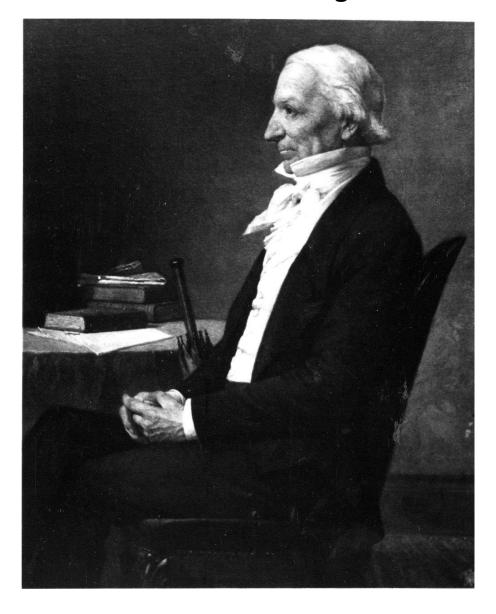


Archives & Special Collections

Guide to the John McDonogh Collection



Processed by Kathleen Morrison, March 2025

MS-14: The John McDonogh Collection

(10 Boxes, 3.6 cubic feet)

Inclusive Dates: c.1850 – 2016

Bulk Dates:

Processed by: Kathleen Morrison, Archives and Special Collections Associate, March 2025

Archivist: Kathleen Morrison

Provenance

This artificial collection was created over time from various types of sources. Facsimiles and photocopies have been noted where present and attributed to their original institutions or sources when possible.

Biography

Born in Baltimore on December 29, 1779, John McDonogh was the son of John McDonogh, Sr. and Elizabeth Wilkins. As a young man, McDonogh traveled to New Orleans at the behest of his employer. He settled in the city and soon went into business for himself, successfully building upon his early gains by purchasing and letting land. It was rumored at the time of his death that he had the largest portfolio of land in the United States. His tactics were not always considered ethical and landed both him and eventually his estate in court multiple times.

In addition to owning land, McDonogh also owned a number of slaves. A devout Presbyterian, he was a member of the American Colonization Society. The objective of the society was to encourage and facilitate black emigration from America to what is now the country of Liberia. Instead of freeing his slaves outright, McDonogh devised a scheme wherein an enslaved person could "earn" his freedom by working on Saturdays instead of enjoying the day off. Though it would take about fifteen years, a number of individuals did manage to complete this plan to McDonogh's approval, at which point he sent them with tools, money, and supplies off to Liberia. He also sent two of his slaves, David and Washington, to Lafayette College in Pennsylvania with the intent of them then heading to Liberia as educated men and preachers. Despite these measures, McDonogh did not stop purchasing or selling slaves, and he only granted them unconditional freedom upon his death.

McDonogh never married. During his lifetime, he was regarded as a miser who only spent money to make more money. When he died on October 26, 1850, it came as a surprise to many that McDonogh had left almost his entire fortune to be split jointly between the cities of New Orleans and Baltimore for the purpose of educating children. His only surviving sibling, Mary, was given \$3,000.

The will was immediately contested by various parties— Mary and her children, fake relatives, people who felt McDonogh had stolen their land during his life—and the case between Mary and the cities of New Orleans and Baltimore eventually made it to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of the cities. New Orleans used its money to establish and fund thirty—five schools over several decades before spending the last of the fund to restore McDonogh's grave in 2012. In Baltimore, the money was put into a trust and eventually used to open a single school, McDonogh School, in 1873. Both the schoolchildren in New Orleans and Baltimore honored McDonogh on his birthday per his request, with "McDonogh Day" eventually becoming an annual event of note in New Orleans. However, his request that the schools be open to boys of any ethnicity was ignored in both cities until the 1960s.

While he was praised for decades for his incredible act of philanthropy, his legacy as a slaveholder has led to a reevaluation of McDonogh over the last few decades. Several of the remaining "McDonogh Schools" in New Orleans have replaced his name with that of a notable African—American, and McDonogh School in Owings Mills has erected a memorial to those people who were enslaved by him at any point in their lives. In the summer of 2020, amid the Black Lives Matters protests and actions nationally, two of the public monuments to McDonogh were vandalized and knocked off their pillars. The city of New Orleans has yet to restore them.

Scope and Content Notes

This is an artificial collection that was largely assembled by McDonogh's first archivist Frayda Salkin. It includes some of Salkin's correspondence with individuals in Louisiana, as well as photos of McDonogh—related sites from her 1996 trip to New Orleans. Salkin also printed out a number of historic articles on John McDonogh using her personal subscription to a genealogy and history database. Most of these articles are from the Baltimore Sun or the Times Picayune newspaper of New Orleans.

The collection contains information on John McDonogh's family, his slaves, his will and the legal contests to it, the McDonogh schools of New Orleans and Baltimore, and his enduring legacy in both cities. There are many photographs and DVDs of "McDonogh Day" in New Orleans, as well as photos of monuments and paintings of McDonogh. Additionally, there are a number of copies of theses on McDonogh or the McDonogh schools in New Orleans.

Series Description

There are eight series and four subseries in this collection. **Series 1**: Biographical and Family; **Series 2**: Will and Legal Cases; **Series 3**: Baltimore City and the McDonogh School; **Series 4**: New Orleans and the McDonogh Schools; **Series 5**: Other John McDonogh Material; **Series 6**: Academic Work on John McDonogh; **Series 7**: Audio-Visual Materials-- **Subseries A**: McDonogh #26, **Subseries B**: Louisiana, **Subseries C**: Maryland, **Subseries D**: Other, **Subseries E**: Physical Ephemera; **Series 8**: Physical Ephemera

Box 1 of 10

Series 1: Biographical and Family

- **1-1** Biographical Information on John McDonogh
- 1-2 "McDonogh's Last Trip" cartoon from the Times Picayune, originally ran c. 10/26/1850
- 1-3 Portrait of McDonogh by Dabour
- **1-4** Bust of McDonogh after Repetto
- 1-5 Bust of McDonogh by Bill Sunderland, Class of 1949, June 9, 1995
- **1-6** Other images of John McDonogh
- **1-7** McDonogh Family history
- **1-8** McDonogh Family genealogy and family charts
- 1-9 McDonogh and the Colonization of Liberia
- 1-10 McDonogh's slaves and their descendants
- 1-11 Lafayette College materials and Correspondence, including William McDonogh
- 1-12 Thomas McDonogh Durnford
- 1-13 David McDonogh and his legacy
- **1-14** Slaves–Related Issues

Box 2 of 10:

Series 2: Will and Legal Cases

- **2-1** John McDonogh's Will and Memoranda to Executors
- 2-2 McDonogh Estate—Land Evaluation and Sale
- 2-3 News articles on McDonogh's will and legal challenges
- 2-4 Letter of Christian Roselius to John McDonogh regarding his will, November 30, 1844
- 2-5 "A Lawyer's Tale of Two Cities, or John McDonogh's Will," by Edgar M. Cahn
- **2-6** Incomplete Legal Documents and Correspondence

Box 3 of 10:

- 3-1 Supreme Court of the United States: State of Louisiana vs. Executors of McDonogh et al., Brief of Counsel for the States of Louisiana and Maryland, May 1, 1851
- 3-2 Opinions of the French Jurists, Messieurs Coin—Delisle, Delangle, Giraud, Duranton Pere, & Marcade, in the Case of the State of Louisiana vs. Executors of John McDonogh, and the Cities of New Orleans and Baltimore, December 1, 1851
- 3-3 Supreme Court of the United States: States of Louisiana and Maryland vs. Executors of McDonogh et al., Supplemental Brief by W.W. King, c. 1851
- **3-4** Opinion on the Validity of the Devises and Bequests in the Will of John McDonogh to the City of Baltimore and State of Maryland, August 18, 1852
- 3-5 United States Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana in Chancery: Mary Murdoch et al., heirs at law of John McDonogh vs. Christian Roselius et al. Executors; the City of New Orleans et al., Argument On Behalf of Complainants, 1851

- 3-6 Supreme Court of the United States: *Executors of McDonogh et al. vs. Mary Murdoch et al.,* Appeal and Argument, October 15, 1852– December [court] Term 1853
- **3-7** Louisiana Supreme Court: *Francis Pena vs. The Cities of New Orleans and Baltimore,* January 1858
- 3-8 Louisiana Supreme Court: Application of Moses Fox to Probate a Codicil to the Last Will and Testament of John McDonogh, May 16, 1871
- **3-9** Civil District Court, Division A, Parish of Orleans: *Ernest A. Carrere vs. The City of New Orleans*, c. 1926
- **3-10** Louisiana Supreme Court: *Appeal from The Civil District Court for the Parish of Orleans Ernest A. Carrere vs. The City of New Orleans*, multiple documents, March—April 1926
- **3-11** Louisiana Annual: Louisiana vs. Executors of McDonogh, 1853
- 3-12 Records of the Supreme Court of the United States for McDonogh cases, December 1858–1871
- 3-13 Decision of the Secretary of the Interior regarding the McDonogh Land Claim, January 6, 1888

Box 4 of 10

Series 3: Baltimore City and the McDonogh School

- **4-1** "The Week" articles on John McDonogh and/or his monument in Baltimore, June 7, 1884–November 30, 1945
- **4-2** McDonogh Grave and Monument in Green Mount Cemetery, October 4, 1860–1964
- 4-3 McDonogh Grave and Monument on the McDonogh Campus, June 22, 1944– July 14, 1960
- 4-4 Photos of John McDonogh related sites in Baltimore and New Orleans, taken by Arthur Thompson, Class of 1891, and Roland Brady, Class of 1906, c. December 1945
- 4-5 Act to Incorporate the Trustees of the McDonogh Educational Fund and Institute, signed by Governor Richie on April 11, 1929
- 4-6 "John McDonogh's Legacy" volumes I and II, published by McDonogh School, 1933–1938
- **4-7** Correspondence between McDonogh School and others about John McDonogh, October 23, 1935– July 3, 2003

Box 5 of 10

Series 4: New Orleans and the McDonogh Schools

- 5-1 McDonogh Monument in Lafayette Square, New Orleans, December 13, 1891–1996
- 5-2 McDonogh Schools and McDonogh Day in New Orleans, August 9, 1889–2017
- "McDonoghville" neighborhood in New Orleans/Gretna, LA, including McDonogh's grave, March 19, 1855 – June 2015
- **5-4** Photos of McDonogh Schools, their students, and of McDonogh Day in New Orleans area, c. 1900 1997
- "Reports of the Boards of Commissioners of [the] McDonogh School Fund..." Report on different philanthropic funds in New Orleans including the McDonogh fund, January 1, 1892 December 31, 1895
- 5-6 Other McDonogh-related Sites and Tributes in New Orleans, March 26, 1920 July 9, 2009

5-7 New Orleans "Souvenir Folder" sent to Duncan Campbell Lyle by Philip McIntyre, Class of 1905, n.d.

Box 6 of 10

Series 5: Other John McDonogh Material

- **6-1** Journal Articles on John McDonogh, August 1862 January 1950
- 6-2 Lists of McDonogh Materials Held at Other Archives, August 15, 1995 September 25, 2004
- 6-3 Other Newspaper Articles on John McDonogh, March 15, 1929 September 2009
- 6-4 Incidental and Apocryphal Stories of John McDonogh, 1864 2014

Box 7 of 10

Series 6: Academic Works on John McDonogh

- **7-1** "John McDonogh and His Contribution to New Orleans" by Edgar P. Harney for a Master's Degree from Xavier University, 1936
- "Some Studies in the Life of John McDonogh" by Maude Fulson for a Master's Degree from Tulane University, before 1938
- 7-3 "The History of Public Education in New Orleans" by Frances Fort as her senior thesis for Eleanor McMain Public High School, New Orleans. Donated by Louis Lamborn January 6, 1943
- 7-4 "John McDonogh: Land Speculator" by Florence Kane for a Master's Degree from Tulane University, May 1, 1943. Two copies
- **7-5** "Educational Interests of John McDonogh" by Vivian Deano for a Master's Degree from Tulane University, July 1, 1947
- **7-6** "The Timeless, Timeless John McDonogh" by G. Leighton Ciravolo, a term paper for undergraduate studies at the University of New Orleans, February 20, 1996
- **7-7** "Afrocentric Renaming of New Orleans Public Schools" by G. Leighton Ciravolo for a Bachelor of the Arts degree in History with Honors, May 1998
- 7-8 Two articles by Byron Warnken, McDonogh Baltimore Class of 1964: "The Continuing Connection Between McDonogh School and The Supreme Court" c. 1999, and "How the 1853 Supreme Court Ignored the Law In Favor of Philanthropic Intent..." n.d.
- 7-9 "In Whose Interest?: John McDonogh and His Plan to Colonize His Slaves" by Margaret Evans Hennen Strickler for a Bachelor of the Arts in History from Harvard University, March 25, 2004
- **7-10** "To Ensure Your Freedom and That of Your Children..." by Judith Huenneke for a Master's Degree from the University of Massachusetts-Boston, June 2004
- 7-11 "An Act of Simple Honesty: John McDonogh's Model for the Humane Antebellum Slaveholder" by Patrick Luck for a Master's Degree from the American Seminar, Johns Hopkins University, April 4, 2007

Box 8 of 10

- **8-1** "John McDonogh: Man of Many Facets" by Arthur G. Nuhrah for a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Tulane University. Pgs. i 301, April 14, 1950
- **8-2** "John McDonogh: Man of Many Facets" by Nuhrah. Pgs. 302 626. June 6, 1950
- **8-3** "John McDonogh: Man of Many Facets" by Nuhrah. Index. 1950
- **8-4** "John McDonogh: Liberal Slaveholder" by Nuhrah for a Master's Degree from Tulane University. January 1947
- "Where is John McDonogh Buried?" and "Memorials and Portraits of John McDonogh" by ArthurG. Nuhrah, December 1950 April 1951
- 8-6 McDonogh School Correspondence with Arthur G. Nuhrah, August 24, 1949 May 20, 1954
- 8-7 News Articles by and About Arthur G. Nuhrah, September 6, 1949 July 25, 1951

Box 9 of 10

9-1 The Nuhrah Collection of McDonogh Papers, c. 1951 Scrapbook made by Arthur G. Nuhrah including letters he wrote and photographs of McDonogh-related documents

Box 10 of 10

Series 7: Audio-Visual Materials

All items are located in the Wilson Young Archives and Special Collections media collection

9-1 Slides of the McDonogh Monuments in Owings Mills and New Orleans, and of the Dabour portrait

Subseries A: McDonogh #26

- **10-1** McDonogh Day in Gretna, 1996-2011 (DVD)
- **10-2** McDonogh Day TV News 1996-2003 (DVD)
- 10-3 WGNO ABC 26 McDonogh Day Coverage May 3, 1996 and May 7, 1999 (VHS)
- **10-4** WGNO ABC 26 McDonogh Day Coverage May 3, 1996 and May 7, 1999 (DVD)
- 10-5 WWL TV4 New Orleans Eyewitness News band performance May 21, 1997 (VHS)
- **10-6** WWL TV4 New Orleans Eyewitness News band performance May 21, 1997 (DVD)
- **10-7** McDonogh Day 2001 and 2003 (VHS)
- **10-8** McDonogh Day 2001, 2003, 2005 (DVD)
- **10-9** McDonogh Day May 4, 2001 (DVD)
- **10-10** McDonogh Day 2003 (OfficeMax DVD)
- 10-11 McDonogh Day May 2, 2003 Jefferson Parish Public School System Cable Access Channel 8 (VHS)
- **10-12** McDonogh Day May 2, 2003 Jefferson Parish Public School System Cable Access Channel 8 (Sony DVD)
- **10-13** McDonogh Day 2004 (DVD)
- 10-14 McDonogh Day May 7, 2004 Jefferson Parish Public School System Cable Access Channel 8 (VHS)
- **10-15** McDonogh Day May 7, 2004 Jefferson Parish Public School System Cable Access Channel 8 (DVD)

- **10-16** Channel 4's School Check February 2004; Our Generation- 5th Grade Dancers 3/27/04 and 3/5/05 (VHS)
- **10-17** Channel 4's School Check February 2004; Our Generation- 5th Grade Dancers 3/27/04 and 3/5/05 (DVD)
- **10-18** McDonogh Day 2005 (OfficeMax DVD)
- **10-19** McDonogh Day '05 (Memorex DVD)
- **10-20** McDonogh Day May '05 (Memorex DVD)
- **10-21** Katrina Damage Photos, Class PowerPoints, and "Thank You" PowerPoint from #26 to McDonogh School MD (2005?) (CD)
- **10-22** McDonogh Day 2006 (DVD)
- **10-23** McDonogh Day May 4, 2007 (DVD)
- **10-24** McDonogh Day May 2, 2008 (imation DVD)
- 10-25 McDonogh Day May 2, 2008 (pure white DVD)
- **10-26** McDonogh Day 2009 (DVD)
- **10-27** McDonogh Day 2011 (TDK DVD)
- 10-28 McDonogh Day 2011 (Fujifilm DVD)
- 10-29 McDonogh Day 2012 (DVD)
- 10-30 "McDonogh Week" 2011 Photos and Documents (DVD)
- **10-31** McDonogh Day May 3, 2013 (DVD)
- **10-32** McDonogh Day May 2, 2014 (DVD)
- **10-33** McDonogh Day WWL-TV Coverage May 2, 2014 (DVD)
- **10-34** McDonogh Day 2015 (DVD)
- **10-35** McDonogh Day 2016 (DVD)
- **10-36** John McDonogh Day May 24, 2017 (DVD)

Subseries B: Louisiana

- **10-37** View of the Mississippi from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico Photographed by the Army Corps of Engineers, 1984 (VHS)
- **10-38** View of the Mississippi from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico Photographed by the Army Corps of Engineers, 1984 (DVD)
- **10-39** McDonoghville Cemetery Index, extracted and transcribed by Katherine Chamberlain, 2010 (CD-ROM)
- **10-40** McDonoghville Bicentennial Celebration, April 25, 2015 (DVD)

Subseries C: Maryland

- **10-41** Alumni Weekend Presentations including Sutherland bust of McDonogh, June 9, 1995 (DVD)
- 10-42 John McDonogh's Papers at the Maryland State Archives, captured March 2009 (CD-ROM)

Subseries D: Other

- 10-43 Interview with Jean Harrison, great-great granddaughter of James and Fanny Harrison, who were John McDonogh's house slaves, and who grew up in New Orleans in the 1940s and 1950s, June 21, 2007 (DVD)
- 10-44 "John McDonogh: Man of Many Facets--Book 1" by Arthur G. Nuhrah. Two copies (CD-ROM)
- 10-45 "John McDonogh: Man of Many Facets--Book 2" by Arthur G. Nuhrah. Two copies (CD-ROM)

10-46 "John McDonogh: Man of Many Facets--Book 3 (Index)" by Arthur G. Nuhrah. Two copies (CD-ROM)

Series E: Physical Ephemera

- **10-47** Four white and red unsharpened pencils reading "John McDonogh Day." Slight differences in design between them but no dates
- **10-48** "McDonoghville 1815-2015" bicentennial pin. Features a red silhouette profile of John McDonogh against a white background
- **10-49** "City of Gretna, Louisiana" pin. White house on a green background with a black border and gold outline
- **10-50** Bill Sunderland Bust of John McDonogh Materials, 1995