

John McLean Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the
Library of Congress

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Revised and expanded by Karen Stuart



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2008

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/mss.contact>

Finding aid encoded by Glenn R.
Gardner, 2009

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms009262>

Collection Summary

Title: John McLean Papers

Span Dates: 1817-1861

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1829-1860)

ID No.: MSS32326

Creator: McLean, John, 1785-1861

Extent: 3,500 items; 25 containers; 10 linear feet; 18 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: United States representative from Ohio, postmaster general, and Supreme Court justice. Correspondence, legal briefs, financial data, docket book, printed matter, a file of reports, opinions and briefs arranged by case name, and other papers relating to McLean's service as postmaster general and Supreme Court justice.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Atwater, Caleb, 1778-1867--Correspondence.

Berrien, John MacPherson, 1781-1856--Trials, litigation, etc.

Buchanan, James, 1791-1868--Correspondence.

Calhoun, John C. (John Caldwell), 1782-1850--Correspondence.

Chase, Salmon P. (Salmon Portland), 1808-1873--Correspondence.

Clayton, John M. (John Middleton), 1796-1856--Correspondence.

Corwin, Thomas, 1794-1865--Correspondence.

Dallas, George Mifflin, 1792-1864--Correspondence.

Eaton, John Henry, 1790-1856--Correspondence.

Edwards, Ninian, 1775-1833--Correspondence.

Everett, Edward, 1794-1865--Correspondence.

Ewing, Thomas, 1789-1871--Correspondence.

Green, Duff, 1791-1875--Correspondence.

Hill, Isaac, 1789-1851--Correspondence.

Ingham, Samuel D. (Samuel Delucenna), 1779-1860--Correspondence.

Johnson, Richard M. (Richard Mentor), 1780-1850--Correspondence.

Key, Francis Scott, 1779-1843--Trials, litigation, etc.

Lee, Henry, 1787-1837--Correspondence.

Madison, James, 1751-1836--Correspondence.

McArthur, Duncan, 1772-1839--Correspondence.

McLean, John, 1785-1861.

Monroe, James, 1758-1831--Correspondence.

Ogden, David Bayard, 1775-1849--Trials, litigation, etc.

Peters, Richard, 1780-1848--Correspondence.

Rives, William C. (William Cabell), 1793-1868--Correspondence.

Rush, Richard, 1780-1859--Correspondence.

Scott, Winfield, 1786-1866--Correspondence.

Sergeant, Thomas, 1782-1860--Correspondence.

Seward, William Henry, 1801-1872--Correspondence.

Stanton, Edwin McMasters, 1814-1869--Correspondence.

Story, Joseph, 1779-1845--Correspondence.

Sumner, Charles, 1811-1874--Correspondence.

Taney, Roger Brooke, 1777-1864--Correspondence.
Taney, Roger Brooke, 1777-1864--Trials, litigation, etc.
Tyler, John, 1790-1862--Correspondence.
Ward, Henry Dana, 1797-1884--Correspondence.
Webster, Daniel, 1782-1852--Correspondence.
Webster, Daniel, 1782-1852--Trials, litigation, etc.
Weed, Thurlow, 1797-1882--Correspondence.
Whitcomb, James, 1795-1852--Correspondence.
Wirt, William, 1772-1834--Trials, litigation, etc.

Organizations

United States. General Land Office.
United States. Post Office Dept.
United States. Supreme Court.
Whig Party (U.S.)

Subjects

Indians of North America--Government relations.
Presidents--United States.
Secession.
Slavery--United States.

Places

Cincinnati (Ohio)--Politics and government.
Ohio--Politics and government.
United States--Foreign relations--1783-1865.
United States--Politics and government--19th century.
Washington (D.C.)--History.

Occupations

Cabinet officers.
Jurists.
Representatives, U.S. Congress--Ohio.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of John McLean, United States representative from Ohio, postmaster general, and Supreme Court justice, were given to the Library of Congress by Marshall McLean in 1907 and 1920. Additions were purchased between 1906 and 1943, and two items from an unknown source were transferred from the Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection in 2005.

Processing History

The papers of John McLean were processed in 1966 and prepared for filming in 1972. The collection was revised and expanded in 2008.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of John McLean is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of John McLean are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on eighteen reels. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, John McLean Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1785, Mar. 11	Born, Morris County, N.J.
1807	Married Rebecca Edwards (died 1840)
1807-1812	Founder and editor, <i>The Western Star</i> , Lebanon, Ohio
1812-1816	United States congressman from Ohio
1816-1822	Associate justice, Ohio state supreme court
1822	Commissioner, United States General Land Office
1823-1829	Postmaster general
1829-1861	Associate justice, United States Supreme Court
1843	Married Sarah Bella Garrard
1861, Apr. 4	Died, Cincinnati, Ohio

Scope and Content Note

The papers of John McLean (1785-1861) span the years 1817-1861 with the bulk of the material falling between 1829 and 1860. The collection consists mainly of correspondence, but includes legal files, newspaper clippings, notes, and printed matter.

The McLean Papers contain very little for the early years of McLean's government service at the state level in Ohio and nationally, but expand after 1822, when he was appointed commissioner of the United States General Land Office. Correspondence and printed matter from his tenure as postmaster general, 1823-1829, reflect problems relating to the early years of the United States postal service, the growth of Washington, D.C., and national political issues.

McLean's service on the United States Supreme Court, 1829-1861, is documented in the [Correspondence](#), [Legal File](#), and [Printed Matter](#) series. Noteworthy is a volume containing McLean's notes on oral arguments made before the Court in 1830, including cases argued by John MacPherson Berrien, Francis Scott Key, David Bayard Ogden, Roger Brooke Taney, Daniel Webster, and William Wirt. McLean was viewed as a prospective presidential candidate during this period, and his papers treat presidential politics in the decades leading to the Civil War. Other topics include state and local politics in Ohio and Cincinnati, Indian affairs, international relations,

the possible secession of Southern slave states from the Union, the Whig Party, and the question of slavery.

Correspondents include Caleb Atwater, James Buchanan, John C. Calhoun, Salmon P. Chase, John M. Clayton, Thomas Corwin, George Mifflin Dallas, John Henry Eaton, Ninian Edwards, Edward Everett, Thomas Ewing, Duff Green, Isaac Hill, Samuel D. Ingham, Richard M. Johnson, Henry Lee, James Madison, Duncan McArthur, James Monroe, Richard Peters, William C. Rives, Richard Rush, Winfield Scott, Thomas Sergeant, William Henry Seward, Edwin McMasters Stanton, Joseph Story, Charles Sumner, Roger Brooke Taney, John Tyler, Henry Dana Ward, Daniel Webster, Thurlow Weed, and James Whitcomb.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- [Correspondence, 1817-1861](#)
- [Legal File, 1829-1860](#)
- [Printed Matter, 1830-1860](#)
- [Addition, 1823](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-19 REEL 1-12	<u>Correspondence, 1817-1861</u> Letters received and a few drafts of letters sent, supplemented by printed matter, memoranda, financial data, legal briefs, and newspaper clippings. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 20-24 REEL 13-17	<u>Legal File, 1829-1860</u> Briefs, opinions, notes, memoranda, and reports. Container 24 includes one volume of McLean's notes on oral arguments before the United States Supreme Court in 1830. Arranged alphabetically by name of case.
BOX 25 REEL 18	<u>Printed Matter, 1830-1860</u> Legal briefs, pamphlets, reports, political tracts, and miscellaneous items. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 25 not filmed	<u>Addition, 1823</u> Printed circular and letter of transmittal by McLean pertaining to postal matters.

Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 13,817

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-19 REEL 1-12	Correspondence, 1817-1861 Letters received and a few drafts of letters sent, supplemented by printed matter, memoranda, financial data, legal briefs, and newspaper clippings. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1 REEL 1-2	1817, Aug. 29-1827, Aug. 13
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	1827, Aug. 14-1828, May 21
BOX 3 REEL 2	1828, May 22-1829, Mar. 10
BOX 4 REEL 2	1829, Mar. 11-Dec. 12
BOX 5 REEL 3	1829, Dec. 13-1831, Mar. 1
BOX 6 REEL 3	1831, Mar. 2-1832, Dec. 21
BOX 7 REEL 4	1832, Dec 22-1834, Jan. 10
BOX 8 REEL 4	1834, Jan. 11-Aug. 13
BOX 9 REEL 5	1834, Aug. 14-1836, Mar. 23
BOX 10 REEL 5	1836, Mar. 24-1842, Mar. 8
BOX 11 REEL 6	1842, Mar. 9-1846, Apr. 23
BOX 12 REEL 7	1846, Apr. 24-1847, Jan. 12
BOX 13 REEL 7	1847, Jan. 13-Dec. 5
BOX 14 REEL 8	1847, Dec. 6-1848, Mar. 24
BOX 15 REEL 8	1848, Mar. 25-July 28
BOX 16 REEL 9	1848, July 29-1850, Jan. 29
BOX 17 REEL 10	1850, Jan. 30-1853, Sept.
BOX 18 REEL 11	1853, Oct.-1856, June

Correspondence, 1817-1861

Container

Contents

BOX 19 REEL 12	1856, July-1861, Mar.
BOX 20-24 REEL 13-17	Legal File, 1829-1860 Briefs, opinions, notes, memoranda, and reports. Container 24 includes one volume of McLean's notes on oral arguments before the United States Supreme Court in 1830. Arranged alphabetically by name of case.
BOX 20 REEL 13	Cases
BOX 20 REEL 13	A-C (10 folders)
BOX 21 REEL 14	D-K (9 folders)
BOX 22 REEL 15	L-R (8 folders)
BOX 23 REEL 16	S-T (7 folders)
BOX 24 REEL 17	W-Y (4 folders)
BOX 24 REEL 17	Miscellany (2 folders)
BOX 24 REEL 17	Notes on oral arguments, United States Supreme Court, 1830
BOX 25 REEL 18	Printed Matter, 1830-1860 Legal briefs, pamphlets, reports, political tracts, and miscellaneous items. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 25 REEL 18	1830-1860, undated (6 folders)
BOX 25 not filmed	Addition, 1823 Printed circular and letter of transmittal by McLean pertaining to postal matters.
BOX 25 not filmed	Circular and letter of transmittal regarding the postal circulation of newspapers and periodicals, 1823, undated