

Holsinger Studio portrait on Rotunda steps

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circa 1896



Title Statement

Holsinger Studio portrait on Rotunda stepsGuide to the Holsinger Studio portrait on Rotunda steps MSS 16892

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Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2026-03-05 17:46:37 +0000.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MSS 16892

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/3/resources/1776

Unit Date

circa 1896

Mixed Materials [X032432753]

Archival Oversized Box M 1 (Flat_Box)

Container

001 (Oversize_Flat_File_folder)

Language

English

Creator

Holsinger's Studio (Charlottesville, Va.)

Extent

0.09 Cubic Feet 1 medium-sized oversized file folder

Condition Description

Fair

Repository

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is minimally processed and open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This collection was a gift from The Valentine to the Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia on 3 October 2022.

Preferred Citation

MSS 16892, Holsinger Studio portrait on Rotunda steps, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia Library.

Biographical / Historical Description: 1895 Rotunda Fire

On October 27, 1895, a fire destroyed much of the Rotunda and completely leveled the building's sizable annex that housed classroom space, lecture halls, laboratories, and faculty offices. The University commissioned Cabell, Cocke, and Rouss Hall after the fire, all designed by McKim, Mead, and White. These buildings were completed in 1898 and housed facilities once within the destroyed Rotunda annex. The Rotunda was restored to its original form as a library without an elongated annex, an effort completed shortly after the turn of the twentieth century.

Sources "Rotunda - Cvillepedia." Accessed May 28, 2025. <https://www.cvillepedia.org/Rotunda>. "Rotunda: History." University of Virginia, n.d. <https://rotunda.virginia.edu/history>.

Biographical / Historical Description: Holsinger Studio

Rufus W. Holsinger (1866-1930), a photographer, relocated to Charlottesville from Bedford, Pennsylvania in the late 1880s. He opened the Holsinger University Studio on West Main Street for over four decades. Holsinger worked in the city as a studio and field photographer, capturing Charlottesville residents and many notable historic events of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His work included everything from the 1895 fire that destroyed the University of Virginia Rotunda to celebrations in Charlottesville marking the end of World War I. Holsinger died in Charlottesville in 1930.

Sources

Virginia Magazine. "Holsinger's Charlottesville." Accessed May 01, 2025. https://uvamagazine.org/articles/holsingers_charlottesville.

Content Description

This collection contains a single black-and-white photograph of young men and women formally dressed and posed on the University of Virginia Rotunda steps. The men are likely UVa students and faculty. The photograph is dated about 1896 and has a Holsinger, Charlottesville stamp on the left corner. Scaffolding is in the photograph's background, erected during the Rotunda restoration efforts. The exposed fluted columns of the Rotunda's front facade lack plaster in this scene, a result of the intense heat of the 1895 fire.

Keywords

University of Virginia Rotunda (Charlottesville, Va.) -- photographs
University of Virginia

University of Virginia -- Buildings -- Pictorial works
Student life