

YLR: 6-16-81
NRHP: 7-26-82

127-354

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received _____
date entered _____

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Virginia Union University

and/or common _____

2. Location

street & number 1500 North Lombardy Street

n/a not for publication

city, town Richmond

n/a vicinity of _____

congressional district Third
(Thomas J. Bliley, Jr.)

state Virginia

code 51

county (in city) _____

code 760

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Board of Trustees, c/o Dr. John L. S. Holloman, Jr., Chairman

street & number Virginia Union University, 1500 North Lombardy Street

city, town Richmond

n/a vicinity of _____

state Virginia 23220

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Richmond City Hall

street & number N/A

city, town Richmond

state Virginia 23219

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks
Commission Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980

federal state county local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond

state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Virginia Union University occupies a spacious, landscaped campus of sixty-five acres on the north side of Richmond, fronting on the 1500 block of North Lombardy Street. The school's oldest buildings include an academic and residential complex consisting of Coburn, Huntley, Martin E. Gray, Kingsley, Pickford buildings, the Old President's Residence and the industrial building and power plant. All seven structures were built between 1899 and 1901 and are constructed of rough-faced gray granite ashlar. The stonework is of exceptional quality and is in excellent condition. The general architectural style employed for the buildings is a simplified version of Richardsonian Romanesque Revival.

The house of the first president is found on the southeastern corner of the campus on Lombardy Street. The 2½-story stone house is covered by a combination hipped and cross-gable roof. It is distinguished by a semicircular wood-frame porch that encircles a tower on the southeast corner. The porch shelters the main entrance; two rear entrances on the west elevation are also sheltered by a wood-frame porch. Fenestration consists primarily of 1/1 hung-sash windows. The turret has three small circular attic openings. The house's interior underwent substantial renovation when it was converted from a private residence into administrative offices. It still retains its open-well stair and paneled double doors on the first floor. The double-door opening also retains a spindled frieze.

Pickford Hall is located to the rear of the president's house and lies in the center of the complex. It presently serves as the chief administration building. The facade is composed of a central gabled pavilion flanked by round towers and one-story, three-bay arcades. It is covered by a hipped roof broken by the gabled pavilion and hipped-roof dormers. The main entrances are sheltered by the arcades and consist of double panel-and-glass doors topped by semicircular transoms. Fenestration consists of 1/1 hung-sash windows in rectangular and segmental-arched openings. A focal point of the facade is a carved stone tablet in the center pavilion. It consists of a shield with a carved eagle and flags above the lettering "Pickford Hall". The building's interior was altered when it became the School of Business Administration.

Huntley Hall is located on the northernmost point of the old campus. Its facade consists of a central gabled pavilion flanked by semicircular-arched entrances. The entries have engaged columns with Romanesque capitals. Above the entrances, serving as keystones, are scrolled consoles. The original glass-paned doors are framed by sidelights and transoms. Fenestration consists of 1/1 hung-sash windows in rectangular openings. The edifice is covered by a hipped roof broken by dormers. Extensively renovated, it now serves as a men's dormitory and also houses the university counseling center, the learning center, and other support services.

Coburn Hall is located to the north of Pickford and to the south of Huntley. Its facade consists of a central gabled pavilion flanked by round towers topped with conical roofs. The building was extensively damaged in a fire in 1970; the present exterior steps date to a recent renovation. Entrances are found through a three-bay arcade in the central pavilion and through single segmental-arched openings on either side of the towers. A large stained-glass window is found above the arcade on the center pavilion. Fenestration consists of 12/12 and 1/1 hung-sash windows in rectangular and segmental-arched openings. The structure is covered by a cross-gable roof. The interior was totally rebuilt after the fire to house a combination chapel and theatrical arts building.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History
Specific dates	1899-1901	Builder/Architect	John H. Coxhead	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The original complex of Virginia Union University is an outstanding example of a late-Victorian collegiate grouping. The solid, Romanesque Revival structures, dramatically clustered along a shallow rise, follow the fashion of campus planning established after the Civil War by architects of the land grant colleges. The dormitories, classroom buildings, chapel, president's house, and power plant, each with its own picturesque massing and lively silhouette, were all designed by the Washington architect John H. Coxhead. The university was established in 1896 through the merger of Richmond Theological Seminary and Wayland Seminary of Washington, D. C., and funds for the new physical plant were provided by Northern philanthropists. This union of two Baptist institutions represented the culmination of efforts by individuals and organizations to provide higher education for freed blacks after the Civil War. Further mergers have transformed the school into an important urban university which has consistently graduated outstanding alumni, many of whom hold positions of leadership in the city, state, and nation. The original complex thus stands as a fitting tribute to perseverance and excellence in the field of black higher education.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Following the termination of hostilities in 1865, there began the difficult task of providing facilities and teachers for educating newly freed slaves. Because of an antebellum state law that forbade the education of slaves, the vast majority of newly freed blacks were almost totally illiterate. Often it was only the black ministers who knew the rudiments of reading and writing. The initial responsibility for providing some education to blacks fell to these ministers who, with support from philanthropic Northerners, launched teaching efforts, initially on a small scale. Complementing these efforts were those of the Baptist Home Mission Society, active in both Richmond and Washington. The society founded the schools which later became the Richmond Theological Seminary and the Wayland Seminary in Washington, D. C. Dr. Nathaniel Colver, a Boston abolitionist, headed the educational effort in Richmond and was assisted by a local Baptist minister, Dr. Robert Ryland.

The search for a school building proved to be a difficult one, but Dr. Colver finally purchased a group of structures known as Lumpkin's Jail from the wife of Robert Lumpkin. This complex of brick buildings, located in Shockoe Valley, had previously served as a slave pen with accompanying buildings to house slave traders. At the same time, the Baptist Home Mission Society was establishing a seminary in Washington in a Baptist church on 19th Street that became Wayland Seminary. Although the bulk of the financing for these seminaries came from the Mission Society, the schools remained non-sectarian, a status which continues today.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #2)

- Corey, Charles H.A. A History of the Richmond Theological Seminary. Richmond: J.W. Randolph Co., 1895.
- Holland, Robert. "Virginia Union Blending Old, New in Program." Richmond Times-Dispatch, October 29, 1967.
- Richardson, W.F. "The History of Virginia Union University." MS, n.d.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 11 acres

Quadrangle name Richmond, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	Zone	Easting	Northing	B	Zone	Easting	Northing
	1,8	2,8,3,6,0,0	4,1,5,9,7,3,0		1,8	2,8,3,4,7,0	4,1,5,9,5,5,0
C	1,8	2,8,3,2,6,0	4,1,5,9,6,4,0	D	1,8	2,8,3,2,4,0	4,1,5,9,7,0,0
E	1,8	2,8,3,4,0,0	4,1,5,9,8,7,0	F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point on W side of Lombardy St. at SW side of tree line on SW side of campus drive opposite Admiral St.; thence continuing about 450' NW along SW side of said tree line; thence about 200' SW along NW side of parking lot; thence about 100' NW, then about 150' NNW, then about 75' NE, then about 30' SE--all along VUU boundary; thence about 500' NE along NW side of walkway running along W side of Storer Hall to SW edge of parking lot; thence about 150' SE passing NE of Gray Hall to SE edge of said lot; thence about 200' NE along said edge to SW side of walkway NE of Huntley Hall; thence about 400' SE to SW side of walkway NW of New Ellison Hall; thence about 350' SW along said side to SW side of walkway SW of New Ellison Hall; thence about 250' SE along said side to W side of Lombardy St.; thence about 350' SW along said side to point of origin.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date June 1981

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3143

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date MAY 10 1982

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Virginia Union University, Richmond, Virginia

Continuation sheet

#1

Item number 7,8

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7. DESCRIPTION

Kingsley Hall, a 3½-story dormitory, is situated to the west of Pickford Hall. The facade consists of a central pavilion flanked by towers. Shed-roofed porches serve to connect the central pavilion with the towers on the first story. The porches shelter the main entrances, which now have modern double doors. Fenestration consists of rectangular openings with 1/1 hung-sash windows. The third-story openings of the central pavilion have round-arched heads. The interior has been extensively altered.

Martin E. Gray Hall is situated to the northwest of Pickford Hall. The facade consists of a gabled central pavilion flanked by round-arched entrances that retain their original double doors. The pavilion has three round-arched windows on the first story and three small round-arched windows on the second story. The remaining fenestration consists of rectangular openings with 1/1 hung-sash windows. The structure is covered by a hipped roof broken by wide, three-part, hipped dormers. The interior has been extensively altered and presently serves the schools of education and psychology.

The industrial building sits on the southwest part of campus. Its facade has a central pavilion that contains the main entrance. The rectangular openings are presently boarded with plywood. The structure is covered by a gable roof. A power plant distinguished by a large chimney stack is located to the south of the industrial building.

The campus is informally landscaped. Magnolias and other trees line the walks that serve to connect the various buildings. Stone gates mark the Lombardy Street entrance to the campus.

RCC

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property for Virginia Union University consists of eleven acres and includes the following buildings: Coburn, Huntley, Gray, Kingsley, Pickford, the Old President's Residence, the industrial building, and the power plant. All the structures date to the 1899-1901 building campaign; the boundaries are so drawn as to exclude modern structures. The campus area for the nominated buildings is defined by Lombardy Street to the southeast, a college access road to the northwest, another access road to the southwest, and a boundary line to the northeast that is drawn to exclude modern edifices. While recent expansion has been to the east of the older structures, Storer Hall, ca. 1960, is included in the nominated area.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

The Richmond Theological Seminary was formally incorporated in 1876 and purchased the old United States Hotel at 19th and Main streets to house its operation. There was little support for black secondary education at that time, so money came primarily from interested groups outside of Virginia. Many of the graduates did missionary work and helped establish and run schools for Negroes in the postbellum period. By the mid-1880s, the major emphasis of the school had shifted to educating Negroes for the clergy. By 1896 it was decided to combine the resources of Richmond and Washington seminaries. The Wayland buildings and property in Washington were sold and the proceeds used to purchase land in Richmond adjacent to the already-functioning Hartshorn Memorial College. Hartshorn was founded in the 1880s as a school for educating young black women and thus provided an appropriate location for the combined schools.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

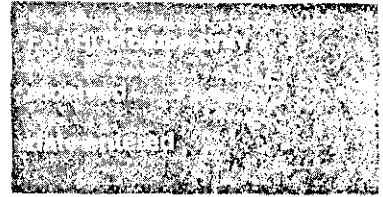
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Virginia Union University, Richmond, Virginia

Continuation sheet #2

Item number 8,9

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

Nine of the new university's buildings were under construction by 1899, and in 1900 a lecture hall, dormitory, dining hall, library, chapel, and two residences were completed. The generosity of wealthy Northern philanthropists provided the capital for what was then an ambitious building campaign. In appreciation for their gifts, many of the college's first buildings were named in honor of their respective donors.

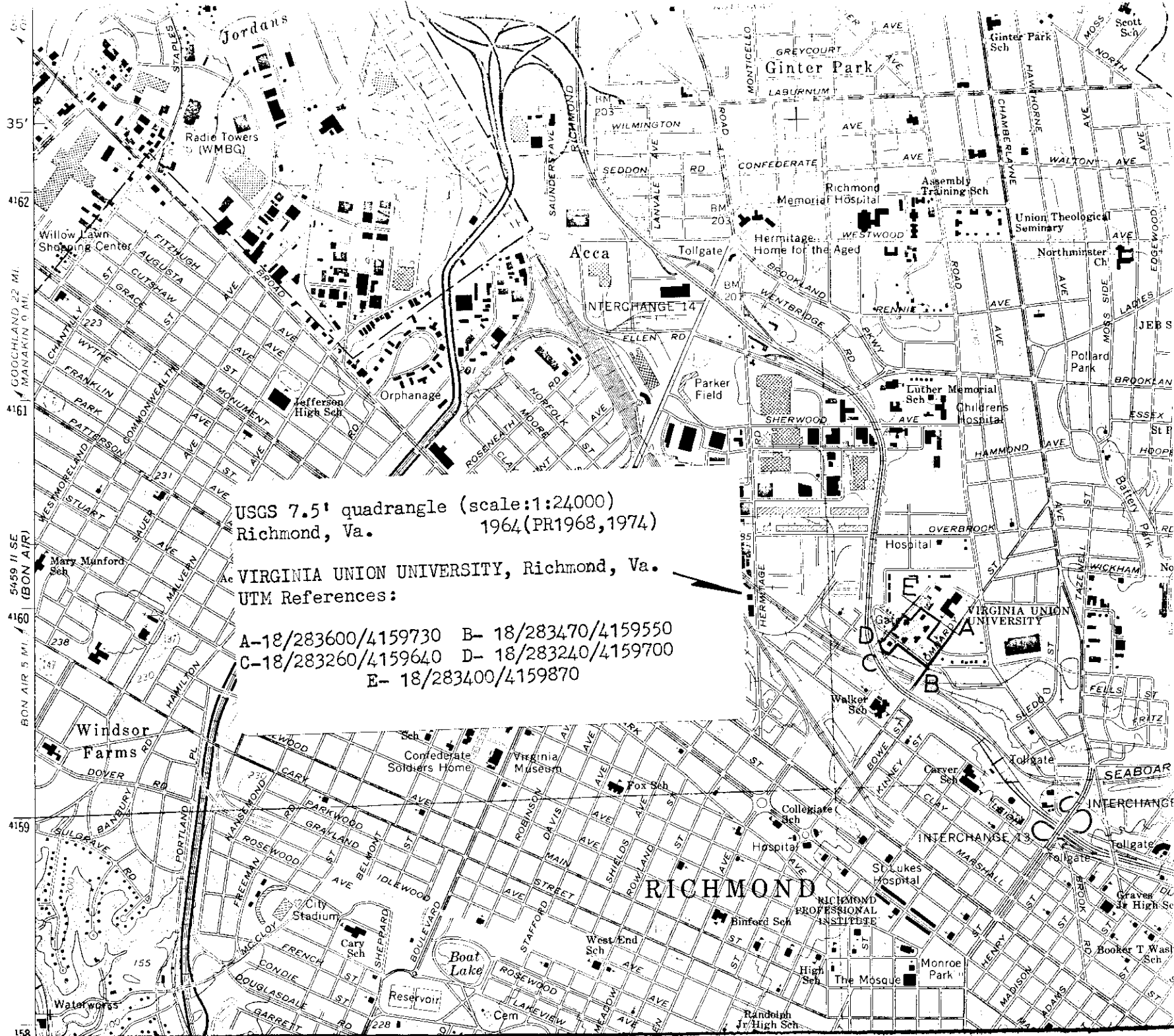
The plans for the buildings were drawn by John H. Coxhead. Coxhead acquired a basic architectural education in New York City and worked in Boston for the firm of Ware and Van Brunt. He later moved to Buffalo, where he worked for nearly twenty years. While in that city he designed the plans for the Delaware Avenue Baptist Church, which may have provided him with the influence necessary to obtain the commission for the Virginia Union University in Richmond with its numerous Baptist affiliations. Coxhead later moved to Washington, D.C., where he distinguished himself as the Architect to the U.S. Army Air Force. Extant plans for additional buildings for the complex were drawn in the late 1920s by the school's Department of Architecture; they reveal a desire to maintain the same style, quality, and general design for the newer buildings. Due to the financial depression of the 1930s, the projected additions were never built.

Graduates of Virginia Union have distinguished themselves as leaders in the community, state, and nation. Among the university's graduates are Henry L. Marsh, III, Mayor of the City of Richmond; L. Douglas Wilder, State Senator; Samuel Lee Gravely, Jr., the U.S. Navy's first black Admiral; and James Hugo Johnston, a president of Virginia State College in Petersburg. Many of those educated at Virginia Union have gone on to fill positions of responsibility in academic institutions as well as to serve as pastors in their communities.

MTP/RCC

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Van Jackson, Wallace. "Virginia Union, A Record of Struggle and Progress." Richmond Times-Dispatch, December 21, 1937.
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
 Richmond, Va. 1964 (PR1968,1974)

VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY, Richmond, Va.
 UTM References:

- A-18/283600/4159730
- B-18/283470/4159550
- C-18/283260/4159640
- D-18/283240/4159700
- E-18/283400/4159870

RICHMOND

35'
 4162
 4161
 4160
 4159
 158

35'
 4162
 4161

GOOCHLAND 2.2 MI.
 MANAKIN 0.8 MI.

5459 11 SE
 BON AIR 5 MI. (BON AIR)

4160
 4159

158