

MCGRATH (JOHN) PAPERS AND SCRAPBOOK
(Mss. 1115)
Inventory

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

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SUMMARY

Size.	56 items and 1 volume
Geographic locations.	East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana
Inclusive dates.	1861-1865, 1882-1949
Bulk dates.	N/A
Language.	English
Summary.	Scrapbook and papers of John McGrath, printer, soldier, and local historian residing in Baton Rouge. Includes material from his service as a soldier and newspaper clippings pertaining to the history of Baton Rouge and his family.
Restrictions on access.	If microfilm is available, photocopies must be made from microfilm.
Related collections.	John McGrath Family Papers, Mss. 3281
Copyright.	Copyright of the original materials is retained by descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. copyright law.
Citation.	John McGrath Scrapbook, Mss. 1115, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack location(s).	C:36

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

John McGrath (1835-1924), a printer, editor, adventurer, and soldier, was born in Bangor, Maine. He traveled to Baton Rouge at age ten, and began his apprenticeship as a printer. After fighting with General William Walker's expedition in Nicaragua, and as a Confederate officer in the Civil War, he worked in Louisiana state government while pursuing his newspaper business.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Papers include a typewritten copy of McGrath's military record in the Civil War, 1861-1865. A telegram and letters concern his journalistic and historical activities and his associations with the Historical Society of East and West Baton Rouge and the Louisiana Press Association.

The scrapbook volume contains clippings of articles edited and authored by McGrath which were published in the *Daily Truth* (1903-1904) and the *State Times Advocate* (1914-1920). Articles cover the early history of Baton Rouge, discussing its residents, events in its history, and its social life. Topics of clippings by McGrath and others include McGrath's biography; news of Confederate veterans; yellow fever epidemics; statistics on local population; education, religion, and manufacturing in Louisiana; the state penitentiary; fire fighting; the Deaf and Dumb Institute; court cases; and executions.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Papers include a typewritten copy of McGrath's military record; a letter and resolution from the Historical Society of East and West Baton Rouge discussing his presidency and resignation (1904-1917); various newspaper articles discussing the history and development of Baton Rouge (1921-1922), activities of Confederate veterans and prominent citizens in the city (1941-1949), the state fair of 1843, LSU history, and the life of John McGrath. Other items include obituaries of John McGrath (1924), Martin McGrath, and Confederate veteran Major R. L. Pruyn (1917).

The scrapbook contains clippings of articles of which McGrath was author or editor, printed in the *Daily Truth* (1903-1904), and the Baton Rouge *State-Times* (1914-1920), and a report of his stories written by Lyle Saxon for other newspapers. The articles include an historical sketch of the early history of Baton Rouge reprinted from DeBow's *Review* and personal reminiscences of McGrath on a variety of subjects. He discusses the story of early inhabitants of the city, including Judge Charles Tessier; General Harney, famous for his participation in the Seminole War; his brother Dr. Harney; Judge J. J. Burke; Dr. French; Captain Searles; Silas Jones; the Favrot family; and other prominent citizens, doctors, lawyers, and merchants.

He also mentions events which took place in Baton Rouge, either his own experiences or stories from older citizens, such as the West Florida Rebellion, the capture of the Spanish Fort by General Philemon Thomas, the capture of the garrison and arsenal by state troops after Louisiana's secession in 1861, the departure and return of Confederate soldiers, and a fire in the early 1840s. McGrath also reports other incidents such as Mrs. Heath helping Captain John McKowen capture Federal General Neal Dow at Fort Hudson, East Feliciana Parish, as well as Mrs. William Kirby crossing Federal lines to aid the Confederacy. He discusses the yellow fever epidemic in 1853 and the attempts to build settlements on the Amite River to escape the fever.

He notes social life in Baton Rouge, discussing Mardi Gras balls, parades, the resort hotel in Greenwell Springs, cockfighting and horse racing (Baton Rouge was on the southern racing circuit in 1850), celebrations of national holidays, events held in the rotunda of the State Capitol, such as concerts for singers Adelina Patti, Catherine Hays, or Anna Bishop. McGrath also discusses early newspapers, the politics of early editors, political practices used to win elections and the policy of "colonizing," and the national election of 1860 in Baton Rouge.

Other topics mentioned include education, churches, early dramatic organizations, the printers' union and strike prior to the Civil War, the Washington Fire Companies, the Protestant Orphan Home, the Deaf and Dumb Institute, and the Grosse Tete and Opelousas Railroad. He discusses duels and execution in Baton Rouge, the local people who joined William Walker in Nicaragua, and the ball to raise money for the expedition of Lopez to Cuba.

INDEX TERMS

American newspapers--Louisiana.

Baton Rouge (La.)--History.

Baton Rouge (La.)--Politics and government.

Baton Rouge (La.)--Social life and customs.

Daily truth (Baton Rouge, La.)

Historical Society of East and West Baton Rouge.

Journalism--Louisiana.

Journalists--Louisiana.

Louisiana Press Association.

Louisiana--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

McGrath, John, 1835-1924.

Newspapers.

Scrapbooks.

State times advocate.

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack</u> <u>Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Content</u>
C:36	1	--	Scrapbook (1903-1904, 1914-1920)
		1	Obituary of Martin McGrath; letter to McGrath noting his resignation from the presidency of the Historical Society of East and West Baton Rouge; resolution from the Historical Society of East and West Baton Rouge concerning his resignation; telegram from N. C. Blanchard thanking McGrath; [1861-1863] 1904-1917
		2	Poems by Addie McGrath; 1882
		3	Editorial by Julia McGrath; 1903
		4	Article "Brief History of Baton Rouge" written by Judge Carrigan and published in DeBow's <i>Review</i> ; 1914
		5	Article detailing the history of Deerford, Louisiana; 1914
		6	Obituaries of Confederate veteran Major R. L. Pruyn; 1917
		7	Articles from the <i>Times-Picayune</i> detailing the life of John McGrath; 1921
		8	Articles concerning the history and development of Baton Rouge; 1921-1922
		9	Obituaries of John McGrath; 1924
		10	Articles detailing activities of Confederate veterans and those of McGrath's daughters; 1941-1949, undated
		11	Articles concerning news of prominent Baton Rouge citizens; 1944-1949, undated
		12	Article commenting on <i>Woman's Enterprise</i> ; undated
		13	Articles concerning miscellaneous Baton Rouge events, including the state fair of 1843, John McGrath, Confederate veterans' activities, Irish history, and LSU history; 1898-1944