

A Guide to the Papers of Luther Hilton Foster, 1928-1949

Luther Hilton Foster Papers, 1928-1949
1928-1949

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Descriptive Summary

Collection number

1976-56

Language

English

Abstract

Some personal correspondence of the fourth President of Virginia State University.

Creator

Luther Hilton Foster

Physical Characteristics

200 items

Repository

Special Collections and Archives, Johnston Memorial Library, Virginia State University

Administrative Information

Access

No restrictions on access.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Preferred Citation

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Biographical/Historical Information

Luther Hilton Foster was born May 26, 1888 in Clover, Halifax County, Virginia. He was the son of Oliver S. and Mary Elizabeth Foster. His early childhood schooling was at the public school of Halifax County and the Saint Paul's Polytechnic institute in Lawrenceville, Virginia. Here he completed his studies, and was awarded his Normal Degree in 1907. Upon his completion from Saint Paul's Polytechnic Institute, he then studied at the University of Chicago School of Commerce and Business Administration.

He began his career as a public school teacher and later was a bookkeeper for several years at the Saint Paul's Polytechnic Institute. In 1913, at the age of twenty-four, he became Treasurer-Business Manager of Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, a position which he held for twenty-nine-years.

In addition to joining the administration, Luther Hilton Foster married Miss Daisy Octavia Poole of Surry County Virginia in September of 1913. Three children were born to this union, a son Luther Hilton Foster Jr., and two daughters Virginia S. Foster (Hendricks), and Mary Allen Foster (Burleigh II).

In 1912, upon the retirement of Dr. John Gandy, Mr. Foster served as acting president of the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. He was then named the fourth president of the college in 1943, serving in that capacity until his death in 1949.

Foster was awarded the honorary degree of LL.D by Morris Brown College, Atlanta University in 1940, and by Virginia Union University in 1943. He was named to the Honor Roll of the Richmond Times-Dispatch for the year of 1942. An article in the Virginia Teachers Association Bulletin gave recognition to Foster in March 1943. He also received special mention by the General Education Board because of his business ability. Foster was founder of the Association of Business officers in schools for Negroes as it was called in 1929 when first established. He was the first president of the organization, now the American Association of College Business Managers.

Foster was a member of the executive board of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia, a trustee and member of the board of Bishop Payne Divinity School in Petersburg, Virginia and of the board of Saint Paul's Polytechnic Institute, Lawrenceville, Virginia. He was a member of the executive committee of the Negro Land Grant College Association and a member of the executive committee of the Virginia Association for Education, chairman of the association's Special BuildingFund.

He was a member of the General Improvement Commission of the Virginia State Planning Board. Dr. Foster was also administrator of the Virginia Graduate Aid Fund for Negro Students. He served as executive scout advisor to the J.B. Brown division of Boy Scouts of America. He was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, the Protestant Episcopal Church, and of the A.F. and A. Order of Masons.

He died July 6, 1949, and was buried in Blanford Cemetery in Petersburg, Virginia. Funeral services were held Friday afternoon July 8, at 12:30 from the Virginia Hall Auditorium.

June 6, 1950, Nottoway County of Virginia named its new high school, in honor of Dr. Luther H. Foster. Foster High School is an 18-classroom building located four miles west of Blackstone. Dr. Foster, for six years in the presidential chair, served to bring additional prestige and worth to the school, which he had already helped develop to a noted degree in thirty years of proceeding service. He was an expert Administrator, but he will

be remembered longest as counselor.

Luther Hilton Foster Hall, the student activities building is dedicated to the memory of the fourth president of Virginia State University, 1942 to 1949, and its Treasurer-Business Manager from 1913-1942.

Scope and Content Information

The Luther Hilton Foster papers, which are founded in this manuscript group do not begin to reflect the prosperous and varied life of the man who was the Treasurer Business Manager of Virginia State University for twenty-nine years, and the fourth president of the university for six years. These papers do however touch some of the highlights of his life away from official campus duties.

During the time span of these papers, (1928-1931), Foster was active with various organizations. This manuscript group is interesting in dealing with some of his activities with several Petersburg social and civic organizations. Of prime interest is his correspondence detailing the attempts of the African American Community to establish a local Boy Scout chapter.

In addition to his role with the Boy Scouts, he was also active with the Petersburg Civic Association, and the Negro Land Grant College Conference.

Luther Hilton Foster was a very active man known throughout Petersburg, and on Virginia State's campus. These papers will reflect on Foster's personal life, and on some of his social and civic activities throughout the City of Petersburg.

Additional information about him may be found in Virginia State University Archives in VSU.RG 4F and VSU.RG 5.

Series Description

Series I. Correspondence. Luther Foster was known in the African American Community for his skills in business and accounting. Most of the Correspondence reflects this aspect of his life.

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