



Guide to the Duncan McLaurin papers, 1779-1932 and undated, bulk 1822-1872

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Summary

Collection Title:

Duncan McLaurin papers, 1779-1932 and undated, bulk 1822-1872

Creator:

McLaurin, Duncan, 1787-1872

Abstract:

Duncan McLaurin was a farmer, teacher, lawyer, and state legislator of Richmond County, North Carolina. Correspondence, bills, receipts, legal and other papers, and printed matter (1822-1872), of McLaurin and members of his family. McLaurin's papers (mainly 1822-1850) relate to economic conditions in North Carolina, South Carolina, and the U.S. in general; the development of infrastructure and education in North and South Carolina; the Civil War; politics in North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia; and national politics, including presidential elections from 1832 to 1848. Civil War topics include camp life, economic conditions, food supplies, the hope for foreign intervention, morale, conscription and desertion, the blockade of Southern ports, the battles of Murfreesboro (Tennessee), Jackson (Mississippi), Port Royal Harbor (South Carolina), Hanover Court House (Virginia), and the siege of Vicksburg (Mississippi). A large amount of correspondence from relatives in Mississippi (circa 1830-1867) concerns frontier conditions, slavery, politics, agricultural and labor problems, sectionalism and nationalism in Mississippi, Reconstruction conditions, and family affairs. There are many references to slavery, particularly in Mississippi: the sale of slaves, runaway slaves, a lynching of an African American in 1839, the fear of slave insurrections in 1856 and 1860; and the abolition movement. Includes an atlas with a list of slaves circa 1864 written on the flyleaf.

Extent:

2.4 Linear Feet
Approx. 1,800 Items

Physical Location:

For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Language:

English

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

RL.00879

Permalink:

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/mclaurinduncan/>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Duncan McLaurin Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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Background

Scope and Content

Personal and political correspondence, legal papers, bills and receipts, and printed material comprise the papers of Duncan McLaurin (1787-1872). Correspondence, including many letters from friends and relatives who migrated to Mississippi, discusses the forced removal of the Choctaw Indians; wars with tribes in Georgia and Alabama; economic conditions, especially the panics of 1837 and 1857; the Bank of the United States; banks and currency; cotton production, markets, and prices. There are many references to slavery, particularly in Mississippi: the sale of slaves, runaway slaves, a lynching of an African American in 1839, the fear of slave insurrections in 1856 and 1860; and the abolition movement. There are also references to the annexation of California; land prices and speculation; the growth of religious denominations in Mississippi and Louisiana; the development of schools in Mississippi, Georgia, and North Carolina, and of Wake Forest Institute (Wake Forest, North Carolina), and Union Seminary (Richmond, Virginia); the temperance movement; the early development of railroads, roads, and canals in North Carolina; politics in North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia; and national politics, including presidential elections, 1832-1848.

Civil War topics in the correspondence include camp life, economic conditions, food supplies, the hope for foreign intervention, morale, conscription and desertion, the blockade of Southern ports, the battles of Murfreesboro (Tennessee), Jackson (Mississippi), Port Royal Harbor (South Carolina), and Hanover Court House (Virginia), and the siege of Vicksburg (Mississippi); economic conditions and Reconstruction government in Mississippi; and difficulties with sharecroppers and debtors.

Legal papers consist of deeds, contracts, wills, court orders, and, after 1850, papers pertaining to the wardship of his sister, Isabel Patterson, and her children after her mental breakdown. Miscellaneous printed items include an atlas, 1835, with a list of slaves dating from the end of the war written on the flyleaf; a memorial to the North Carolina state legislature from the Society of Friends, 1832; a reply to President Jackson's proclamation on nullification;

a report of the treasurer of the University of North Carolina to the trustees, 1839; a report of the Merchants Bank of New Bern, the Bank of the State of North Carolina, and the Bank of Cape Fear, 1838; a North Carolina Republican campaign circular, 1873; The Prison News, Raleigh, North Carolina, for March 1, 1932; and other various items.

Biographical/Historical

The McLaurin collection centers around Duncan McLaurin (1787-1872), a teacher, lawyer, state legislator, and farmer of Richmond County, North Carolina. Much of the correspondence involves his only brother, John McLaurin (d. 1864), and eight sisters: Mary (d. 1869), Effy (d. 1861), Polly (d. 1860s), Barbara McKenzie (d. 1855), Elizabeth (d. 1860), Jeanny McCall, Sarah Douglas (d. 1860s), and Isabel Patterson (d. 1860s), and their children.

During the 1820s Duncan McLaurin was engaged in a law practice in his home county, and by 1831 was a member of the state legislature. In 1834 he accepted a teaching position at an academy in Bennettsville, S.C. He remained here until 1837, when the failing health of his father forced him to return home and resume his law practice. The next year he was back in the legislature, and during 1841-1842 he was postmaster at Laurel Hill. By 1853, however, he was in his sixties, and was looking for an assistant to manage his affairs. He never married, but lived with a succession of nieces and nephews.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Acquisition Information

The Duncan McLaurin papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a gift in 1956 and 1963.

Processing Information

Processed by Rubenstein Library staff

Encoded by Tanya Lee, Paula Jeannet, and Carrie Mills, May 2014

Accession(s) described in this finding aid: 56-111

Materials may not have been ordered and described beyond their original condition.

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Related Materials

Related Material

Laughlin McLaurin papers, 1817-1924 (resident of Scotland County, N.C., related to Duncan McLaurin) Rubenstein Library, Duke University

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Names and Subjects

- South Carolina -- History -- 1775-1865
- South Carolina -- Politics and government -- 1775-1865
- Southern States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
- Mississippi -- Politics and government
- North Carolina -- Economic conditions

- North Carolina -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865
- North Carolina -- Politics and government -- 1775-1865
- Education -- North Carolina
- Frontier and pioneer life -- Mississippi
- Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877) -- Mississippi
- Slavery -- Mississippi
- Photographs
- United States -- Politics and government -- 1815-1861
- Agriculture -- Mississippi

Collection Inventory

Duncan McLaurin papers, 1779-1932 and undated, bulk 1822-1872

Physical Description: 6 boxes

Correspondence, 1817-1842	Box 1
Physical Description: 3 folders	
Correspondence, 1843-1932	Box 2
Physical Description: 4 folders	
Legal papers, 1779-1922	Box 3
Physical Description: 3 folders	
Legal papers, undated	Box 4
Bills and receipts, 1817-1840s	Box 4
Physical Description: 3 folders	
Bills and receipts, 1850s-1917 and undated	Box 5
Physical Description: 3 folders	
Miscellany, 1822-1923 and undated	Box 5
Physical Description: 2 folders	
Scope and Contents note	
Includes Laurel Hill and Richmond City property tax lists.	
A Comprehensive Atlas Geographical, Historical and Commercial by T.G. Bradford, 1835	Box 6

Scope and Contents

Atlas with extensive marginalia and annotations by both Duncan McLaurin (approximately 1838) and L. Edgar McCall (approximately 1892-1893). McLaurin's manuscript writings include a slave list, a list of volumes in his library, and assorted notes. McCall's manuscript writings include school notes, drawings and doodles, diary entries, and other penmanship and geography exercises.

Photographs	Box 6
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Small volumes	Box 6
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Physical Description: 9 items

Scope and Contents note

Includes account (1868-1876) and day (1848-1851) books for Hugh McCall, a carpenter and Duncan McLaurin's nephew.

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