

A Guide to the Office of the State Forester, Office Files of Alfred Ackerman, 1920-1961

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1920-1961

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History

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Descriptive Summary

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Transferred from the Office of the State Forester, 13-16 January 1976.

Physical Characteristics

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State Records Collection, Department of Conservation and Recreation (Record Group 18)

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Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

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Biographical/Historical Information

Mr. Ackerman was a former employee of the Office of State Forester from 1921 to 1926. He later became a professor of forestry at the University of Virginia. He maintained frequent contact with his former employers and these files document some of his extensive work in the area of assuring the scenic forestry in Virginia would be maintained.

The Office of the State Forester has been a part of numerous department reorganizations since its' establishment in 1914. The following is a brief chronology of the various names of parent agencies of the Office of State Forester: (1) State Geological Survey Commission, 1914-1926; (2) State Conservation and Development Commission, 1926-1938; (3) Virginia Conservation Commission, 1938-1948; (4) Department of Conservation and Economic Development, 1948-1985; (4) Department of Conservation and Historic Resources, 1985-1989; and (5) Department of Conservation and Recreation, 1989-. During these various reorganizations the responsibilities and duties of the Office increased resulting in bureau and later division status for the State Forester.

In 1914 the Legislature created the Office of State Forester under the direction of the State Geological Survey Commission. The responsibility of the State Forester was "the supervision and direction of all forest interests and all matters pertaining to forestry within the state." The Legislature provided no appropriations for funding of the office and expenses were to be assumed by the University of Virginia. In return, the State Forester was appointed the Professor of Forestry at the University of Virginia and was expected to teach one class. In 1916 the Legislature appropriated increased funding for the Office allowing for the hiring of five professionally trained forestry staff members and the development of a state nursery.

In 1919 the legislature increased the duties of the State Forester with the following responsibilities (1) the control of all forest fire fighting measures; (2) the investigation of methods of conservation and education in forestry; (3) the cooperation with private landowners in sound forestry practices; (4) the maintenance of the state forest nursery and distribution of tree reforestation; (5) the right to purchase and manage lands as state forest; (5) the investigation of stream flows within the state.

Scope and Content Information

The office files of Alfred Ackerman highlights four specific topics of interest. The files documenting the Chapin Jones Case involves the controversial and political firestorm concerning the removal of Mr. Jones from the position of State Forester. Mr. Jones had been State Forester for eighteen years when Mr. William E. Carson (Chairman of the State Commission on Conservation and Development) had several disputes regarding the administration of the Office of the State Forester. The request made by Mr. Carson for Jones to resign and Jones' subsequent refusal and demand for an open hearing on the issue, made for interesting news coverage. This series documents Mr. Ackerman's (former employee under State Forester Chapin Jones) contributions to the case providing correspondence, newclippings and a published report entitled "What Ails the Conservation Commission."

The second area of interest concerns the Shenandoah Park. These files offer Alfred Ackerman's opinions and

concerns regarding the federal government's initial move to establish a national park in the valley. This series contains, pamphlets, correspondence, and reports discussing among other things the validity of appropriating state tax dollars for a national project.

The Virginia Forest Fire on White Cedar consists of correspondence and research notes outlining the concerns of the drainage of swamps and the forest growth in Virginia. The files includes trip expense tallies for camping and explorations made by Ackerman and the staff of the Office of State Forester. There are research notes and reports from the results of the Forest staffs research explorations.

The Virginia Forestry files contains correspondence, fire reports, expense vouchers and research notes. This series gives insight into the daily operations of the Office concerning forestry issues. There are detailed prosecution reports giving the names and address of alleged to have started fires. The Fire report forms give the location of fire, date of fire acres burned damage to growth and the names of the accused fire perpetrators. There is correspondence from members of the private sector as well as the federal government seeking information and advice about forestry concerns.

Arrangement

Organized into one (1) series: Series I. Office Files of Alfred Ackerman, 1920-1961 (Bulk dates 1920-1940).

Contents List

Series I. Office Files of Alfred Ackerman, 1920-1961

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically by year.

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Box 1

Folder 2

Shenandoah Park, 1920-1940

Box 1

Folder 3

Shenandoah Park, 1920-1940

Box 1

Folder 4

Shenandoah Park, 1920-1940

Box 1

Folder 5

Virginia Forest Fire on White Cedar Correspondence A-L, 1920-1930

Box 2

Folder 1

Virginia Forest Fire on White Cedar Correspondence M-L, 1923-1961

Box 2

Folder 2

Virginia Forest Fire on White Cedar Correspondence Research Notes, 1921-1924

Box 2

Folder 3

Virginia Forestry Correspondence, 1924-1925

Box 2

Folder 4

Virginia Forestry Correspondence, 1925

Box 2

Folder 5

Virginia Forestry Correspondence, 1925

Box 2

Folder 6

Virginia Forestry Correspondence and Research Files, 1921-1923

Box 3

Folder 1

Virginia Forestry Correspondence and Research Files, 1931-1934

Box 3

Folder 2