

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



The University Archives
and Records Center

A Guide to the
Josiah C. McCracken Papers, 1874 – 1962,
Papers, 1906 - 1993

0.5 Cubic ft.

UPT 50 McC883

Prepared by Kaiyi Chen

1995

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PROVENANCE

Gift of Martha M. Howard, daughter of Josiah C. McCracken, which was conveyed at several times from 1993 to 1995.

ARRANGEMENT

The collection is arranged in the order of papers generated by Josiah C. McCracken; oversized material related to McCracken; and papers created by or related to his children.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Josiah Calvin McCracken was born in a pious religious family in Tennessee in 1874. His father was a scholar minister. After moving west homesteading to Kansas, the family helped build a local church. Josiah joined the United Presbyterian church when he was eight years old. In addition to the inheritance of a profound faith in Christianity, young McCracken acquired.

through the family's homesteading experience such qualities typical of American frontiers--a strong physique, manly demeanor, endurance of hardships, and the spirit of enterprise

McCracken's outstanding athletic abilities led to his admission to the University of Pennsylvania in 1896. At Penn, he was elected president of his class for four years, and served as president of the Christian Association for three years. In the latter capacity, he initiated a number of welfare projects such as Boys' Camp and University Settlement, which benefited many less fortunate families in the area for decades following his tenure. McCracken's goal for the Christian Association was to make it a moral but lively character-building institution run by students for students. After his graduation from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in 1901, McCracken served as secretary of the Y.M.C.A. of Columbia University for two years.

Parallel to his contribution as a student leader, McCracken enjoyed a brilliant record as a star athlete at Penn. He played on the varsity football team all four years and earned the status of All-American. With his all-round athletic competence, McCracken was selected as a member of the United States Olympic Team in 1900; he competed in the events of shot put and hammer throw in Paris that year. All these merits and accomplishments made him one of the most popular students that the University of Pennsylvania ever graduated.

In early 1906, the Christian Association of the University of Pennsylvania, which was interested in taking over the medical department of the Canton Christian College in southern China, sent McCracken to Canton for a field study. After spending seven months in China, McCracken concluded that the medical work at the Canton Christian College was worth undertaking. Based on his report, the Christian Association accepted the proposal from the College in Canton to establish a Christian medical school of the highest order. The Association appointed McCracken to head its China mission. In February 1907, McCracken, with his new bride Helen Newpher McCracken, traveled to Canton to start what turned out to be a forty-year-

long medical missionary career in China. When the proposed medical department of the Canton Christian College was renamed “The University Medical School in Canton, China,” McCracken was made its president, and he served in that position for seven years from 1907-1913.

In late 1913, the Christian Association terminated its affiliation with the Canton Christian College and accepted the invitation from St. John’s University, Shanghai, for a joint medical program. In the fall of 1914, McCracken transferred to Shanghai as dean of St. John’s Medical School. His deanship continued from 1914 to 1942, interrupted for only a short period due to the revolution in China in the late twenties. Under his administration, the School grew remarkably in both its faculty and student body and became one of the best medical schools in China.

McCracken also served as chief surgeon of St. Luke’s Hospital--the main teaching hospital for the Medical School. The Hospital treated over 80,000 out-patients each year. Though often overworked, McCracken enjoyed the hospital work. When war broke out between China and Japan in 1937, he helped build St. Luke’s Hospital No. 2, also known as American Refugee Hospital. His China mission, however, was cut short by the Pacific War in World War II. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese occupation troops located Americans and British subjects working in Shanghai and deported them to their home countries. McCracken and his family left Shanghai for the United States in late June 1942.

After the end of World War II, McCracken came back to Shanghai in 1946 and served as dean of St. John’s Medical School for another year. His contribution to the School, however, did not end with his retirement from the deanship. He continued to play an important role in raising funds in his home country for the School. He assisted St. John’s graduates in their entry to advanced medical programs in American schools, among them the Penn Medical School. He also recruited talented Chinese medical graduates to join the faculty of St. John’s Medical School. After the Communist government took over St. John’s University in 1952, all relations between St. John’s and its sponsoring church or missionary organizations in this country were

broken. McCracken, however, kept close contact with graduates of St. John's Medical School living in this country and rendered them valuable advice and help.

McCracken died at his apartment in Philadelphia in 1962.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection, though small in volume, represents two important aspects of Josiah C. McCracken's rich and splendid life--his brilliant achievement as an all-round star athlete at Penn and his life-long devotion to the development of medicine in China. News clippings and letters from his friends on his 65th birthday document the success of his China experience while eight photos of Penn Track Team portray his glory as the best and most popular athletic figure on campus when he studied at Penn.

The collection also includes family photos taken in China or America during different periods of time and three folders about his children, one of which concerns their planning for the publication of a biography of their father.

Archivist's note on additional materials related to Josiah C. McCracken: For his China mission, especially his work with the University Medical School in Canton, China, see UPS 48.1, the [Christian Association Records, 1857-1990](#), 51 linear ft.

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INVENTORY

Box 1

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| FF | 1 | Papers on surgery written by McCracken, reprints, 1920-1924 |
| FF | 2 | Letters written by friends of J. C. McCracken on his 65th birthday anniversary, 1939 |
| FF | 3 | Clippings about McCracken's China mission, 1911-1962 |
| FF | 4 | Photos of J. C. McCracken and his family, etc., 1906-1967 |
| FF | 5 | Photo album of scenes of Shanghai collected by J. C. McCracken, n.d. |
| FF | 6 | Pedigree of the McCrackens, 1973 |
| FF | 7 | Letters of condolence on Josiah C. McCracken's death, 1962 |
| FF | 8 | Tree planted in Israel in memory of J. C. McCracken, certificate, 1962 |
| (Oversize 1) | | Class photo, with McCracken sitting in the front row, n.d. |
| (Oversize 2) | | Eight photos of Penn Track Team, with McCracken in seven of them, n.d. |
| (Oversize 3) | | Certificate of the University of Pennsylvania re J. C. McCracken's selection as member of US team for the Olympic Games held at Paris in 1900, n.d. |

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Inventory

Box 1

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|--------------|----|---|
| (Oversize 4) | | Certificate of the Council on Athletics of the University of Pennsylvania regarding the awarding of the Varsity P to Josiah McCracken, 1927 |
| FF | 9 | Correspondence of family members re J. C. McCracken's files and the Plan for his biography, 1962-1978 |
| FF | 10 | Mary Elizabeth McCracken, a biographical account dictated by J. C. McCracken in 1951 |
| FF | 11 | Stewart McCracken (youngest child of J. C. McCracken), obituary, 1989 |

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