

G.J.S. and A.L.S photographs of Glen Burnie and the Rotunda at the University of Virginia

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1897

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Descriptive Summary

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Unit ID

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1897

Mixed Materials

Oversize Box P-23 (Flat_box)

Container

X03762393 (Oversize_Folder(Within_an_OSBox))

Language

English

Extent

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Condition Description

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Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was a gift from The Valentine Museum to the Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia on 21 August 2023.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16945, G.F.S. and A.L.S photographs of Glen Burnie and the Rotunda at the University of Virginia, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Historical Note

The University of Virginia Rotunda Fire

The University of Virginia Rotunda Fire occurred on October 27, 1895, originating in the Annex, a large addition constructed on the Rotunda's north face in 1853. The cause was an issue with electrical wiring. The Annex was demolished by dynamite during the fire in an attempt to create a firebreak, but the Rotunda was nonetheless gutted. The dome collapsed, destroying Jefferson's interior almost entirely, including the library and its collection.

For the restoration effort, the University commissioned architecture firm McKim, Mead and White, with Stanford White as the lead architect. Restoration was completed in 1898. Key alterations White made to Jefferson's Rotunda design included the elimination of Jefferson's two-story oval library room, replacing it with a single large domed hall at the main floor level; an addition of a south portico, which Jefferson's original design had omitted; a redesign of the interior in a Beaux-Arts classical style, with more ornate detailing than Jefferson's original; and the construction of three new academic buildings to the south (Cabell, Rouss, and Cocke Halls), replacing the demolished Annex.

McKim, Mead and White's version stood unaltered until 1973–1976, when a second restoration by Ballou and Justice deliberately reversed White's alterations. Jefferson's oval library room was reconstructed, the Beaux-Arts interior detailing was removed, and the south portico was retained. This effort returned the Rotunda substantially to Jefferson's 1826 design.

Glen Burnie, Winchester, Virginia

The land on which Glen Burnie sits was surveyed, claimed, and settled in 1735 by James Wood, the founder of Winchester. Wood was a prominent Virginia planter, surveyor, and colonial official who laid out the town of Winchester in 1744.

The oldest portions of the house were constructed by Wood's son Robert in 1793 and 1794. The property descended through the Wood family and later the Glass family over the following generations. Until the end of the Civil War and the ratification of the 13th Amendment, every generation of Wood and Glass descendants enslaved men, women, and children on the property.

The house passed through multiple generations largely intact until the mid-twentieth century. In the 1950s, the 214-acre property came to be owned by Wood descendant Julian Wood Glass Jr. (1910–1992), who preserved and renovated the ancestral home from 1958 to 1959. Aided by his partner R. Lee Taylor, he transformed Glen Burnie into an opulent country retreat surrounded by six acres of formal gardens, furnished with a significant private collection of decorative arts.

References

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McDonald, Travis C. "Restoring Jeffersonian Ideals: The 1976 Restoration of the University of Virginia Rotunda." *APT Bulletin* 27, no. 1/2 (1996): 4–17.

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Content Description

This collection contains a collage of photographs mounted on board. Five photos are of the Rotunda at the University of Virginia, dated August 1897, and four are titled Glen Burnie, a home in Winchester, Virginia, dated September and October 1897. The pictures contain captions, and the rotunda photographs have the initials "G.J.S" inscribed, while the Glen Burnie photographs have the initials "A.L.S." The black and white photographic prints of the University of Virginia Rotunda show the interior and exterior restoration of the Rotunda, including workers in and outside of the Rotunda rebuilding after the 1895 fire. The Glen Burnie photographs include the exterior and interiors of the home with family members in a horse-drawn carriage and reading inside the house.

Keywords

University of Virginia Rotunda (Charlottesville, Va.) -- photographs

University of Virginia -- Fire, 1895