

# A Guide to the Robert Prentiss Daniel Papers 1920-1966

Robert Prentiss Daniel 1920-1966

1920-1966

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## Descriptive Summary

**Collection number**

1920-1966

**Language**

English

## **Abstract**

Personal and business correspondence of the fifth President of Virginia State University. Robert P. Daniel was one of the movers in establishing what is now Norfolk State University. He was also very involved in efforts to integrate the institutions of higher learning in Virginia. Acc.#1976-16

## **Creator**

Robert Printiss Daniel

## **Physical Characteristics**

5,000 items

## **Repository**

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

# **Administrative Information**

## **Access**

Additional information about Robert P. Daniels may be found in the Virginia State University Archives.

## **Use Restrictions**

There are no restrictions.

## **Acquisition Information**

A gift from the Daniel Family.

## **Preferred Citation**

Robert Prentiss Daniel Papers, Accession # 1976-16, Special Collections and University Archives, Johnston Memorial Library, Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA.

# **Biographical/Historical Information**

Robert P. Daniel was elected to become the fifth president of Virginia State University(then Virginia State College)in December of 1949. He assumed his duties in February of 1950. Mr. Daniel however was not a stranger to Virginia State, having been born on the campus in 1902. This strange twist of fate makes Robert P. Daniel the only President of a state-supported institution who was born on the campus, which he would later serve as chief administrator.

The historical background, which explains, this unusual occurrence lay in the origins of the Daniel Family. The roots of this family began in Louisa County Virginia, with Lucy Langston, Robert Daniel's great great grandmother, who was described as being of African and Virginia Indian origins.

Lucy langston lived as the only wife of Ralph Quarles, a white farmer and landholder in Louisa County. Although this was not a legal union(black-white marriages had been outlawed in Virginia in 1692), the two lived as man and wife for more than thirty years.

From this union came four children: Maria (Daniel's great grandmother), Gideon, Charles and John Mercer Langston (who become the first president of Virginia State in 1886-1887. Ralph Quarles had given his common law wife her freedom earlier and all four of these children were born free between the years of 1800-1829.

Maria Langston married early and her proud father gave her a section of his farm as a wedding gift and also from her father she recieved as her personal property her husband Joseph Powell, who was a slave belonging to Ralph Quarles. Maria Langston like other free blacks, (men and women) around the state of Virginia were forced to hold their husbands and or wives as their personal property in order to keep the family unit together.

From this union came Robert Daniel's grandmother Lucinda, who like her mother also married a slave and was forced to hold him as her enslaved property. Charles Daniel, father of Robert Daniel was born in 1845 in Louisa and until around 1870 lived with his father and learned his trade in shoemaking.

In 1871 he entered the Richmond Institute graduating from the Normal Department in 1877 and its Academic Department in 1878. He studied law for one year at Howard University and then accepted a teaching position in Danville, Virginia.

In 1888 he was invited to become the Secretary of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. It was here in the old Virginia hall that Robert Daniel and all but one of the eight Daniel children were born.

Robert P. Daniel graduated from Virginia Union University in 1924. Later, he obtained his MA and his doctorate at Teachers College. He also completed a post doctoral study in Bible at the Union Theological Seminary in New York during the summers of 1943 and 1946.

Robert Daniel began his career in higher education at Virginia Union University in Richmond as an instructor in mathematics in 1924. Concurrently, Dr. Daniel supervised the establishment of the Norfolk division of Virginia Union University which later became the Norfolk division of Virginia State College. He was named president of Shaw University in 1936 until 1950.

Dr. Daniel was elected president of Virginia State College by the State Board of Education on December 15th 1949 following the death of Luther H. Foster.

Dr. Daniel was an active member of several state and national professional organizations.

## Scope and Content Information

The Daniel Papers document primarily his becoming the President of Shaw University in 1936 and Virginia State University in 1950. There is also correspondence concerning his activities with a national radio program "Wings over Jordan" and with Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. In the Daniel papers are also some very interesting newsletters printed by the "Political Action Committee" of the Petersburg Improvement Association. These newsletters address the attempts to desegregate public facilities in Petersburg.

## Series Description

Series I. Correspondences 1926-1960 Some personal and business correspondence of Robert P. Daniel. Most of the correspondences has to do with Mr. Daniel's leaving Shaw University to become the fifth President of Virginia State College in 1949-1950. sub-series A. Personal Correspondence. sub-series B. Business Correspondence

Series II. Organizations and Affiliations Sub-series A. Alpha Phi Alpha Sub-Series B. Virginia Union Alumni Association Sub-Series C. Class (1924) Reunions

Series III. Literary Speeches, Sermons and radio addresses made by Robert P. Daniel from 1936-1966. speeches are arranged by subject and location. Writings State Teachers Report. sub-series A. speeches. sub-series B. Sermons. sub-series C. writings.

Series IV. Photographs. Sub-series A. Personal Sub-series B. The International advisory Board on Liberia Sub-series C. The Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity

Series V. Printed. Sub-Series A. Programs and Flyers with Meetings Attended by Robert Daniel. Sub-Series B. Awards and Certificates Presented by Robert Daniel over a period of years documenting his involvement in a number of organizations. Sub-Series C. Virginia Union University Printed Items generated by Virginia Union University which includes programs, bulletins, and a short history of Virginia Union University. D. Shaw Printed Items such as Bulletins, and other programs E. The Sphinx F. Degrees and Appointments. Earned degrees for Robert Daniel and members of the Daniel and Taylor Families. Included are appointments for Robert Daniel for several commissions G. Newspapers. Several issues of Black owned newspapers, which were published in North Carolina, Virginia, Massachusetts, and New York. H. Newsclippings. Newsclippings from a number of Newspaper mostly from Virginia I. Civil Rights in Petersburg. Newsletters and Flyers concerning some of the civil rights issues in Petersburg during the 1960's

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**Virginia Union University Bulletin June, 1938**

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**Sub-Series D.Shaw University**

**Inauguration as 5th President November 20, 1936**

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**Christmas Number December, 1937**

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**President's Report September, 1940**

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**President's Report Number October, 1941**

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**Alumni Number May, 1942**

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**Program of Founder's Day November, 1946**

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**The Department of Rural Church March, 1948**

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**Homecoming Number October, 1948**

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**President's Report Number November, 1948**

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**Sub-Series E: The Sphinx**

**The Spinx of Alpha Phi Alpha June 1915 Vol #2**

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**Xmas Sphinx of Alpha Phi Alpha December 1916**

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**The Sphinx October 1916**

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**The Sphinx February 1916**

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**The Sphinx Xmas Alumni Issue December 1916**

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**The Sphinx April 1917**

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**The Sphinx April 1917**

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**The Sphinx Quarterly April 1918**

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**The Sphinx Convention December 1918**

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**The Sphinx Quarterly Carl J. Murphy**

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**The Sphinx Quarterly June 1919**

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**The Sphinx Quarterly December 27th 1919**

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**The Sphinx Quarterly Carl J. Murphy Convention December 27th-30th**

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**The Sphinx Quarterly 12th Annual Convention**

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**The Sphinx Quarterly May 1920**

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**The Sphinx Vol XIII 1927**

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**The Sphinx Vol XIV 1928**

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**The Sphinx Post War Expansion 1946**

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**The Sphinx Convention News February 1921**

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**The Sphinx Chapter Elections February 1922**

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**The Sphinx Commencement October 1923**

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**The Sphinx Convention February 1925**

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**Sub-Series F.Degrees and Appointments**

**Carrie Green, Wayland Seminary 1886**

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**Charles James daniel, Bluestone Harmony MCMXXXV**

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**Blanche Ardell Taylor, Armstrong High School January, 1923**

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**John Robert Taylor, Armstrong 1931**

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**John Robert Taylor, Va Union University 1936**

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**Robert James Robinson Bachelor of Science 1939**

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## **Sub-Series G: Newspapers**

**The Carolina Tribune April 12, 1941**

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**The Wilmington Journal August 4, 1951**

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**The National Baptist Union Review November 11, 1950**

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**The Richmond Afro-American October 21, 1950**

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**The Norfolk Journal and Guide February 11, 1950**

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**The Boston Chronicle January 11, 1947**

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**The Amsterdam News March 3, 1951**

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**The Charlottesville Tribune April 28, 1951**

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**The Tribune April 18, 1959**

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## **Sub-Series H. NewsClippings**

**Newsclippings from a number of newspapers, most are Virginia.**

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## **Sub-Series I. Civil Rights in Petersburg**

**Political Action Committee Newsletter**

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**Emergency Mass Meeting June 19, 1960**

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**PAC Ruckers's, No Jim Crow**

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**Citizens Action Meeting Zion Baptist Church**

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**Alpha Phi Alpha 20th Annual Convention Pin**

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**African Head Mrs. Ida Stevens January 4, 1965**

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