

McGee Family Bible

This Bible belonged to Mrs. James H. McGee who was a member of one of the prominent families of early Kansas City.

Descriptive Summary

Title: McGee Family Bible

Dates: published 1816

Size: 1 Bible, 1 box

Location: SC33-1

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: Unrestricted access.

Terms governing use and reproduction: The pages of the Bible may not be photocopied due to preservation concerns.

Acquisition information: Gift, n.d., Eleanor McGee, to the Missouri Valley Historical Society.

Custodial history: It appears that this Bible was given at some point to the Missouri Valley Historical Society and that the library acquired it with the acquisition of the records of the society. Complete provenance is not available.

Citation note: McGee Family Bible (SC33-1), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

Collection Description

Biographical/Historical note

According to newspaper clippings found in the Bible, Mrs. James (Eleanor) McGee was born in Frederick County, Virginia on October 10, 1793. She married James H. McGee in 1812 in Shelby County, Kentucky. The family came to Clay County, Missouri in 1827 and moved in 1828 to Jackson County living in the area known as McGee's Addition. Supposedly their house was the first brick house built in the county.

"Few persons have seen so much of the growth of the West as Mrs. McGee. That any one has been living among us that saw Kansas City before the Indian title was extinguished, or rather saw where it is, when not a white man save an army officer or a trapper had ever been west of it, when all was a wilderness from St. Charles to the Pacific, can hardly be realized. Yet this woman saw it all, and was part of all the wonderful change." Her husband and sons Col. E.M. McGee, Fry P. McGee and Menard McGee died before her. She appears to have died on November 22, 1880, at the home of her son Mabilon W. McGee.

Scope and content note

The McGee Family Bible is a large, King James version of the Bible containing the Old and New Testaments as well as the Apocrypha. It was published in 1816 in Philadelphia and contains 1,074 pages. This Bible belonged to Mrs. James H. McGee, a member of a prominent early Kansas City family. The only family information in this Bible is found on the verso of the New Testament page. It reads "Elenor Brisco was born on the 26th of August 1818."

A newspaper obituary for Eleanor McGee is pasted in the front cover of the Bible and numerous loose, miscellaneous items were found in different pages of the book. These things were removed and placed in a folder. Items found include a newspaper clipping describing the funeral of Eleanor (Mrs. James) McGee, a lock of hair, pressed flowers, pieces of fabric and patterns, a partial letter, page from *Harper's Bazar* dated September 18, 1869, a receipt for F. M. McGee dated 1849, etc. A name plate is loose and reads "Library of the Kansas City Historical Society, Bible of Mrs. James H. McGee, wife the first American to take out a Government land grant in K.C., presented by Miss Eleanor McGee." This Bible may have come to the Kansas City Public Library with the Missouri Valley Historical Society records.

Processed by Special Collections Librarian Sara Nyman, August 1992.