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William Gould Vinal Papers

1930-1958

3 boxes (1.25 linear ft.)

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William "Cap'n Bill" Vinal was the first instructor in nature education at Massachusetts State College and a pioneer in the field. A graduate of Bridgewater State (1904), Harvard (MA 1907) and Brown (PhD, 1922), Vinal worked for several years as a camp director on his native Cape Cod and held a variety of university appointments in nature education before joining the faculty at Massachusetts State College as Professor of Nature Education in the Nature Guide School in 1937. Spontaneous in the classroom and field, enthusiastic, and highly popular with his students, Vinal taught courses in conservation, outdoor leadership, outdoor recreation, and nature guiding, and was an important figure in the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the American Camping Association, the Camp Directors Association, and several conservation groups. After retiring from UMass in 1951, Vinal returned to his home in Norwell, Mass., remaining active as a nature writer and teacher until his death in 1973.

A valuable glimpse into the early growth of nature and conservation education, the Vinal collection includes dozens of scarce publications by the exceptionally prolific Cap'n Bill, along with a small quantity of correspondence, talks, and reports. As a collection, these document the origin and growth of the Nature Guide School and the program in nature recreation at MSC and UMass, and more generally the growth of nature, recreation, and conservation education in New England. Of local interest is an extensive report for the town of Amherst Recreation Survey Committee (1948) regarding recreational opportunities for youth. Nearly half of the collection consists of an extensive run of Vinal's quirky, self-published *Nature Guide Newsletter* (1935-1951).

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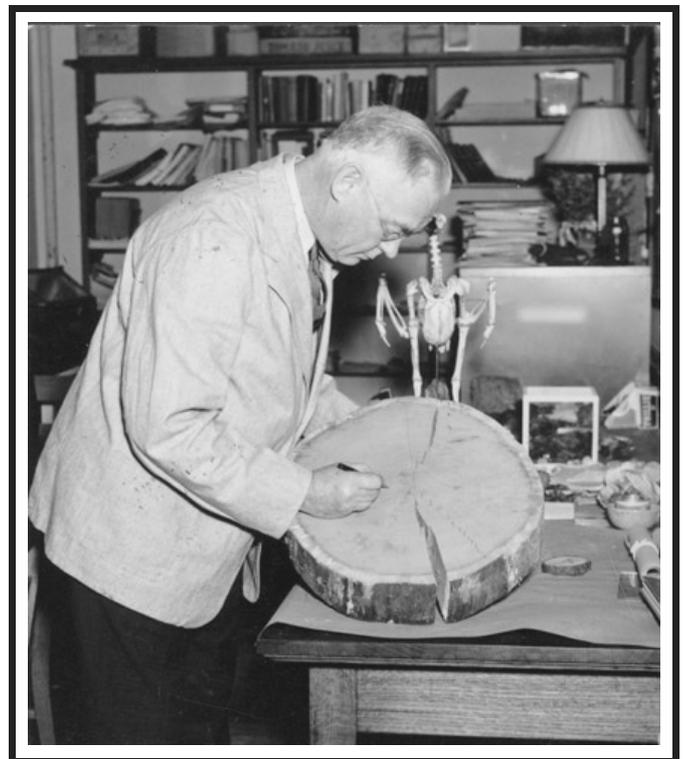
UMass (1947-)

UMass faculty

Background on William Gould Vinal

Nature education was in its infancy when William "Cap'n Bill" Vinal entered college at the turn of the twentieth century. A native of Norwell, Mass., (then called South Scituate), Vinal attended Bridgewater State Teachers College, graduating with the class of 1904, before taking a second bachelor's degree (1906) and master's (1907) in the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard.

One of the first formal nature educators in the nation, Vinal taught at the Rhode Island Normal School from 1911-1925, during the course of which he earned a doctorate at Brown (1922). A remarkably energetic man, dedicated to educating youth about the outdoors, nature, and conservation, Vinal held a string of short-term university appointments in nature education after receiving his doctorate, but throughout, he filled his summers with his love for the outdoors, directing Camp Chequesset (1914-1926), a nautical summer camp for girls in Wellfleet on Cape Cod, and later working as a ranger naturalist in parks in the western United States, or with the Nature Lore School for training nature counselors (1920-1926). These experiences solidified his desire to introduce nature education into the universities, and in 1927, he was hired by the School of Education at Western Reserve University to do just that. A magnet for students and innovative instructor, he took regular field trips with his students to introduce them to nature in the northeast.



William Gould Vinal

Given the opportunity to create a similar program in his home state, Vinal gladly accepted. In 1937, he established the Nature Guide School at Massachusetts State College, the beginnings of what became the program in outdoor and recreation leadership. Spontaneous in the classroom and field, enthusiastic, and highly popular with his students, Vinal taught courses in conservation, outdoor leadership, nature recreation, and nature guiding. He was active in a range of organizations devoted to camping, nature, and conservation, including the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the American Camping Association, the Camp Directors Association, and the National Camp. He was a prolific author, best known for his books *Nature Guiding* (1926) and *Nature Recreation* (1940, 1963).

After retiring from UMass in 1951, Vinal returned to his home in Norwell, Mass. He continued to lecture and write on nature and conservation, as well as local history, until his death in 1973.

Scope of collection

A valuable glimpse into the early growth of nature and conservation education, the Vinal collection includes dozens of scarce publications by the exceptionally prolific Cap'n Bill, along with a small quantity of correspondence, talks, and reports. As a collection, these document the origin and growth of the Nature Guide School and the program in nature recreation at MSC and

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Inventory

Adventures in camping education at National Camp

ca.1940

Box 1: 1

Amherst (Mass.). Recreation Survey Committee: Committee Report

1948

Box 1: 2

Biographical

1946/1988

Box 1: 3

Bus Spoke: Western Reserve University "daily paper provided by the students of the Nature Guide School on Wheels, New York-New England trip)

1935

Box 1: 4

Conservation: a selected bibliography

1941

Box 1: 5

Correspondence with Mrs. Richard Haven

1963

Box 1: 6

Includes some reminiscences of William Penn Brooks

Dedication of the Robert Salisbury Cole Museum (talk)

1943

Box 1: 7

Forest Field Day, Amherst, Mass. Scout leaders' training course (schedule of events)

1944

Box 1: 8

Hiking by use of the Belchertown sheet, U.S. Geological Survey

ca.1945

Box 1: 9

History of nature study: a series of articles published in *School Science and Mathematics*. Bound with "Boston, the hub of nature study," talk before the National Recreation Association

1934-1938

Box 1: 10

National Camp brochures

1940-1944

Box 1: 11

Nature Guide Newsletter (loose issues), vol. 8: 2, 3, 5; vol 9: 1,2

1944-1946

Box 1: 12

Nature Guide School (MSC *Bulletin* 31)

1939

Box 1: 13

Nature Guide School Log, vol. 1: 1m 3

1939

Box 1: 14

Nature Training School (Auburn, Mass.) brochure

1945

Box 1: 15

Outdoor Recreation Conference, 7th. Information circular

1940

Box 1: 16

Publications (offprints)

1932-1939

Box 1: 17

Publications (offprints)

1940-1949

Box 1: 18

Publications (offprints)

1952-1953

Box 1: 19

Publications (offprints)

1955-1961

Box 1: 20

Vinal, William Gould: Auto caravan trip o'er Mount Greylock, Massachusetts's highest point

1941

Box 2: 1

Vinal, William Gould: The community leader in nature recreation gets to work on cases

ca.1940

Box 2: 2

Vinal, William Gould: Conservation! Wake up Massachusetts!

ca.1940

Box 2: 3

Vinal, William Gould: A handbook on nature trails

1938

Box 2: 4

Vinal, William Gould: Life, liberty, and the pursuit of nature, *Nature Magazine* vol. 33

1940

Box 2: 5

Vinal, William Gould: Nature guiding on wheels (co-written with the teachers of elementary science on the Nature Guide School on Wheels New York to New England Field Trip, Western Reserve University

1935

Box 2: 6

Vinal, William Gould: Nature Recreation (promotional flier)

1940

Box 2: 7

Vinal, William Gould: Outdoor cooking

1938

Box 2: 8

Vinal, William Gould: Review of *Black Widow: America's Most Poisonous Spider*, by Raymond W. Thorp and Weldon D. Woodson

1945

Box 2: 9

Vinal, William Gould: Scouting means being at home in the woods (hiking and activity guide)

ca.1944

Box 2: 10

Vinal, William Gould: Welcome to Sugar Bush (questions for hike)

ca.1945

Box 2: 11

Vineholler (annual newsletter to former students)

1963-1964

Box 2: 12

Nature Guide Newsletter

1935-1939

Box 3: 1

Nature Guide Newsletter

1939-1946

Box 3: 2

Nature Guide Newsletter

1939-1946

Box 3: 3

Nature Guide Newsletter

1949-1951

Box 3: 4

Bound with:

Vinal's Annual reports of activities to MSC, 1937-1940
"A survey of the profession of recreational leadership at the University of Massachusetts"
"What is a major in nature education?"
"Biological field studies: nature leadership"
Nature Guide News (vol. 1:1, 1941)
Nature Magazine vol. 33 (1940)
Annual report of activities, 1940-1941
Coordinating council of nature activities
Robert Salisbury Cole, 1918-1942
Guide sheet for teen age center
Community service by rec leaders in training
Camp Fire program
A perspective of school and community in a changing democratic society
For dedication of camp and environment at Vinheall, Norwell (1941)
The need of recreation leaders in Massachusetts Communities as seen by local leaders
Outdoor Recreation Conference exhibit: plan (1941)
Massachusetts State College Eighth Outdoor Recreation Conference, March 13-16, 1941
Coordinating council of nature activities
Biological field studies: Nature leadership
Traditional American Rights
Coordinating council of nature activities
The oriole that sewed up a hole in the blanket (1947)
Nature is healing (1945)
The Eleusis of Chi Omega (1950)
Teachers return to nature in Maryland (1949)
Teach nature lessons out of doors: it's easier than you think (1951)
Training for peace (1951)
Let's take camping back to nature (1950)
Hydrology and water recreation (1950)
Workshop in Outdoor Education, Boston University (1950)
Teacher education outdoors (1944)
Conservation education (1942)
Conservation education in Rhode Island (1944)

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Source of acquisition not recorded.

Processing Information

Processed by Dex Haven, July 2009.

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

Cite as: William Gould Vinal Papers (FS 138). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

Amherst (Mass.)--Social life and customs.
Conservation of natural resources--Study and teaching.
Outdoor education--Massachusetts.
Recreation--Massachusetts--Amherst.

Contributors

Vinal, William Gould, 1881- . [\[main entry\]](#)

Vinal, William Gould, 1881- .

Genres and formats

Mimeograph copies.

Link to similar SCUA collections

Conservationism

Environment

Mass State College (1931-1947)

Massachusetts (West)

UMass (1947-)

UMass faculty



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