

Sanford Bernell Fenne Papers

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1918-1970



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1987.054

Unit Date

1918-1970

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The papers of Sanford Bernell "Chuck" Fenne, a graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute (BS, 1927; MS, 1930) and a Virginia Agricultural Extension plant pathologist from 1939 to 1967, includes correspondence, writings, biographical materials, photographs, a VPI scrapbook, and a photo album compiled during a year (1943-1944) spent working in Brazil for the Food Supply Division, Institute of Inter-American Affairs.

Creator

Fenne, Sanford Bernell, 1903-1978

Extent

0.7 Cubic Feet 3 boxes

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Sanford Bernell Fenne Papers were donated to Special Collections in 1987, 1990, and 1991.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Sanford Bernell Fenne Papers commenced and was completed in March 2013.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Sanford Bernell Fenne Papers, 1918-1970, Ms1987-054, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Sanford Bernell "Chuck" Fenne was born in Madison, Wisconsin on August 14, 1903, to parents Tollef E. and Anna Vinge Fenne. By 1910, the Fennes had moved to York County, Virginia. Fenne entered Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (VPI; later Virginia Tech) in 1919, but left school after his junior year to manage a dairy farm for two years. He served as an extension agent in Augusta County from 1924 to 1926, then returned to VPI to complete a bachelor's degree in agriculture. Following his 1927 graduation, Fenne married Catherine "Cay" Crafton (1906-1997) of Staunton, Virginia. That same year, he was appointed acting Virginia Extension plant pathologist. In this position, Fenne planned and conducted projects relating to the control of various plant diseases. He worked as an extension agent in Washington County from 1928 to 1930.

Fenne earned a master's degree in agriculture at VPI in 1930 and pursued a doctoral degree in plant pathology at Cornell University while working summers as a student assistant at the New York Experiment Station in Geneva. His dissertation remaining unfinished, Fenne was appointed plant pathologist with the USDA's Dutch Elm Eradication Program in White Plains, New York in 1934. He continued working on Dutch elm disease control while serving as superintendent of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp from 1935 to 1937. During the latter half of 1937, Fenne served as assistant county agent for Lancaster County, Virginia, before being appointed extension specialist in plant pathology for the Georgia Extension Service. In 1939, he was appointed Virginia Extension plant pathologist, engaging in various public information programs. In 1943, he was granted a year's leave of absence to serve in the Comissão Brasileiro-Americana a cooperative war emergency food project of the Food Supply Division, Institute of Inter-American Affairs. Chief of Brazil's Region 4, Fenne coordinated the distribution of seeds, farming implements, and monetary loans to the region's farmers and also oversaw cooperative agricultural education programs.

Fenne returned to VPI as project leader in plant pathology in January, 1945. In 1953, he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Confined to a wheelchair by 1956, he continued to work, founding the *Plant Disease Newsletter* (later the *Plant Protection Newsletter*), producing several bulletins issued by the Extension Service regarding plant disease, and writing a detailed history of Virginia Extension plant pathology from 1923 to 1957. He retired in 1967, but continued to be active through woodworking and gardening. Sanford B. Fenne died on November 16, 1978.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the papers of Sanford Brennel Fenne, a plant pathologist with the Virginia Agricultural Extension Service at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (VPI; later Virginia Tech) from 1939 to 1967. The collection includes correspondence, writings, personal records, printed materials, photographs, a scrapbook compiled during Fenne's years as a student at VPI, and a photo album compiled during Fenne's year (1943-1944) of cooperative agricultural work in Brazil.

The small selection of correspondence relates largely to routine personal matters and to details regarding Fenne's career and health. Included is a letter from B. C. Cabbage, VPI's football coach, about team practice sessions and a letter from Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs Nelson Rockefeller, acknowledging Fenne's resignation from the Food Supply Division. Also relating to Fenne's life, health, career, and retirement are separate folders containing an assortment of documents (school records, forms, letters, certificates, and newspaper clippings). Among these are several newspaper clippings about VPI's Plant Disease Clinic. The collection also contains an assortment of Fenne's writings, including his unfinished dissertation and several pieces relating to agriculture in Brazil and Virginia.

Among the photographs in the collection are several images from Fenne's 1967 retirement, as well as images from his student years at VPI, including class portraits, athletic and other groups, and snapshots. More photos from Fenne's student years may be found in a scrapbook that includes images of cadets on drill, on march, in parade, and in encampment; snowball fights; "rat parades" (including two that picture Tek Heung Fung, an early international student from China); campus scenes; and scenes of Blacksburg and the surrounding area, including Blacksburg High School, Mountain Lake, the Huckleberry Railroad, Yellow Sulphur Springs, and Nellie's Cave. The scrapbook also contains such ephemera as school forms, event programs, tickets, and receipts. A large photo album, titled "1943-1944 Activities of the Comissão Brasileiro-Americana Cera, Piaui, Maranhão, completes the collection and includes photos of Brazilian farms and farmers, as well as personal snapshots.

Keywords

Agriculture -- Brazil

Faculty and staff

Students and alumni

University History

Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (1896-1944)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute (1944-1970)

Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged by material type.

Description of Subordinate Components

General correspondence

Unit Date 1922-1967

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Personal records / biographical material

Unit Date 1934-1962, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

Writings

Unit Date 1926-1965, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

"A Five-Year Agricultural Program for Augusta County"

Unit Date 1926

"Field Studies on the Ring-Spot Disease of Burley Tobacco in Washington County, Virginia"

Unit Date 1931

"Publications of S. B. Fenne"

Unit Date 1965

"Activities of the Comissão Brasileiro-Americana in Ceara"

Unit Date n.d.

"Agricultural Practices in Northeast Brazil"

Unit Date n.d.

"Agriculture in Brazil Does Not Compete With the United States"

Unit Date n.d.

"The Biology of CephaloThecium Roseum, Corda" [unfinished dissertation]

Unit Date n.d.

"Diseases of Certain Economic Crops in Virginia and Their Control"

Unit Date n.d.

Retirement

Unit Date 1966-1970, n .d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

Photographs

Unit Date [1927]-1968, n.d.

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

Scrapbook

Unit Date 1918-1923, n.d.

box-folder 2 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

Photo album

Unit Date 1943-1944

box-folder 3 (box)

Container 1 (folder)