Collection Title: Martin I.J. Griffin papers

Date Range: 1842-1945
Bulk Dates: 1880-1911

Finding Aid Created by: Lesley Carey, 12/20/2019

Creator: Martin I.J. (Ignatius Joseph) Griffin

Extent: 6.083 linear feet

Location: Archives and Special Collections, Drexel Library, Hopkins Room, 3rd floor, Post Learning Commons.

Abstract: Martin Ignatius Joseph Griffin was a researcher, historian, journalist and publisher who focused his work on the history of Catholicism, especially American Catholicism. Martin I.J. Griffin was born October 23, 1842 and died November 10, 1911. He was born and lived in Philadelphia for most of his life. He was married to Mary A.E. McMullen and had 6 children, four of whom lived to be adults.

The Martin I.J. Griffin papers document part of the writing, research and biography of Martin I.J. Griffin. This collection which dates from 1842-1945, with bulk dates from 1880-1911, consists of correspondence, research notes, clippings, monographs, ephemera, biographical information, a deed and several awards and gives a sense of Martin I.J. Griffin’s research and writing process, his family, and his publications. Martin I.J. Griffin was an avid contributor to the documentation of Catholic history, particularly Philadelphia Catholic history, and his work highlighted Catholic history and made it legitimate in a time period when none of this information was widely available.

Language: English

Acquisition information: The collection was originally donated to Dr. Raymond Schmandt of the History Department by Martin I.J. Griffin IV, great grandson of Martin I.J. Griffin, in 1981. Dr. Schmandt then transferred the collection to the Archives. The donation was in memory of Martin I.J. Griffin IV’s uncle, Mr. Joseph G. Magee, who was in the class of 1910 at Saint Joseph’s College.
**Access Restrictions:** The collection is open to researchers with the exception of Boxes 3 and 5 which are in a very fragile and brittle condition and cannot be handled. The collection itself is fragile and must be handled with care. Scans must be done by the staff of Archives and Special Collections.

**Copyright:** Researchers are responsible for determining copyright of materials used in their publications. Advice on determining copyright information is available at the University.

**Preferred citation:** [item], folder (if titled or numbered), box, Martin I.J. Griffin papers, Saint Joseph’s University Archives and Special Collections.

**Biography/History:**

Martin Ignatius Joseph Griffin was a researcher, historian, journalist and publisher who focused his work on the history of Catholicism, especially American Catholicism. Martin I.J. Griffin was born October 23, 1842 and died November 10, 1911. He was born and lived in Philadelphia for most of his life. He was married to Mary A.E. McMullen and had 6 children, four of whom lived to be adults. They were Rev. Martin I.J. Griffin, Dr. William I.J. Griffin, Sister Dorothea (born Elizabeth Griffin) and Philomena Griffin.

As a child, Martin Griffin suffered an injury to his leg which led him to pursue intellectual inquiry instead of physical play. He attended Philadelphia’s Central High School. He was curious about the gravestones in Saint Mary’s cemetery and this led him to research the names he found there; Commodore John Barry, Thomas FitzSimons, and George Meade. His research led him to Old St. Joseph’s Church in Willings Alley where the Jesuits allowed him access to some of the original documents about the church’s history.

Griffin started his career as a bookkeeper and began editing a Sunday school journal called *The Guardian Angel* in 1867. He became the editor for the Catholic Standard in 1870 for three years. He was a temperance advocate and was one of the founders of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America in 1872. Griffin was very active in Philadelphia’s temperance movement.

Martin Griffin attended daily Mass at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Philadelphia. Much of his time was spent corresponding with other researchers and institutions of research in pursuit of information on Catholic history.

Martin Griffin wrote, edited and published a Catholic scholarly journal, *American Catholic Historical Researches*, for most of his working life. The American Catholic Historical Society, which had been founded in Philadelphia in 1884, dissolved in 1886. Martin Griffin took over its work in 1886 and began publishing the *American Catholic Historical Researches*, a journal that originated from the defunct Ohio Valley Historical Society. The American Catholic Historical
Society is the oldest Catholic Historical Society in the United States and collects, maintains and researches historical records about the Catholic Church’s contributions to American society and culture. Martin Griffin served as the Society’s librarian. He spent much of his time researching and writing articles for *American Catholic Historical Researches*, as well as writing a number of books about American Catholic history.

Before Martin Griffin’s work and because of anti-immigrant bias not much was known about the role of Catholics in the founding of the United States. He wrote about the central role of Catholics in the founding of the country and legitimized the study of American Catholic history in an era when it was considered unimportant.

His published works include: Monographs on the history of Old Saint Joseph’s and other Philadelphia Churches (1881-1882), a monograph on Bishop Michael Egan, O.S.F. (1885), a monograph on Thomas FitzSimons (1887), a monograph titled “The trail of John Ury” (1899) and these published books; *History of Rt. Rev. Michael Egan, D.D. First Bishop of Philadelphia* (1893), *Commodore John Barry* (1902), *General Count Casimir Pulaski* (1909) and *Catholics and the American Revolution* (1907).

Citations:


**Scope and Contents:** The Martin I.J. Griffin papers document part of the writing, research and biography of Martin I.J. Griffin. This collection which dates from 1842-1945, with bulk dates from 1880-1911, consists of correspondence, research notes, clippings, monographs, ephemera, biographical information, a deed and several awards and gives a sense of Martin I.J. Griffin’s research and writing process, his family, and his publications. Martin I.J. Griffin was an avid contributor to the documentation of Catholic history, particularly Philadelphia Catholic history.
This collection enhances other collections of Martin I.J. Griffin papers and provides additional details, especially about his research and writing of his book on Commodore John Barry. There are some biographical materials about Griffin and his family including a hand drawn family tree and a printed memorial book that can give researchers further knowledge about Griffin’s life. In addition, there is some ephemera and correspondence which detail events in the last years of his life. Beside this material which illuminates Griffin’s life, there is value in his research materials and correspondence with libraries and historical societies who answered his research requests. This includes hand-written copies of materials from earlier time periods from the collections of these libraries and historical societies.

The largest series in the collection is correspondence both from and to Martin I.J. Griffin. This includes boxes 2, 4, 9, 10, and 11. Research notes and clippings are the next largest in boxes 3, 4, 5, 10 and 11. Biographical materials are in box 12, oversized materials in box 13. The memorial book is in box 14. When possible the folders of correspondence are labeled by date. More details are available in the Box and folder list.

Some of the Griffin materials have a very early date on them, earlier than the time period of the collection. These are responses to Griffin’s research questions and are copied in handwriting from sources at the institutions he sent queries to.

**Arrangement and Processing notes:** There is a box of accession information which includes research notes from the first archivist who worked with the collection. However, the notes do not give a complete picture of the original order or of the proposed plan of arrangement.

The fragility of the collection required additional measures of preservation, like mylar and interleaving paper. Even with these measures some boxes cannot be used by researchers.

The collection was processed to a box and folder level, as evidenced by the Box and folder list.

**Subjects:**

Barry, John, 1745-1803

Catholic Church--History—Societies

Catholic Church--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia

Catholics—United States—Biography

Catholics--United States—History

Catholics--United States—Periodicals
Griffin, Martin I. J. (Martin Ignatius Joseph), 1842-1911

Philadelphia (Pa.)—History—19th century

Philadelphia (Pa.)—History—20th century

**Related Materials:**

Saint Joseph’s University Archives online collections: 43 entries of digitized papers from the Martin I.J. Griffin papers with metadata. [https://sjulibrary.pastperfectonline.com/archive](https://sjulibrary.pastperfectonline.com/archive)

Saint Joseph’s University Archives Old Saint Joseph’s Church Archive. A Finding Aid for the collection is available on site. [https://sites.sju.edu/library/collections/archives-special-collections/noteworthy-collections/](https://sites.sju.edu/library/collections/archives-special-collections/noteworthy-collections/)

Catholic Historical Research Center | 6740 Roosevelt Blvd | Philadelphia, PA 19149
[archives@chrc-phila.org](mailto:archives@chrc-phila.org) 215-904-8149 A collection titled “Martin I.J.Griffin papers” Finding aid online at PACSCAL
[http://dla.library.upenn.edu/cocoon/dla/pacscl/ead.html?fq=top_repository_facet%3A%22Philadelphia%20Archdiocesan%20Historical%20Research%20Center%22&id=PACSCL_PAHRC_MC8&](http://dla.library.upenn.edu/cocoon/dla/pacscl/ead.html?fq=top_repository_facet%3A%22Philadelphia%20Archdiocesan%20Historical%20Research%20Center%22&id=PACSCL_PAHRC_MC8&)

Falvey Memorial Library, Villanova University, 800 Lancaster Ave., Villanova, PA 19085 610-519-4270, Special Collections
[https://library.villanova.edu/collections/distinctive/specialcollections](https://library.villanova.edu/collections/distinctive/specialcollections) Digitized materials from the Martin I.J. Griffin papers at the Catholic Historical Research Center.

Georgetown University Library, Georgetown University Archival Resources, Booth Family Center for Special Collections [https://www.library.georgetown.edu/special-collections/our-collections](https://www.library.georgetown.edu/special-collections/our-collections) 202.687.7444 37th and O Streets NW, Washington, DC 20057-1174
(202) 687-7607 Martin I.J. Griffin papers
[https://findingaids.library.georgetown.edu/repositories/15/resources/10347](https://findingaids.library.georgetown.edu/repositories/15/resources/10347)

**Box and folder list:**

**Box 1-** Accession records and processing notes by Josephine Savaro, first archivist to work on the papers. Xeroxes of collection made by J. Savaro, addition to collection accessioned later.

- Folder 1- Griffin, J. Savaro processing notes
- Folder 2- Accession information on Griffin papers, previous research
- Folder 3- Reprints and additional donated materials
- Folder 4- J. Savaro Xeroxes
- Folder 5- J. Savaro Xeroxes of Griffin Collection
Folder 6- Josephine Savaro Xeroxes of Griffin papers
Folder 7- Xeroxes done by J. Savaro
Folder 8- Xeroxes done by J. Savaro
Folder 9- Xeroxes done by J. Savaro
Folder 10- Xeroxes done by J. Savaro
Folder 11- Catholic University of America Xeroxes of Articles
Folder 12- Binding records kept by J. Savaro

Box 2- Martin Griffin’s notes and research, some correspondence.
Folder 1- research notes and correspondence from Martin Griffin
Folder 2- research notes and correspondence from Martin Griffin
Folder 3- research notes and correspondence from Martin Griffin
Folder 4- notes and research from Martin Griffin
Folder 5- Research notes, clippings and correspondence from Martin Griffin
Folder 6- research notes, correspondence, and clippings from Martin Griffin

Box 3- Clippings from Griffin’s Catholic Historical Researches and other publications used in Griffin’s research.
Folder 1- Martin Griffin’s clippings
Folder 2- Martin Griffin’s clippings
Folder 3- Clippings used in research
Folder 4- Clippings from American Catholic Historical Researches and others
Folder 5- Clippings for Griffin’s research
Folder 6- Clippings for Griffin’s research
Folder 7- Clippings for Griffin’s research
Folder 8- Martin Griffin’s clippings
Folder 9- Martin Griffin clippings research notes, correspondence
Folder 10- clippings

Box 4- Martin Griffin’s research and correspondence on Commodore Barry.
Folder 1- Commodore Barry, monograph
Folder 2- Martin Griffin research and correspondence about Commodore John Barry and some other research

Folder 3- Commodore Barry research materials

Folder 4- Martin Griffin’s research and correspondence for his book on Commodore John Barry

Box 5- Newspaper clippings used in Griffin research or sent to Griffin

Folder 1- News clippings
Folder 2- News clippings
Folder 3- Newspaper clippings
Folder 4- Newspaper clippings
Folder 5- Clippings
Folder 6- Clippings
Folder 7- Clippings
Folder 8- Clippings
Folder 9- Clippings

Box 6- Thomas FitzSimons monograph by Martin I.J. Griffin, 1887

Box 7- Thomas FitzSimons Pennsylvania’s Catholic Signer of the Constitution of the United States by Martin Griffin, 1887

Box 8- American Catholic Historical researches, index to New Series, VIII, April 1912- Tribute to Martin Griffin, July 1912, Final Publication of American Catholic Historical Researches

Box 9- Correspondence to Martin I.J. Griffin 1883-1898, and undated

Folder 1- 1895, v.12, deconstructed, correspondence
Folder 2- correspondence, 1894
Folder 3- correspondence, 1894
Folder 4- correspondence, 1901
Folder 5- correspondence, 1895
Folder 6- correspondence, 1895
Folder 7- correspondence, 1894, 1895, 1900
Folder 8- Inventory of folders 1-7, Savaro’s processing notes
Folder 9- Copy of 1858 letter, hand written
Folder 10- correspondence, 1864
Folder 11- correspondence, 1883
Folder 12- correspondence, 1884
Folder 13- correspondence, 1885
Folder 14- correspondence, 1886
Folder 15- correspondence, 1887
Folder 16- correspondence, 1888
Folder 17- correspondence, 1889
Folder 18- correspondence, 1890
Folder 19- correspondence, 1891
Folder 20- correspondence, 1892
Folder 21- correspondence, 1893
Folder 22- correspondence, 1894
Folder 23- correspondence, 1895
Folder 24- correspondence, 1896
Folder 25- correspondence, 1897
Folder 26- correspondence, 1898
Folder 27- correspondence, undated or without a year

**Box 10-** Correspondence sent to Martin Griffin, 1899-1913
Folder 1- correspondence, 1899
Folder 2- correspondence, 1900
Folder 3- correspondence, 1901
Folder 4- correspondence, 1902
Folder 5- correspondence, 1903
Folder 6- correspondence, 1904
Folder 7- correspondence, 1905
Folder 8- correspondence, 1906
Folder 9- correspondence, 1906
Folder 10- correspondence, 1907
Folder 11- correspondence, 1908
Folder 12- correspondence, 1909
Folder 13- correspondence, 1910
Folder 14- correspondence, 1911
Folder 15- correspondence, 1913, 1914

**Box 11**- Misc. box, Martin Griffin notes and correspondence for FitzSimons Book, clippings and notes from American Catholic Historical Researches, Griffin’s research on OSJ church and Fr. Greaton.

Folder 1- Martin Griffin research and clippings
Folder 2- Thomas FitzSimons monograph by Martin Griffin
Folder 3- correspondence after Martin Griffin’s death
Folder 4- Book by Martin I.J. Griffin; *William Penn the Friend of Catholics*
Folder 5- Clippings from American Catholic Historical Researches and others
Folder 6- correspondence regarding research, transcribed copies, mostly undated
Folder 7- American Catholic Historical Researches 1911
Folder 8- Griffin’s research on Old Saint Joseph’s and Father Greaton
Folder 9- Notes and research found in Thomas FitzSimons book

**Box 12**- Martin Griffin papers, ephemera, journals and record books, Biographical information, awards

Folder1- Ephemera
Folder 2- Ephemera from Martin Griffin correspondence
Folder 3- Award book
Folder 4- Martin Griffin; biographical information
Folder 5- Biographical information after the death of Martin Griffin
Folder 6- Biographical information, article about Martin Griffin by Edmund M. Coughlin

**Box 13**- Oversized materials

Folder 1- NYC deed
Folder 2- Commodore Barry research
Box 14- Martin I.J. Griffin, memorial book, 1911