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## Michael J. Ahern, SJ Papers

New England Jesuit Province Archives

New England Province of the Society of Jesus

Michael J. Ahern SJ

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**Archives of the New England Province of the Society of Jesus  
c/o College of the Holy Cross Archives & Special Collections  
One College Street, Worcester, MA 01610-2395**

**Record Group:** MSS

**Name of Collection:** Rev. Michael J. Ahern, SJ (1877 – 1951) Papers

**Record Group Number:** MS AHERN, Michael J.

**Size of Collection:** 6 boxes, 2.5 linear feet

**Dates of Collection:** 1907-1951

**Biographical Sketch:**

Michael J. Ahern was born in 1877 in New York City. In 1896 he entered into the Society of Jesus at the novitiate in Frederick, MD after receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Francis Xavier College in New York City. He was ordained in 1910, after completing theological studies in Innsbruck, Austria. From 1911-1914 he was a Professor of Chemistry and Geology at Canisius College, as well as the director of Meteorological and Seismology Observatories. In 1914 he did his year long tertianship at St.-Andrew-on-Hudson, NY and from 1915 to 1919 he taught Chemistry at Boston College. In 1919, Father Ahern was named Rector-President of Canisius College, serving until 1923. During his term, he began a drive to raise funds for buildings and development of the College with the help of students, alumni and local businessmen. Over the summer of 1919, he inaugurated the Colleges Courses for Teachers program, called "extension courses." These classes were held in the afternoons and evenings during the regular school year. They were exceedingly popular, attracting hundreds of teachers, including nuns from religious congregations.

While President of Canisius College, Father Ahern also taught science and religion courses. On August 21 – 22, 1922, he hosted the first meeting of an Association of Science and Mathematics Teachers of the Maryland-New York Province of the Society of Jesus at Canisius College. On July 16, 1923, the night before he left Canisius College for his assignment at College of the Holy Cross, a large scale Passion Play was held in the open air theater seating 3000 that he helped build at the College. From 1923-1926 he was the head of the Chemistry Department at The College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA. In 1926 he left Holy Cross to teach Geology at Weston College in Weston MA. While there, he also served as the Director of the Seismology Station. Also while at Weston, he broadcast a radio show called the "Catholic Question Box" on the Yankee Network beginning in 1929. This show lasted several years under his direction.

In 1940, Father Ahern received an Honorary Degree from Canisius College. In 1946 he was a delegate to the European Conference of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, an organization of which he had been a member for a number of years. He also was a member of the American Association of Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the American Geological Society, and the Buffalo Academy of Science. He died on June 5, 1951 in Boston MA.

## Archives of the New England Province of the Society of Jesus

### Scope and Content:

The collection consists of correspondence, postcards, newspaper clippings, and 1 folder of photographs. The correspondence generally relates to his radio show and courses he taught, as well as personal letters and memorabilia. The material also contains postcards and souvenir photographs mostly depicting geological sites around the United States.

**See:** RG 12 Audiovisual: Photographs for 1 folder of black and white prints.

**See also:** The New England Province Authors Collection contains one offprint of an article by Fr. Ahern, "The Educational Ideals of the Jesuits" (*Harvard Educational Review*, 1937)

**Access / Restrictions:** This collection is open to researchers.

**Cite As:** Rev. Michael J. Ahern, SJ Manuscript Collection  
MS AHERN, Michael J  
Archives of the New England Province of the Society of Jesus  
College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA.

Archives of the New England Province of the Society of Jesus

**Rev. Michael J. Ahern, S.J. (1877 - 1951) Papers**

**MS Ahern, Michael J.**

**3 linear feet  
6-5" boxes**

Folder Title	Dates	Box	Folder
<b>Box #1:</b>			
Personal Photographs		1	1
Health Record and Student Visa	1946,1907	1	2
Personal Papers		1	3
Science Articles	1920-25	1	4
Notes and Reports	1924	1	5
Convention Notifications	1925	1	6
Invoices	1924-30	1	7
[Personal Correspondence]	1923-25	1	8
[Correspondence: Rotary Club and Other Organizations]	1923-25	1	9
[Correspondence: Science and Education]	1923-25	1	10
[Correspondence: Visual Arts]	1923-25	1	11
[Correspondence: Religious]	1927	1	12
<b>Box #2:</b>			
Evolution – Periodicals	1913-32	2	1
Evolution – Radio Show and News Clippings	1930-37	2	2
Evolution and Religion		2	3
Articles of Interest: By and About	1923-51	2	4
Correspondence Re: Cardinal O'Connell and Memorandum	1930-36	2	5
Personal Correspondence	1932	2	6
Letters from Bishops	1936-46	2	7
Photostats for MIT Chemistry Course	1941	2	8
Photocopy from Chemistry Source Book	1941	2	9
Radio Show Articles	1929-44	2	10
Radio Show Reactions and Controversy	1940	2	11
Radio Show and Tolerance	1941-46	2	12
Radio Show Correspondence	1944	2	13
Lynch Article	1946	2	14
Oxford Conference Photographs	1946	2	15
Tomb of St. Peter Articles	1948-50	2	16
Tributes to Mary	1949	2	17

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Folder Title	Dates	Box	Folder	3 linear feet 6-5" boxes
<b>Box #3:</b>				
Labs		3	1	
Colleges and Universities		3	2	
Product Ads and Manuals		3	3	
Personal: Ordination, Anniversary, Diplomas	1910-1946	3	4	
Personal: Radio Show		3	5	
Reflections on Evolution		3	6	
American Academy of Arts and Science	1932,1951	3	7	
Tourist Maps of Various Caverns		3	8	
Souvenir Photos: California		3	9	
Souvenir Photos: Howe Caverns, NY		3	10	
Souvenir Photos: Carlsbad Caverns, NM		3	11	
<b>Box #4:</b>				
Postcards – Europe		4	1	
Postcards and Scenes – Europe		4	2	
Postcards – Oberammergau		4	3	
Postcard – British Columbia Canada		4	4	
<b>Box #5:</b>				
Negatives		5	1	
Jesuit Group Photo and Landscapes		5	2	
Photographs – Weston		5	3	
Scenes – Massachusetts Geology		5	4-6	
Scenes – Massachusetts Geology – Extra Special		5	7	
<b>Box #6:</b>				
Postcards – Colorado		6	1	
Postcards – Mesa Verde, CO, et al		6	2	
Photographs – Yellowstone, CO		6	3	
Postcards – “West”		6	4	
[Geological Photographs – “West”]		6	5	
Postcards – Nevada		6	6	
Postcards – New Mexico		6	7	
Postcards – New Hampshire Scenes		6	8	

Created: October 28, 2004

Updated: October 8, 2015

MS Ahern, Michael J

Box-Folder List