

CULLEN-SUPPLEMENTS GUIDE

(CUL/OCO , CUL/AME , CUL/TBG)



The following is a brief guide to what is known as the Cullen Supplements.

For more information on Paul Cullen and an overview of Cullen papers in the Irish College, please consult 'Cullen Papers in the Irish College Rome (1821-1879)'- available on this website.

Provenance and archival history

The papers contained in these three series were separated from the core Cullen correspondence. They were all extracted (presumably at the same time) to form the following thematic units:

- Letters from Michael O'Connor, later Bishop of Pittsburgh (CUL/OCO/)
- The American Letters (CUL/ AME/)
- Letters and Reports from Trinidad and British Guyana (CUL/ TBG/)

This separation must have occurred after the separation of the New Collection (by Archbishop Moran of Sydney, in the late 19th or early 20th century) and before the compilation of the Cullen catalogue in 1942.

It is regrettable that this separation occurred as it fractured the integrity of the core collection and because these three sub-collections complement one another. A reversal of all the abovementioned separations was deemed impracticable and archivally unsound (the aim being to preserve the purposes behind the separations).

The Cullen Supplements need to be consulted in parallel with the 'core' Cullen Collection (CUL/) and the New Collection (previously known as the Manly Collection) as all originally formed one collection of papers.

The digitization project, however, simplifies this consultation. Researchers can perform a single keyword search across all the digitized material, thereby gathering together virtually, papers that have been physically separated.

CUL/OCO- Letters from the Michael O'Connor, later Bishop of Pittsburgh

This series relates to Michael O'Connor, vice-rector at the Irish College and later Bishop of Pittsburgh – the papers span the period 1834-1847. This collection is very small, comprising merely 38 letters. They consist of the usual mixture of agency material -approaching the rector of the Irish College, Paul Cullen, with administrative, political and personal matters. Some insights can be gleaned as to the state of religion in Pittsburgh before and after the establishment of the diocese, and as to the particular, political and practical, problems O'Connor faced there.

As at least one letter from O'Connor was overlooked and remains in the core collection (CUL/ 1015 of 29 January 1845) researchers should also always consult the core collection (CUL/), the other supplements (CUL/OCO/ and CUL/TBG) and particularly the New Collection (CUL/NC).

Michael O'Connor was born near Cork on 27 September 1810. He studied in France for several years before being sent by the Bishop of Cloyne and Ross to Propaganda College, Rome, to complete his doctorate. In *Recollections of the Last Four Popes*, Cardinal Wiseman commended the ability of O'Connor.

On 1 June, 1833, he was ordained and was then appointed professor of Sacred Scripture at the Propaganda. He held the post of vice-rector of the Irish College and upon returning to Ireland in 1836 was stationed in the parish of Fermoy. In 1839 he was invited to come to the United States by Bishop Kenrick of Philadelphia. He secured a professorship in St. Charles Borromeo's Seminary, Philadelphia and later became president of the seminary. During his time there he attended the mission at Morristown, and built the church of St. Francis Xavier at Fairmount.

In June, 1841, he was appointed vicar-general of the western part of the State of Pennsylvania and succeeded Rev. John O'Reilly, as pastor of St. Paul's, Pittsburgh. He was consecrated bishop of the newly established diocese of Pittsburgh on 15 August, 1843 in Rome. On his return journey to America, he visited Ireland and made an appeal for religious volunteers for his new Diocese. He persuaded five students of Maynooth and a colony of seven Sisters of the recently-founded Order of Our Lady of Mercy to accompany him. These were the first Sisters of the Order of Mercy, founded by Mother Catherine McCauley, to establish a convent in the United States.

In 1853 the bishop had in his vast diocese, 33 churches, 16 priests and a Catholic population of less than 25,000. By 1852 the diocese had increased to such an extent that the bishop began to consider the propriety of having it divided. Later developments in his diocese fall outside the scope of our letters at the Irish College. It could be added that on 23 May 1860, O'Connor resigned his see to carry out his purpose of entering the Society of Jesus. Having made his novitiate in Germany he returned to the United States, preaching and lecturing. He died on 18 October 1872.

CUL/AME- The American Letters

The American letters are comprised of 138 items which complement the O'Connor letters. These letters span a period from 1824 to 1849 which is more or less coextensive with Cullen's position in the Irish College but also include correspondence preceding his rectorship.

At a glance it seems that some items were overlooked and are still in the main collection (e.g. 1799, 1832 and 1834). Researchers should also always consult the core collection (CUL/), the other supplements (CUL/OCO/ and CUL/TBG) and particularly the New Collection (CUL/NC).

The writers of these letters address themselves to Rector Cullen or to Vice-Rector O'Connor. For the most part they are members of the hierarchy of the north and east of the United States: the most prominent being the bishops of Charleston, Philadelphia, New York but also Detroit, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis. The subject matter is the usual mixture of agency matters with observations on the developing churches in North America. Cullen's hand in the 'hibernicisation' of the American church, as well as his similar interest in the antipodes and other parts of the Commonwealth, has been noted in studies by Colin Barr.

CUL/TBG- Letters and Reports from Trinidad and British Guyana

The third group of documents consist of 57 letters and reports concerning British Guiana and Tobago. They span the period 1837 (when the diocese of Georgetown in the Archdiocese Port of Spain, British Guyana was established) until 1849 (when Cullen returned to Ireland).

The main correspondents with Cullen are R.P. Smith, Vicar Apostolic of Trinidad (in 1850 Archbishop of Port of Spain) and John T. Hynes, who was appointed to Georgetown on the resignation of Bishop Clancy. The problems concerning the latter and his (enforced) resignation stand out from the general discussion of a relatively new missionary field where financial assistance from Propaganda Fide is paramount for survival. We also gain some insights into Hynes's policy of encouraging immigration of clergy and religious from Ireland, in the middle of the famine.

As with the other supplements, researchers are advised to consult in parallel the core collection (CUL/), the other supplements (CUL/OCO/ and CUL/TBG) and particularly the New Collection (CUL/NC).



Finding Aids.

An electronic catalogue has been copied with some slight amendments, from an earlier type-script paper catalogue. This catalogue is included at the 'Cullen Catalogue'.

While details behind the separation of these three groups is unknown, it seems that Anton Debevec, working here in the 1950s and 1970s, was connected with the calendaring of the American and the Bishop-O'Connor letters. He worked extensively in the Propaganda Fide archives with the scope of selecting North American material, and his original calendars for CUL/AME and CUL/OCO are among the Irish College finding aids and bear cross-reference codes for the Propaganda Fide-collections. These have not been integrated into the electronic catalogue.

Further reading.

Henry A. Szarnicki *Michael O'Connor: First Catholic Bishop of Pittsburgh...1843-1860 (A Story of the Catholic Pioneers of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania)* (Pittsburgh 1975)

Colin Barr 'The Irish College Rome and the appointment of Irish bishops to the United States 1850-1851' (in *The Irish College, Rome and its World* published by Four Courts Press).

Ibid. ' "Imperium in Imperio": Irish Episcopal Imperialism in the nineteenth century' *The English Historical Review* (forthcoming).

<http://www.catholicity.com/encyclopedia/p/pittsburgh.html> (retrieved November 2006)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12121a.htm> (retrieved November 2006)

<http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/>

Archivist, Irish College Rome.