John MacKenzie Norris fonds

Compiled by Elissa How (2014)
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University of British Columbia Archives
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Fonds Description

3.34 m of textual materials.
48 black & white photographs (32 negatives and 16 prints).

Biographical Sketch

John MacKenzie Norris (1925-2010) was born on March 3, 1925 in Kelowna, B.C. to Jean Mary Norris (née) Denovan and Thomas Grantham Norris. At the time of his birth, his father, T.G. Norris, was practicing as a lawyer in Kelowna and subsequently served as a judge on both the British Columbia Supreme Court and the British Columbia Court of Appeal. John Norris had an older sister and a younger brother, attended elementary schools in Kelowna and Vancouver, and graduated from Lord Byng Secondary School in Vancouver. He enlisted with the Royal Navy in 1943 and, after returning, attended UBC from 1946-1949 where he obtained both a Bachelor of Arts Degree (1948) and a Master of Arts Degree (1949). At UBC he met Barbara Violet Casey whom he married in 1947. They had one son, Thomas Norris. John Norris pursued additional graduate work at Northwestern University, obtaining his Ph.D. in 1955, and post-graduate studies at the London School of Economics.

In 1953, John Norris began teaching as an instructor within the Department of History at the University of British Columbia and in 1964 became a Professor of the Department of History. He published five books and numerous articles in the areas of administrative, economic and demographic history. During the 1970s, he began to change his academic focus towards the history of medicine and over the next few decades he specialized in the study of the history of various diseases, including plague, cholera, and scurvy.

In 1980, John Norris was appointed Professor and Director of the Division of the History of Medicine and Science at UBC. He continued to serve in this role until his retirement early in 1990 when he was extended the title of Professor Emeritus in the History of Medicine. He continued to teach on a part-time basis until at least 2004.

Norris served on many boards and committees, including acting as the Chair of the Osler Medal Committee of the American Association for the History of Medicine (1978-1979); as Chair of the Programme Committee of the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine (1983); and as the Chair of the Grants Committee of the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine (1980). At UBC, he served in such capacities as Chairman, University Curriculum Committee, UBC (1968-1974); as a Member of the University Senate (1964-1974); and as Chairman of the University Grievance Committee (1968-1969). He held an American Council of Learned Societies Graduate Fellowship, 1951-3,

John Norris was an active member in politics, first in the C.C.F., and subsequently of the N.D.P. In 1963, he unsuccessfully ran to be N.D.P. representative for Vancouver Centre during the British Columbia Provincial election.

John Norris died on May 2, 2010. At the time of his death, he was working on a history of cholera.

**Scope and Content**

Fonds consists of the personal papers of John Norris, including family papers, correspondence of both a personal and professional nature, notes of academic articles, lecture and class notes, as well as several photographs of Norris and his family. Fonds has been organized into seven series: Correspondence series; Family series; Political Career series; Hannah Institute series, Research Materials and Publications series; Teaching series; and Photographs series. Materials are arranged in alphabetical order unless otherwise indicated.

**Notes**

Thomas Norris, son of John Norris, transferred the bulk of these documents to the UBC Archives in 2014. File 2-7a was found in Woodward Biomedical Library and transferred to the Archives in 2018.

Note that RBSC at UBC contains the papers of Thomas G. Norris, the father of John Norris.

File list available.
Series Descriptions

**Correspondence series.** – 1964-2005.
37 cm of textual records.

Series consists of correspondence sent to and received from John Norris.

**Family series.** – 1925-1990.
7.5 cm of textual documents.

Series consists of personal and family documentation such as birth and marriage certificates, transcripts, copies of articles and some collected newspaper reports.

20.0 cm of textual documents.

Series consists of notes, speeches, scripts, newspaper clippings, and other documentation related to John Norris’ candidacy for the Provincial Election in 1963.

10.5 cm of textual documents.

Series consists of correspondence, applications, and materials related to successive Practitioner-Historian workshops offered by Norris during his association with the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine.

1.25 m of textual documents.

Series consists of notes taken in support of various publications, such as those on the British economy during the 1800s, cholera, and the plague. Series also consists of copies of a number of Norris’ publications.

Note that many of the research notes are without dates; however, it can likely be reasonably inferred that the notes regarding cholera were made in support of his unpublished work on cholera that was remained unfinished at the time of his death in 2010.

Also note that some notes that might have influenced his publications have been included in the Teaching series as they were described as pertaining to lectures and conferences.
1.34 m of textual records.

Series consists of notes for lectures and seminars given in various classes, continuing education, and conferences; course materials, papers from colleagues and students; and documentation related to Norris’ role on various committees and boards within UBC and as the Director of the Department of the History of Medicine and Science.

32 black & white negatives; various sizes.
16 black & white prints; various sizes.

Series consists mainly of photographs of John Norris and Barbara Norris and of other family members. A number of photographs relate to images used by Norris during lectures or in scholarly articles. Photographs are arranged in chronological order.
File List

BOX 1

CORRESPONDENCE SERIES

1-1 Brandak. 1999.
1-3 CBC talk. 1964.
1-4 Dean’s Office. 1984-1985.
1-5 Dean’s Office. 1986-1991.
1-6 Duff’s chair. 1998.
1-7 E-mail correspondence, 2002-2005. [2 folders]
1-9 “Founding Fathers” History of Medicine at UBC project. 1985.
1-13 [Heisler], John. 1966.

BOX 2

2-6 Lawson family. 1977.
2-7 Library-Special Collections. 1980.
2-7a “M” 1991-92
2-8 Mayer, Carol. 1991.
2-9 McPhedran, Dr. N. Tait. 1991.
BOX 3

3-1 Ormsby, Margaret - Book of Essays. 1977.
3-3 Personal correspondence. 1946-1951.
3-4 Personal correspondence. 1951.

BOX 4

4-1 Personal correspondence. 1960s. [2 folders]
4-3 Roberts, Kenneth. 1982.
4-4 Siddarth. 1999.
4-5 Sivaram. 1999.

BOX 5

FAMILY SERIES

5-3 House of Commons debate for February 24, 1964. 1964.
5-4 Norris, T.G. – copies of articles. 1939-1943.
5-6 Transcripts of news commentary. 1957-1964.
5-7 Papers and notes relating to WWII. 1943-1945.

POLITICAL CAREER SERIES

5-10 Addresses and notes. 1963. Note: written on folder “Workers”.
5-11 Assessment of ridings. 1963.
5-12  Car toons.  1963.
5-13  Industrial development.  1963.
5-14  Labour.  1963.
5-15  Legal and legislative.  1963.
5-16  Medicare.  1963.
5-17  Newspaper clippings.  1963.
5-18  Notes, correspondence, and pamphlets.  1963. [2 folders].
5-19  Notes for speeches.  1963.
5-20  Power.  1963.
5-22  Scripts.  1963.
5-24  West End issues.  1963.

HANNAH INSTITUTE SERIES

5-28  Paterson History.  [N.D.]

BOX 6

RESEARCH MATERIALS AND PUBLICATIONS SERIES

6-2  Copy of article by Norris - “The ‘Scurvy Disposition’: Heavy Exertion as an Exacerbating Influence of Scurvy in Modern Times.”  [1983?]
6-3 Copy of draft of article by Norris “The Policy of the British Cabinet in the Nootka Crisis. [N.D.]
6-4 Copy of draft of paper by Norris “The Economic Basis of the English Commonwealth: Ireton and the Army Debates of 1647. [N.D.]
6-5 Copy of The Miner, volume 10, no. 4, 1937. [N.D.]
6-6 Copy of thesis by Norris “The British Retreat 1760-1770”. [N.D.] [2 folders]
6-7 Notes - Agriculture after 1797. [N.D.]
6-8 Notes - Agriculture up to 1797. [N.D.]
6-9 Notes - Animism Stahl. [N.D.]
6-10 Notes - Army after 1797. [N.D.]
6-12 Notes - Banking & investment & capitalization of industry after 1797. [N.D.]
6-13 Notes - Banking & investment & capitalization up to 1797. [N.D.]
6-14 Notes - Bibliography. [N.D.] [3 folders]
6-15 Notes - Birmingham gun trade during the war. [N.D.]
6-16 Notes - British History. [1970s?]
6-17 Notes - Children at risk: Some historical perspectives. [N.D.]
6-18 Notes – Cholera - “Antiquity of Cholera”. [N.D.]
6-19 Notes - Cholera - Assigning causation in disease. [N.D.]
6-20 Notes – Cholera - Back to Broad Street. [N.D.]
6-21 Notes – Cholera - Calomel. [N.D.]
6-22 Notes – Cholera – Cases and deaths from cholera Bombay – August 1818 – February 1819. [N.D.]
6-23 Notes – Cholera - Cathartics. [N.D.]
6-24 Notes – Cholera - Change in the Nature of Epidemic 1817. [N.D.]
6-25 Notes – Cholera - Chapter 3: Perspective on cholera during the first pandemic and beyond, 1817-1931. [N.D.]
6-26 Notes – Cholera - Chapter 5 - 19th and 20th century pandemics of Cholera. [N.D.]
6-27 Notes – Cholera - Chapter 7 – Developments in the Knowledge of Cholera: 1831-1959. [N.D.]
6-28 Notes – Cholera - Chapter 8. [N.D.]
6-29 Notes – Cholera - Chapters 1 and 2. [N.D.]

BOX 7

7-1 Notes – Cholera - Cholera Attacks in Middle of Bengal Provinces 1818. [N.D.]
7-2 Notes – Cholera - Cholera: c. 1770-c. 2000. [N.D.] [2 folders]
7-3 Notes – Cholera - Cholera stats – 1818-1923. [N.D.]
Notes – Cholera - McNicol and Doetsch. [N.D.]

BOX 8

8-1 Notes – Cholera - Medico-Chirurgical transactions (1821). [N.D.]
8-2 Notes – Cholera - Miscellaneous. [N.D.]
8-3 Notes – Cholera - Movement of cholera in India 1817-1818. [N.D.]
8-4 Notes – Cholera - Need for early treatment. [N.D.]
8-5 Notes - Cholera - Nomenclature. [N.D.]
8-6 Notes – Cholera – Pathophysiology. [N.D.]
8-7 Notes – Cholera - Precordial oppressed. [N.D.]
8-8 Notes – Cholera – Predisposing causes. [N.D.]
8-9 Notes – Cholera - Progress of cholera. [N.D.]
8-10 Notes – Cholera - Progress of cholera through Madras residency. [N.D.]
8-11 Notes - Cholera – Preoccupation with spasm. [N.D.]
8-12 Notes – Cholera - Quarantining for cholera. [N.D.]
8-13 Notes – Cholera - References to cholera morbus in Europe. [N.D.]
8-14 Notes – Cholera - Remote etiology. [N.D.]
8-15 Notes – Cholera - Scot on nosology of cholera. [N.D.]
8-16 Notes – Cholera - Sedatives and opiates. [N.D.]
8-17 Notes – Cholera - Sequelae of cholera. [N.D.]
8-18 Notes – Cholera - Snow & cholera. 1990. [2 folders]
8-19 Notes – Cholera – Spread including weather, contagion, epidemiology. [N.D.]
8-20 Notes – Cholera - Spread of cholera in Bengal 1817. [N.D.]
8-21 Notes – Cholera - Spread of cholera in Ceylon. [N.D.]
8-22 Notes – Cholera - Spread of cholera after Central Division attacked 1820. [N.D.]
8-23 Notes – Cholera - Spread of cholera to Penang. [N.D.]
8-24 Notes – Cholera - Spread of epidemic cholera from Bengal to Bombay 1818. [N.D.]
8-25 Notes – Cholera - Spread to Deccan. [N.D.]
8-26 Notes – Cholera - Treatment. [N.D.]
8-27 Notes – Cholera - Treatment of cholera – early 19th century. [N.D.]
8-28 Notes – Cholera - Treatment of Natives and Native Treatment. [N.D.]
8-29 Notes – Cholera - Types of Cholera. [N.D.]
8-30 Notes – Cholera - Was cholera confined to spread beyond India before 1817? [N.D.]
8-31 Notes – Cholera - What makes cholera disperse? [N.D.]
8-32 Notes – Cholera - What made cholera disperse after the outbreak of 1817? [N.D.]
8-33 Notes - Clinical medicine. [N.D.]
8-34 Notes – Coal up to 1797. [N.D.]
8-35 Notes - Coal & coal mining after 1797. [N.D.]
8-36 Notes - Condition of the English working class & poor relief after 1797. [N.D.]
8-37 Notes - Cotton after 1797. [N.D.]
8-38 Notes - Cotton up to 1797. [N.D.]
8-39 Notes - Counter-attack: Hoffman, Leibniz, Boerhaave Contra Stahl. [N.D.]
8-40 Notes - Deficiency Diseases: Scurvy. [N.D.] [2 folders]
8-41 Notes - Demography. [N.D.]
8-42 Notes - Distilling and brewing after 1797. [N.D.]
8-43 Notes - Early scientific medicine. [N.D.]
8-44 Notes - Economic mobilization for war. [N.D.] [3 folders]

BOX 9

9-1 Notes - Economic policy after 1797. [N.D.]
9-2 Notes - Economic warfare after 1797. [N.D.]
9-3 Notes - Economic warfare – blockade, embargo – licensed trade up to 1797. [N.D.]
9-4 Notes - Food production and distribution after 1797. [N.D.]
9-5 Notes - Food production & distribution up to 1797. [N.D.]
9-6 Notes - Forensic medicine. [N.D.]
9-7 Notes - Galveston. [N.D.]
9-8 Notes - IatroMechanism. [N.D.]
9-9 Notes - Iron after 1797. [N.D.]
9-10 Notes - Iron up to 1797. [N.D.]
9-11 Notes - Italian science. [N.D.]
9-12 Notes - Knitting & hosiery up to 1797. [N.D.]
9-13 Notes - Labour, manpower & population – condition of poor. [N.D.]
9-14 Notes - Linen after 1797. [N.D.]
9-15 Notes - Loans and debt. [N.D.] [2 folders]
9-16 Notes - Loans & subsidies other countries. [N.D.]
9-17 Notes - Luddites. [N.D.]
9-18 Notes - Machines after 1797. [N.D.]
9-19 Notes - Miscellaneous. [N.D.] [2 folders]
9-20 Notes - Navy after 1797. [N.D.]
9-21 Notes - Ordinances after 1797. [N.D.]
9-22 Notes – Plague - Fleas & rodents population dynamics. [N.D.]
9-23 Notes – Plague - Modern scientific explanations of the retrogression of the Plague from West. Europe: origins & weaknesses. [N.D.]
9-26 Notes – Plagues - Plague in Africa. [N.D.]
9-27 Notes – Plagues - Plague in Canada. [N.D.]
9-28 Notes – Plagues - Plague in China. [N.D.]
9-29 Notes – Plagues - Plague in Europe. [N.D.]
9-30 Notes – Plaques - Plague in India. [N.D.]
9-31 Notes – Plagues - Plague in Indonesia. [N.D.]
9-32 Notes – Plagues - Plague in Java. [N.D.]
9-33 Notes – Plagues - Plague in the Middle East. [N.D.]
9-34 Notes – Plagues – Plaque in the Mediterranean Lands – Malta & Ionian Islands. [N.D.] [2 folders]
9-35 Notes – Plagues - Plague in North Africa. [N.D.]
9-36 Notes – Plagues - Plague in the Pacific. [N.D.]
9-37 Notes – Plagues - Plague in Russia. [N.D.]
9-38 Notes – Plagues - Scholarly articles regarding plagues and epidemics. [N.D.]
9-39 Notes - Population. [N.D.]
9-41 Notes - Retrospective diagnosis. [N.D.]
9-42 Notes - Role of war in English economic growth. [N.D.]
9-43 Notes - Rural Medicine. [N.D.] [3 folders]

BOX 10

10-1 Notes - Shipping after 1797. [N.D.]
10-2 Notes - Shipping up to 1797. [N.D.]
10-3 Notes - Silk Industry up to 1797. [N.D.]
10-4 Notes - Statistics – especially prices after 1797. [N.D.]
10-5 Notes - Statistics – especially prices up to 1797. [N.D.]
10-6 Notes - Subsidies and supply prices to Spain and Portugal 1808-1814. [N.D.]
10-7 Notes - Syphilis. [N.D.]
10-8 Notes - Taxation. [N.D.]
10-9 Notes - Trade after 1797. [N.D.]
10-10 Notes - Trade up to 1797. [N.D.]

BOX 11

11-1 Notes - Vitalism. [N.D.]
11-2 Notes - War mobilization. [N.D.]
11-3 Notes - Wool after 1797. [N.D.]
11-4 Notes - Wool up to 1797. [N.D.]
11-5 Ottawa, Ontario map – with shaded areas. [N.D.]
11-6 Poster - History of the Faculty of Medicine. 1993.
11-7 Publications - Miscellaneous. 1955-1970s?
11-8 Review of Roger French, Medicine Before Science. 2003

BOX 12

TEACHING SERIES

12-2 American Association for the History of Medicine, May 2-5, 1984. 1984. [2 folders]
12-5 Birth, Death, and Ethology in Early Modern Europe. [N.D.]
12-6 British History Offerings. 1987.
12-9 Capilano College – Course in Local History. 1972.

BOX 13

13-2 Centre for Continuing Education. 1983.

Classics, Department of. 1981.

Continuing Education “Black Plague”. 1982

Continuing Education “Culloden: Division and Defeat”. 1983.


Course materials - History 135. [N.D.]


Course materials - History 401. [N.D.]

Course materials - History of Medicine 401. [N.D.]


Density-Dependent Mechanisms for Regulating Populations of Rodents and Rodent Fleas Influencing the Incidence of Plague. [N.D.]


“Discipline and Discovery: A Proposal to the Faculty of Arts of the University of British Columbia.” 1965.


Faculty Association. 1963-1964. [2 folders]


Faculty Association - Newspaper clippings, correspondence and rally notes regarding faculty pay raise and other matters. 1963-1965.

Faculty Association Executive general. 1963-1964.

Faculty Association Salaries. 1963-1964. [2 folders]


Faculty of Medicine - Canadian Society for the History of Medicine. 1993.

Faculty of Medicine - Division of Continuing Medical Education. 1988-1990.

14-26 Faculty of Medicine - First Year Curriculum Planning & Development Committee. 1993-1994.
14-28 Flyer for lectures by Dr. John Norris. 1983.
14-31 Guideposts to Innovation: Report of a President’s Committee on Academic Goals. 1964.

BOX 15

15-3 History of Occupational Medicine – Reading List. [N.D.]
15-4 Horizons in Medical Ethics. 1988.
15-5 Introduction and Lecture #1 “The Doctor and the Others”. [N.D.]
15-6 Jane Austen / Addison. [N.D.]
15-7 “Just the Facts, Please, Doctor!” presentation to the Legal Studies Dinner Seminar. 1986.
Limitations of Medicine: An Historical Perspective. [N.D.]
Medical Social Responsibility: Its Roots and Development. [N.D.]
Memorial Room: Tributes to Pioneer Doctors. 1983.
Notes – Miscellaneous. [1980s?] [4 folders]
Notes – Paper - Death, Birth & Ethology in Early Modern Europe. [N.D.]
Notices – Department of History
“The Nuremburg Trials” – essay. [N.D.]
Oral History Project. 1984. [2 folders]
Ormsby. 1996.

BOX 16

Population Regulation as a Determinant of Disease Thresholds: the Case of Plague in Western Europe, 1560-1680. [N.D.]
Report to the Commission on Graduate Education in the Humanities and Social Sciences by the Task Force from the University of British Columbia. [N.D.]

BOX 17

17-3 Scholarly articles from colleagues and students. 1974-1983.
17-4 Senate Committee on Long Range Objectives. 1969. [2 folders].

BOX 18
18-2 Solar Radiation and Plague in Early Modern Europe. [N.D.]
18-3 Summer Research Project by John Gill – “Indians of the Pacific Northwest: Health, Disease and Therapeutics.” [N.D.]
18-5 Technomania: the Impact of Technology on Clinical Practice, 1880s to the 1930s. [N.D.]

PHOTOGRAPHS SERIES
173.1/1 Black & white glossy print of John and Barbara Norris. 1946. 7.9 cm x 5.4 cm.
173.1/2 Black & white glossy print of Barbara Norris. [1946?] 7.8 cm x 5.4 cm.
173.1/3 Black & white glossy print of Barbara Norris. [1946?] 7.9 cm x 5.5 cm
173.1/4 Black & white glossy print of John Norris. [1946?] 7.9 cm x 5.4 cm. [Note: handwritten on back of photograph “You know something? You look more like you last year than you do this year.”]
173.1/5 Black & white glossy print of Barbara Norris and two others. 1947. 5.5 cm x 7.9 cm. [Note: handwritten on back “Same people plus Bill / 1947”]
173.1/6 Black & white glossy print of Barbara Norris and Bill? [1947?] 7.9 cm x 5.4 cm. [Note: handwritten on back of photograph “This is near our front door.”]
173.1/7 Black & white glossy print of Barbara Norris. [1947?] 7.9 cm x 5.7 cm. [Note: handwritten on back “This is me at the scene of the logging operations. That’s my dear little pup-pup in my arms. Isn’t he nice?”]
173.1/8 Black & white glossy print of three people [Barbara Norris’ parents?] [1947?] 7.9 cm x 5.6 cm. [Note: handwritten on back “Dad, Mother & Billium at the garden gate.”].
173.1/11  Black & white glossy print of four people in uniform. [N.D.] 4.3 cm x 5.7 c.m. [Note: handwritten on front of photograph “Patrick Fleming / Francis Berard”.
173.1/12  Black & white matte print of a woman. [N.D.] 8.5 cm x 6.0 cm.
173.1/13  Black & white matte print of a woman. [N.D.] 11.4 cm x 9.0 cm.
173.1/14  Black & white glossy print of Vancouver from Stanley Park towards Deep Cove. [N.D.] 19.2 cm x 24.0 cm. [Note: photograph has numerous folds].
173.1/15  Black & white matte print of Barbara Violet Norris. [N.D.] 26.6 cm x 18.8 cm.
173.1/16  Black & white glossy print of John Norris. [N.D.] 19.7 cm x 13.0 cm.
173.1/17  Black & white glossy print of two people at a blackboard. [N.D.] 16.8 cm x 18.3 cm.
173.1/18  14 black & white negatives of people at the beach and in a classroom. [N.D.]
173.1/19  Black & white glossy print of Dr. John Norris. [N.D.] 17.1 cm x 11.5 cm.