

SAMUEL SYLVANUS MCNINCH COLLECTION, 1905 – 1976

1 document box, 2 flat boxes

ABSTRACT

Samuel Sylvanus McNinch lived from 1867-1929. Born in Chester, South Carolina, he would move to Charlotte, North Carolina at a young age and would become the Mayor of Charlotte from 1905-1907. McNinch became Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court at sixteen, followed by Manager of Springs and Burwell, partner of what became S.S. McNinch and Co. in 1896, and eventually bought out the Charlotte Brick Works in 1904. In addition, he served as a member of the Charlotte Board of Aldermen, a Trustee of Carnegie Library, and Trustee of the Florence Crittenden Home.

McNinch assisted in organizing the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence Celebration of 1906, as part of his Mayoral duties. The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, drawn up on May 20, 1775, advocated for independence from Britain. This historical event has brought on celebrations for many years and this collection focuses on the 1906 celebration, including the preparations of the event.

This collection also contains drafts of, and letters to, Theodore Roosevelt, the President at the time of McNinch's Mayoral administration. There is also a response from Roosevelt himself in the front of the scrapbook, a letter signed by the President himself that is addressed to McNinch.

Samuel S. McNinch's home would be deemed a historical property within Charlotte, North Carolina in 1976.

This collection includes documents, a scrapbook, photographs and an artifact.

ACCESS

This collection is open to the public without restriction. The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

PREFERRED CITATION

Cite as: Mayor Samuel Sylvanus McNinch, Mecklenburg Declaration Day Celebration Collection, 1906, Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

ACQUISITION

Donated by Ann C. McNinch, 2014

Processed by Rachael Gaskin, 2017

HISTORICAL NOTE

Samuel McNinch, born in Chester, South Carolina, who moved to Charlotte, North Carolina at a young age, would become the Mayor of Charlotte from 1905-1907. Prior to becoming Mayor of Charlotte for one term, McNinch would serve as alderman for the fourth ward of Charlotte as well as the President of Charlotte Brick Company. McNinch is also known for founding both the Charlotte Brick Company and the S. S. McNinch Real Estate Company. During McNinch's Mayoral administration, Theodore Roosevelt visited Charlotte, the number of Charlotte alderman increased to 22, and the Brevard Street Library opened.

Every year, on May 20th, the city of Charlotte celebrates the *Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence*. The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence is believed to have been signed on May 20, 1775, making it earlier than the Declaration of Independence signed in 1776. While the historical authenticity of this document and its place in a historical timeline is oftentimes argued, Charlotte celebrates its creation every year. In 1906, Mayor McNinch planned a large celebration which is one of the largest aspects of this specific collection, the mention and preparation of the 1906 "Meck Dec" Celebration.

The Liddell McNinch House was the residence of the McNinch family for most of its history. The property on 511 North Church Street was bought by Vinten Liddell in 1891, and the home was built by Mr. Liddell. Samuel McNinch lived in the home and in 1909, President William Howard Taft visited the house when he came to Charlotte to celebrate the "Meck Dec" celebration in 1909, at the invitation of Samuel McNinch.

While Samuel McNinch only served the city of Charlotte, as Mayor, one term, he was behind two separate presidential visits to Charlotte, due to the fact that he sent requests for them to visit, Roosevelt and Wilson. Mayor McNinch was also well known for his planning of the "Meck Dec" parade in 1906. This collection looks into his personal life, through correspondence and House related documents, his Mayoral life, through correspondence and legal documents, and also looks into the "Meck Dec" celebration of 1906, the planning that went into it as well as newspaper articles that reference the event itself.

REFERENCES

Mayor Samuel Sylvanus McNinch (1867-1929). Charlotte Mecklenburg Story, cmstory.org/content/mayor-samuel-sylvanus-McNinch-1867-1929
<http://cmstory.org/content/mayor-samuel-sylvanus-McNinch-1867-1929>

Williams, James H. The Celebrations. The Mecklenburg Declaration, June 10, 2008
<https://www.meckdec.org/declaration/the-celebrations>

McNinch House. Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, May 4, 1990.
<http://www.cmhpf.org/Properties%20Foundation%20Reports/mcninch.html>

RELATED MATERIALS

A Free and Independent People, Celebrating "Meck Dec" Through the Years. 2004. (CALL NUMBER: NCR 975.61 M43d F85 DVD)

Historic Buildings – Liddell-McNinch House. (CALL NUMBER: NCR VERTICAL FILES) NCR-Mecklenburg Room. *Hundred and Thirty-First Anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.* Souvenir Programme. May 20, 1906. Watkins D. Hatcher. (CALL NUMBER: NCR 975.61 M43d W33)

McNinch Family Files. (CALL NUMBER: NCR VERTICAL FILES)

Meck Dec Collection, 1831-2015, Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. (CALL NUMBER: NCR ARCHIVAL COLLECTION)

Robinson Spangler Carolina Room. *The First American Declaration of Independence? The disputed History of the Mecklenburg Declaration of May 20, 1775.* Charlotte, NC: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. (CALL NUMBER: NCR 975.676)

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Samuel Sylvanus McNinch Collection consists primarily of materials belonging to Samuel McNinch. The materials in this collection are all related to Samuel S. McNinch, personal and professional, with the majority pertaining to the 1906 "Meck Dec" celebration. The collection spans from 1905-1976, with the bulk encompassing materials from 1906. This collection consists of correspondence, newspapers, photographs, a scrapbook and an artifact.

Correspondence, 1906, includes both personal and professional correspondences. The predominant concerns of the professional materials are the 1906 Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence Celebration. The personal portion of this section includes correspondences that pertain to matters not involving the "Meck Dec" Celebration.

McNinch House, 1976, includes documents related to the McNinch House, specifically papers deeming it a historical property in the city of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Meeting Notes, 1906, includes correspondences that were in the revision process, from a meeting pertaining to the "Meck Dec" Celebration of 1906.

Newspaper, 1905 – 1977, includes newspaper articles that pertain to Samuel S. McNinch, 1906 "Meck Dec" Celebration, Presidential visits to Charlotte, and mayor McNinch's house, as well as a compiled list of full newspapers that were originally within the scrapbook. The full newspapers that are no longer within the scrapbook were unable to be saved due to aging and deterioration that had taken place over time, however they are local papers and can be found on either microfilm or through other libraries services.

Printed Materials, 1906-1907, includes various printed materials, including; speeches, meeting programs, newsletters and statistics of the city of Charlotte.

Scrapbook, 1906-1909, includes a variety of materials, such as, letters to government officials, “Meck Dec” celebration planning materials, postcards, photographs, financial statements, and an assortment of additional materials. The contents of these letters often are invitations for government officials to attend the celebrations or speak during the parade, and those being addressed responses to McNinch. This scrapbook also contains a letter from Teddy Roosevelt, addressed 1909.

Photographs, undated, contain photographs pertaining to Mayor Samuel S. McNinch, his house and “Meck Dec” Celebrations.

Artifact, 1906, Committeeman’s ribbon from the 1906 “Meck Dec” Celebration.

SERIES LIST

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