

## James Parks McCombs Papers

Born in 1836 in the Crab Orchard Township of Mecklenburg County, James Parks McCombs was the son of Joseph and Martha Park McCombs. His family claimed some prominence with connections to both the Parks and Morrison families of Mecklenburg County. Parks McCombs attended a private school along the Rocky River in Cabarrus County. He spent two years at Davidson College before entering and graduating from the New York Medical College. Upon his return to North Carolina, McCombs opened a practice in Taylorsville in Alexander County.

Shortly after starting his practice in Taylorsville, the Civil War began and McCombs enlisted. He received his appointment on September 26, 1862 and served as an Assistant Surgeon with the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Companies "F" and "S." On July 4, 1863, the final day of the battle of Gettysburg, McCombs was taken prisoner along with the Confederate wounded who were left behind. According to his papers, he received a pass in late July at the Susquehanna Camp at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Apparently McCombs received some special treatment with the most likely reason being his profession. Confined at various localities, he eventually arrived at Fort McHenry, Maryland on August 10, 1863. McCombs remained there until November 21, 1863 when he was exchanged for other prisoners. Returning to his company, McCombs remained in service until he was paroled with his regiment at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865.

With the end of the war, McCombs returned to Mecklenburg County and established a practice in Crab Orchard Township. Later he formed partnership with Dr. Robert Gibbons and moved to Charlotte and the two remained partners until 1883. McCombs would form another partnership with Gibbons' son in 1897. Known primarily as an obstetrician, McCombs was well respected for his work with the poor. One can indicate from his obituary that people remembered McCombs for his gentleness and generosity.

Besides practicing medicine, McCombs became deeply involved in the gold mining industry in Mecklenburg and Cabarrus County as well as some mines in South Carolina. Over the course of thirty-six years, he leased or owned seven different mines. Most of them yielded barely enough gold to cover his expenses. Based on the papers, McCombs endeavored to attract New York and British investors. The latter were quite prevalent in the North Carolina mining industry during the late nineteenth century.

A bachelor for most of his life, McCombs married Ferebe or Feribe Guion shortly before his death in 1901. His wife gave birth to a daughter, Annie Parks, shortly after his death. Interesting enough, Annie Parks McCombs became a physician like her father. By 1930,

she and her aunt, Constance Guion practiced medicine together in Manhattan, New York.

Upon his death, his mining ventures were sold.

## **Series Description**

### **Series 1, Reed Gold Mine Papers. 1876-1890.**

3 inches. 102 folders in one box, 123 items arranged chronologically.

This series contains correspondence, payrolls, deeds and other related papers that describe McCombs's involvement in the Reed Gold Mine, near Stanfield, North Carolina during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The bulk of the correspondence is from the supervisor at the mine, Robert Gadd. Descriptions of work at the mine, the personal problems of the workers and McCombs's involvement at the mine are the main subjects of each letter. A few letters concern William Gadd, brother of Robert, who was jailed for murder. This was the result of an ongoing feud between the two brothers. Payroll sheets identify workers, their occupations and the salaries they received. The receipts to local merchants give some indication as to the type of mining that took place, the expense involved and the number of merchants in the area that sold mining supplies.

### **Series 2, Miscellaneous Correspondence.**

Eight folders arranged chronologically.

Small sets of letters from various individuals concerning business investments.

### **Series 2A, Miscellaneous Mine Receipts 1881-1900.**

Sixteen folders. Arranged chronologically.

A number of receipts that provide ample evidence of the number of businesses that sold mining supplies and the impact the mining industry had in the Charlotte community during this time. Items are listed as well as their cost, which are indicative of the expenses and activities occurring at the mine.

### **Series 2B, Correspondence from Thomas Kinnan, 1877.**

Six folders arranged chronologically.

Letters from Thomas Kinnan who worked for *The Herald* in Boston. Most of the correspondence focuses on the Willard mining process that Kinnan was developing. He was looking for investors.

### **Series 2C, Medical papers, 1877-1883.**

Nine folders arranged chronologically.

According to this obituary, McCombs kept few medical records. The papers consist of letters from various agencies requesting information and services, and receipts from the Mecklenburg County Tax Office for his license to practice medicine. A case history of a splenectomy he performed; a list of pensioners McCombs examined and other correspondence, including with Jane Wilkes, founder of Good Samaritan Hospital, the first medical facility, reportedly in the United States, for African Americans.

**Series 2D, Miscellaneous correspondence.**

Four folders, eleven items arranged chronologically.

Various letters from individuals regarding business activities. Letters from Robert Johnston. Dr. Alfred C. Post, and S. K. Kane. Also includes a letter from J.L. Rodman to Bruce Craven with a map of President Andrew Jackson's birthplace.

**Series 2E, Various financial papers (1882-1901).**

Eleven folders arranged chronologically.

Various receipts for items purchased by McCombs provide details concerning his personal tastes and habits.

**Series 2F, Checks.**

One folder, eight items arranged chronologically.

Payments by check to various businesses where McCombs shopped.

**Series 2G, Bank book, 1885.**

One item.

Account with Merchants and Farmers National Bank in Charlotte, North Carolina.

**Series 2H, Mortgage Agreement, 1877.**

One item.

Mortgage agreement between W.V. Dunn and William Todd.

**Series 2I, Joseph McCombs Estate.**

Two folders, ten items arranged chronologically.

Papers granting James Parks McCombs power of attorney to handle his father's affairs. Also includes receipts for his father's debts that were paid by James Parks McCombs.

**Series 2J, Mary Wallis Estate.**

Four folders arranged chronologically.

Mary Wallis wife of E. Wallis, was a patient of Dr. McCombs. The papers indicate he served as the executor of her estate.

**Series 2K, Civil War personal papers, 1861-1865.**

Four folders arranged chronologically.

Contains an interesting mix of civilian and military papers, including a petition from local citizens, a military pass and two lists for the 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

**Series 2L, Lawsuit, 1897.**

One item.

Final opinion in the case of J.P. Alexander and D. A. Johnston vs. James Parks McCombs.

**Series 2M, Correspondence of Mrs. Ferebe McCombs.**

Eight folders arranged chronologically.

Contains the correspondence of prospective buyers for some of the real estate left by Dr. James Parks McCombs following his death in 1901.

**Series 3, Brewer Mine, 1881-1886.**

Three inches, thirty-eight folders arranged chronologically.

Primarily a day-to-day account of activities at the Brewer Mine in Chesterfield, South Carolina. Supervisor E. Motz wrote about the work at the mine and the hopes of striking it rich. Provides good details of the mechanics of mining in this part of the state.

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R.S. Harris to Ferebe McCombs regarding mineral properties, 10 January 1903.	2	2M:1
R.S. Harris to Ferebe McCombs concerning the Reed Mine, 2 February 1903.	2	2M:2
Ed Rames to Ferebe McCombs with mine inquiry, 6 May 1903.	2	2M:3
J.N. Johnston to Ferebe McCombs with a mine inquiry, 8 June 1903.	2	2M:4
J.C. Bates to Ferebe McCombs concerning Brewer Mine stocks, 14 July 1903.	2	2M:5
R.S. Harris to Ferebe McCombs, 19 January 1906.	2	2M:6
Two receipts paid by Ferebe McCombs to Wadsworth and Sons, 1900.	2	2M:7, 8

**Brewer Mine, Chesterfield County, South Carolina, 1880-1897**

Correspondence from E. Motz to McCombs re: mine news, undated.	3	3:1
Correspondence from E. Motz to McCombs about an employee, undated.	3	3:2
Correspondence from F.E. Chatard to McCombs about a partnership, 16 September 1880.	3	3:3
Correspondence from E. Motz to McCombs with news of the mine, 15 January 1881.	3	3:4
Correspondence from E. Motz to McCombs with news of the mine, 24 January 1881.	3	3:5
Correspondence from E. Motz to McCombs, in from London describes his activities with the viewpoint of an American businessman abroad, 13 April 1881.	3	3:6
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs in London about attempt to sell Brewer Mine depended on an examination of the ore, 25 April 1882.	3	3:7
Correspondence from Motz still in London to McCombs with news from his attempts to get a buyer, 12 May 1882.	3	3:8
Correspondence from Motz still in London to McCombs with news from his attempts to get a buyer, 23 May 1882.	3	3:9
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs, 23 July 1882.	3	3:10
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs regarding the formers' travel plans, 18 August 1882.	3	3:11
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs about mine, 18 February	3	3:12

1883.		
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs about sale of mine, 2 March 1883.	3	3:13
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs regarding financial news, April 1883.	3	3:14
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs requesting money, 27 December 1883.	3	3:15
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs with mine news, 19 February 1884.	3	3:16
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs with mine news, 26 February 1884.	3	3:17
Correspondence from E.W. Lyon to McCombs about partial sale of mine, 26 April 1884.	3	3:18
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs with mine news, 13 December 1884.	3	3:19
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs with a monetary request, 25 March 1885.	3	3:20
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs about mine business, 4 May 1885.	3	3:21
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs regarding a bank check, 31 October 1885.	3	3:22
[Illegible] to McCombs about photographs at the Brewer Mine, 16 August 1886.	3	3:23
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs with financial news, 19 December 1885.	3	3:24
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs with mine news, 18 June 1885.	3	3:25
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs regarding Western Union cable, 1 October 1886.	3	3:26
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs with financial news, 15 January 1887.	3	3:27
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs concerning a sick infant, 19 May 1887.	3	3:28
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs about an illness in his family and Motz is sick too, 30 June 1887.	3	3:29
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs regarding an inquiry about the mine, 13 January 1887.	3	3:30
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs concerning stock shares, 12 October 1888.	3	3:31
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs requesting his signature,	3	3:32



20 August 1889.		
Correspondence from J.K. Owen to McCombs concerning a monkey, 17 April 1893.	3	3:33
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs describing his injuries, 8 November 1897.	3	3:34
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs requesting a skin graft, 30 November 1897.	3	3:35
Correspondence from Motz to McCombs regarding an experimental procedure with examining ore and makes remarks about his (Motzs') injury, 12 January 1898.	3	3:36
Receipt from Motz to McCombs for \$100.00 from Brewer Mine, but not related to mine activities, 2 November 1885.	3	3:37
Correspondence from Motz to Brewer. Apparently Mollie, possibly Motzs' wife was an alcoholic and the letter describes her behavior, 5 December 1884.	3	3:38

#### **Ferris Mine in Mallard Creek, North Carolina, 1877-1901**

Dunlap to McCombs inquiring if McCombs wanted to sell his interests in the Ferris Mine and how the mine was progressing. References to two men, Body and Thomas, supervisors at the mine. Dunlap stresses importance of making it a working mine. Believed attitudes improving in North Carolina toward mining. Mentions the arrival of Mr. Crumlish. Mentioned to McCombs that he, Dunlap, had New York buyers for any mine property that McCombs wanted to sell, 4 November 1877.	3	4:1
Dunlap to McCombs in which he mentions problems with Misters Body, Crumlish and Robert Gadd. Currently working to sell Rudisell Mine, 16 November 1877.	3	4:2
Dunlap to McCombs where describes the new arrangements for payments of Ferris Mine, 19 November 1877.	3	4:3
Dunlap to McCombs where he advises McCombs on how to improve ventilation in the mine, 22 November 1877.	3	4:4
Dunlap to McCombs and he informs the latter the New York investors want to buy the Ferris Mine and Dr. McCombs could recoup his money, 23 November 1877.	3	4:5
Dunlap to McCombs to request McCombs send records on Ferris Mine to Griffith and Dumont, 23 November 1877.	3	4:6
Dunlap to McCombs in which he mentions that the investors' aid in buying new equipment to improve the mine's efficiency. Urged McCombs to talk to Mrs. Ferris, 28 November 1877.	3	4:7
Dunlap to McCombs about problems with the mine and the	3	4:8

machinery, 3 December 1877.		
Dunlap to McCombs thanking him for something. The former wanted to know who was in charge since Body, left and that he needed papers for a report to Professor Hanna. Also requesting samples of supharate [sic], 5 December 1877.	3	4:9
Dunlap to McCombs informs him that the small amount of gold is not worth the money spent to mine it, 12 December 1877.	3	4:10
Dunlap to McCombs thanking him for the report but needs additional information. Dunlap wants a mining engineer to evaluate the mine, 13 December 1877.	3	4:11
Dunlap to McCombs in which he begs McCombs for information and assures McCombs that he, Dunlap, is on his way with money to pay the bills and secure the New York investor, 20 December 1877.	3	4:12
Dunlap to McCombs about the Wall Street investors. Body had been paid. Writes about developing stock capital at \$600,00 and working capital of \$250,000, 24 December 1877.	3	4:13
Dunlap to McCombs, 2 January 1878.	3	4:14
Dunlap to McCombs, 5 January 1878.	3	4:15
Dunlap to McCombs about mine stock and New York investors, 10 January 1878.	3	4:16
Dunlap to McCombs, 11 January 1878.	3	4:17
Dunlap to McCombs, 30 January 1878.	3	4:18
Dunlap to McCombs, 31 January 1878.	3	4:19
Dunlap to McCombs concerning stock options for mine and dealings with Mrs. Ferris, 1 February 1878.	3	4:20
Dunlap to McCombs reassures McCombs that there is available capital for the mine. Requests McCombs be patient, 3 February 1878.	3	4:21
Dunlap to McCombs requesting help in convincing Mrs. Ferris to take \$4000.00 in cash for her interest in the mine, 6 February 1878.	3	4:22
Dunlap to McCombs to offer him \$30,000.00 for stock interest in mine which McCombs paid \$9000.00. Mrs. Ferris was offered cash. Seems McCombs was wary of offer, 6 February 1878.	3	4:23
Dunlap to McCombs with questions about stock news concerning Gaston County property, 11 February 1878.	3	4:24
Dunlap to McCombs – telegrams with a \$2000 offer for Gaston property, 11 February 1878.	3	4:25
J.A. Babcock to McCombs expressing interest in the Ferris Mine,	3	4:26

12 February 1878.		
Dunlap to McCombs in which he outlines the sell of the Ferris Mine plus awarding stock options, 13 February 1878.	3	4:27
Dunlap to McCombs with a continuation of the deal, 15 February 1878.	3	4:28
Dunlap to McCombs assuring the latter would receive \$2000, 15 February 1878.	3	4:29
J.A. Babcock to McCombs with stock news, 18 February 1878.	3	4:30
S.K. Kane to McCombs with information about the Stewart and Ferris Mine, 29 March 1878.	3	4:31
McCombs leased to J. Howard Livingston of New York and Samuel J. Warren tracts of the Ferris Mine with machinery for the sum of \$15,000 and \$5,000 in stock, 3 May 1880.	3	4:32
Quit Claim between W.E. Alexander and McCombs in which the former relinquishes interest in the Ferris Mine, 8 August 1881.	3	4:33
Quit Claim between J. Spencer and McCombs in which the former relinquished all interest in Ferris Mine, 8 August 1881.	3	4:34
Loan agreement between John A. Ferris and James Parks McCombs, 15 January 1889.	3	4:35
Mine lease from C.S. Pritchett and McCombs concerning Ferris Mine tracts, 1 July 1900.	3	4:36
C.S. Pritchett for Grace Ferris relinquishing mineral rights to McCombs, 16 July.	3	4:37
Mine lease between John A. Ferris and McCombs for Ferris Mine that was never signed. Two copies, 1 October 1900.	3	4:38
Lease agreements between W.L. Ferris, M.W. Ferris and Dr. McCombs regarding mining rights to Ferris Mine, 1 March 1901.	3	4:39
Payrolls of the Ferris Mine listing the names and wages of each worker (sixteen items), undated.	3	4:40-56
List of supplies for Ferris Mine, undated.	3	4:57
Correspondence from J.A. Babcock to Dunlap concerning Ferris Mine and may refer to McCombs, 8 February 1898.	3	4:58
James P. McCombs sold Ferris Mine to H.H. Crevelish [sic]. The deal probably did not go through because McCombs still the mine owner in the 1880s, 21 July 1877.	3	4:59
<b>Garris Mine, 1894</b>		
McCombs sold 1/3 interest of the Garris Mine to John A. Ferris, 11 April 1894.	3	5:1
Deed between Samuel E. Garris and John A. Ferris for a land and mining tract to the Garris Mine for 1/10 of gold mined, 12 April	3	5:2

1894.

John Henderson and others sold fifteen acres of land to John A. Ferris, 17 April 1894. 3 5:3

Deal between C.S. Pritchett, et.al. to John for fifty-four acres of land, undated. 3 5:4

**Black Gold Mine – Mecklenburg County North Carolina, 1877-1898**

Deed between William McCombs and James Parks McCombs and C. Turner for the Black Mine, 10 May 1877. 3 6:1

Deed between William McCombs and James Parks McCombs and C. Turner for the Black Mine, 1881. 3 6:2

Deed between McCombs and C. Turner for the Black Mine, 9 December 1881. 3 6:3

Letter from Burwell and Walters to McCombs confirming the latter's ownership of the Black Mine, 1 February 1882. 3 6:4

Survey of Black Mine done by M.D.L. Biggers for William McCombs, 13 April 1882. 3 6:5

James McCombs receives power of attorney for William McCombs, 20 April 1882. 3 6:6-7

S.W. Valentine to McCombs providing information on Brewer Mine, 22 August 1882. 3 6:8

V.W. Pilsifer to McCombs with questions concerning Black Mine, 2 January 1886. 3 6:9

W.G. Davis to McCombs inquiring about mining locations, 11 November 1887. 3 6:10

Deed between William McCombs and James McCombs for the Black Mine, 1 January 1898. 3 6:11

**Stewart and Henderson Mines, 1878**

History of the Stewart Mine, undated. 3 7:1

Deed between Nathaniel Henderson and James McCombs for the Henderson Mine, January 1878. 3 7:2

Letter from S.K. Kane to McCombs concerning attempts to get clear titles to the Henderson-Stewart Mines, 23 February 1878. 3 7:3

**North State Mining Company, 1876**

Deed between Frederick W. Rupell and McCombs for the company, land and machinery belonging to North State Mining Company, 4 March 1876. 3 8:1

**Jackson Mine Moore County, North Carolina, 1896**

Mining agreement between George King of New York and McCombs for the Jackson Mine in Moore County, North Carolina, 3 9:1

11 December 1896.

### **Miscellaneous Mining Letters, 1881-1901**

Correspondence from Thomas Chatard [sic] to McCombs, 22 May 1881.	3	10:1
Unidentified Correspondence, 25 April 1882.	3	10:2
Letter between L.C. McLelland and McCombs requesting information about gold mine, 4 July 1882.	3	10:3
E.W. Lyon to McCombs concerning the Brewer, Ferris and Reed Mines, 30 April 1884.	3	10:4
Correspondence from W.G. Douglas to McCombs concerning mine business and stamp mill, 6 July 1885.	3	10:5
Correspondence from W.G. Douglas to McCombs regarding the sale of a mine, 8 December 1897.	3	10:6
Letter from C.E. Farley [sic] to McCombs, 13 December 1897.	3	10:7
Letter from W.G. Davis regarding problems at mine in Ophir in Montgomery, North Carolina, 21 December 1897.	3	10:8
Correspondence from William Young Westervelt of Case & Westervelt (Mining Engineers) describing their operation to McCombs, 13 January 1898.	3	10:9
Letter from W.G. Davis to McCombs about work at the mine in Ophir in North Carolina, 14 May 1898.	3	10:10
Correspondence from W.G. Davis to McCombs concerning transporting machinery to Ophir, 17 May 1898.	3	10:11
Letter from J.W. Gilchrist to McCombs regarding shipment of ore, 20 December 1898.	3	10:12
S.J. Warren to McCombs about activities of a mine, 20 March 1901.	3	10:13

### **Deeds & Other Papers, 1871, 1894, 1897**

Letter from A.J. Overton to McCombs about payment for Garrison Mine, 11 June 1897.	3	11:1
Deed for McGinn Mine in Mecklenburg County, 18 October 1871.	3	12:1
Payroll for Surface Hill Mine, 7 July 1894.	3	13:1
Payroll for Surface Hill Mine, 4 July 1894.	3	13:2
Payroll for Surface Hill Mine, 28 July 1894.	3	13:3
Payroll for Surface Hill Mine, 11 August 1894.	3	13:4
Payroll for Surface Hill Mine, undated.	3	13:5
Survey of plot in Mecklenburg County by C.A. Spratt for McCombs, 1894.	3	14:1

### **High Shoals Property, Gaston County, North Carolina, 1881**

From S.Y. Wright to McCombs regarding sale of property at High	3	15:1
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Shoals, 16 July 1881.

From Thomas J. Grier to McCombs advising the latter to extend his option on High Shoals property, 8 October 1881. 3 15:2

From S.Y. Wright to McCombs about the failure of the property to sale, but will try another sale with the New York investors, 11 November 1881. 3 15:3

**Assay Reports Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, 1876, 1881, 1894-1895, 1897, 1901**

Report by G.C. Thompson for 22 ounces valued at \$288.00, 21 July 1876. 3 16:1

Report by George B. Hanna, the Charlotte Assay Office for \$32.15, 27 August 1880. 3 16:2

Ore from Black Mine valued at \$62.00 a ton by the Branch Mint, 8 August 1881. 3 16:3

Ore from unknown mine valued at \$45.05 per ton by D.A. Tompkins Company. Stuart Cramer, assayer, 12 July 1894. 3 16:4

Report by W.E. Ardrey, Assayer at Charlotte Branch of U.S. Assay Office at \$59.00 per ton, 14 August 1894. 3 16:5

Report by J.P. Ardrey, Charlotte Assay Office, one bar was valued at \$37.39, 20 August 1894. 3 16:6

Report by W.E. Ardrey, Charlotte Assay Office for \$164.10, 30 August 1894. 3 16:7

Report by W.E. Ardrey, Charlotte Assay Office for gold valued at \$102.80, 4 September 1894. 3 16:8

Report by W.E. Ardrey, Charlotte Assay Office for \$49.75, 10 September 1894. 3 16:9

Ore from unknown mine valued at \$15.40 per ton by Stuart Cramer, assayer, 18 December 1894. 3 16:10

Report by F.W. Carnahan at Miner's Assay Office for \$108.00, 13 May 1895. 3 16:11

Report by W.E. Ardrey, Charlotte Assay Office for \$115.55, 16 May 1895. 3 16:12

Report by W.E. Ardrey, Charlotte Assay Office for \$152.25, 27 May 1895. 3 16:13

Report by W.E. Ardrey, Charlotte Assay Office for \$59.45, 5 July 1895. 3 16:14

Report by W.E. Ardrey, Charlotte Assay Office for \$54.25, 5 July 1895. 3 16:15

Report by Curtis Alexander at the Assay Office of Consolidated Kansas City Smelting and Refining, 29 November 1897. 3 16:16

Letter from George B. Hanna, Assayer of U.S. Office at Charlotte to McCombs regarding samples of Garris and the Ferris Mine, 3 January 1901.	3	16:17
<b>More Miscellaneous, 1832</b>		
Deed between J. Humphrey Bissell and the Mecklenburg Gold Mining Company for the Capps Mine and the St. Catherine Gold Mine, 18 December 1832.	3	17:1
Blank mine lease agreements – three items, undated.	3	18:1-3
Various land deals – five items, variable.	3	19:1-5
<b>Ephemera, 1886</b>		
Cabinet card of Dr. James Parks McCombs with a lock of his hair, undated.	3	20:1
Ten tintypes featuring mining process at the Brewer Mine, c. 1886.	3	20:2-11
Three cabinet cards of Brewer Mine, c. 1886.	3	20:12-15