

McBryde House Specification Records

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ca. 1900



Title Statement

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Author: LM Rozema, Archivist, and Special Collections and University Archives Staff

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specref@vt.edu
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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1999.010

Unit Date

ca. 1900

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

John McLauren McBryde (1841-1923) was the fifth president of Virginia Tech from 1891 thru 1907. This collection contains Specification No. 1755 of the labor and materials required in the erection and completion of a two-story, brick dwelling house to be erected for Dr. J. M. McBryde in Blacksburg Virginia.

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to research.

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Source of Acquisition

The collection was acquired by Special Collections and University Archives prior to 2001.

Processing Information

The collection is unprocessed. Minimal description was completed prior to 2001 and in September 2021.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], McBryde House Specification Records, Ms1999-010, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Known as the "father of VPI," John McLaren McBryde (January 1, 1841-March 20, 1923) was the fifth president of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (VPI, or Virginia Tech). He was born in Abbeville, South Carolina, to Susan McLaren and John McBryde, a Scottish cotton merchant. In December of 1858, John McLaren McBryde enrolled in South Carolina College (later the University of South Carolina) in Columbia, South Carolina. He later transferred to the University of Virginia in 1859, leaving in 1861 to fight in the American Civil War for the Confederacy. Having joined the military, McBryde was stationed on both Sullivan and Morris Islands, reportedly seeing the first shot fired on Fort Sumter. In 1862, McBryde contracted typhus fever and was forced to leave the army, but went on to work for the Treasury Department of the Confederate States of America in Richmond, Virginia.

Following the end of the Civil War, McBryde ran a large farm named Branchland in Charlottesville, Virginia. During this time, he published numerous articles on the subject of agriculture, gaining him the attention that eventually led to his appointment as a Professor of Agriculture and Botany at the University of Tennessee in 1879. In 1882, McBryde was offered a chair at the South Carolina College, where he remained until 1891, expanding it into a university after becoming president. In 1891, South Carolina University was again reduced to a college and its agricultural department moved to Clemson, leading to McBryde's acceptance of the Presidency at the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC).

During his time at Virginia Tech, McBryde divided the college into separate departments, expanded the curriculum, oversaw the installation of an infirmary and a new water system, added dormitories and faculty housing, and increased enrollment from 135 students in 1891 to 727 by 1903. After his retirement in 1907, McBryde was the first person elected president emeritus for the college, eventually becoming known as "the father of VPI."

On November 18, 1863, McBryde married Cora Bolton. They had eight children, six of whom lived to adulthood: Janet (1864-1869), James (1866-1925), Anna (1868-1948; later Mrs. Robert J. Davidson), John McLaren, Jr. (1870-1956), Charles (1872-1962), Susan (1874-1951), Meade (1877-1959), and Waid (abt. 1878-?). In 1923, McBryde died at his son's home in New Orleans but was returned to Blacksburg, Virginia for burial.

Scope and Content

This collection contains Specification No. 1755 of the labor and materials required in the erection and completion of a two-story, brick dwelling house to be erected for Dr. J. M. McBryde in Blacksburg Virginia. It is 20 leaves and dates from about 1900.

Related Archival Materials

See also the following related collections at Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives: Records of the Office of the President, John McLaren McBryde, RG 2/5

J. Bolton McBryde Collection, Ms1992-059

Larry McBryde Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family, Ms2013-024

Janet Barnhill Collection on Cora Bolton McBryde, Ms2016-019

Polly Ashelman Collection on the John McLaren McBryde Family, Ms2019-017

John M. and Cora Bolton McBryde Family Papers, Ms2023-069

Midhurst, J.M. McBryde Estate, Blacksburg, Va., Map-0276

Photographs of John M. McBryde are in the Faculty/Staff Photograph Collection

Keywords

Blacksburg (Va.)

Faculty and staff

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

Montgomery County (Va.)

University History

McBryde, John McLaren, 1841-1923

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Description of Subordinate Components

Records

Unit Date ca. 1900

folder 1