

# **John McLean Papers**

## **A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



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**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
2008**

Contact information:

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

Additional search options available at:

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

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm78032326>

Prepared by J. Butler and Carolyn H. Sung  
Revised and expanded by Karen Stuart

## 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

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Summary:** 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 Department.  
United States. Supreme Court.  
Whig Party (U.S.)

### **Subjects**

Constitutional law--United States.  
Indians of North America--Government relations.  
Law--United States.  
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

*Container*  
BOX 1-19  
REEL 1-12

*Series*  
**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 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 25  
REEL 18

**Printed Matter, 1830-1860**

Legal briefs, pamphlets, reports, political tracts, and miscellaneous items.  
Arranged chronologically.

BOX 25  
not filmed

**Addition, 1823**

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

## Legal File, 1829-1860

### Container

### Contents

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REEL 12

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