

Their middle child was John Allister McAllister, born on September 30, 1822. He attended the Edgehill School for Boys, founded in Princeton, New Jersey, by the noted classics professor Robert B. Patton (1794-1839). The remainder of his resume is known from a brief essay written by his brother William in a family genealogical scrapbook he created in the early 1890s (now in the Print Department of the Library Company, but not part of the McAllister Collection):

[John] was brought up to the hardware trade with Earp McMain Haven & West but never followed it. Was with Charles Belin and a Mr. Adams in the Butter & Cheese business but was not successful. He was for a time with the Crane Iron Co and with energy might have been President. In 1848 he went with his Brother Thomas to Louisville Ky and was in some small business but unsuccessful. In 1853 I offered him and Thomas an interest in my business and we were partners til 1865.

Though William McAllister described a partnership with both his brothers, a formal business agreement in the Marian S. Carson Collection at the Library of Congress features only two principals, William and Thomas. As well, Philadelphia city directory entries for the firm of McAllister & Brother [always singular] during those dozen years have expanded listings of product specialties, and name Thomas and William as proprietors. John A. McAllister was listed in the city directories as an "optician" at the Chestnut Street store address for many years and was, at minimum, involved with the commercial photographs marketed there, but it is likely that his role in the shop was more that of a clerk. Several acknowledgement letters saved in his personal papers reveal that McAllister mailed photographs of churches and portraits of prominent religious figures to noted clergymen in the 1850s and early 1860s, but the lack of request letters in the files suggests that those gifts were perhaps unsolicited, and may well have been his way of acquiring autographs for his collection. A few similar letters exist for the eyewear and portraits of prominent military figures he sent to servicemen during the Civil War, though in many cases those mailings were in response to their orders, which he also kept for his personal files.

While John A. McAllister's role in the family business remains unclear, his role in the family is more evident. Evidence supporting a fraternal rift first appears in 1875, the last time an occupation and the firm's address are part of his entry in the city directories. A second suggestion can be found in the will that John McAllister Jr. prepared in March 1876, wherein he assigned bequests of both Philadelphia real estate, cash and securities to William, Agnes, and Frances, but only cash and securities to John and Thomas (who remained in New York through his death in 1898). When John McAllister Jr. died on December 17, 1877, Agnes inherited the family mansion on Merrick Street (now the west side of Penn Square at Market Street), and upon her death in 1879, she bequeathed the property to Elizette and Jessie Grant, the daughters of her Sarah who had died a decade earlier; the Grant family had lived in the house for more than twenty years having moved there after Sarah was widowed in 1852. The following year, the sisters sold the house to the Pennsylvania Railroad for \$25,000 (approximately \$500,000