

Guide to the McAllister Family Papers, 1841-1910, 1928

Administrative Information

Title and Dates:

McAllister Family Papers, 1841-1910, 1928

Repository:

New Hampshire Historical Society
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Concord, NH 03301
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Collection Number:

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Author of Finding Aid:

Mylynda Gill

Creator:

McAllister family

Language:

The materials in this collection are in English.

Extent:

6 boxes and 1 oversized folder ; 2.29 linear feet

Abstract:

The McAllister Family Papers, 1841-1910, 1928, span three generations, and consists of correspondence, papers, ephemera, photographs, and some family genealogy. This collection reveals the inner workings of a family living in New England from the mid-nineteenth century to the very beginning of the twentieth century due to the vast majority of the collection being composed of correspondence from one family member to another.

Access and Use

Acquisition Information and Provenance:

The McAllister Family Papers were a gift of Sherman L. Lewis III, great-grandson of John Gilman McAllister of Nashua in April 2012.

Processing Information:

This collection was processed by Mylynda Gill in February and March 2023. The finding aid was written by Mylynda Gill in February and March 2023. This finding aid follows the standards set-forth by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

Access Restrictions:

Available for research.

Location:

The collection is housed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements:

The materials in this collection are paper based and have no special technical requirements for use.

Copyright/Conditions Governing Use:

For permission to reproduce or publish materials from this collection, please contact the New Hampshire Historical Society. Users are responsible for following all copyright and intellectual property laws.

Preferred Citation:

Item title, McAllister Family Papers, 2012.021. New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH. Date accessed.

Collection Overview

Biographical Information:

Merab French was born on November 27, 1811 to Ebenezer and Rhoda French in Bedford, NH. She married John McAllister (1810-1849), son of John and Jane (Aiken) McAllister, on April 11, 1839. John McAllister was born in Bedford. Merab and John had one son, John Gilman McAllister (1841-1908). In 1842, for reasons unclear, John left his wife and child, though he kept in contact with his family. He eventually died of cholera on May 24, 1849, while participating in the California Gold Rush. Merab remained in New England after her husband's departure and death. Family lore indicates that to support herself and her son, she sold many family items, took up dress making, and became famous for her fine needlework. She died on June 6, 1881, in Lawrence, MA, at the home of her son, apparently while holding her granddaughter, Grace Tirrell McAllister (1880-1954), in her arms.

John Gilman McAllister was born on December 9, 1841, to Merab French McAllister and John McAllister in Bedford, NH. Due to a lack of siblings and having an absent father, he became

close to his cousins John Henry Barr, Frank Barr, and Etta Barr while growing up. They were his cousins on his mother's side. Their mother was his mother's younger sister, Mary Annis French, who married John N. Barr. John Gilman McAllister attended Dartmouth College and later attended Columbia Medical School. He served in the Navy toward the end of the Civil War. He married his wife, Almeda Norton Tirrell (1845-1912), in 1869 in Nashua, NH. The couple moved to Lawrence, MA, where they had four children: Frederick Danforth (1872-1936), Frank Barr (1874-1940), Grace Tirrell (1880-1954) and Helen Webster (1884-1967). He also joined the Massachusetts Militia and was commissioned Assistant Surgeon of the Fourth Battery of Light Artillery in the Second Brigade, Fourth Division. He worked as a physician and surgeon and was known to hitch up his horses in the middle of the night during a snowstorm to go tend to patients who needed him. According to family history, he never charged for his services, but would accept voluntary payments. He died on June 20, 1908 in Methuen, MA.

Almeda Norton Tirrell was born on November 23, 1845 in Nashua, NH. Her mother, Almeda (Norton) Tirrell, died on December 4, 1845 due to complications of childbirth. Her father, Quincy Adams Tirrell, stricken with grief of losing his wife, left Almeda with her aunt Catherine Norton for the first twelve years of her life. He then remarried and brought his daughter to live with him in Nashua. It was at the public school in Nashua that Almeda and John Gilman McAllister first met. Almeda went on to Mt. Holyoke Seminary and graduated in 1866. She then attended the Boston Conservatory of Music. She was said to have a sweet and true soprano voice and even sang solos at concerts given by the Conservatory of Music. After she completed her studies, she returned to Mt. Holyoke to teach singing and English until her marriage to John Gilman McAllister in 1869 in Nashua, NH. The couple moved to Lawrence, MA, where they had four children together: Frederick Danforth (1872-1936), Frank Barr (1874-1940), Grace Tirrell (1880-1954) and Helen Webster (1884-1967). She spent the rest of her life living at home and taking care of her family. She passed away on August 9, 1912 in Methuen, MA.

Frederick Danforth McAllister was born on October 2, 1872, to Almeda and John Gilman McAllister. He was their oldest son and child. According to family lore, he and his brother Frank were part of a quartet that went on a world tour. He graduated from Amherst in 1894, and Harvard Medical in 1898. Like his father, he was a doctor and surgeon who worked in the Lawrence, MA, area. On June 8, 1909, he married Gladys Anna Schrebler (1888-1968) in Cohasset, MA. His brother, Frank Barr McAllister, married them as he had become a Minister of Gospel and was stationed in Cohasset at the time. They had one child together, a daughter named Elizabeth (1910-1997). Frederick Danforth McAllister passed away in 1936.

Frank Barr McAllister (1874-1940) was born on September 17, 1874, to Almeda and John Gilman McAllister. He was their second son and second child. According to family lore, he and his brother Fred were part of a quartet that went on a world tour. He graduated from Amherst College and then Yale Divinity College in 1899. He was a clergyman who held various titles throughout his life and served the towns of Cohasset and Bedford, MA, along with others. While he was a member of the clergy in Cohasset, he acted as the officiant for the marriages of his two siblings, Fredrick and Helen to their spouses. He married his first wife May Leslie Collier (1883-1917) on June 12, 1906 in Cohasset, MA. Together they had one son: Jonathan Tower McAllister (1909-1974). According to family lore, after May's death Frank was so heartbroken

that he had to move to new church. He married Mary Woodburn Adams (1880-1937) on April 21, 1919 in Cambridge, MA. He passed away on January 19, 1940.

Grace Tirrell McAllister was born on February 2, 1880, and is the first daughter and third child born to Almeda and John Gilman McAllister. She worked as a real estate agent and insurance agent. She never married or had children. Family lore claims that she lived with a woman named Ethel Haserat for a long time and that when Grace passed away in 1954, she left Ethel her house on Caleb's Lane in Rockport, MA.

Helen Webster McAllister was born on January 24, 1884. She was the second daughter and last child born to Almeda and John Gilman McAllister. She attended, but did not graduate from Mount Holyoke College. Family lore states that she left after two years to study music at the Metropolitan Opera of New York City. She married Sherman Leland Lewis (1882-1937) on June 27, 1907, in Methuen, MA. They were also married by her brother Frank Barr McAllister, who was a clergyman stationed in Cohasset, MA, at the time. Helen and Sherman had four children together: Almeda (1909-1999), Sherman (1910-2000), Nancy (1913-1991), and John (1918-1984). Helen and her family moved all over the county. She passed away in Newport Beach, CA, on September 28, 1967.

Collection Scope and Content Note:

The McAllister Family Papers span three generations and date from 1841 to 1928. The materials in this collection are made up of correspondence, papers, ephemera, photographs, and some family genealogy. This collection reveals the inner workings of a family living in New England from the mid-nineteenth century to the very beginning of the twentieth century due to the vast majority of the collection being composed of correspondence from one family member to another.

The name of each group of materials reflects what the majority of the materials are within that particular group, but there are occasional outliers as well. For example, in Group 3: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, there is a letter to Almeda Norton from Benjamin F. Norton Jr. dated 1858. Calling cards for Grace T. McAllister and Almeda Norton Tirrell's report card are located in Group 4: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, but the rest of the materials in this group belong to Merab and John Gilman McAllister.

Some items of note include calling cards for Almeda N. Tirrell and J. Gilman McAllister found in Group 8. In Group 3, a type of registration confirmation card for John G. McAllister can be found for the New Hampshire Medical Institution Dartmouth College Matriculated for Course of Lectures, dated August 5, 1863. In Group 7, there are correspondence and records relating to John Gilman McAllister's time in Navy during the end of the Civil War. Frank Barr McAllister's letters to his mother, Almeda Norton (Tirrell) McAllister, in Group 12, provide a unique insight into the daily life of a pastor in New England at the very beginning of the twentieth century.

Arrangement:

The materials in this collection arrived in letter packets, which they have been kept in. The materials in each group have been arranged chronologically.

Contents List

Box 1

- Folder 1 Group 1: Merab McAllister correspondence and papers, 1842-1849
- Folder 2 Group 1: Merab McAllister correspondence and papers, 1851-1859
- Folder 3 Group 1: Merab McAllister correspondence and papers, 1860-1861
- Folder 4 Group 1: Merab McAllister correspondence and papers, 1862-1866
- Folder 5 Group 1: Merab McAllister correspondence and papers, undated
- Folder 6 Group 2: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1857-1859
- Folder 7 Group 2: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1860
- Folder 8 Group 2: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1861-1862
- Folder 9 Group 2: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1864
- Folder 10 Group 2: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1865
- Folder 11 Group 2: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, undated
- Folder 12 Group 3: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1857-1860
- Folder 13 Group 3: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1861
- Folder 14 Group 3: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1862
- Folder 15 Group 3: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1863
- Folder 16 Group 3: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1864
- Folder 17 Group 3: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, undated

Box 2

- Folder 1 Group 4: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1857-1860
- Folder 2 Group 4: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1862-1863
- Folder 3 Group 4: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1864-1867
- Folder 4 Group 4: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, undated
- Folder 5 Group 4: Merab and John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, ephemera, undated
- Folder 6 Group 5: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1857-1859
- Folder 7 Group 5: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1860 January-September
- Folder 8 Group 5: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1860 October-December
- Folder 9 Group 5: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1861-1862
- Folder 10 Group 5: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1863-1865
- Folder 11 Group 5: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, undated
- Folder 9 Group 6: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1857-1861
- Folder 10 Group 6: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1862

Box 3

- Folder 1 Group 6: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1863
Folder 2 Group 6: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1864
Folder 3 Group 6: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1865
Folder 4 Group 6: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, undated
Folder 5 Group 7: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1843-1859
Folder 6 Group 7: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1860-1862
Folder 7 Group 7: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1863-1865
Folder 8 Group 7: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1866-1872
Folder 9 Group 7: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, 1902, 1907
Folder 10 Group 7: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers, undated
Folder 11 Group 8: Almeda Tirrell McAllister correspondence and papers, 1841-1861
Folder 12 Group 8: Almeda Tirrell McAllister correspondence and papers, 1862-1867
Folder 13 Group 8: Almeda Tirrell McAllister correspondence and papers, 1868
Folder 14 Group 8: Almeda Tirrell McAllister correspondence and papers, 1869-1894
Folder 15 Group 8: Almeda Tirrell McAllister correspondence and papers, correspondence, undated
Folder 16 Group 8: Almeda Tirrell McAllister correspondence and papers, compositions, undated
Folder 17 Group 9: Almeda Tirrell McAllister correspondence and papers, 1887-1895

Box 4

- Folder 1 Group 9: Almeda Tirrell McAllister correspondence and papers, 1896-1897
Folder 2 Group 9: Almeda Tirrell McAllister correspondence and papers, 1898-1899, 1907
Folder 3 Group 9: Almeda Tirrell McAllister correspondence and papers, undated
Folder 4 Group 10: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1907
Folder 5 Group 10: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 April-June
Folder 6 Group 10: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 July-August
Folder 7 Group 10: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 September-October
Folder 8 Group 10: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 November-December
Folder 9 Group 10: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1909 February
Folder 10 Group 10: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1909 March-July
Folder 11 Group 10: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, undated
Folder 12 Group 11: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 July-August
Folder 13 Group 11: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 September-October
Folder 14 Group 11: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 November-December

- Folder 15 Group 11: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, 1909-1910
- Folder 16 Group 11: Almeda and Helen McAllister correspondence and papers, undated
- Folder 17 Group 12: Almeda and Frank Barr McAllister correspondence and papers, 1906-1907

Box 5

- Folder 1 Group 12: Almeda and Frank Barr McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 January-April
- Folder 2 Group 12: Almeda and Frank Barr McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 May-July
- Folder 3 Group 12: Almeda and Frank Barr McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 August-October
- Folder 4 Group 12: Almeda and Frank Barr McAllister correspondence and papers, 1908 November-December
- Folder 5 Group 12: Almeda and Frank Barr McAllister correspondence and papers, 1909 February-March
- Folder 6 Group 12: Almeda and Frank Barr McAllister correspondence and papers, 1909 April-May
- Folder 7 Group 12: Almeda and Frank Barr McAllister correspondence and papers, 1909 June-December
- Folder 8 Group 12: Almeda and Frank Barr McAllister correspondence and papers, 1910
- Folder 9 Group 12: Almeda and Frank Barr McAllister correspondence and papers, undated
- Folder 10 Group 13: McAllister family correspondence and papers, 1841-1859
- Folder 11 Group 13: McAllister family correspondence and papers, 1861-1863
- Folder 12 Group 13: McAllister family correspondence and papers, 1864-1868, 1889
- Folder 13 Group 13: McAllister family correspondence and papers, undated
- Folder 14 Group 14: McAllister family correspondence and papers, 1883-1898
- Folder 15 Group 14: McAllister family correspondence and papers, 1899-1903
- Folder 16 Group 14: McAllister family correspondence and papers, 1904 May-June
- Folder 17 Group 14: McAllister family correspondence and papers, 1904 July-August

Box 6

- Folder 1 Group 14: McAllister family correspondence and papers, 1904 September-December
- Folder 2 Group 14: McAllister family correspondence and papers, 1905-1906
- Folder 3 Group 14: McAllister family correspondence and papers, 1907-1910, 1928
- Folder 4 Group 14: McAllister family correspondence and papers, undated
- Folder 5 Group 15: Loose materials, correspondence and papers, 1860-1865, 1908, undated
- Folder 6 Group 15: Loose materials, photocopies, 1842-1865
- Folder 7 Group 15: Loose materials, genealogy and photographs, undated

Separated Materials:

The following item was moved to Oversized Manuscripts Box 'M':

Appointment of John G. McAllister as Assistant Surgeon of the Fourth Battery of Light Artillery in the Second Brigade of the Massachusetts State Militia, 1868 August 18

[Originally part of Group 7: John Gilman McAllister correspondence and papers.]

Subject Terms

People:

- McAllister family
- McAllister, Almeda Norton Tirrell, 1845-1912
- McAllister, Frank Barr, 1874-1940
- McAllister, Frederick Danforth, 1872-1936
- McAllister, Grace Tirrell, 1880-1954
- McAllister, Helen Webster, 1884-1967
- McAllister, John Gilman, 1841-1908
- McAllister, John, 1810-1849
- McAllister, Merab French, 1811-1881

Organizations:

- Second Congregational Church (Cohasset, M.A.)
- United States. Navy

Subjects:

- Families
- Families of clergy
- Friendship
- Genealogy
- Health
- Siblings
- Single-parent families
- Travel
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

Locations:

- Cohasset, MA
- Lawrence, MA
- Mound City, IL
- Nashua, NH

Occupations:

- Clergy
- Physicians
- Surgeons