

President John Joseph Meng Collection  
1960 – 1967  
Finding Aid



*Archives and Special Collections*



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## GENERAL INFORMATION

Accession Number: 98-19

Size: 5.8866 cu. ft.

Provenance: Hunter College Office of the President

Restrictions: None.

Location: Range 4 Section 2-3 Shelves 12 - 14

Archivist: Prof. Julio L. Hernandez-Delgado

Assistant: Mr. Manuel Rimarachin

Date: October 2004

Revised: November 2014

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Joseph Meng was born in Cleveland, Ohio on December 12, 1906. He was the only child of George Edward and Marie Louise Gott. George Edward Meng was in the wholesale millinery business. John received his primary schooling in Cleveland where he attended a Roman Catholic elementary school and Cathedral Latin School. In 1924, John enrolled in Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he majored in Latin and Greek and became involved in literary activities by serving as the editor in chief of the college newspaper. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in 1928.

After graduating from Catholic University of America, John intended to pursue a career in the foreign diplomatic service. But the failure to obtain a high score on the Foreign Service examination led him to apply for the Knights of Columbus Fellowship where he won a four-year scholarship. John used the scholarship to enroll in Catholic University of America to pursue a master's degree in history and economics. He received his degree in 1929. When the U.S. State Department didn't offer the examination for Foreign Service, John decided to remain at Catholic University of America for the next three years and pursue a Ph.D. degree. As part of his course of study he went to Paris to study French Diplomacy during the American Revolutionary War at the Ecole Libre des Politiques from 1930 - 1931.

Upon his return from Paris John was offered an assistantship in politics at Catholic University of America in 1931. In 1932, John received his Ph.D. degree after having submitted a dissertation entitled *The Compte de Vergennes; European Phases of his American Diplomacy*. As an instructor from 1932 - 1938, Dr. Meng specialized in diplomatic history, with a focus on the role that France played during the American Revolution. He subsequently was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1938.

In 1938, Dr. Meng was hired as an instructor in politics at the recently established Queens College of the City of New York. He rose in rank from assistant professor in 1941 to associate professor in 1948. From 1941 to 1949 he was the chair of the Political Science Department. From 1942 - 1943 and again from 1947 - 1948, he was the chair of the Social Sciences Division.

Dr. Meng returned to his specialty of diplomatic history when he joined the faculty of Hunter College in 1949. During the intervening years he pursued his studies in history and was the author and co-author of several books and articles on Franco-American diplomatic history. He met Marjorie Brunini, of Vicksburg, Mississippi, while she was a student at Trinity College, married and had eight children. Outside of the academic sphere, Dr. Meng was active in state politics. He directed the internship program for the New York State Democratic Committee from 1947 through 1950 and in 1951 was the committee legislative chairman. As an administrator and educator, Dr. Meng was concerned about the encroaching demands of technology on liberal arts education. "The liberal arts college such as Hunter" he said, "is one of the great central bastions protecting in America the intellectual traditions of the Western World."

Shortly after his arrival Dr. Meng's teaching load was reduced to allow him to assist President George Nauman Shuster. In 1952, Dr. Meng was named the Dean of Administration. The new post called for him to assume the duties as the "Executive Vice-President" of Hunter College. This meant that he would assume the tasks of planning, budget negotiations, maintenance, clerical activities, and executive control of the former Hunter College in the Bronx (aka the Bronx Campus).

On Monday, October 31, 1960, the former Dean of Administration at Hunter College was inaugurated as the sixth president of Hunter College of The City of New York by the Board of Higher Education. During his tenure as president of Hunter College Dr. Meng presided over the expansion of graduate and undergraduate enrollment in the liberal arts and teacher education; he advocated and secured approval for the College's transition to co-education; and he strongly supported the creation of the City University of New York.

In addition to fulfilling his duties as president of Hunter College, Dr. Meng, like his predecessor Dr. George N. Shuster, did find time to write numerous articles and several books. His key publications include *Despatches and Instructions of Conrad Alexander Gerard, 1778-1780* (1939); Volume 2 of *Guide to Materials for American History in the Libraries and Archives of Paris* (1944) with W.G. Leland and Abel Doysie; *American History for Catholic High Schools* (1959) with E.J. Gergely; co-author of *Christianity and America*, (1948); and he edited and wrote the introduction to *The Government of the Catholic Church* (1952) by Elizabeth M. Lynskey.

President Meng resigned from Hunter College in protest at the end of the 1965 - 1966 academic year over what he perceived as the "overstepping of policy-making functions and interference in academic matters by the city's Board of Higher Education." He subsequently went on to become executive vice-president of Fordham University from 1969 to 1973, and later became the first male and layperson to head Marymount College from 1973 to 1979.

Dr. John J. Meng died on February 15, 1988, in Jackson, Mississippi. He was survived by his wife Majorie Brunini, two daughters, six sons, and 18 grandchildren.

## REFERENCES

Vitae of Dr. John J. Meng, December 7, 1948

Entry of John J. Meng in *Current Biography*, H.W. Wilson: 1961, pp. 305 - 306.

Entry of John J. Meng in the *Faculty and Staff News*, October, 1961. n.p.

Fowler, Gene. "Dr. John Meng, 81, Ex-President at Hunter and Marymount Dies."  
*The New York Times*, February 18, 1988, p. D26.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The John J. Meng Papers, 1922 - 1986, are housed in the Georgetown Special Collections: American History unit. The papers consist of correspondence, photographs, and files that document Dr. Meng's tenure as a professor with the Catholic University of America and Queens College, and as president of Hunter College. The papers also include materials that are related to Dr. Meng's involvement with conferences, task groups, and other educational structures.

The President John J. Meng Collection in Archives & Special Collections of Hunter College Libraries does not adequately reflect the role and impact that Dr. Meng had on Hunter College from 1960 to 1966. The surviving records provide a glimpse of Dr. Meng's rapport and involvement with the Faculty Council, committees, students, and with external organizations like the Advisory Board of Public Health, the American Association of University Professors, the American Association of University Women, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Council on Education, and the Association of American Colleges among others.

During his tenure President Meng presided over three major projects at Hunter College. The first project was the restoration of the former Hunter College in the Bronx (aka the Bronx Campus) in 1963. Specific files detail the renovation plans of Davis Hall, Gillet Hall, Gymnasium Building, and Student Hall. The second project was the administrative reorganization of Hunter College in 1964. The last major project was the administrative separation of Hunter College on 68<sup>th</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue from Hunter College in the Bronx (aka the Bronx Campus) in 1966. President Meng demonstrated skill, tact, and sensitivity in working with administrators, faculty, and students from both locations. The Bronx Campus was legally separated from Hunter College and was renamed Lehman College in 1968.

The President John J. Meng Collection consists of inauguration documents, newspaper articles, annual reports, committee files, correspondence, memoranda, addresses, minutes, writings, publications, reports, and photographs. Specific files that should draw the attention of researchers are the restoration of the former Bronx Campus, the administrative reorganization of Hunter College, and the autonomy/separation of the former Bronx Campus from the main campus on 68<sup>th</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTION**

### **Series I – Biographical Information**

Series I consist of an encyclopedic entry and information on the life of Dr. John J. Meng.

### **Series II – Appointment and Inauguration**

Series II documents the appointment and inauguration of Dr. John J. Meng as the sixth president of Hunter College of the City of New York. Included are Inauguration Committee minutes, a press manual, program, President Meng's inaugural address, and several articles.

### **Series III – Administration**

Series III consists of annual reports, committee files, correspondence, memoranda, and reports. There are three sets of folders that may be of interest to researchers. The first set of folders focuses on the restoration of the former Hunter College in the Bronx (a.k.a. the Bronx Campus) in 1963. The files detail the renovation plans that were implemented in Davis Hall, Gillet Hall, Gymnasium Building, and Student Hall. Some of the files also include drawings, floor plans, and blueprints for specific buildings. The second set of folders documents the administrative reorganization of Hunter College in 1964. The last set of folders documents the separation of the Bronx Campus from the Park Avenue and 68<sup>th</sup> Street campus in 1966. The records highlight the issues, concerns, and logistics of separating Hunter College into two distinct institutions. In 1968, the former Hunter College in the Bronx became Lehman College of the City University of New York.

### **Series IV – Writings**

#### **Subseries 4.1 Addresses and Subseries 4.2 Articles**

Subseries 4.1 consists of addresses that Dr. Meng presented between 1948 and 1975. Subseries 4.2 consists of articles that Dr. Meng published between 1934 and 1946.

### **Series V – General Files**

Series V documents President Meng's association and involvement with a variety of city agencies, colleges/universities, clubs, and associations. The files are arranged alphabetically.

### **Series VI – Photographs**

Series VI visually documents Dr. Meng's family and various social functions that he attended and/or participated in as president of Hunter College.

### **Addenda**

Supplementary materials that were added after the collection was organized.

## CONTAINER LIST

### SERIES I – BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	1	Biographical Information on Dr. John Joseph Meng  Entry of John Joseph Meng in <i>Current Biography</i> , H.W. Wilson: 1961, pp. 305 - 306  John Joseph Meng, President of Hunter College of the City of New York: An Outline Biography, n.d.

### SERIES II – APPOINTMENT AND INAUGURATION

1	2	<p>“A No. 1 at Hunter John Joseph Meng.” <i>The New York Times</i>, February 10, 1960, p. 40.</p> <p>Buder, Leonard. “Dean at Hunter Named President.” <i>The New York Times</i>, February 10, 1960, p. 1.</p> <p>Lawrence, April. “Inauguration Ceremonies Set for President Meng.” <i>Hunter Arrow</i>, February 10, 1960, n.p.</p> <p>Morrisseau, James J. “Meng Named Head of Hunter College.” <i>The New York Times</i>, February 10, 1960, n.p.</p> <p>Levy, Harry L. “John J. Meng, Sixth President of Hunter College.” <i>The Hunter College Alumni News</i> (March 1960): 1, 4.</p> <p>Schiff, Bennett. “Dr. John J. Meng New President at Hunter.” <i>New York Post</i> March 7, 1960, n.p.</p> <p>“Hunter to Invest Meng Tomorrow.” <i>The New York Times</i>, October 30, 1960, p. 81.</p> <p>“Install Meng, Hunter’s New Head, Tomorrow.” <i>Daily News</i>, October 30, 1960, n.p.</p> <p>“New Hunter Head.” <i>New York Journal American</i>, October 30, 1960, n.p.</p> <p>“Meng Inducted as Hunter Prexy.” <i>World Telegram &amp; Sun</i>, October 31, 1960, n.p.</p>
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## SERIES II – APPOINTMENT AND INAUGURATION

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	2	<p>“The Inauguration of Dr. John Meng.” <i>Hunter Arrow</i>, October 31, 1960, p. 2 - 8.</p> <p>Terte, Robert H. “Hunter College Invests Dr. Meng.” <i>The New York Times</i>, November 1, 1960, p.1.</p> <p>“Hunter Installs Meng as President.” <i>New York Herald Tribune</i>, November 1, 1960, p. 25.</p> <p>Wessels, Florence. “Good Will Is Aim of Hunter Prexy.” <i>New York Journal-American</i>, November 1, 1960, p. 6.</p> <p>“Hunter College: Six Presidents and 90 Years Later.” <i>Manhattan East</i> (November 3, 1960): n.p.</p> <p>“Meng Inaugurated President.” <i>Hunter Arrow</i>, November 3, 1960, p.1.</p> <p>“New Hunter Head.” <i>Manhattan East</i>, November 3, 1960, p. 1.</p> <p>“Renewed Stress on Moral Values Urged by Dr. Meng.” <i>The Catholic News</i>, November 5, 1960, n.p.</p> <p>“Inauguration of Dr. John Meng.” <i>The Hunter College Alumni News</i>, (December 1960): pp. 1, 3.</p>
	3	The Committee on the Inauguration of the President, 1960
	4	Press Manual of the Inauguration of John J. Meng as the Sixth President of Hunter College of the City of New York, October 31, 1960
	5	Program of the Inauguration of John Joseph Meng as President of Hunter College of the City of New York, October 31, 1960
	6	Inaugural Address by John Joseph Meng “The Whole Round of Truth,” October 31, 1960
	7	Inaugural Luncheon, October 31, 1960
	8-9	<i>The Inauguration of John Meng: The Sixth President of Hunter College</i> . Hunter College of the City of New York, 1960

### SERIES III – ADMINISTRATION

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		Annual Reports
1	10	The President's Report of Hunter College, 1953 - 1955, 1960 - 1964
	11	The Report of the President, 1964 - 1966
		Committees
2	1	Committee on Functions and Duties of Administrative Officers Board of Higher Education City of New York, 1966
	2-5	Committee on the Use of College Facilities – <i>The National Review</i> (Suit of <i>The National Review</i> against Hunter College over the use of the Playhouse and the Assembly Hall, 1961 - 1963).
		Correspondence
		Incoming
	6	July 1953, July 1955 March 1960 - December 1961
	7	January 1962 - October 1962
	8	January 1963 - November 1965
3	1	January 1966 - June 1966
	2	June 1966 - June 1967
		Outgoing
	3	March 1960 - May 1961
	4	May 1961 - December 1961
	5	January 1962 - June 1962
	6	July 1962 - December 1962
	7	January 1963 - November 1965
	8	January 1966 - December 1966 August 1967
4	1-2	Brooks, Amanda, 1962
	3	Everett, John R., 1960 - 1961
	4	Zuber, Paul B., 1963
	5	Faculty Council, 1961-1965
		Hunter College in the Bronx – Restoration List
	6	Drawings and Floor Plans, ca. 1963
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### SERIES III – ADMINISTRATION

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4	11	Hunter College in the Bronx – Restoration List Student Hall, 1963
5	1	Hunter College Administrative Reorganization Administrative Handbook, April 1962
	2	“Hunter College Study of Organization and Systems,” by Cresap, McCormick and Piaget, January 28, 1964
	3	Comments on Cresap, McCormick and Piaget Report “Study of Hunter College Organization and Systems,” February 28, 1964
	4	Administrative Reorganization for Hunter College: A Letter from the President, November 18, 1964
	5	Hunter College in the Bronx – Autonomy Committee of the Instructional Staff of the Bronx Center on the Autonomy of the Bronx Center, 1966
	6	Committee on Exploration and Means, 1966
	7	Correspondence, 1966
	8	Hunter Bronx as a Separate College, March 25, 1966
6	1	Report of Meeting of Departmental Representatives, 1966
	2	Report of the Committee to Consider the Question of Autonomous College Status for the Bronx Campus, May 31, 1966
	3	Separation of the Anthropology/Sociology Department, 1962 - 1963
		Memoranda
	4	January 1951 - July 1963
	5	September 1959 - November 1963
	6	November 1960 - April 1962
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7	1	Studies Leading to the Creation of the Administrative Handbook, 1962
	2	<i>Ibid.</i> , Part I
	3	Report on the Thomas Hunter Program Bronx Campus, 1962 - 1963

### SERIES IV – WRITINGS

#### Subseries 4.1 Addresses

7	4	<p>“Philadelphia Welcomes America’s First Foreign Representative.” Address delivered by John J. Meng at the Society’s Rooms, 715 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, on Monday evening, 26 February 1934, The Catholic University of America.</p> <p>Untitled address by Dr. John J. Meng when he was a professor of Political Science at Queens College of the City of New York, February 23, 1948.</p> <p>“Address by President Meng,” <i>Hunter Alumni Quarterly</i> (Spring, 1965): 7 - 8.</p> <p>“The Liberal Arts in a Computerized Society.” Excerpts of a talk given by President John J. Meng of Hunter College of the City University of New York, at the Opening Convocation of the 1964 - 1965 College Year.</p> <p>“Leisure of the Theory Class.” A Commencement address to the Class of 1965, <i>Hunter Alumni Quarterly</i> (Fall 1965): 11.</p> <p>“Educational Opportunity For All: Is Free Tuition the Only Answer?” Talk by President John J. Meng at the Hunter College Alumni Homecoming, November 6, 1965.</p> <p>“Freedom, Responsibility, and the University.” Presented at Commencement Exercise at Siena College, June 5, 1966.</p> <p>Remarks of John J. Meng at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual State Education Department Administrative Conference, November 13, 1975.</p> <p>Statement on the “Mission and Structure of the City University During this Period of Fiscal Stringency.” Prepared for presentation at a public hearing before Senate and Assembly Committees on Higher Education of the New York State Legislature, 3 December 1975.</p>
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## SERIES IV – WRITINGS

### Subseries 4.2 Articles

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
7	5	Meng, John J. "A Revolutionary Fragment." in <i>Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia</i> (June, 1931): 191 - 196.  ---. "The Place of Canada in French Diplomacy of the American Revolution" <i>Le Bulletin des recherches historiques</i> (November, 1933): 663, 687.  ---. "Abbe Bandoi in America." <i>The Catholic Historical Review</i> 20, No. 2 (July, 1934): 135 - 153.  ---. "Secretary of Legation Meyer." in the <i>Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia</i> , (1935): 22 - 48.  ---. "William Penn and American Catholics." <i>The Sign: A National Catholic Magazine</i> (December, 1935): 653 - 654.
	6	---. "French Diplomacy in Philadelphia." <i>The Catholic Historical Review</i> 24, No. 1 (April, 1938): 39 - 57.
	7	---. "A Footnote to Secret Aid in the American Revolution, 1778 - 1779." <i>The American Historical Review</i> (July 1938): 791 - 795.
	8	---. "A Century of American Catholicism as Seen Through French Eyes." <i>The Catholic Historical Review</i> 27, No. 1 (April, 1941): 39 - 68.  ---. "Philadelphia and the Revolution: French Diplomacy in the United States, 1778 - 1779." <i>American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia</i> (December, 1945): 306 - 328.  ---. "Cahenslyism: The First Stage, 1883 - 1891." <i>The Catholic Historical Review</i> 31, No. 4 (January, 1946): 389 - 413.  ---. "Thomas Paine, French Propagandist in the United States." <i>Records of American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia</i> (March, 1946): 1 - 21.
	9	---. "The Constitutional Theories of Thomas Paine." <i>The Review of Politics</i> 8, No. 3 (July, 1946): 283 - 306.  ---. "Cahenslyism: The Second Chapter, 1891-1910." <i>The Catholic Historical Review</i> 32, No. 3 (October, 1946): 302 - 340.

## SERIES IV – WRITINGS

### Subseries 4.2 Articles

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>
7	9	Meng, John J. "Growing Pains in the American Catholic Church." <i>Historical Records and Studies</i> 36 (1947): 17 - 67.
		---. "American Thought: Contributions of Catholic Thought and Thinkers." <i>Catholic Historical Review</i> 53, No. 1 (August, 1956): 112 - 120.

## SERIES V – GENERAL FILES

		Advisory Board of Public Health of New York
7	10	1960
	11	Minutes, 1960 - 1962
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	3	The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1954, 1965
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	3	Committee for Workshop on Vietnam, 1965
	4	<i>Faculty Handbook Hunter College of the City University of New York</i> , September 1965
		Hunter College A Study of Punch Card Data Processing Operations, August 3, 1962
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## SERIES V – GENERAL FILES

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10	1	Newspaper Articles
		Obituary
	2	Fowler, Glenn. "Dr. John J. Meng, 81, Ex-President at Hunter and Marymount, Dies." <i>The New York Times</i> , February 17, 1988, p. D 26.
	3	Outside Speakers, 1961, 1964
		Publications
	4	Bosworth, William. "The French Catholic Hierarchy and the Algerian Question." <i>The Western Political Quarterly</i> 15, No. 4 (December, 1962): 667- 680.
	5	Fowler, Dorothy G. "Precursors of the Hatch Act." <i>The Mississippi Valley Historical Review</i> , No. 2 (September, 1960): 247- 262.
		Friedberg, Maurice. "The State of Soviet Jewry." <i>Commentary</i> (January 1965): 1 - 6.
		Hopwood, Kathryn L. <i>The College Student and the Humanities</i> . Hunter College, 1966.
		---. "Guidance in Quest." Reprinted from <i>Teachers College Record</i> (March 1964): 546 - 549.
		McCadden, Joseph J. "The New York-To-Cuba Axis of Father Varela." <i>The Americas: Academy of American Franciscan History</i> 20, No. 4 (April, 1964): 376 - 392.
		Richter, Melvin. "Tocqueville on Algeria." <i>The Review of Politics</i> 25, No. 3 (July, 1963): 362 - 398.
		Samuel, Irene. "Henry James on Imagination and the Will to Power." <i>The Bulletin of The New York Public Library</i> 69, No. 2, (February, 1965): 117 - 130.
		---. "The Proems of the Commedia and Paradise Lost: Higher Argument Remains." <i>Bucknell Review</i> (ca. 1965): 31 - 46.
		Woehl, Arthur L. "Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Parliamentarian" in <i>The Rhetorical Idiom</i> . Cornell University Press, 1958.

## SERIES V – GENERAL FILES

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	2	Graduate Studies in the Liberal Arts and Sciences: a report submitted to the Middle States Association. Spring, 1966
	3	Hunter College Index of Budget Request for Fiscal Year July 1, 1961-June 30, 1962
	4	Hunter College Budget Request Fiscal Year 1962 - 1963
	5	Hunter College Index of Budget Request for Fiscal Year 1963 - 1964
	6	Hunter College Budget Request for Fiscal Year 1964 - 1965
	7	Meeting the Challenge of Health Care Today: A Study and a First-Step Program, ca. 1962
		Report of a Self-Study of Teacher Education Programs, Hunter College, CUNY, 1966
	8	The Report of a Self-Study of Hunter College of CUNY Conducted by the Faculty and Administration in Preparation for an Evaluation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, June 1966
	9	Report to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education on Hunter College of CUNY March 13 - 15, 1967
	10	Salary List submitted by the Hunter College Committee, September 11, 1963
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	5	Portrait as President of Hunter College, ca. 1960
	6	Roosevelt House Birthday Celebration, March 15, 1960
	7	School of General Studies Reception, Spring 1962
	8	Silberman Gift of New School of Social Work, June 23, 1964
	9	Titov's Visit to Hunter College, May 9, 1962
	10	Unidentified Photographs

## ADDENDA

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14	1	Faculty Council, 1960 - 1969
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	7	Miscellaneous Materials
	8	Notes
	9	Office of Public Instruction – Annual Report, 1965 - 1966
	10	“Open Admissions at CUNY – Which Way?”, October 30, 1969

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- . "Philadelphia and the Revolution: French Diplomacy in the United States, 1778-1779." *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* (December, 1945): 306 - 328.
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