

Diploma Collection

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1877-1964



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2019.039

Unit Date

1877-1964

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection contains university diplomas for various people related to Virginia Tech, both alumni and faculty. This collection includes 16 Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate degrees awarded between 1877 and 1964, with 15 from Virginia Tech. Diplomas are for William S. Adkisson, Katherine Sue Arrington, R.E.L. Aylor, John Poindexter Billingsley, William Mayo Brodie, J.M. Carrington, Calvert Lewis Estill, Howard Rucker Keister Jr., Howard Rucker Keister Sr., Harvey B. McDonald, Charles Preston Millard, Hugh Chapman Minton, Thomas Jefferson Rowe, Jr., George Carter Stone, and Pryor Lindsay Watts. There are also several blank diplomas for Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College from the 1880s or 1890s.

Extent

0.25 Cubic Feet 10 folders

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 materials in this collection were donated from before 1968 to 2018.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Diploma Collection was completed in July 2019. Additional diplomas were integrated in June and October 2023.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Diploma Collection, Ms2019-039, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Administrative History

Virginia Tech's roots go back to 1851, when the Olin and Preston Institute opened in Blacksburg, Virginia. After closing during the American Civil War, it chartered as a college called the Preston and Olin Institute in 1869.

In 1872, Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC) was established as a land-grant institute by the Commonwealth of Virginia on the site of the Preston and Olin Institute. The first 12 students were awarded non-degree diplomas in 1875, and the first Bachelor of Arts degrees were awarded in 1883. The first Bachelor of and Master of Science degrees were awarded in 1892. The first Doctorate of Philosophy degree was awarded in 1942.

In 1895, the university was renamed Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (VAMC&PI), and in 1944 it became Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI). At this time, it merged with Radford College, which became the Women's Division of VPI, until the partnership dissolved in 1964. Finally, the university became Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPI&SU) in 1970. Nicknames and common acronyms over the years include VAMC, VAMC&PI, VPI, VA Tech, VT, Tech, VPI&SU, and Virginia Tech.

Biographical Note

William Sydnor Adkisson (1857-1935) of Halifax, Virginia, graduated from Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1877. He later operated his own farm.

Katherine Sue Arrington (1940-2018) of Virginia earned a B.S. in education from Radford College in 1964, the last year the college served as the Women's Division of Virginia Polytechnic Institute. She later became a teacher.

Robert Edward Lee Aylor (1860-1939) of Virginia, graduated from Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1886 and served as an Instructor in Penmanship from 1883 through 1885. He later became a preacher.

John Poindexter Billingsley (1906-1993) of Virginia, graduated from Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute in 1931 with a degree in agricultural engineering. He later worked as an agricultural engineer.

William Mayo Brodie (1880-1932) studied mechanical engineering at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute, earning a B.S. degree in 1901 and M.S. in 1902. He worked at the university as a librarian and 1st and 3rd Assistant Commandant of Cadets from 1901 through 1909. Brodie began teaching in the Department of Mathematics in 1902 and served as dept. head from 1924 until his death in 1932. He also served in various capacities in the Blacksburg Board of Trade, Y.M.C.A., Masons, and the VPI Alumni Association. The former Brodie Hall at the university and the Brodie Memorial Tower at Christ

Episcopal Church in Blacksburg were named in his honor.

John M. Carrington of Halifax, Virginia, graduated from the School of Agriculture at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1879. In his sophomore year, Carrington served as Color Corporal in the Corps of Cadets.

Calvert Lewis Estill (1893-1948) of Lewisburg, West Virginia, earned a B.A. degree from Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia. He served as an Instructor in English at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute from 1916 until his resignation on November 22, 1917, when he joined the U.S. Army during World War I. He later worked for the West Virginia National Guard and in the newspaper industry.

Howard Rucker Keister, Sr. (1882-1958), a native of Giles County, Virginia, graduated from Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and State University in 1903 with a B. S. in applied chemistry. He later lived in Wheeling, West Virginia, and worked as an insurance agent.

Howard Rucker Keister, Jr. (1917-2007) earned a B. S. in architectural engineering from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1942. He later worked as a commercial architect.

Harvey B. McDonald (1856-1923) graduated from the School of Agriculture and Mechanics at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1877. He served as U.S. Postmaster for McDonald's Mill, operated a dry goods store in Blacksburg, and maintained a farm in Christiansburg.

Charles Preston Millard (1887-1978) received a B.S. in civil engineering from Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute in 1908. He worked for the Standard Tool & Manufacturing Co. in New Jersey before moving to Florida.

Hugh Chapman Minton (1890-1963) of Smithfield, Virginia, earned a B.S. in civil engineering from Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute in 1911. Minton was a career serviceman, fighting in the U.S. Army during both World War I and World War II, and rising to the rank of Brigadier General before retiring.

Thomas Jefferson Rowe, Jr. (1890-1967) of Hampton, Virginia, graduated from Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute in 1915 with both a B.S. and M.S. in agriculture. He served in World War I and worked for Swift & Company Fertilizer Works in Baltimore, Maryland.

George Carter Stone (1887-1975) of Pittsylvania County, Virginia, earned a B.S. in civil engineering from Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute in 1908. He later studied at Cornell University, and worked as an engineer and surveyor, until his retirement in 1932.

Pryor Lindsay Watts (1905-1945) of Virginia, graduated from Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute in 1929 with a degree in electrical engineering. He later worked as an electrical engineer.

Scope and Content

This collection contains university diplomas for various people related to Virginia Tech, both alumni and faculty. This collection includes 16 Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate degrees awarded between 1877 and 1964, with 15 from Virginia Tech. Diplomas are for William S. Adkisson, Katherine Sue Arrington, R.E.L. Aylor, John Pindexter Billingsley, William Mayo Brodie, J.M. Carrington, Calvert Lewis Estill, Howard Rucker Keister Jr., Howard Rucker Keister Sr., Harvey B. McDonald, Charles Preston Millard, Hugh Chapman Minton, Thomas Jefferson Rowe, Jr., George Carter Stone, and Pryor Lyndsay Watts. There are also several blank diplomas for Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College from the 1880s or 1890s.

Related Archival Materials

See also several related items in the Art, Artifact, and Textile Collections:

- VAMC Diploma Printing Plate, ca. 1876, Artifact-002
- Framed VPI Diploma for Cecil Henry Fisher, Art-077
- Framed VAMC Diploma for William J. Lawrence, Art-079
- Framed VAMC Diploma for Henry D. Ayre, Art-080
- Thomas Jefferson Rowe's Uniform Cape, Textile1993-007

Keywords

Faculty and staff

Students and alumni

University Archives

University History
Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (1872-1896)
Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (1896-1944)
Virginia Polytechnic Institute (1944-1970)
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (1970-)
Radford College

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in alphabetically by surname, with blank diploma forms at the end.

Description of Subordinate Components

Adkisson, William S., School of Agriculture, VAMC

Unit Date 1877-08-05

oversize 1 (folder)

Arrington, Katherine Sue, Bachelor of Science in Education, Radford College, Women's Division of VPI

Unit Date 1964-06-03

oversize 2 (folder)

Aylor, R.E.L., Bachelor of Arts, VAMC

Unit Date 1886-06-30

oversize 1 (folder)

Aylor, R.E.L., School of Mechanics, VAMC

Unit Date 1886-06-30

oversize 1 (folder)

Billingsley, John Poindexter, Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering, VAMC&PI

Unit Date 1931-06-09

oversize 10 (folder)

Brodie, William Mayo, Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, VAMC&PI

Unit Date 1901-06-19

oversize 3 (folder)

Brodie, William Mayo, Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering, VAMC&PI

Unit Date 1902-06-18

oversize 3 (folder)

Carrington, J. M., School of Agriculture, VAMC

Unit Date 1879-08-13

oversize 4 (folder)

Estill, Calvert Lewis, Bachelor of Arts, Randolph-Macon College

Unit Date 1916-06-08

oversize 6 (folder)

Keister, Howard Rucker Jr., Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering, VAMC&PI

Unit Date 1942-05-30

oversize 6 (folder)

Keister, Howard Rucker Sr., Bachelor of Science in Applied Chemistry, VAMC& PI

Unit Date 1903-06-17

oversize 6 (folder)

McDonald, Harvey B., School of Agriculture/Mechanics, VAMC

Unit Date 1877-08-15

oversize 7 (folder)

Millard, Charles Preston, Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, VAMC&PI

Unit Date 1908-06-17

oversize 8 (folder)

Minton, Hugh Chapman, Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, VAMC&PI

Unit Date 1911-06-14

oversize 8 (folder)

Rowe, Thomas Jefferson, Jr., Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, VAMC&PI

Unit Date 1915-06-16

oversize 5 (folder)

Rowe, Thomas Jefferson, Jr., Master of Science in Agriculture (Agronomy - Plant Breeding, Soil Physics), VAMC&PI

Unit Date 1915-06-16

oversize 5 (folder)

Stone, George Carter, Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, VAMC&PI

Unit Date 1908-06-17

oversize 9 (folder)

Watts, Pryor Lindsay, Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, VAMC&PI

Unit Date 1929-06-11

oversize 10 (folder)

VAMC blank diplomas

Unit Date ca. 1870s-1880s

oversize 5 (folder)