Finding Aid to the
James Holes Family Papers

Holes, James, 1845-1916
James Holes Family Papers, 1875-1937
1.4 linear ft.
Collection number: Mss 211

Biography Scope and Content Box and Folder List

OVERVIEW

Links: Finding aid to the James Holes Family Photograph Collection

Access: The collection is in off-site storage. A 24-hour turn-around is required to make the records available for use at the Institute Research Room. The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Bernard Holes, Hunter, N.D., 1989 (Acc. 2553) and Betty Holes, 1999 (Acc. 2572).

Property rights: The Institute for Regional Studies owns the property rights to this collection.

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Citation: [Identification of item]. James Holes Family Papers, MS 211, Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

James Holes was one of the earliest settlers at Fargo, N.D., establishing a farm on the north edge of town in 1871. He had visited the Red River Valley in 1868 and again in the summer of 1869. Mr. Holes was born January 29, 1845 in Bradford County, Pennsylvania to parents James and Mary (Hibbert) Holes,

natives of Derbyshire, England. At age five the family moved to Oswego, New York where he was educated and lived sixteen years. At age twenty-one he moved west to St. Cloud, Minnesota and purchased land. In 1871 he was sent by the Puget Sound Company to hold land for the company on the site where the Northern Pacific Railway was to cross into Dakota Territory (the present site of Fargo). The company made other arrangements, but Mr. Holes did purchase a land claim from Ole Hansen on which he built his farm at the northern edge of Fargo. He also had other land holdings in Cass County near Hunter, N.D. For six years prior to his death he was the North Dakota and Montana agent for the Emerson Wild Oats Separator Company.

James Holes married Rhoda Harrison in 1889. She was a native of Wisconsin. They had three children, James, Bernard, and Marguerite. Mrs. Holes was a champion for the poor of the city. She died in 1908. Mr. Holes died in Fargo on June 2, 1916. They were buried at St. Cloud, Minnesota. After his death their children, James and Marguerite, managed the estate, and the James Holes Company was established. The impressive Holes house, built in 1879, still stands, now surrounded by other Fargo homes. The house's address is now in the 1200 block of 5th Street North.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **James Holes Family Papers** include a variety of documents and other records related to the family. The collection has been organized into five series, Correspondence, James Holes Company, Bernard R. Holes, Legal Document, and Subject File. The initial donation of papers was by Bernard Holes, a grandson of James Holes. Mrs. Holes made a donation in 1999 after the death of her husband. The two donations have been combined into this one collection. They give a nice glimpse into the life and business affairs of the Holes family.

The **Correspondence Series** is made up of two sets of correspondence. The first correspondence file includes photocopies of two letters (1886 & 1887) to Andrew Holes regarding family history. There is a postcard from his nephew A.J. Holes from St. Cloud and a series of letters to Andrew from his brothers at St. Cloud regarding the estate of their mother, and the placing of a stone monument at the grave site. A second correspondence file contains letters to James Holes. One is in Norwegian from Kristian Isakson Holes dated May 3, 1886. Another letter is dated July 17, 1886. This letter is a promissory note from his mother, Mary Holes to James Holes regarding her coming to stay with him, and paying $3.00 a week for her keep.

The **James Holes Company Series** holds information regarding the company's business dealings. There is a correspondence file that contains letters between the James Holes Co. and other companies with which they did business. There is also a contract for deed for the James Holes Co. to the Park District of the City of Fargo dated October 3, 1922. The James Holes Company division file has court papers pertaining to the split of the company between Bernard Holes & Mr. and Mrs. Charles Finkle, on August 25, 1939. The Property Sales folder contains a Holes First Addition price list. This is a small four-page pamphlet issued by The Amerland Co. of Fargo. Inside is a price listing by block and lot. Some have been crossed out in red pencil. On the back are the sales terms. There is also a map of the Holes First Addition. This folder also contains numerous letters and receipts regarding the sales of the Holes

property. There are four leather-bound ledgers from the James Holes Company of Fargo, listed as "jobbers of Emerson Wild Oats separators and grain testers for North Dakota and Montana." They document, for the years 1914 to 1920, the business transactions of the company regarding the sales of the Riddle Separator and screens. By the number of accounts given in the ledgers it is apparent that they conducted an extensive business with dealers across North Dakota and into Montana. There are also five leather-bound journals from years 1914 to 1920. These list the cash receipts, shipments and orders of the James Holes Co. for these years.

The **Bernard H. Holes Series** contains a Fire Loss Statements file, which contains a copy of a newspaper clipping about the fire, itemized statements, and letters from Warner and Company regarding the fire that destroyed the Bernard Holes home near Hunter on March 13, 1942. The North Dakota State Water Commission Application to Drain file gives information on the drainage of Bernard Holes Jr.'s property near Hunter, N.D. in 1977. There is included in this, a high altitude photo of this piece of property. The Oil & Gas Lease file is dated December 31, 1938 and grants a lease to Bernard Holes for the royalties and rents from an oil field in Montana. Also in this series is a World War II era Transport Mileage Ration card belonging to Bernard H. Holes, with several stamps left intact.

The **Legal Documents Series** has an abstract of titles file containing three titles from the years 1883, 1891, and 1892, and a letter from William J. Clapp, attorney at law regarding three abstract of titles. The Northern Pacific Railroad Co. deeds to James Holes file contains three deeds and one contract between Charlemagne Tower of the Northern Pacific Railroad Co. and James Holes in 1875 and 1878. There are two power of attorney papers for Paul D. Davenport (1879), and George R. McGee (1880) authorizing S. B. Pinney as their power of attorney. The Warranty Deeds folder contains fourteen deeds ranging from the dates 1871 to 1920.

The **Subject File Series** has a clippings file, which contains four newspaper clippings regarding James Holes, a photograph of his brothers, and a photograph of his brother Andrew Holes' Moorhead home before being torn down. There is also a copy of an advertisement in Hunter, N.D.*'s The Eye* (1888) newspaper regarding the American Champion Road Machine, sold by James Holes, general agent. The Court Papers file (1898) holds papers regarding the case of The Red River Valley National Bank vs. James Holes, Terrence Martin, C. B. Thimens, and H. Sorenson regarding a failure to pay on a promissory note. The family history material consists of three handwritten pages written on Andrew Holes' stationery (undated). They document the emigration of the Holes family from England to America, fighting in the American Revolution, and later generations. The document is incomplete; the last page ending in mid sentence. The funerals file contains information regarding the deaths of James Holes' parents, James Holes, Sr. and Mary Holes. There is a detailed account of Mary Holes' death, and the transfer of her body to St. Cloud for burial. There are also receipts for the re-interment of James Holes Sr.'s body from Oswego, N.Y. to St. Cloud. The marriage certificate of James Holes to Rhonda Harrison can also be found in series, dated July 20, 1887 in Fargo, Dakota Territory. The Riverside Cemetery Plot file contains the receipt for the purchase of the lot by James Holes in 1911, a perpetual care contract for Bernard Holes, Jr., with a hand drawn diagram of the lot, and a quit claim deed between Bernard Holes, Jr. and Margaret Holes Finkle. Another file holds James Holes' will, dated May 27, 1916. Along with this will are court papers documenting the wills' execution on January 26, 1918. For anyone doing research on the history of Fargo and Cass County, the scrapbook may be of some particular interest. The covers are

homemade wood with an old decal on the cover. It contains *Fargo Forum* articles from 1949 to 1956, including many articles from the 1950 diamond jubilee edition. Most articles were written by Roy P. Johnson, but other authors include J.V. McCarthy and Louis Dussere. Some clippings in this scrapbook document the life of James Holes.

SEPARATIONS RECORD

Nine photographs of the James Holes farm in Fargo have been added to Institute Collection Photo 2093.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box/Folder	Contents
1/1	Finding aid, and Biographical material
	Correspondence Series
1/2	Andrew Holes, 1886-1888
1/3	James Holes, 1886
	James Holes Company Series
1/4	Contract for deed to the Park District of the City of Fargo, Oct. 3, 1922
1/5	Correspondence business dealings, 1915-1922
1/6	James Holes Co. business cards
1/7	James Holes Co. division, 1940
	Journals—
4/1	Sept. 1914 to Sept. 1920 Cash Receipts
4/2	Sept. 1914 to Dec. 1916 Shipments
4/3	Sept. 1915 to Dec. 1916 Shipments
5/1	Jan. 1917 to Feb. 1919 Shipments/Orders
5/2	Feb. 1919 to Aug. 1920 Orders
	Ledger—
3/1	July 1913 to Aug. 1914
2/1	Sept. 1914 to Dec. 1916
2/2	Jan. 1917 to Dec. 1917
3/2	Dec. 1917 to Sept. 1920
1/8	Property sales
	Bernard R. Holes Series
1/9	Fire loss statement, March 13, 1942

1/10	North Dakota State Water Commission application to drain, 1977
1/11	Oil and Gas Lease, Dec. 31, 1938
1/12	World War II ration card

Legal Documents Series

1/13	Abstract of titles, 1883, 1891, 1892
1/14	Foreclosures, 1877, 1886
1/15	Land grant papers, 1867-1885
1/16	Mortgage deeds, 1885, 1892
1/17	Northern Pacific Railroad Co. deeds to James Holes, 1875-1878
1/18	Power of attorney, 1879 - 1880
1/19	Quit claim deed, 1893
1/20	Warranty deeds, 1871-1918

Subject File Series

1/21	Clippings
1/22	Court papers, 1898
1/23	Family history material
1/24	Fargo Armory Association Capital stock certificate, 1913
1/25	Funerals - Mary Holes & James Holes Sr. 1886
1/26	Marriage certificate - James Holes and Rhonda Harrison, July 20, 1887
1/27	Property tax statements - James Holes and Finkle, 1938
1/28	Riverside Cemetery plot
6/1	Scrapbook
1/29	Wheat producers note, 1939
1/30	Will of James Holes, 1916, 1918

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