

DEERFIELD ACADEMY
ARCHIVES



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**John McPhee: *The Headmaster Papers*, 1925-1985:
Finding Aid**

Summary Information

Location: Deerfield Academy Archives, Deerfield, MA

Title: John McPhee: *The Headmaster Papers*, 1925-1985

ID No.: MSS002

Creator: McPhee, John, 1931-

Quantity: 3 boxes, 1.5 linear ft.

Abstract: Author notes and manuscript materials used by John McPhee in writing *The Headmaster*.

Administrative Information

Processing Information: Processed by Anna Newman, 2013

Acquisition: The John McPhee: *The Headmaster Papers* were transferred to the Academy Archives by John McPhee.

Access: Access to these papers is governed by the rules and regulations of the Deerfield Academy Archives. The collection is open to research without restrictions.

Preferred citation: [Identification of item], [Box #, folder #], in John McPhee: *The Headmaster Papers*, 1925-1985, Deerfield Academy Archives, Deerfield, MA.

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Historical Note

John McPhee graduated from Deerfield Academy in 1949. He is an acclaimed writer, widely considered a pioneer of creative nonfiction. McPhee has written for *The New Yorker* since 1965, and he is the author of 29 books.

In 1965-1966, McPhee wrote *The Headmaster*, a short biography of Deerfield Academy headmaster Frank L. Boyden. McPhee stated that *The Headmaster* was more of a “portrait” than a conventional biography. “I hope the reader will have a sense that he is looking at a picture of Frank L. Boyden, headmaster of Deerfield Academy, as he was soon after his eighty-sixth birthday, with details of his life and the history of his school coming in as elements in the portrait,” he wrote in the preface.

The Headmaster was published first in *The New Yorker* and then by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 1966.

Scope and Content

The John McPhee: *The Headmaster* Papers consist primarily of materials John McPhee used in writing *The Headmaster*, including source material from the Deerfield Academy Archives—correspondence, newspaper clippings, and biographical material—and McPhee’s notes and plans. McPhee used slips of paper and index cards to record quotes, phrases, and ideas, which he then organized into a series of folders. He also created an alphabetical system to track topics within these folders, such as “personal nature” and “cliché schoolmaster.” The collection also has scant correspondence about the publication of *The Headmaster*, including McPhee’s letters to Hazel Clark concerning specific research questions. This collection would be useful to anybody researching John McPhee, *The Headmaster*, the writing process, or Frank L. Boyden.

Additional Index Terms

The following entries represent persons, organizations, and topics documented in this collection.
THIS IS NOT AN INDEX.

People

Ashley, Thomas W., 1894-1918.
Boyden, Frank L. (Frank Learoyd), 1879-1972.
McPhee, John, 1931-
Gunther, John, 1901-1970
Gunther, John, Jr., 1929-1947
Haley, Arthur B. (faculty)
Maynard, Robert

Organizations

Deerfield Academy

Subjects

The Headmaster: Frank L. Boyden, of Deerfield
Independent Schools
Deerfield Academy funding crisis 1920s

Container list

BOX-FOLDER	Contents	
1-1	Miscellaneous	1928-1965
1-2	Correspondence – Hazel Clark and Frank Conklin	1965-1966
1-3	Photos	[n.d.]
1-4	One Full Day with FLB	1965-1982
1-5	Newspaper Clippings	1962
1-6	Edward R. Murrow Program	1952
1-7	Movie re Deerfield and Mr. Boyden	1949
1-8	Politics, President Eisenhower, Sherman Adams	1952-1966
1-9	Miscellaneous	1923-1956
1-10	John Gunther's Article	[n.d.]
1-11	Seth Boyden	1959
1-12	Honors Degrees	1922-1963
1-13	Taxes	1924-1935
1-14	History of DA	[n.d.]
1-15	FLB-Personal	[n.d.]
1-16	Personal	1928-1965
1-17	Foxboro Clippings and Letters	1934-1955
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2-1	Letters from Famous People	1930-1959
2-2	1922-1923 Crisis and Campaign	1920-1931
2-3	FLB Misc. Biographical Lists	1950-1963
2-4	Notes by Mr. A.B. Haley	1957-1962
2-5	Horses	1945-1953
2-6	Amherst 1902	1966
2-7	Newcomen Society-FLB Speech	1959
2-8	50 th Wedding Anniversary	[n.d.]
2-9	Maynard – Personal Correspondence	1922
2-10	DA-Town Split – Year of 1924	1924
2-11	Horace Taft – Personal	1926
2-12	Speaking Engagement Requests	1928-1961
2-13	Requests to Head Other Schools	[n.d.]
2-14	Nelson A. Rockefeller '58	1957
2-15	DA-Town Split – Year of 1923	1923
2-16	FLB Hobbies – Horse and Buggies	1951-1957
2-17	Frank L. Boyden Notes	1965
2-18	1879-1902-Amherst-Foxboro	[n.d.]
2-19	Miscellaneous	1922-1949
2-20	Detail and Showmanship	[n.d.]
2-21	1902-24 Town As He Found It, History of Academy	1954-1955
2-22	FLB Misc Notes and Doodles	1967 [mostly n.d.]

BOX 3

3-1	Changed Composition of Student Body	[n.d.]
3-2	Manner	[n.d.]
3-3	Appearance	[n.d.]
3-4	Future of Deerfield	1965
3-5	Misc. Notes	[n.d.]
3-6	Charity and Good Works	[n.d.]
3-7	Fundraising	[n.d.]
3-8	Campus and Town Now	[n.d.]
3-9	Politics-Town, State, Nation	[n.d.]
3-10	1902-24 Ashley	[n.d.]
3-11	Personal Nature (Faculty)	[n.d.]
3-12	Academic Side	[n.d.]
3-13	Admissions, Placement, Scholarships	[n.d.]
3-14	Religion	[n.d.]
3-15	Alumni	[n.d.]
3-16	1924-Public Funds Crisis	[n.d.]
3-17	1924-29	[n.d.]
3-18	Great Headmasters	[n.d.]
3-19	Mrs. Boyden	[n.d.]
3-20	Principles – Basic – on which school was built and runs	[n.d.]
3-21	Discipline – Relations with the Boys	[n.d.]
3-22	Coach – Athletics Generally	[n.d.]
3-23	1902-1904 Athletics Lead-ins	[n.d.]
3-24	1902-1924 School Life Other Than Sports	[n.d.]
3-25	Traditions and Their History	[n.d.]
3-26	Miscellany	1953-1965 [mostly n.d.]
3-27	Boyden, Frank L. Biographical Material	1970