

Agnew, Ella G. Papers

Ella G. Agnew Papers

1914-1916



Title Statement

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Author: John M. Jackson

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Profile Description

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Revision Description

2020-08-28 Finding aid notes updated to new department standards. juliags

2021-04-26 LM Rozema added missing notes for an unprocessed collection, added FA date from EAD, and added component with instances previously attached to collection level.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1989.026

Unit Date

1914-1916

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

Papers of educator Ella G. Agnew (1871-1958), home demonstration agent for Virginia Tech (1914-1919), consisting of six weekly field reports completed by Avie E. Phillips of Evington (Campbell County), Virginia; a monthly library report for Virginia Tech; a 1914 Virginia Tech commencement program; a receipt for an American School of Home Economics correspondence course; and a brief letter about a financial matter.

Creator

Agnew, Ella G., 1871-1958

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

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Source of Acquisition

The Ella G. Agnew Papers were donated to Special Collections in 1989.

Processing Information

The processing and description of the Ella G. Agnew Papers commenced and was completed in January 2022.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Ella G. Agnew Papers, Ms1989-026, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Biographical Note

Ella Graham Agnew, daughter of Dr. James A. and Martha Chaffin Scott Agnew, was born in Prince Edward County, Virginia on March 18, 1871; soon afterward, the family's home was destroyed by fire, and the Agnews moved to Nottoway County, Virginia. After studying stenography at Smithdeal Business College (Richmond, Virginia), Agnew was hired as a secretary at Stonewall Jackson Institute, a women's college in Abingdon, Virginia. Around 1894, she moved to Long Island, New York, where she briefly worked as a secretary for a publisher before moving to South Africa to teach secretarial courses at Huguenot Academy in Paarl. She then served as principal of Amajuba Seminary (Wakkerstrom).

Returning to the United States ca. 1900, Agnew held several positions before becoming involved in the education of rural girls in Virginia. In 1910, she created a vocational education system through tomato and canning clubs in Nansemond and Halifax counties, becoming the nation's first woman home demonstration agent. When administration of the state's home demonstration was transferred from the U. S. Department of Agriculture to Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (now Virginia Tech) in 1914, Agnew became an employee of the university.

In 1919, Agnew became president of the Virginia Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. Two years later, she became a member of the national YWCA finance department. From 1927 to 1931, she served as editor of the women's department at *Southern Planter* magazine and from 1933 to 1943 as head of New Deal relief activities for Virginia women. Ella Agnew retired in 1943 and died on February 5, 1958. She was buried in Sunset Hill Cemetery, Burkeville, Virginia. At Virginia Tech, Agnew was the first woman to receive a certificate of merit (1926) and the first to have a building (Agnew Hall) named in her honor (1949).

Scope and Content

This collection contains papers of Ella G. Agnew, home demonstration agent at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (now Virginia Tech). The collection consists largely of six weekly field reports completed by Avie E. Phillips of Evington, Virginia. Included among the information Phillips recorded on the printed form are the number of meetings she held, number of miles she traveled, and the number of schools or clubs visited. She also briefly described her activities during visits to local homes (e.g., "Sept. 9th--Brookneal / Teaching Theta Holt and Eva McDowell to can"). On the back of the form, Phillips

made more extensive notes ("The Pribbles are very slovenly and shiftless ... They have built a new kitchen and dining room this year and things look better.")

The collection also contains a 1914 Virginia Tech commencement program; a monthly report of the university library's circulation activities and finances, a letter of receipt for matriculation in a correspondence course of the American School of Home Economics; and a brief letter asking for clarification in a financial matter.

Related Archival Materials

See also the Ella Graham Agnew. Papers, ca. 1846-1992. Accession 42285. Personal papers collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Keywords

Home demonstration work

University History

Women -- History

Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (1896-1944)

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Description of Subordinate Components

Papers

Unit Date 1914-1916

folder 1