

Montgomery Female College Collection

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1875-1892, n.d.



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2009.013

Unit Date

1875-1892, n.d.

Language

The materials in the collection are in English.

Abstract

The collection contains ephemera relating to Montgomery Female College in Christiansburg, Virginia, including programs and certificates.

Creator

Montgomery Female College (Christiansburg, Va.)

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

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Source of Acquisition

The Montgomery Female College Collection was purchased by Special Collections in 2008. An additional item was donated in 2014.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement and description of the Montgomery Female College Collection commenced and was completed in January 2009. An additional item was integrated in or prior to 2016.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: [identification of item], [box], [folder], Montgomery Female College Collection, Ms2009-013, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va.

Administrative History

Founded as a companion to the Montgomery Male Academy, the Montgomery Collegiate Institute opened in Christiansburg Virginia on November 1, 1852. Under the auspices of the Montgomery Presbytery, the school was first located in what had been the old Presbyterian Church on Franklin Street. In 1860, the college moved into a new building, but it was used as a hospital during the American Civil War and the school endured harsh economic conditions. In 1870, Dr. Samuel K. Cox purchased the school (by then known as Montgomery Female Academy); though it retained its prestige, the school failed to regain its antebellum prosperity. The school was sold at public auction to Oceana S. Pollock, a teacher at the school, in 1876.

With Pollock serving as principal, the school--by then known as Montgomery Female College--once again thrived. In 1887, Pollock deeded the college to Ebenezer T. and Anna Susan McDannold Baird but continued to serve as principal. The school closed for a year in 1890, then reopened under a series of principals. In 1903, Pollock's niece, Virginia Wardlaw was named principal of Montgomery Female College. She was soon joined on the staff by her older sisters, Mary Snead and Caroline Martin. Under the sisters' operation, the school declined and gained local notoriety as the scene of strange events. The Wardlaws became known as "the black sisters" for their practice of appearing always in black dresses and heavy veils. The sisters fell deeply into debt, local sentiment turned against them, and the school's reputation suffered. Montgomery Female College closed in 1908, and the Wardlaws left Christiansburg for New Jersey. (Within a year, the sisters would become implicated in events surrounding the mysterious death of Caroline Wardlaw Martin's daughter, Ocey.) The building formerly housing the Montgomery Female College operated under new owners as a boarding house and health resort for several years, then was sold to the Montgomery County School Board. In 1935, the building was demolished to make space for construction of a new Christiansburg High School.

Scope and Content

This collection contains five pieces of ephemera relating to Montgomery Female College in Christiansburg, Virginia. The collection includes a program for exercises of the "Eureka Class," also listing the class' individual members. Also included is an 1892 program of entertainment including recitations, music and songs. Two undated certificates, awarded to Annie V. and Eugenia V. Sullivan for "purity and correctness in the use of the English language" are included as well (Eugenia V. Sullivan is listed elsewhere as a member of the class of 1886.). Finally, the 1875-1876 Annual Announcement is a catalog for the college with information on faculty, courses, and more.

Related Materials

VT Special Collections and University Archives also has the following related publications in the Rare Book Collection:

Annual announcement of the Montgomery female college : Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Va., for the collegiate year (Salem, Va.: W.A. & C.A. Griffith, 1877/1878). LD7251.C65 A2 Large Spec

Zierold, Norman J., *Three sisters in black* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968). HV6533 .N3 Z5 1968 Large Spec

Keywords

Christiansburg (Va.)

Education, Secondary

Local/Regional History and Appalachian South

Montgomery County (Va.)

Women -- History

Montgomery Female College (Christiansburg, Va.)

Existence and Location of Copies

Some of this collection has been digitized and is available online.

Rights Statement for Archival Description

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged chronologically.

Description of Subordinate Components

Collection

Unit Date 1875-1892, n.d.

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