

A Guide to the David John Mays Papers, 1905-1985

The David John Mays Papers, 1905-1985
1905-1985

A Collection in the Virginia Historical Society Mss1 M455 g FA2
Virginia Historical Society
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History

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Title Statement

A Guide to the David John Mays Papers, 1905-1985

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Descriptive Summary

Collection number

Mss1 M455 g FA2

Language

English

Creator

David John Mays (1905-1985)

Size

8250 items

Repository

Virginia Historical Society

Administrative Information

Access

Collection is open for use

Use Restrictions

Permission to cite, quote, or reproduce for publication must be obtained in writing from the Senior Archivist.

Acquisition Information

Bequest and gift of the estate of Mrs. Ruth (Reams) Mays, Richmond, Va., 2 December 1985.

Preferred Citation

David John Mays Papers, 1905-1985 (Mss1 M455 g FA2), Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

Biographical/Historical Information

David J. Mays was born in Richmond, Va., 22 November 1896, but spent most of his youth in Mobile, Ala., and Memphis, Tenn. His parents were Harvey James Mays and Helga Christine Nelsen, both Richmond natives. Mays saw service on the Mexican border, 1916-1917, and in France with the Allied Expeditionary Force, 1918-1919. After World War I he attended the University of Richmond and received his law degree in 1924. He practices in Richmond throughout his life, and died on 17 February 1971.

Scope and Content Information

Include diaries, 1916, 1925-1928, and 1938, scrapbooks, 1916-1971, correspondence, accounts, tax and land records, materials concerning his law practice, and historical research on Edmund Pendleton (1721-1803) and Virginia judges, particularly Spencer Roane, Henry St. George Tucker, and St. George Tucker.

Significant correspondents include Julian Parks Boyd, Harry Flood Byrd, Harry Flood Byrd, Jr., Andrew Jackson Montague, John Garland Pollard, Lewis Franklin Powell, and Absalom Willis Robertson. The scrapbooks cover Mays's entire career, consisting mostly of newspaper clippings on his political, social, legal and community activities. Beginning in 1955, they document his work as counsel to the Virginia Commission on Public Education (the so-called Gray Commission) and his service in the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1956 and the Virginia Commission on Constitutional Government. From 1959-1963, the volumes largely concern May's involvement in the proposed merger of Richmond and Henrico County.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into eight sections by document type.

Contents List

Series 1: Diaries 1916-1964

Box 1-2

Scope and Content

diary, 1916, 1925-1918, 1938; general correspondence, 1905, 1914-1939, 1950-1954, 1957-1964.

Series 2: Correspondence , etc. 1916-1970

Box 2 (cont.)

Scope and Content

general correspondence, 1965-1966, 1969-1970; loose accounts, 1942-1954, 1959-1966; income tax records, 1951-1952, 1954, 1967-1969; law practice (general materials and financial records, 1924-1930, 1933-1960; application to practice before U. S. Supreme Court, 1950-1953; business law course, University of Richmond, 1926-1927; materials as president, Virginia State Bar Association, 1958-1959; anecdotes of

the Richmond bar, 1962; Virginia Commission on Constitutional Government, 1962-1966); autobiographical notes; real property records (Gregory's Mill Pond, Chesterfield County; Colonial Avenue, Richmond; Memphis, Tenn.); birth and marriage certificates, passports, 1959-1969; military service records, 1916-1924.

Series 3: Scrapbooks 1916-1971

Extent 35 volumes.

Physical Location (Filed on open shelves following Box 2)

Series 4: Student essays, speeches, and miscellany

Box 3

Scope and Content

student essays, 1911-1920; speeches; miscellaneous appointments (see oversize); Nelsen family property, Myrtle Grove, Henrico County; Hugh Douglas Pitts and Robert Lee Pitts materials; news clippings; personal miscellany.

Series 5: Pendleton Biography 1926-1964

Box 3-6

Scope and Content

Edmund Pendleton biography: general correspondence, 1926-1952 (arranged alphabetically); notes; contract with publisher; memoranda; gallery proof; awards, reviews, financial matters; post-publication correspondence, 1952-1956 (arranged chronologically); speaking engagements and book-related appearances; 1985 reprinting; Pendleton letters and papers (general correspondence, 1957-1964; chronological contents list; note cards; copies and transcripts; reviews and articles).

Series 6: Virginia Judges

Box 6

Scope and Content

biographical sketches of Virginia judges; historical research files on Spencer Roane, Henry St. George Tucker, St. George Tucker.

Series 7: John Taylor Materials 1946-1966

Box 7

Scope and Content

John Taylor letters and papers (general correspondence, 1946-1952, 1956-1966; copies and transcripts; notes; Mays estate agreement); George Wythe speech, 1964; Marbury v. Madison speech, 1954; Virginia Colonial Records Project; reviews, essays, miscellaneous historical notes; resolutions on death of Mays and estate materials.

Series 8: Ruth (Reams) Mays Materials 1937-1979

Box 7

Scope and Content

general correspondence, 1937, 1951, 1971-1979; loose accounts, 1970-1979; check stub book, 1977-1979; birth certificates, passports, etc.; inventory of household effects; guarantees; lines of verse.