

McBryde, Larry, Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family

Larry McBryde Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family
1859-2013



Title Statement

McBryde, Larry, Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family
Larry McBryde Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family, 1859-1920s Ms.2013.024

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2013.024

Unit Date

1859-2013

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The Larry McBryde Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family, 1859-2013, contains materials concerning John McLaren McBryde, Sr., his brother Robert James McBryde, and their descendants. Primarily, the collection contains photographs, letters, family histories, and biographies about McBryde, Sr., who was president of Virginia Tech from 1891 thru 1907.

Creator

McBryde family

Creator

McBryde, John McLaren, 1841-1923

Creator

McBryde, Larry

Extent

0.94 Cubic Feet 3 boxes

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Larry McBryde Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family were donated to Special Collections and University Archives in multiple accessions in 2013. Additional materials were donated in May 2019.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the collection was completed in June 2013. An addition was integrated in June and July 2019.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Larry McBryde Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family, Ms2013-024, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Known as the "father of VPI," John McLaren McBryde (January 1, 1841-March 20, 1923) was the fifth president of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (VPI, or Virginia Tech). He was born in Abbeville, South Carolina, to Susan McLaren and John McBryde, a Scottish cotton merchant. In December of 1858, John McLaren McBryde enrolled in South Carolina College (later the University of South Carolina) in Columbia, South Carolina. He later transferred to the University of Virginia in 1859, leaving in 1861 to fight in the American Civil War for the Confederacy. Having joined the military, McBryde was stationed on both Sullivan and Morris Islands, reportedly seeing the first shot fired on Fort Sumter. In 1862, McBryde contracted typhus fever and was forced to leave the army, but went on to work for the Treasury Department of the Confederate States of America in Richmond, Virginia.

Following the end of the Civil War, McBryde ran a large farm named Branchland in Charlottesville, Virginia. During this time, he published numerous articles on the subject of agriculture, gaining him the attention that eventually led to his appointment as a Professor of Agriculture and Botany at the University of Tennessee in 1879. In 1882, McBryde was offered a chair at the South Carolina College, where he remained until 1891, expanding it into a university after becoming president. In 1891, South Carolina University was again reduced to a college and its agricultural department moved to Clemson, leading to McBryde's acceptance of the Presidency at the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC).

During his time at Virginia Tech, McBryde divided the college into separate departments, expanded the curriculum, oversaw the installation of an infirmary and a new water system, added dormitories and faculty housing, and increased enrollment from 135 students in 1891 to 727 by 1903. After his retirement in 1907, McBryde was the first person elected president emeritus for the college, eventually becoming known as "the father of VPI."

On November 18, 1863, McBryde married Cora Bolton. They had eight children, six of whom lived to adulthood: Janet (1864-1869), James (1866-1925), Anna (1868-1948; later Mrs. Robert J. Davidson), John McLaren, Jr. (1870-1956), Charles (1872-1962), Susan (1874-1951), Meade (1877-1959), and Waid (abt. 1878-?). In 1923, McBryde died at his son's home in New Orleans but was returned to Blacksburg, Virginia for burial.

Scope and Content

The Larry McBryde Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family, 1859-2013, contains materials concerning John McLaren McBryde, Sr., his brother Robert James McBryde, and their descendants, including John McLaren McBryde, Jr., Charles N. McBryde, Robert J. Davidson (the son-in-law of McBryde, Sr.), Meade Bolton McBryde, Sgt. John McLaren McBryde, David Caldwell McBryde, and others. The collection contains five series, organized by subject and subdivided chronologically.

Series I contains the papers of John McLaren McBryde, Sr., and his immediate family, dating from 1859 through 1930. Items include photographs and newspaper articles relating to McBryde's life and service at Virginia Tech, a Petersburg Railroad Pass during McBryde's Confederate service, a Sweet Briar College program, newspaper clippings related to the colleges he worked at, and an unbound photograph album (20 leaves) with photographs of the University of South Carolina, Washington and Lee University, and early images of the VPI campus and the surrounding town of Blacksburg. There are also letters to McBryde, including copies of correspondence pertaining to the University of Virginia's presidency, and to his son Charles N. McBryde about him. Finally, legal documents, letters, and resolutions relate to McBryde's death.

Series II contains items belonging to John McLaren McBryde, Jr., dated 1904 thru 1947. Primarily, items pertain to his research, reminiscences, and biographies about his father. There are also postcards to him and his wife of Blacksburg, Charlottesville, and Hollins, Virginia.

Series III contains a c. 1905 photograph of and 1926 memorial to Robert James McBryde, the brother of John McLaren McBryde, Sr.

Series IV consists of newspaper clippings, obituaries, and curriculum vitae, dated [1916?] thru 2013, for other McBryde Family members, including Robert J. Davidson, Meade Bolton McBryde, and the descendants of John McLaren McBryde, Sr., and Robert James McBryde. There is also a 1972 invitation sent to Sgt. John McLaren McBryde for the dedication ceremony of McBryde Hall at Virginia Tech in 1972.

The fifth and final series is undated genealogy of the McBryde Family. Several family trees and four handwritten volumes of the Chronicles of the McBryde Family by David Caldwell McBryde are included, along with partial photocopies and digital copies of the volumes on DVD.

Related Archival Materials

See also the following related collections at Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives:

Records of the Office of the President, John McLaren McBryde, RG 2/5

J. Bolton McBryde Collection, Ms1992-059

McBryde House Specification Records, Ms1999-010

Janet Barnhill Collection on Cora Bolton McBryde, Ms2016-019

Polly Ashelman Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family, Ms2019-017

John M. and Cora Bolton McBryde Family Papers, Ms2023-069

Midhurst, J.M. McBryde Estate, Blacksburg, Va., Map-0276

Photographs of John M. McBryde are in the Faculty/Staff Photograph Collection

Keywords

Faculty and staff

University Archives

University History

Record Group 2 - Office of the President

McBryde, Charles Neil, Dr., 1872-1962

McBryde, John McLaren, 1841-1923

McBryde family

Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (1896-1944)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute (1944-1970)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (1970-)

Existence and Location of Copies

Some of this collection has been digitized and is available online.

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged into series by subject, and each series is arranged chronologically.

- Series I: John McLaren McBryde, Sr., and Family
- Series II: John McLaren McBryde, Jr.
- Series III: Robert James McBryde
- Series IV: Other McBryde Family Members
- Series V: Genealogy

Description of Subordinate Components

Series I: John McLaren McBryde, Sr., and Family

Unit Date 1859-1930

South Carolina College Examination Results

Unit Date 1859

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Confederate Petersburg Rail Road Pass

Unit Date 1863

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Newspaper Articles by John McLaren McBryde on Agriculture

Unit Date 1883, undated

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Newspaper Articles from South Carolina College

Unit Date 1885, undated

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Newspaper Articles on Agriculture from Mississippi College

Unit Date 1887, undated

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Unbound Photograph Album of University of South Carolina

Unit Date 1888-1900

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Unbound Photograph Album of Lexington, Richmond, and Blacksburg, including Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College

Unit Date 1889-1891

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 7-8 (folder)

Copy of biography on President McBryde from the 1899 Bugle yearbook

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Photographs and Film Negatives of the John McLaren McBryde, Sr. Family

Unit Date 1902-c. 1920s

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Correspondence regarding the University of Virginia Presidency

Unit Date 1903-1904

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

Letter from Archer Phlegar to John McLaren McBryde

Unit Date 1904

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 12 (folder)

Retirement of John McLaren McBryde

Unit Date 1906

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 13 (folder)

Newspaper Articles from Sweet Briar College

Unit Date 1905-1906

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 14 (folder)

Sweet Briar College Program

Unit Date 1910

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 15 (folder)

Scrapbook of Newspaper Articles

Unit Date 1911-1923

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 16 (folder)

Last Will and Testament of John McLaren McBryde, Sr. (photocopy)

Unit Date 1918

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 17 (folder)

Obituaries for John McLaren McBryde, Sr.

Unit Date 1923

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 18 (folder)

Condolences, Resolutions, and Funeral Information for John McLaren McBryde, Sr.

Unit Date 1923

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 19 (folder)

Letter from Charles N. McBryde to Charles W. Badney about his father's appearance

Unit Date 1930

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Series II: John McLaren McBryde, Jr.

Unit Date 1904-1947

Post Cards to Mrs. and Dr. John McLaren McBryde, Jr. of Blacksburg, Charlottesville, and Hollins, Virginia

Unit Date 1904-1907

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

John McLaren McBryde, Jr.'s reminiscences and biographies on John McLaren McBryde, Sr.

Unit Date 1937, 1944, undated

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Research of John McLaren McBryde, Jr. on John McLaren McBryde, Sr.

Unit Date 1944-1947

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Series III: Robert James McBryde

Unit Date c. 1905, 1926

Photograph of Dr. Robert J. McBryde

Unit Date c. 1905

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Article, "Memorial to Dr. McBryde" [Dr. Robert James McBryde]

Unit Date 1926-12

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 6 (folder)

Series IV: Other McBryde Family Members

Unit Date [1916?]-2013

Newspaper Articles on Robert J. Davidson

Unit Date [1916?], 1927

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 7 (folder)

Obituaries and CVs for Descendants of John M. McBryde, Sr., and Robert J. McBryde

Unit Date 1957-2013

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 8 (folder)

Meade Bolton McBryde Newspaper Articles

Unit Date 1959, undated

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 9 (folder)

Invitation to Sgt. John McLaren McBryde for Dedication of McBryde Hall

Unit Date 1972-07-04

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 10 (folder)

Series V: Genealogy

Unit Date undated

Family Trees

Unit Date undated

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 11 (folder)

box 3

Chronicles of the McBryde Family by David Caldwell McBryde, 4 vols.

Unit Date undated

box 3

Photocopy of McBryde Chronicles on Robert J. Davidson and John McLaren McBryde, Sr.

Unit Date undated

box 3

Digital Copies of the Chronicles

Unit Date undated

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 12 (folder)