

# Patton, William MacFarland, Papers

William MacFarland Patton Papers

1893, 1896, n.d.



## Title Statement

Patton, William MacFarland, Papers William MacFarland Patton Papers, 1896 Ms.1954.001

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## Publication Statement

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

Ms.1954.001

### Unit Date

1893, 1896, n.d.

### Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

### Abstract

This collection contains papers of William MacFarland Patton, civil engineer and professor at Virginia Agricultural & Mechanical College (now Virginia Tech). It includes a partial draft of Patton's book, *A Practical Treatise on Foundations* and draft of an unpublished textbook on civil engineering, together with patent documentation for two inventions.

### Creator

Patton, William MacFarland

### Extent

0.7 Cubic Feet 1 box, 1 oversize folder

### Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

# Administrative Information

## Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

## Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

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## Source of Acquisition

The William MacFarland Patton Papers were acquired by Newman Library in 1954 and 1956.

## Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the William MacFarland Patton Papers commenced and was completed in February 2011.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], William MacFarland Patton Papers, Ms1954-001, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

## Biographical Note

William MacFarland Patton, the son of John M. and Margaret William Patton, was born in Richmond, Virginia on August 22, 1845. He attended the Virginia Military Institute during the Civil War and served with the cadet corps in the Battle of New Market in 1864. Patton graduated from VMI in 1869 and left Virginia to engage in engineering in Central America and the Caribbean. Patton became an adjunct professor of civil engineering at VMI in 1873 and was promoted to full professor the following year, when he was also commissioned a colonel of the state militia, a position he would hold until 1882, when he returned to private enterprise. During the next five years, he was involved in construction of the B&O Railroad Susquhanna River bridge at Havre de Grace, Maryland, and the Ohio River bridge at Point Pleasant, West Virginia, among other projects and also served as chief engineer of the Mobile and Birmingham and the Louisville, St. Louis and Texas railways. In 1887, he returned to VMI as chair of civil engineering and remained for two years. From 1889 to 1896, Patton was chiefly engaged in writing *A Practical Treatise on Foundations* and *A Treatise on Civil Engineering*, while also working on various engineering projects, including the Chicago Drainage Canal. In 1896, Patton was appointed the civil engineering chair at Virginia Agricultural & Mechanical College (now Virginia Tech); he was named the first dean of the university's engineering department in 1904, and held that position until his death the following year.

## Scope and Content

This collection contains the papers of William MacFarland Patton, a professor of civil engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The collection includes two manuscript drafts. The first of these, though incomplete and unidentified, represents the supplemental section of the second edition of Patton's *A Practical Treatise on Foundations*. The second draft comprises a text book on civil engineering, apparently never published. Together with the manuscript pages are printed pages detached from Patton's *A Treatise on Civil Engineering*, to be incorporated in the new work. The manuscript is accompanied by a cover letter to the publisher from Patton. Also within the collection is patent documentation for two inventions by Patton: a breakwater and a pneumatic caisson. The collection also contains drawings for a bridge designed by McNairy, Claflin & Company of Cleveland, Ohio. Completing the collection is the cover of a Virginia Agricultural & Mechanical College writing tablet, bearing an early photograph of Academic Building 1 and Academic Building 2.

## Keywords

Faculty and staff  
Science and Technology  
University History

## Existence and Location of Copies

The collection has been digitized and is available online.

## Rights Statement for Archival Description

The guide to the William MacFarland Patton Papers by Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, is licensed under a CC0 (<https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/public-domain/cc0/>).

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged by subject matter.

## Description of Subordinate Components

### **Supplement to A Practical Treatise on Foundations**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 1 (folder)

**Extent** [2 folders]

### **"Text Book on Civil Engineering"**

**Unit Date** 1896

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 2 (folder)

**Extent** [7 folders]

### **Patent documentation**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 3 (folder)

### **Virginia Agricultural & Mechanical College tablet cover**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**box-folder** 1 (box)

**Container** 4 (folder)

### **Drawing for patent breakwater, designed by Patton**

**Unit Date** 1893

**oversize** 1 (folder)

### **Drawings for bridge designed by McNairy, Claflin & Company**

**Unit Date** n.d.

**oversize** 1 (folder)