Charles Edward Burks was born May 8, 1886, in Ackerman, Mississippi, and died in the City of Lynchburg, Virginia, where he had practiced law and served as a Circuit Court Judge from 1913 until his death on January 30, 1965.

Judge Burks received his A.B. degree from Washington and Lee in 1910, being President and Valedictorian of his class, Editor of the college weekly newspaper, and recipient of a scholarship in Latin as well as other honors. He received his LLB degree in 1912 from Washington and Lee and worked for one year for the U. S. Department of Justice before beginning his law practice in Lynchburg.

His career was interrupted by service in the United States Army during World War I, in 1918-1919. Upon his return to Lynchburg and active practice, he began his political career by managing the Trinkle-for-Governor campaign in 1921 and the Swanson-for-U. S. Senate campaign in 1922. He was himself elected to the Virginia Senate in 1933 and served until he was appointed to the judgeship of the Circuit Court of Lynchburg and Campbell County, Virginia on March 1, 1940.

From that date until his death, Judge Burks held the same judgeship; but his duties were enlarged by the addition of Bedford County to his Circuit in 1948. He was highly respected for his performance of duty upon the bench, as indicated by the following excerpts from editorials in Lynchburg and Bedford papers.

"The judge set the highest kind of standards for himself in his professional and private life. He had no tolerance for the shoddy or second rate."
"He never would have won any popularity contests. His rough, bespectacled exterior was accompanied, appropriately, by a penchant for bluntness and absolute candor.***

"Scholar, lawyer, State Senator, Circuit Judge - Charles Edward Burks was an outstanding success in all of these callings."

"Judge Burks' Court never has been dull. He has a gift for injecting interest, even excitement, into the processes of justice. **He was the court with the knowledge of the law is unsurpassed in this State; his gift for getting at the essence of an issue is greatly respected; his patience with an attorney's attempts to obscure or delay is short, but his readiness to give the man on trial every chance to make his case is almost without limit. His sentences have reflected a mixture of stern, even-handed justice with compassion for the transgressor. His standing in the machinery of justice in Virginia is attested by the estimate of attorneys that he probably holds a record for the smallest percentage of reversals by the State Supreme Court. **""

Judge Burks was survived by his daughter, Margaret Burks Lollis Fishkin, who gave the books in this Section to Washington and Lee. Judge Burks had often stated that he would make the gift, but failed so to provide in his will. Knowing his wishes, Mrs. Fishkin donated the books to Washington and Lee shortly after his death. The editorials took note of his interest in books, saying:

"A voracious reader, he maintained extensive libraries both at home and office and possessed one of the finest collections of early Virginia legal textbooks anywhere."

"Among his especial interests was his library. For anyone interested and knowing books it was a pleasure to be shown his library, characterized by scholarship and law, by wide reading interests, by a knowledge of and liking for quality and attractiveness in bindings as well as content."