and Descendants of John Steele McCormick (1815-1900) and Martha Jane (Elam) McCormick (1828-1884)," compiled by John Steele McCormick III

**Folders 27-41: John Steele McCormick III, correspondence and personal papers**

- F. 27: Alexander, Rose, correspondence and miscellaneous newspaper clippings regarding Forest Hill, ca. 1968-1988
- F. 28: Correspondence regarding McCormick's history of Forest Hill and Forest Hill School (with class photo, 1901), ca. 1970-1988
- F. 29: Fox, Jean (Paris, France), letter to John S. McCormick III, 8 May 1925
- F. 30: Goodman Wonder Show, souvenir yearbook and introductory script, 1938
- F. 31: Russell, Sarah (Fredericktown, Mo.), letters to John S. McCormick III, 1924-1926
- F. 32: Russell, Sarah (Fredericktown, Mo.), letters to John S. McCormick III, 1927-1928
- F. 33: Russell, Sarah (Fredericktown, Mo.), letters to John S. McCormick III, 1929-1932
- F. 34: Russell, Sarah (Fredericktown, Mo.), letters to John S. McCormick III, 1933-1954
- F. 35: "Cousin Sarah's [Sarah Russell] Letters to Cousin John S. McCormick III" [1924-1954], compiled and transcribed by Frances E. Hanson, 2004
- F. 36: Sanders, William D., letter to John S. McCormick III, 1989. Includes typescript diary of Albert Lee Reeves, n.d., and typescript from Coataway [Courtois] Baptist Church record book, 1829-1831
- F. 37: McCormick, John Steele, general correspondence, 1931-1975
- F. 38: McCormick, John Steele, general correspondence, 1976-1984
- F. 39: McCormick, John Steele, general correspondence, 1985-1999
- F. 40: Letters of recommendation written by John S. McCormick III, ca. 1964-1975
- F. 41: Greeting cards, ca. 1980s-1990s

**Folders 42-55: John Steele McCormick III, photograph collection**

- F. 42: Forest Hill farm, photographs, n.d.
- F. 43: Forest Hill School, photographs (negatives only), ca. 1910s
- F. 44: McCormick, Florence Russell (Mrs. James McCormick), photographs, n.d.
- F. 45: McCormick, James Walker, photographs, ca. 1900-1910s
- F. 46: McCormick, John Steele III, childhood photographs, ca. 1906-1908
- F. 47: McCormick, John Steele III, photographs of infancy, boyhood, pets, and pastimes (negatives only), ca. 1910s
- F. 48: McCormick, John Steele III, High School graduation photograph, 1924
- F. 49: McCormick, John Steele III, photographs of the Rhythm Aces (Bourbon, Mo.), ca. 1930s
- F. 50: McCormick, John Steele III, portrait as a performer with Goodman Wonder Show, 1936-1941
- F. 51: McCormick, John Steele III, portrait in pencil by Edward Marks, n.d.
- F. 52: McCormick poultry farm, photographs (negatives only), n.d.
- F. 53: McCormick/Russell family, miscellaneous photographs of friends, relatives, etc., n.d.
- F. 54: Polotowitz, Marie, photographs, n.d.
- F. 55: Miscellaneous views of Missouri, n.d.

**Folders 56-63: McCormick family papers**

- F. 56: McCormick, Florence Russell, certificate of membership in Daughters of the American Revolution (based on the service of Ensign John Russell), 1917
- F. 57: McCormick, James Walker, papers, ca. 1880s—1910s
- F. 58: McCormick, John Steele I, carte-de-visite photograph W. H. Unger, Ironton, Mo., n.d.
- F. 59: McCormick, Julia Sullivan (Mrs. Sidney D. McCormick), school catalog and papers, 1870-1915
- F. 60: McCormick, Sidney Dyer, scrapbook of poetry, ca. 1880s.
- F. 61: McCormick, Sidney Dyer, portrait and papers, ca. 1877-1923
- F. 62: Miscellaneous genealogical papers and obituaries [mostly McCormick-related], 1810-1992

F. 63: McCormick Poultry Farm, photocopy of the *Cuba Review*, 27 Feb 1919

**Folders 64-72: Claude C. Russell papers**

- F. 64: Photograph (carte-de-visite), 1877
- F. 65: Diary: 1 Jan 1896—26 Jan 1898; 1 Jan 1920—14 Nov 1921
- F. 66: Diary: 1 Jan—29 Dec 1920
- F. 67: Diary: 1 Jan—31 Dec 1922
- F. 68: Diary: 23 Jan—31 Dec 1923
- F. 69: Diary: 1 Jan—31 Dec 1925
- F. 70: Diary: 1 Jan—31 Dec 1926
- F. 71: Scrapbook compiled by John Steele McCormick as a gift to C. C. Russell, ca. 1930s-1940s
- F. 72: Biography of C. C. Russell by John Steele McCormick III, 1986

**Folders 73-81: Russell family genealogical and historical materials**

- F. 73: "Selections from the 'Old Times' articles by Theodore Pease Russell for the Iron County Register in the [18]80s." Holographic copies by John Steele McCormick.
- F. 74: Items concerning Theodore Pease Russell and "Old Times" articles
- F. 75: Russell-Guild Genealogical Charts, by John Steele McCormick III **OVERSIZE**
- F. 76: *Descendants of Theodore P. Russell and Emily Guild Russell*. Compiled by John Steele McCormick and Howard M. Johnson (1963)
- F. 77: "The Family of Thomas Russell," (3 genealogical papers), n.d.
- F. 78: Russell Family genealogical data (9 genealogical papers)
- F. 79: Miscellaneous genealogical papers, 1868-1992
- F. 80: Robert A. Pollock, "The Descendants of Col. Cyrus Russell and Rebecca Pease Russell," n.d.; "Russell Cemetery Association Listing of The Descendants of Col. Cyrus Russell and Rebecca Pease Russell, February 14, 1991."
- F. 81: Robert A. Pollock, correspondence, 1990-1993

**Folders 82-98: Russell family papers**

- F. 82: Miscellaneous papers, 1895-1991
- F. 83: Guild, Emily (Mrs. Theodore P. Russell), tintype photograph, n.d.
- F. 84: Guild family photographs
- F. 85: "Oak Hill," home of Theodore Pease Russell, cabinet photograph and stereoview, ca. 1870, 1890
- F. 86: Oat, Mary Calvert, a musical score by Joseph Haydn, *The Creation: An Oratorio Composed by Joseph Haydn, newly revised and edited by G. F. Harris* (London and New York, Boosey and Co., [1863]) from the collection of Mary Oat.
- F. 87: Oat/Russell, miscellaneous papers and photographs
- F. 88: Pease/Russell correspondence, 1809-1935
- F. 89: Pease, Jerusha (Pitkin), carte-de-visite photograph by Kellogg Brothers, Hartford, Conn., n.d.
- F. 90: Russell, David and Shirley, photographs (negatives only), n.d.
- F. 91: Russell, Florence Lucille, Certificate of Scholarship, St. Louis Public Schools, 1897
- F. 92: Russell, Florence Lucille, graduation announcement and diploma, Central High School (St. Louis, Mo.), January 1901 [the diploma is **OVERSIZE**]
- F. 93: Russell, Florence Lucille, art school sketches, 1910 **OVERSIZE**
- F. 94: Russell, Theodore Pease, carte-de-visite photograph, n.d.
- F. 95: Russell Cemetery Association, papers, 1993

- F. 96: Russell Family reunion, 1992
- F. 97: Russell family photographs (negatives only with partial identifications), n.d.
- F. 98: "Scene from Jim's (Charlie Russell's) toward Cousin Sanford's (& Fredericktown Road)," color print, n.d.

**Folders 99-107: Allied families: correspondence, genealogical information, and miscellaneous historical papers**

- F. 99: Holt Family Association of America, 1971-1989
- F. 100: Longmeadow (Mass.) Sesquicentennial, official souvenir book, 1933
- F. 101: Magill family, correspondence, 1859-1862
- F. 102: Rose, Nancy, deed to Ellzey H. Rose (St. Louis County, Mo.), 5 Aug 1852
- F. 103: Rose family, genealogical papers, 1981-1985
- F. 104: Society of the "Sons of the Revolution," application papers and certificate, 1916
- F. 105: Smith family, genealogical papers
- F. 106: Sullivan family, genealogical papers
- F. 107: Walker, William (Rogersville, Tenn.), letters to James W. McCormick, 1843-1857

**Folders 108-112: Miscellaneous papers and historical information**

- F. 108: Clippings of Rose Alexander's column "Dowler Mill," from Bourbon and Cuba newspapers, 1965-1994
- F. 109: Items concerning the Battle of Pilot Knob, Mo., 1913-1987
- F. 110: Leasburg Reunion, autograph and photograph album, ca. 1974
- F. 111: Missey, Harry H., and King, James, articles on the history of Crawford County, published in the *Bourbon Beacon*, 1991-1996
- F. 112: Orr, Florence, eulogy by Betty Hamlin Laureau, 1990

**Volumes 1-9: Photograph albums/Scrapbooks, 1936-1940**

- V. 01: Photograph album, 1937-1938  
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- V. 02: Photograph album/Scrapbook, 1936-1937  
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- V. 03: Photograph album/Scrapbook, Goodman Wonder Show, June-July 1937  
(Tennessee, Michigan, North Dakota)
- V. 04: Photograph album, August 1937  
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- V. 05: Photograph album, Goodman Wonder Show, ca. 1937  
(Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois)
- V. 06: Scrapbook, Goodman Wonder Show (Vol. 1), 1938
- V. 07: Scrapbook, Goodman Wonder Show (Vol. 2), 1938
- V. 08: Photograph album, Goodman Wonder Show/University of Wyoming, 1939  
Nebraska, South Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, Iowa), 1939
- V. 09: Photograph album, Goodman Wonder Show, 1940  
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**Volumes: 10-16: Scrapbooks, ca. 1910s-1980s**

- V. 10: Scrapbook bearing cover "Annual register of Supply Sources, 1913"  
Newspaper clippings mostly regarding the Forest Hill neighborhood, the McCormick Poultry Farm, and Sidney Dyer McCormick
- V. 11: Scrapbook bearing cover: "Year Book, 1922"  
This volume contains newspaper clippings from the *Bourbon Standard* of John S. McCormick's first writings on the Forest Hill neighborhood, later (1969) revised and

- published. The scrapbook also contains clippings of the Iron County memoirs of C. C. Russell
- V. 12: Scrapbook bearing cover “Universal Reference Guide,” ca. 1930s-1950s  
This contains memorabilia concerning the travel of John S. McCormick, and graduation announcements, news items, obituaries, and miscellaneous items from friends and acquaintances.
- V. 13: Scrapbook bearing note “A collection of valuable family memorabilia + important papers—much Russell/McCormick gen. information,” ca. 1940s—1970s
- V. 14: Scrapbook bearing note, “A few greeting cards from his loads of friends thru the years,” ca. 1950s—1980s (**OVERSIZE**)
- V. 15: Scrapbook containing clippings on music and famous composers, n.d.

*r964**21 July 2003**Frances E. Hanson**Gift***Index Cards****Index to Folders 1-112**

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