

McLean County Museum of History

F.M. Hall Collection

Processed by
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	2 Boxes
COLLECTION DATES:	1868-1917
RESTRICTIONS:	None
PROVENANCE:	Donation from Danvers Historical Society in July 2025
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	See also

Brief History

Francis Micajah (F.M.) Hall, later known as “Cage” Hall, was born in Todd County, KY, on March 25, 1833, to Rachel and Young Hall. The family settled in McLean County, IL in the spring of 1835. Hall married Jane Ellen Barnard in 1855, and the pair had eight children, four of whom lived past infancy. Hall was a prominent farmer near Danvers, and a member of the Masonic order. He remained in the Danvers area until his death on April 5, 1917.

F.M. Hall and the Hall family are associated with the early, unincorporated settlement / community of Wilkesborough / Wilksborough. It was laid out in 1836, with 70 lots and a village common or square. The small community flourished for a while, with a post office (1836-1861), blacksmith shop, and store. The growth of Concord (later Danvers), located one mile to the west, doomed Wilkesborough as a viable community.

Scope

The collection includes eight journals recording the daily life of F. M. Hall and his family, and a folder on general information about Hall. These diaries include accounts of life on his farm, politics, local news, significant events such as deaths and births, and Hall’s travels.

Box and Folder Inventory

Box 1

Folder 1: General Information

- 1.1.1 Collection of newspaper clippings concerning F. M. Hall of Wilksborough and Danvers, IL, 1866-1917.
- 1.1.2 Obituary for Francis Micajah “Cage” Hall, *Pantagraph*, 6 April 1917.
- 1.1.3 Gift agreement for donation by the Danvers Historical Society courtesy of Sharon Wolfe in July 2025.
- 1.1.4 Collection of historical information of Danvers, IL from three books.
- 1.1.5 Journal page removed from original journal, date is illegible.

Folder 2: Journal 1868-1876

First entry September 1868; final entry December 31, 1876

- Politics
- Farm business, renting property
- Weather and road conditions
- Father Hall horse theft

- Visits, meetings, church events
- Page 7 & 8 very faded
- Notes illnesses, funerals, christenings, death, injuries
- Trips to different towns around the area
- Local news
- Trip to Iowa to visit brother John Hall
- On page 26 different handwriting, November 29, 1869, note about faith and happiness, J. E. H. (Jane Ellen Hall, wife of F. M. Hall)
- Between pg. 62-63 handwritten note with mathematical equations on back of a small book page
- Trip to Philadelphia for centennial September 1976, then Mount Vernon
- News about children (Frank, Eva, Lydia, Mark, and Ellen), friends
- Between pg. 202-203 handwritten note, including a name and address
- Some religious fervor at the end
- Some farm accounting after daily journal entries
- Recipes for home remedies
- Adhered to back board of journal: “The Dying Wife” poem and another poem that is ripped

Folder 3: Journal 1877-1881

First entry January 1, 1877; final entry December 31, 1881

- 3 newspaper clippings adhered to book board: “Yes, we miss thee at Home.”, “Waiting and Watching”, and The Elements of Friendship”
- End sheet:
 - Small drawing
 - Another newspaper clipping pasted to page, poem written in memory of Belle Shorthose
 - 2 newspaper clippings: “About Sheet and Wool” and “Why He is a Democrat”
- Introduction to journal
- Pg. 1 Jan. 2, 1877 dedication of new Masonic Hall
- Comings and goings: Bloomington/Normal, Danvers
- Farm business, weather conditions, business with banks
- Politics
- Meetings: church
- Local news: funerals, illnesses, murders, deaths, rifts with people
- Visits from friends and family
- Pg. 13 May 16, 1877, agree to settle lawsuit (over land?: “Mother and Frank agrees with me Merriman (sp?) to settle our lawsuit. We are the lone ally of the Wilksboro property (illegible word) North of state Road and East of ours.”)
 - Next day: don’t settle on terms agreed to

- Day after that settle
- Mostly illegible
- Pg. 25, drama with Lydia: September 4, 1877 goes to Bloomington, refuses to come home, they go after her then leave her there. Ask God to forgive her: “May God forgive her and happy angels guide her to a better world than this before she is lost in wickedness”.
 - A few more similar lines
- Pg. 26 another settlement
- Court cases
- Between pg. 50-51 small paper of more journal entries
- Travel by train to Iowa, then Kansas
- Between pg. 178-179 folded flyer for discounts at Brown’s (grocery store?)
- Pages after entries include farm accounting

Folder 4: Journal 1882-1887

January 1, 1882, first entry; October 31, 1887 final entry

- Pg. 2 newspaper clipping of pie recipe, a written receipt, and a clipping of how to treat a “bone felon”
- More farm business
 - Has sheep
 - Rents part of farm
- Notes weather conditions
- Frank - son
- Local politics
- Visits, comings and goings
- Borrow from banks
- Trip to California
- Notes holidays and holiday dinners
- Errands
- Installed a telephone
- Injuries (hand, rat bite)
- Between pg. 298-299
 - Business card for G. W. Covert – Physician, Surgeon and Dentist in Whiteland, Ind.
 - Handwritten note from July 24, 1885, Danvers, notes money Mr. Hall owed

Folder 5: Journal 1887-1892

November 1887 first entry; August 6 1892 last entry

- Well digger, Father Hall died, railroad fence (lived near railroad?), sold cattle to Chicago (would go there), sold corn, clover hay, weather, records of selling cattle and

other farm activities (include traveling to other towns), injured back lifting wagon box out for a while, sold pigs, records, transactions, life with wife, went to local Democratic convention, Eva (daughter) visits, farmed oats, rented out some land, Charley?, birthdays, some local politics, leg injury 1891

- Between pages 48-49: Adams Express Company Farmington, ILL. card
- Jan. 30, 1889, pg. 63: it looks like someone else wrote an entry, handwriting much better
- Pg. 64-65, letter on McLean County Democratic Central Committee letterhead, addressed to Theodore Nelson (at Palmer House Chicago), First side Danvers Aug. 16, 1891 (looks like 1 but could not have been 1, letterhead says 1894) discusses politics. Second side from Danvers June 12, 1897, to ? Hays wrote about birth of some pigs
- Pg. 67 March 3rd, different handwriting, very melancholy
- Pg. 128-129: Eclectic Complete Book-Keeping by Ira Mayhew card
- Pg. 144-145, different handwriting, possibly wife recording farm activities
- Records of money received and paid in years at back of diary
- Recipe for cough syrup pg. 244; soft soap recipe pg. 246
- Between pg. 246-247 receipt(?) in account with C. B. Kirkpatrick, Wall Paper, Carpets, Curtains, Table Cutlery, China Glass and Queensware, Mirrors, Moulding, Etc. 502 North Main Street Bloomington May 14 1889
 - On pg. 247 note of materials used to paper their house in 1889
- Hand drawn map of farm? Property? On back board of book
 - Also short article about a cure for hog cholera pasted to the board
- Mostly illegible

Box 2

Folder 1: Journal 1893-1899

First entry August 7, 1893; Final entry December 31, 1899

- Possibly a receipt pinned to the first page
- Newspaper clipping “Fourteen Years’ Experience with Hog Cholera” adhered to page
- Handwriting mostly illegible
- Farm business
- Comings and goings
- Church events
- News about children: Frank (J. F. Hall), Eva, Lydia, and Mark
- Weather conditions
- Trial proceedings
- Visits
- Local news
- Illnesses, deaths, injuries
- Politics – delegate in democratic convention

- Between pg. 46-47, business card for F. C. Campbell, with The Davis Company, in Hannibal MO
- Court cases
- Between pg. 126-127, handwritten note from Ellen (possibly called his wife Ellen instead of Jane?) to Aunt Nannie (possibly Nancy as referenced in journal entries) asking for money as they are in desperate need of money or risk losing their home
- Between pg. 126-127 second handwritten note difficult to read but appears to be about a settlement from a court case, Danville November 2, 1897
- Between pg. 148-149 newspaper clipping “Facts of Record”, talking about President McKinley and silver coinage
- Between pg. 176-177 newspaper clipping asking for advice for health issues with a horse
- Between pg. 178-179
 - Newspaper clipping photograph of a young child in a field
 - List of names and towns on Democratic Congressional Committee letterhead
 - Live Stock Contract with Chicago & Alton Railroad Co.; J. F. Hall (son) listed as shipper aka person accompanying livestock to their destination, April 1884
 - A court summons for F. M. Hall and J. E. Hall (wife) with Susie J. Lamme as defendant and Christian D. Sass as plaintiff for a bill of complaint about property, dated August 6, 1913
 - A handwritten note concerning sales from 1896, with another note tucked inside possibly adding up assets and debts?
 - Hand drawn map of farm and neighboring property
 - Illegible handwritten note
 - A pamphlet concerning suggested changes going into the 20th century, written by A. M. Coffeen
- Between pg. 222-223 handwritten note “Hogs from J. E. Nafzign (not sure on spelling)”, back has pricing
- Pg. 223 owes money to someone named Otto from a loan possibly for a mortgage
- Pg. 224 writes about the last day of 1899, hoping for good luck and god's blessings for the family for the new year
- In back of diary, notes about money owed, crops profit
 - Pg. 240, notes on trial
- Last page: recipes, notes about giving items to people, train schedule

Folder 2: Journal 1900-1905

First entry May 1, 1900; Final entry August 18, 1905

- Statement from a pharmacy or doctor, “H. Parkhurst, M. D., Dr.”
- Folded letter to “Mrs. Kenian (sp?) Danvers Mcleain Co Ill. May 20 1899” from F. M. Hall and J. E. Hall

- Contents of letter are general greeting, remembering old times, hoping for a response
- Handwritten list of hog medicine
- Handwritten recipe
- Receipt from “Grand Leader – Vimont & Koehn, Bloomington, Ill. – 317 North Main Street”
- Bill from Woolen Mill Store
- Handwritten note to Mr. Brescher of Danvers from Eva J. Hall asking him to pay the Mr. Halls, December 6, 1899
- 2 smaller loose pages of journal entries
- Typed letter from J. F. Conrad in Chicago January, 1905, thanking recipient for patronage of his business and asking for it to continue
- Certificate of Delivery of cross-ties from The Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway Company to Danvers, Ill., May 31, 1895
- Receipt for second vein lump coal from the McLean County Coal Co. in Bloomington, Ill.
- Stock contract for F. M. Hall from The Ohio, Indiana & Western Railway Co. to ship forty head of cattle from Danvers to Chicago on August 14, 1889
 - Includes a return ticket
- Handwritten note about gold and the United States government
- Certificate of Delivery of cross-ties to Danvers on April 30, 1895
- Live stock contract from The Ohio, Indiana & Western Railway Co. to send 40 head of cattle from Danvers, Ill. to Chicago. Cattle received from J. W. Ewuis (sp?) on August 14, 1889
- Four newspaper pages from *The Weekly Welcome*, Vol. 7 No 37. David C. Cook Publishing Co., Elgin, Ill., & 36 Washington St., Chicago. Sept. 16, 1894.
- Newspaper clipping: “The Crime of 1873.”, *The Cincinnati Weekly Enquirer*, February 15, 1900.

Folder 3: Journal 1905-1909

First entry August 24 1905; Final entry December 31 1909

- Note on end sheet about Francis Micajah Hall from Danvers Historical Society
- First page, Jane Hall’s handwriting, “The Golden Cycle Fifty Years of wedded life” 1855-1905 August 19
 - Reveals F. M. Hall is more familiarly known as “Uncle Cage”
 - Gives family background including F. M. and Jane’s parents
 - Jane’s father “laid out a town and kept post office” at Wilkesboro
 - Nancy is Jane’s sister
 - Members of the Christian Church
 - F. M. Hall was a member of the Masonic fraternity, a Knight Templar

- Children: Frank, prosperous farmer; Mark; Lydia, married; Eva, single and lived with parents
- List of attendees of party and where they're from
- Farm business, weather conditions, errands
- Visits from family
- Travels
- Church activities
- Family news: illnesses,
- Between pg. 40-41 small, loose sheet of journal entries that appear to be from August 1905 (lists golden wedding which occurred in 1905 for 50th anniversary)
- School election 1907
- 75th birthday 1908 pt. 92
- Pg. 103-106, handwriting improved, may have had someone else write during injury
 - Wagon hit by train car, hurt back, cuts, and unconscious for a while
 - July 25-September 6
 - Many days were skipped
- Politics, democratic conventions
- More court cases
- Pg. 151 instructions to pickle pork side?

Folder 4: Journal 1913-1917

First entry May 12, 1913; final entry February 3, 1917

- Various tables of dates, laws, weights and measures, etc. on front board and end sheet
- Short introduction to journal – 80 years old
- Visits from family, family news: weddings, illnesses, births, deaths
- Comings and goings (mostly to Bloomington and Danvers)
- Farm business, weather conditions
 - Payments to bank
- Between pg. 6-7 handwritten note that includes numbers for cattle assets, losses
- Between pg. 48-49 large business card “Organized A. D. 1794 – Insurance for North America – Philadelphia – C. E. & J. B. Vance, Agents, Danvers, Ills.” Covered in ink splotches
- Local politics, various meetings (historical society, masonic lodge, church)
- Pg. 78 December 4, 1915 spoke at historical society meeting in Bloomington
- Pg. 80 December 25, 1915: different handwriting (possibly Jane Ellen's or Eva's?
 - Sick with grippe (influenza) may have had someone take over journaling for rest of diary
 - Later he is noted as going to Bloomington for treatment often
- Home renovations
- Between pg. 94-95 handwritten note of various names and cities they live in

- Notes first time women can vote for president
- Pg. 99 Dec. 31, 1916: talks about war in Europe, Wilson as president, high prices
 - “The last year Father has not written in his journal has been very poorley all year.”
- End sheet and back board of journal includes postal information