

Christian Case Papers

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1905-1906



Title Statement

Christian Case PapersChristian Case Papers, 1905-1906 Ms.1996.026

Author: Katie Cox, Student Assistant, and John M. Jackson, Archivist

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.1996.026

Unit Date

1905-1906

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection of materials about accusations in student hazing incident at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, subsequent disciplinary actions by the university's faculty, actions taken by the Board of Visitors, appeal by Judge George L. Christian (father of one of the accused), and proceedings of a joint legislative committee investigating the incident and the college's faculty and administrative practices and policies.

Creator

Christian, George L.

Extent

0.2 Cubic Feet 1 box

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Christian Case Papers were transferred to Special Collections as part of the Records of the Office of the President, John McLaren McBryde, RG 2/5, probably in 1973.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement and description of the Christian Case Papers commenced and was completed in February 2007. The materials had been previously housed within the Records of the Office of the President, John McLaren McBryde, RG 2/5, but were deemed to be more appropriately processed as a separate collection.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Christian Case Papers, Ms1996-026, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Historical Note

On September 24, 1905, four cadets at Virginia Polytechnic Institute were accused of having violated college rules by hazing a freshman cadet named Bowly. The four upperclassmen were caught by Lieutenant-Colonel William Mayo Brodie in the act of "bucking" Bowly in his dorm room. A faculty meeting was called immediately to level charges of hazing against the students and to question them on the matter. Shortly after the incident, one of the boys, J. L. Brown, left the college. The other three students, William B. Christian, Julian M. Salley, and Rowland P. Eubank, were found guilty by the faculty and asked to leave the campus and barracks immediately. Christian's father, Judge George L. Christian, appealed to the school's Board of Visitors, asking the Board to persuade the faculty to reverse its decision. The Board agreed to hold a hearing in December. Judge Christian presented a strong appeal, and the Virginia General Assembly appointed a joint committee of the house and senate to investigate the case.

The committee met on campus on July 23, 1906. Claiming that he had obtained new information, Judge Christian acknowledged that his son and the others had been guilty of hazing and therefore withdrew his request for an investigation of the matter. As rumors and allegations against the school had become so widespread, however, the committee had been instructed to "investigate any other matter at the college which may seem proper." The committee dropped the Christian case from its agenda but proceeded for the next six days to examine and review the university's faculty and administrative practices. In issuing its final report, the committee ultimately vindicated the college's administration.

Scope and Content

This collection contains materials regarding allegations of hazing perpetrated against a Virginia Polytechnic Institute freshman named Bowly by upperclassmen J. L. Brown, William B. Christian, Julian M. Salley, and Rowland P. Eubank. Most of the materials relate to the appeal by Judge George L. Christian (father of one of the accused) to have the four students reinstated following their expulsion from the school and the many charges he leveled against the college's administration. The collection includes correspondence, as well as published copies of Christian's appeal to the Virginia Assembly and the faculty's response to Christian's allegations. Also included is a report from the college's Board of Visitors, requesting a legislative investigation. The collection also contains the lengthy proceedings and findings of a joint legislative committee that convened in Blacksburg to investigate not only the hazing incident but all aspects of the college's administration.

Keywords

Faculty and staff
Students and alumni
University Archives
University History
Christian, George L.
Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (1896-1944)

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged by document type, then chronologically.

Description of Subordinate Components

Correspondence and transcripts

Unit Date 1905-1906

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 1 (folder)

"Answer of the Faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute to a Printed Letter of Hon. George L. Christian"

Unit Date 1905

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 2 (folder)

General Physical Description note [2 copies]

"Appeal from a Judgment of the Board of Visitors of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Affirming a Judgment of the Faculty, Refusing to Allow William B. Christian, Rowland P. Eubank and Julian M. Salley to Matriculate at Said Institute"

Unit Date February 11, 1906

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 3 (folder)

Board of visitors request for legislative investigation

Unit Date [1906?]

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 4 (folder)

"Proceedings Had Before the Committee Appointed by the General Assembly of Virginia, to Investigate Charges Against the Virginia Polytechnic Institute"

Unit Date July 1906

box-folder 1 (box)

Container 5 (folder)

General Physical Description note [2 copies]