

**John McElroy, SJ, President's Office Records  
1813-2005 (bulk 1813-1878)**

**BC.2002.126**

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## Summary Information

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<b>Library Unit</b>	Archives and Manuscripts Department
<b>Title</b>	John McElroy, SJ, President's Office records
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	Bulk, 1813-1878
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1813-2005
<b>Extent</b>	0.5 Linear feet (1 box)
<b>Language</b>	English

**Language of Materials note** Materials in this collection are primarily in English, with some Latin.

**Abstract** This collection consists mainly of photocopies of material created by John McElroy, SJ, in the course of his work as a Jesuit priest, long-time campaigner for a Jesuit college in Boston, and founder of Boston College. Material types include primarily photocopies of correspondence, diaries, manuscripts, publications, legal documents, and accounts.

### Preferred Citation note

Identification of item, Box number, Folder number, John McElroy, SJ, President's Office Records, BC.2002.126, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Processed by unknown; revised by AnneMarie Anderson, April 2010; revised by Stephanie Bennett, June 2013. This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit.

### Last Update

June 2013

### Restrictions on access

Collection is open for research.

### Restrictions on use

These materials are made available for use in research, teaching and private study, pursuant to U.S. Copyright Law. The user must assume full responsibility for any use of the materials, including but not limited to, infringement of copyright and publication rights of reproduced materials. Any materials used for academic research or otherwise should be fully credited with the source. The original authors may retain copyright to the materials.

### Provenance

Because the current accessioning system was not used until January 1986, it is not possible to know exactly the dates of acquisition of materials received before that time. Many of the photocopies were made by David R. Dunigan, SJ, in the 1940s. Two original letters written to Ellen (Ahern) Ruth were donated by Paul Nelligan, SJ, in October 2002.

### Existence and Location of Originals note

Original copies of materials in this collection exist at Georgetown University in Washington, DC and the Archives of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, now on deposit at Georgetown University. Some photocopies date back into the 1940s.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Archival Materials note

President's Office Records, University Archives, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Rev. John McElroy, SJ Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Georgetown University.

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## Biographical note

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John McElroy was born in 1782 in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. Following a rudimentary education due to the penal laws prohibiting Irish schoolmasters from teaching Catholic students, McElroy worked on his father's farm. In 1803, he left for America on a flax ship bound for Baltimore, Maryland. From Baltimore, McElroy moved to Georgetown. In Georgetown, while working as a store clerk, McElroy felt a calling to the religious life. In 1806, following the reinstatement of the Jesuit Order in America, John McElroy entered the Society of Jesus at Georgetown College as a novice.

During his probationary period, McElroy worked at Georgetown and witnessed the 1814 burning of Washington, DC. In 1815, he was elevated to the Scholasticate and began studying for the priesthood. By 1816, he had received tonsure and minor orders, and by 1817, he was ordained a priest by Archbishop Neale. In 1818, McElroy was appointed assistant pastor, and later full pastor, of Trinity Church, Georgetown, where he was known for his oratorical gifts.

McElroy engaged in the missionary work of his parish and the surrounding areas, supported the development of local Catholic education, and lead spiritual retreats. His work brought him the recognition of superiors and Church leaders, including Archbishop Hughes, Bishop Purcell, and Bishop Flaget. A further honor came in 1845, when, in response to a request of President Polk, McElroy was chosen as one of the first two Catholic priests to be appointed chaplains for the United States Army. McElroy served in Matamoras, Mexico, until 1847.

The establishment of a Jesuit school serving the city of Boston had long been an aspiration of McElroy's, and his transfer to that city in 1847 enabled him actively to pursue the cause. Overcoming obstacles such as financial problems, public anti-Catholic sentiment, and turmoil caused by the Civil War, McElroy realized his dream in 1863 when Boston College was formally incorporated. He served as the College's first vice-president and was instrumental in the building of the Church of the Immaculate Conception, the College's first chapel.

Following his tenure in Boston, McElroy retired to the novitiate house in Frederick City, Maryland, where he continued to serve as a priest. He died in 1877.

### Sources

David R. Dunigan. *A History of Boston College*. Milwaukee, WI: Bruce Publishing Co., 1947.

Clippings, Box 1, Folder 27, John McElroy, SJ, President's Office Records, BC2002.126, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

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## Scope and Contents note

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This collection consists mainly of photocopies of material created by John McElroy, SJ, in the course of his work as a Jesuit priest, long-time campaigner for a Jesuit college in Boston, and founder of Boston College. Material types include correspondence both to and from Father McElroy, as well as a letter of introduction for McElroy from former First Lady Dolley Madison to Army General Zachary Taylor; McElroy's personal diaries; two manuscripts he authored about his time as a Mexican missionary and the history of Boston College; publications by or about McElroy; McElroy's naturalization certificate from a court in Washington, DC; and an accounts ledger dating 1848-1869. These materials are all photocopies. The only original material in this collection are two letters that McElroy wrote to Ellen (Ahern) Rush in 1871 and 1872 when she was a student of the Sisters of Notre Dame.

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## Arrangement note

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The records are arranged into five series: I. Correspondence; II. Diaries; III. Legal documents and accounts; IV. Manuscripts; V. Publications. The correspondence, diaries, and legal documents and accounts are arranged in chronological order. Manuscripts and publications are arranged by author.

# Collection Inventory

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## Series I: Correspondence, 1837-1854

McElroy, John on St. John's Literary Institution, 1837 August	Box 1	Folder 1
Madison, Dolley, to General Zachary Taylor, introducing McElroy, 1846 June	Box 1	Folder 2
McElroy, John to Francis Dzkrozynski, 1846 July 15	Box 1	Folder 3
Fitzpatrick, John Bernard to John McElroy, 1854 May 28	Box 1	Folder 4
Beckx, Peter to John McElroy, circa 1854-1855	Box 1	Folder 5
McElroy, John to Charles H. Stonestreet, 1855 July 7	Box 1	Folder 6
McElroy, John, memorandum regarding plans for a college between Leverett and Wall streets, 1855 September	Box 1	Folder 7
General correspondence, 1857-1866	Box 1	Folder 8
McElroy, John to Charles H. Stonestreet, 1857 September	Box 1	Folder 9
Parsce, Angelo M. to John McElroy, 1863 April-July	Box 1	Folder 10
McElroy, John to Ellen (Ahern) Ruth, 1871, 1872	Box 1	Folder 11

## Series II: Diaries, 1813-1854

1813 January 1-1821 December 3	Box 1	Folder 12
1834 January 1-1836 March 12	Box 1	Folder 13
1836 March 25-1838 January 28	Box 1	Folder 14



1838 February 6-1840 February 19	Box 1	Folder 15
1847 October 5-1848 May 25	Box 1	Folder 16
1848 May 29-1849 June 15	Box 1	Folder 17
1849 June 21-1853	Box 1	Folder 18
1853 July 14-1854 August 12	Box 1	Folder 19

### Series III: Legal documents and accounts, 1819-1869

McElroy's naturalization certificate, Washington, DC, 1819	Box 1	Folder 20
McElroy's account book, 1848-1869	Box 1	Folder 21

### Series IV: Manuscripts, 1859-1869

McElroy, John. "A Brief History of the Preparatory Steps Towards the Erection of a College and Church in Boston" and clippings, circa 1860s	Box 1	Folder 22
McElroy, John. Accounts of chaplaincy in Mexico during war and foundation of Boston College, circa 1860s	Box 1	Folder 23
McElroy, John. "Farewell Address to the Congregation at Immaculate Conception" and clipping, circa 1859	Box 1	Folder 24

### Series V: Publications, 1816-2005

Bowditch, N.I. "Argument for a Catholic Church on the Jail Lands", 1853 April 19	Box 1	Folder 25
Boyle, Esmeralda. <i>Father John McElroy, The Irish Priest</i> , 1878	Box 1	Folder 26
Clippings, 1816, 1861, 2005	Box 1	Folder 27

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Clippings from the <i>Pilot</i> , circa 1981	Box 1	Folder 28
McElroy biography, typescript, undated	Box 1	Folder 29
McElroy, John. "Chaplains for the Mexican War," in <i>Woodstock Letters</i> , vol. 16, 1887	Box 1	Folder 30

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