



Guide to the Robert Lee Flowers Records, 1891-1968

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Summary

Collection Title:

Robert Lee Flowers records, 1891-1968

Creator:

Duke University. Presidents; Duke University. Office of the Vice President; Flowers, Robert Lee

Abstract:

Robert Lee Flowers, born in 1870, spent his entire professional career at Duke University. From 1891 to 1951, Flowers served in a variety of capacities, including professor (1891-1924), vice president of the business division (1925-1941), president (1941-1948), and chancellor (1948-1951). Types of material in the collection include correspondence, memoranda, reports, clippings, bound volumes, and other printed material. Major subjects include higher education in the United States, the role of universities during World War II, the assistance of displaced scholars during World War II, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and organizations in which Flowers served, including the Duke Endowment, the Durham Chamber of Commerce, the Durham and Southern Railway Company, Greensboro College, North Carolina Central University, the Methodist Orphanage, the Oxford Orphanage, and the Lincoln Hospital. Major correspondents include William Hayes Ackland, George Garland Allen, Alexander Boyd Andrews, John Fletcher Bruton, Homer Hasenlue Dubs, Benjamin Newton Duke, William Washington Flowers, Allen Howard Godbey, Edward R. Murrow, Edward Hines Page, William Robertson Perkins, Alexander Hamilton Sands, Jr., James Augustus Thomas, and Horace Trumbauer. English. Volumes include two autograph albums.

Extent:

22.75 Linear Feet

Language:

English.

Collection ID:

UA.03.56.0001

Permalink:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m1d70d>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Robert Lee Flowers Records, Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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Background

Scope and Content

Collection includes office files of the vice president and president of Duke University. The position of vice president included duties as secretary and treasurer. The official files consist of correspondence, memoranda, reports, printed matter and other materials received or generated by these offices. The first series, Correspondence is arranged chronologically, and the second series, Subject Files alphabetically. Besides University records, the subject files include material on higher education in America, the role of colleges and universities during World War II, the committee to assist displaced scholars, Methodist Church activities and administration, and records of the various organizations for which Flowers served as a trustee. The collection includes a series of several Volumes comprising Trinity grade books from the 1890s, an autograph album, an album of clippings and autographs, and a volume of letters in tribute to Flowers's 79th birthday.

Biographical/Historical

Robert Lee Flowers was born at York Collegiate Institute, Alexander County, North Carolina, on November 6, 1870, the son of George Washington and Sarah Haynes Flowers. A graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy in 1891, Flowers was first employed as an instructor in mathematics and electrical engineering when Trinity was still in Randolph County. He moved with the college to Durham in 1892. As an engineer, one of his first responsibilities was to wire the new buildings in Durham for electricity.

He served as a professor from 1891 to 1924 and as vice-president of the business division of Duke University from 1925-1941. Following the death of President Few in 1941, Flowers was named president of Duke University. In 1948, he stepped down as president and served as chancellor until 1951. Dr. Flowers was a trustee of the Duke Endowment, a director of the Durham and Southern Railway Company, a director of the Fidelity Bank of Durham, and a trustee of Greensboro College, of the Oxford Orphanage, of Lincoln Hospital, and of the North Carolina College for Negroes (now North Carolina Central University).

He married Lily Virginia Parrish on June 22, 1905. They had two daughters, Virginia and Sybil Parrish. Mrs. Flowers died on May 22, 1948. Robert Flowers died on August 24, 1951. He is buried in Maplewood Cemetery in Durham.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Access Restrictions

Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection.

For a period of twenty-five years from the origin of the material, permission in writing from the office of origin and the University Archivist is required for use. After twenty-five years, records that have been processed may be consulted with the permission of the University Archivist.

Records of the University's Board of Trustees which have been existence for at least fifty years are available for scholarly research with the permission of the University Archivist. Access to records which have been in existence for less than fifty years shall be granted only by special permission, in writing, from the Board of Trustees.

In accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended, Duke University permits students to inspect their education records and limits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records.

Use Restrictions

Copyright for Official University records is held by Duke University; all other copyright is retained by the authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law.

Acquisition Information

The Robert Lee Flowers Records were received by the University Archives as transfers in 1953 (A48-309), 1964 (A64-62), 1971 (A71-70), 1975 (A75-114), and 1982 (A82-133), as well as a gift in 2021.

Processing Information

This collection has been given basic processing: materials may not have been ordered and described beyond their original condition.

Encoded by Valerie Gillispie, June 18, 2003

Updated by Leah Tams, December 2021.

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Related Materials

Separated Material

President Flowers has oversize material located in map cabinet 3 including a resolution in memoriam of his death and diplomas from the Naval Academy and Trinity College.

Related Material

[Forms part of:] Duke University President records. University Archives. Duke University.[Forms part of:] Duke University Office of the Vice President records. University Archives. Duke University.Horace Trumbauer Architectural Drawings Collection. University Archives. Duke University.

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Names and Subjects

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- Orphanages -- North Carolina
- Universities and colleges -- United States
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Education and the war

- Autograph albums
- Duke University. Office of the Vice President
- Duke University -- Presidents
- Durham and Southern Railway Company
- Durham (N.C.) Chamber of Commerce
- Duke University. Presidents
- Allen, George Garland, 1874-1960
- Duke University -- Administration
- Duke Endowment
- Bruton, John Fletcher
- Andrews, Alexander Boyd, 1873-1946
- Perkins, William Robertson, 1875-1945
- Sands, Alexander Hamilton, Jr.
- Thomas, J. A. (James Augustus), 1862-1940
- Trumbauer, Horace, 1869-1938
- Flowers, Robert Lee
- Godbey, Allen Howard, 1864-1948
- Greensboro College (N.C.)
- Lincoln Hospital (Durham, N.C.)
- Murrow, Edward R.
- North Carolina Central University
- Duke, Benjamin N. (Benjamin Newton)
- Oxford Orphanage (Oxford, N.C.)

Collection Inventory

Correspondence, 1891-1948

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Duke, James Buchanan -- Will	Box 30
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Physical Description: 2 folders	

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