



**Sharlot Hall Museum Library and Archives**  
**415 West Gurley Street**  
**Prescott, AZ 86301**  
**www.sharlot.org**

**Title:** Gardner Family Papers

**Creator:** James Isom Gardner Family and Descendants

**Dates:** 1850-1997

**Quantity:** 6 linear feet (7 boxes)

**System of Arrangement:**

Series 1: Family Records

Series 2: J.I. Gardner Merchandise

**Abstract:** James I. Gardner came to Prescott to seek his fortune. After observing, working and saving he was able to acquire a store in Prescott and even opened a store in Jerome, Arizona for a time. His son became a rancher and cowboy in his own rite. Many family members still work and live in Arizona. This collection primarily consists of ledger books from J. I. Merchantile, but also includes photos and negatives of family, friends and travel.

**Identification:** SHM MS-7

**Language and Scripts of the Materials:** English

## **Biographical History**

James I. Gardner was born January 15, 1857 near Booneville, Missouri. His parents died in 1870 and after some years with relatives in Kansas, he was on his own from the age of 16. He had some schooling while living with these relatives and worked at anything a young and husky boy could do. For a time he drove a team for a government contractor. To seek his fortune he had intended to go to Silver City, New Mexico, but between Trinidad and Santa Fe he met a man who told him, "You don't want to go to Silver City, you want to go to Prescott, Arizona. That town is the gambler's paradise—more money there than any place in the West." So Prescott it was to be. He arrived in Prescott, then the capitol of the Territory, on April 23, 1879. He had no trouble finding employment and worked at various jobs for the next four years. He herded sheep, hauled lumber and meticulously observed gambling losses. Mr. Gardner was a clerk in a store of Mr. Joe Daugherty, set up in the Cliff House, when it failed. He told Mr. Daugherty he would like to take over the business and was surprised that he had a thousand dollars to purchase it. So the orphan boy who had drifted west, herded sheep, hauled lumber and decided that gambling did not pay,



went into business for himself, October 1, 1883. His old store was soon too small and a new store building was completed in 1891 at the northeast corner of Cortez and Willis Street.

Mr. Gardner started a romance by mail with Miss Bell, a schoolmate of one of Mr. Gardner's sisters. Mr. Gardner went to Missouri and married Miss Rebecca Jean Bell on June 30, 1890. He hurried back to his store and his bride soon followed by train. He successfully operated his store until April 1, 1918 when he closed his doors. He also operated a branch store in Jerome, Arizona from 1888-1891.

Mr. and Mrs. Gardner had a daughter, James Gardner Sisson and a son, Gail Gardner.. Mr. Gail Gardner had a son, Jim and a daughter, Cynthia. Great grandchildren of J. I. Gardner are Lew, Gail, Linda, Lisa, Delia and Elizabeth. Delia's father was Aubrey Gist. They had a goat ranch in Skull Valley. Great, great grandchildren include Jonathan, Theresa, Cody and Jody.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The bulk of the collection consists of ledgers from the J.I. Gardner Merchandise Store, but also includes articles, photographs, negatives and general information

## **Restrictions**

None

## **Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use**

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## **Related Archival Materials & Subjects**

### **Personal Name(s)**

Adams, Lieutenant Henry  
Beach, Philip  
Bell, George Washington  
Bold, Ross  
Dickson, Alene  
Draper, Louise



Ellinwood, E. E.  
Gardner, Delia  
[Gardner, Gail I., 1892-1988](#)  
[Gardner, James I., 1857-1935](#)  
Gardner, Jean  
Gardner, Mary Frank  
Gatfield, Edith  
Gist Family Peter, Charles A., Sr.  
Looney, Dr.  
Meyers, Warren  
Norton, John  
Pooler, Edith  
[Prescott Unified School District \(Yavapai County, Ariz.\)](#)  
Robinson, John  
[Watson, Clyde](#)  
Weedle, Will

**Geographic Name(s)**

Burmister House  
Cash Mine  
Gardner's Ranch  
Grandview Hotel  
Grandview Stage  
Granite Creek Bridge  
J. I. Gardner Store  
[Prescott \(Ariz.\)](#)  
Senator Mine  
Tip Top Mill  
[Yavapai County \(Ariz.\)](#)

**Subject(s)**

[Military Parade](#)

Gail Gardner vertical file  
See DB7f3i5 for a receipt from the J. I. Gardner Store.  
The museum collection has a 33 LP of cowboy songs including Gail Gardner (accession 2007.024).  
Yavapai Heritage Foundation Collection under 201 S. Cortez  
MS 42, Series 2, Subseries 2.3, Ruffner Family Collection



## Administrative Information

Accession Numbers:

2006.086

2007.024

1997.171

## Custodial History

Gail Gardner donated 6 ledgers of the J.I. Gardner's Store, 1888-1890 to NAU Special Collections. In 2006 they were deaccessioned and given to the Sharlot Hall Museum.

Negatives came from DB184, f1,i1 and i2.

PB84,f5,i3 is now in series 1 photographs and negatives.

PB83,f10,i5 and PB84,f8,i4 are now in series 1 photographs and negatives.

PB 160,f1, i1-70 are included in series 1 photographs and negatives.

BU-RE 4214p is included in

BU-I-0111p is now included in Series 2 photographs

BU-I-249p is now included in Series 2 photographs

PO-2185p is now included in Series 1 photographs and negatives

BU-RE 4221p is now included in series 1 photographs and negatives

BU-RE4124p is now included in series 1 photographs and negatives.

PO-690pd is now included in series 1 folder 2

PO-690pb is now included in series 1, folder 2

PO-690pc is now included in series 1, folder 2

PO-690pe is now included in series 1, folder 2

Refer to the Yavapai Heritage Foundation Collection under 201 N. Cortez for a variety of information about the J. I. Gardner store.

**Accruals:** Accruals are not anticipated at this time, however there are many family members living locally.

## Description Control

This collection was processed by Libby Coyner and LaDawn Dalton using *Describing Archives: a Content Standard (DACs)* in 2010 and 2014.



## Container List

**Title:** Gardner Family Papers - SHM MS-7

**Dates:** 1850-1969, 1997, Unknown

**Series Scope & Content:**

Series 1: Family Records		
Box/Folder	File/Item Description	Date(s)
1/1	Obituaries; newspaper articles; "The Pioneer Merchant", a portion of Gail Gardner's oral history; letters by Delia Gardner and her brother, Randolph; and a Day's Past Article	1997, unknown
1/2	Photographs and negatives of the Gardner family and residences (7 photographs, 7 negatives)	Unknown
1/3	Negatives from Linda Cravens, itemized list (70 negatives)	1850-1969, unknown



**Title:** Gardner Family Papers - SHM MS-7

**Dates:** 1888-1957

**Series Scope & Content:** Includes inventory of ledger.

<b>Series 2: J.I. Merchandise</b>		
<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>File/Item Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
1/4	The Pioneer Merchant, article by Gail Gardner about his father J. I. Gardner	1957
1/5	Inventory of Ledger Books made by Jerome Historical Society	
1/6	Photographs of the J. I Gardner store including The Dry Goods Department, the Hardware and Queensware Department, the Grocery Department (formerly BU-I-0111pa, pb and pc) Interior photographs of the J. I. Gardner store (formerly BU-I 249pa and pb) (formerly T-168RP and T-168P)	Early 1900's  c. 1890's
2/1	Bank of Arizona Bank Books (2)	1888-1890, 1980-1891
2/2	Journal of Delinquent Accounts	1899
2/3	Check Book, Commercial Trust Co.	1922
2/4	Address Book	Undated
2/5	Ledger, Statement of Register Book	1898-1902
2/6	Account Ledger "Book C"	1902-1905
2/7	Account Ledger	1908
2/8	Account Book	1898-1904
2/9	Account Ledger	1898-1919
3/I-1	Day and Cash Book	1889-1890
3/I-2	Day and Cash Book	1890
4/I-1	Ledger, Jerome, AZ	1888-1890
4/I-2	Day and Cash Book	1888-1890
4/I-3	Day and Cash Book	1888
5/I-1	Current Ledger, J. I. Gardner, Prescott, Arizona (formerly 257a)	1908-1911
6/I-1	General Accounts Ledger, includes suspended accounts	1894-1895
7/I-1	General Accounts Ledger	1899-1916