

James McCune Smith: Information sheet

How to use this sheet

This information sheet gives a brief overview of [James McCune Smith](#)'s connection with the University of Glasgow and related records held in the University of Glasgow Library. Enquiries should be directed to Archives & Special Collections in the first instance at library-asc@glasgow.ac.uk

James McCune Smith is the first known African American graduate in medicine, as well as a doctor he is celebrated as an intellectual, abolitionist and medical activist.

After being denied entry to American colleges due to his race he attended the University of Glasgow from 1832 to 1837. During his studies in Glasgow he obtained three university degrees – a Bachelor of Arts (1835), a Master of Arts (1836) and his Medical Doctorate (1837). In 2021 the University of Glasgow's new world-leading learning and teaching building was named the James McCune Smith Learning Hub in his honour.

Student records

Held in Archives & Special Collections

Matriculation

GUA26005 p227	1832	Names of students enrolled in the Greek class taught by Daniel K Sandford. See transcript of entry in Matriculation albums of the University of Glasgow 1723-1858 , entry 12983/1832
GUA31247 p84	6 Nov 1835	Medical matriculations register. Includes matriculation date, name, father's forename, hometown/city and classes.

Classes

Note: There were at least three James Smiths at UofG at the same time as James McCune Smith. In the class catalogues there are James Smith, senior and junior, James Smith, Glasgow (who was studying theology) and James M Smith. The following have been identified as James McCune Smith.

R9/1/1 p759	1832-33	Greek class list [Jacobus M Smith]
R9/1/1 p778	1833-34	Logic class list [Jacobus Smith]
GUA19039 p150	1833-34	Anatomy class list [James McUne Smith]
R9/1/1 p816	1835-36	Physics class list [Jacobus M Smith]
Library Records 131, p629	1835	Notes that he is registered in the Moral Philosophy class
GUA26680 p144	1836	Register of attested students of Medicine [James McCune Smith]

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Prize lists

SEN10/3 p47	1832-33	Humanity (Greek)
R7/1/2 p7	1833-34	Logic

Library borrowing records

Library Records 131, p629	1835	Library student receipt books, recording books borrowed
Library Records 87, p283	1835-36	Student deposit book for the Medical Class Library, 1827-42. Lists books borrowed, the title of the entry says: "James McCune Smith. Mrs Millar. 55 Renfrew St". 55 Renfrew St seems to have been the lodging house of a Mary Millar

Graduation

GUA26676 p181 R7/1/2 p26	29 Apr 1835 1835	Graduation album, BA degree List of degrees awarded in University Prize lists, BA degree
GUA26676 p184 R7/1/2 p38	27 Apr 1836 1836	Graduation album, MA degree List of degrees awarded in University Prize lists, MA degree
GUA26677 p69 R7/1/2 p50	1837 1837	Register of the names of Doctors of Medicine List of degrees awarded in University Prize lists, MD degree

Other

GUA21360	1836	Stent roll Document is in Latin, heading: <i>Nomina et Census eorum qui in Universitate Glasguensi ad Gradus in Artibus Liberalibus capessendos maturi sunt. Anno Aerae Vulgaris MDCCCXXXVI</i>
SEN10/3 p18-20	1833-34	University Calendar - General information on Professors and the syllabus in the Faculty of Medicine.
SEN10/3 p30	1833-34	University Calendar - <i>Regulations respecting degrees in Medicine and Surgery.</i> General information on regulations for graduation.

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Publications

Held by Archives & Special Collections and in the Main Library

The works of James McCune Smith: Black intellectual and abolitionist, edited by John Stauffer; foreword by Henry Louis Gates Jr (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, c2006) <https://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/record=b2940093>

James McCune Smith, 'From St. Domingo : its revolutions and its patriots: a lecture delivered before the Metropolitan Athenaeum, London, May 16, and at St. Thomas' Church, Philadelphia, December 20, 1854' in *African Americans and the Haitian revolution : selected essays and historical documents* (New York ; London : Routledge, 2010) <https://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/record=b3016257>

James McCune Smith, 'Solid nitrate of silver in gonorrhoea' in *London Medical Gazette*, vol 20, 27 May 1837, p310 <https://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/record=b1415272>

James McCune Smith, 'Solid nitrate of silver in gonorrhoea' in *London Medical Gazette*, vol 20, 9 Sep 1837, p894 <https://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/record=b1415272>

Frederick Douglass, *My bondage and my freedom*; with an introduction by James M'Cune Smith (New York : Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855) <https://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/record=b2007956>
E-book available via <https://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/record=b3055969>

Bibliography

Publications using our sources

'James McCune Smith and Glasgow: A Scholar's Transatlantic Journey, 1821-1837' by Amy M Cools https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/slavery/news/headline_815417_en.html

'James McCune Smith: new discovery reveals how first African American doctor fought for women's rights in Glasgow' by Matthew Daniel Eddy <https://theconversation.com/james-mccune-smith-new-discovery-reveals-how-first-african-american-doctor-fought-for-womens-rights-in-glasgow-166233>