

A Guide to the records of James Hugo Johnston

12/17/1887

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There are no restrictions.

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Biographical/Historical Information

James Hugo Johnston Sr. was born in Richmond, Virginia, July 29th, 1858. Not much is known about his parents. He graduated from the Richmond Normal School in Richmond, in 1876, and that fall he was elected a teacher in the public schools of his native city. He began in the lowest grade of the system and made his way upward until he was elected principal of the Baker Street group of schools, having twelve teachers under him.

In 1886, Governor Fitzhugh Lee, appointed him a member of the Board of visitors of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. He was also elected Secretary of the Board because of his record as Principal of the Baker Street School in Richmond. Mr. Johnston would also take charge of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute, as President, January 1, 1888. Under his administration a three year course of study was approved by the State Superintendent and began in the Institute in June 1889.

In addition to serving as President, he was professor of philosophy, and Political Economy. It was in recognition of his ability and worth that Shaw University, at its commencement held on May 23, 1889, conferred on him the degree of A.M.; and, in 1892, the Ph.D.

Scope and Content Information

James Hugo Johnston Sr.'s administration was full of controversy. During his administration the state of Virginia pressured the University to adopt a style of education modeled after Hampton. The correspondence reflects Johnston's day to day activities as president of the University as well as some correspondence with leaders of the local black community. Additional information concerning James Hugo Johnston's term as President may also be found in the James Hugo Johnston Papers acc# 1963-9 located at Virginia State University.

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