These are papers concerning E. C. Markham & Company, a real estate agency at West Plains in Howell County, Missouri. The firm’s partners, E. C. Markham and C. P. Harper, were agents for the South Missouri Land Company, which was related to the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railroad Company.

The Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railroad was built through Howell County, Missouri, in the early 1880s. In its wake the South Missouri Land Company was organized to dispose of granted, acquired, and neighboring land along the right-of-way. E. C. Markham & Company acted as “general agents” for the Land Company, with “exclusive sale of the largest list of Farms, Fruit Lands, and Stock Ranches in South Missouri, including 135,000 acres of ‘Company’ Land.”

There are five items in this collection:

1) A letter dated 26 March 1895 on the letterhead of E. C. Markham & Company and signed by H. B. Deardorff. The letter concerns payment for sawing logs and posts for a fencing project. This letterhead does not include the names of E. C. Markham and C. P. Harper, and claims “exclusive sale” of 150,000 acres of “Company” land.

2) A business card of C. P. Harper as “immigration agent” at West Plains for the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railroad.

3) A cover for E. C. Markham & Company addressed to Joseph H. Gillett, 2808 Emerald Ave., Chicago, Illinois, and postmarked at West Plains on 4 May 1900.

4) A letter dated 3 May 1900 on the letterhead of E. C. Markham & Company to Joseph H. Gillett, encouraging Gillett to pursue his interest in fruit-culture in the region and enclosing a “circular” (See next item.).

5) A promotional circular for E. C. Markham & Company, printed on both sides in small print, extolling the virtues of Howell County as a productive agricultural region. Included are descriptions of 36 individual properties under the categories “For Sale,” “For Exchange,” and “Fruit Farms.” The circular suggests that, in addition to its superb agricultural qualities, Howell County’s land might also contain mineral wealth. The soil was “fertile brown loam,” supporting the “best fruit region in America.” The local populace was “intelligent, thrifty, progressive and moral,” among whom “sectional feeling has no shadow of existence.” Land near the railroad was priced at $3.00 per acre, while parcels “farther back” were available at $2.50 per acre, on attractive terms. “Title is perfect as the company purchased the land directly from the government.”
Deardorff, H. B.
E. C. Markham & Company
Gillett, Joseph H.
Harper, C. P.
Markham, E. C.
Powell, George T.
Real estate business—Missouri—Howell County
South Missouri Land Company
West Plains (Mo.)