

# Zipporah Woodward fonds

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University of British Columbia Archives



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# Fonds Description

**Zipporah Woodward fonds.** – 1906-1975.

48 cm of textual records.

25 photographs.

Ephemera.

## Biographical Sketch

Zipporah Ritchie “Zippy” Woodward (1885-1976) was a theatre director, writer, and supporter of the University of British Columbia and of the arts community in Vancouver from the 1920s to the 1970s. Through family and friends she was well-connected within the Vancouver “establishment” of the mid-twentieth century. She was no relation to the Woodward’s department store family.

Born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, “Zippy” (or “Bizzy”) Ritchie attended Wells College in Aurora, New York, in the early 1900's, where she was class president, editor of the school journal, and member of the Play Committee. She withdrew from Wells to marry businessman Ernest Austin Woodward in 1907. She moved with her family from Winnipeg to Vancouver in the early 1920s, where Ernest Woodward built a successful business, the Columbia Grain Elevator Company, with an innovative grain elevator design. They resided on Vancouver's affluent Point Grey Road, in a home called "Seagate". When Ernest’s business fortunes waned the couple moved to an apartment in Vancouver’s West End; by the time of his death from dementia in 1954, Zipporah had found accommodation in the affluent Shaughnessy neighbourhood.

Woodward directed numerous plays for Vancouver Little Theatre in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1941 she directed George Bernard Shaw’s *Candida* for the UBC Players’ Club. Included in the cast were Arthur Hill, who later became a famous Canadian actor, and Lister Sinclair, who went on to be a CBC broadcaster and playwright. In 1945 she directed *Claudia* for the UBC Players Club Alumni.

Zipporah was known among her friends and family as a prolific letter writer. In return, they would often compose humorous poems for her on her birthday. She also wrote several scripts and short stories, which she tried unsuccessfully to sell. In 1945 she published a series of articles in the Vancouver *Daily Province* newspaper titled "Letters of a Mother to Her Son".

As a supporter of the Canadian arts community, Woodward was at various times on the Advisory Council to the National Film Society; president of the British Columbia Drama Association (now Theatre BC); chair of the Vancouver Symphony Society; a member of the Governing Committee of the Canadian Drama Awards; and a director of the

Community Arts Council of Vancouver. In 1956 she appeared as a panelist discussing "Canadian Playwriting" at UBC's Frederic Wood Theatre. Woodward was also active in the Women's Auxiliary of Vancouver General Hospital: in 1954 she was chair and second vice-president, and in 1963 she was made Honorary President.

Woodward's son Geoffrey attended UBC (B.A. 1930) and was a member of Alpha Delta Phi – she was a member of the fraternity's "Mothers' Club". Her daughter Shirley married A.E. "Dal" Grauer, who was president of the B.C. Electric Company (1946-61) and Chancellor of UBC (1957-61); he died in 1961. Shirley subsequently married prominent Vancouver lawyer Walter S. Owen, who later served as BC's Lieutenant-Governor (1973-78). Zipporah had two other children: Henry (who died at age 4), and Peter.

Zipporah Woodward was supported by her daughter Shirley and her family in her later years; she died in 1976.

### **Custodial History**

After Zipporah's death her archive was kept and maintained by her son Geoffrey Woodward. A selection of those papers and other memorabilia was donated by his daughter Paisley Woodward to University Archives in 2025.

### **Scope and Content**

Fonds consists of materials acquired or created by Zipporah Ritchie "Zippy" Woodward. These materials reflect her life as a mid-twentieth century Vancouver "society" lady, as well as an artist and a supporter of the arts and of UBC. They include incoming correspondence, photographs, a photograph album, poetry (typed and handwritten) from Woodward's friends and family, several unpublished pieces written by Woodward, typescripts of her newspaper column "Letters of a Mother to Her Son", newspaper clippings, published items, and a pin and ribbon from the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity. Of particular interest are four folders of letters and other written material from noted Canadian writer Ethel Wilson. The fonds is arranged in three series: Correspondence, Memorabilia, and Photographs.

### **Notes**

File list available.

Donated to University Archives by Paisley Woodward in April 2025.

Photographs are listed as UBC 207.1/xxx.

Further accruals are expected.

## Series Descriptions

**Correspondence series.** –1920-1975.

37 cm of textual materials.

Series consists of correspondence and related textual materials, mainly newspaper clippings and poetry, received by Zipporah Woodward. They represent the wide circle of friends that she had among Vancouver's social and cultural elite, including J.V. Clyne, Lauren Harris, H.R. MacMillan, Dorothy Somerset, Aldyen Hamber, and Stu Keate, among many others. Of particular interest are four folders of letters and other written materials from noted Canadian writer Ethel Wilson.

The files are arranged in alphabetical order, by correspondent, and chronologically within each file.

**Memorabilia series.** – 1930-1972.

11 cm of textual materials.

Ephemera.

Series consists of a variety of materials that reflect Zipporah Woodward's activities and interests. They include her unpublished pieces, typescripts of her newspaper column "Letters of a Mother to Her Son", UBC Players' Club materials (in particular her production of *Candida*), poems written for her (authors unidentified), UBC materials, and items from the memorial for her son-in-law and UBC chancellor A.E. "Dal" Grauer.

The files are arranged in chronological order.

**Photographs series.** – 1906-1972.

25 photographs.

Ephemera.

Series consists of photographs of various sizes, and one photograph album. Some images document Zipporah Woodward and her life, others are from her friends.

Photographs are listed as UBC 207.1/xxx.

# File List

## BOX 1

### CORRESPONDENCE SERIES

- 1-1 Geoff [and Margaret] Andrew 1950-68
  - includes poetry
- 1-2 Bloedel[s] 1953-67
- 1-3 Brock [Babs and David] 1940-62
  - includes poetry
- 1-4 Buckerfield [Mrs. Ernest / Amy] 1963-67
- 1-5 Cave-Browne-Cave [Lady Dowager, "Dorrie"] 1963-75
- 1-6 Council of the Canadian Drama Award 1949-73
  - includes some personal correspondence
- 1-7 Caple/Clegg [Mildred/Edith] 1943-73
- 1-8 Clyne Family 1952-75
  - includes poetry
- 1-9 Robertson Davies May 1960
- 1-10 Duke Ellington 1965-74
  - includes explanatory note from donor Paisley Woodward
- 1-11 Dorothy Olcott Elsmith 1966-73
- 1-12 [Dorothy Farris] 1 April 1958
  - includes explanatory note from donor Paisley Woodward
- 1-13 Hamber (Aldyen) 1940-68
- 1-14 Lilly Harper 1966
- 1-15 Lawren [and Bess] Harris 1939-1968
- 1-16 Alice Hemming (& Harold Hemming) 1958-73
- 1-17 Arthur Hill 1960, 1972
- 1-18 Bruce Hutchison 1966-67
- 1-19 Stu Keate / Vcr Sun – also re. Audrey Alexandra Brown [also Jack Wasserman] 1966-72
- 1-20 Koerner [Leon, Otto, Thea, Joy] 1941-72

## BOX 2

- 2-1 Lecky Family (descendants/relations of H.R. MacMillan) 1954-63
- 2-2 Mrs. Sherwood Lett 1965-73

- 2-3 Edward Alexander Lucas 1929-52  
- includes explanatory note from donor Paisley Woodward  
- includes poetry
- 2-4 Norm McKenzie – Margaret McKenzie & George Curtis 1963-68
- 2-5 H.R. MacMillan 1936-72
- 2-6 McRae, Blanche (Hycroft) [ca. 1920-30]
- 2-7 Malkin [various family members] 1940-66
- 2-8 Merritt family 1954
- 2-9 Bill Murrin 1929-59
- 2-10 Odlum 1965-66
- 2-11 Janet Partridge & family – Vancouver Sun reporter 1937-75 [2 folders]
- 2-12 Pitblado, Isaac – of Winnipeg 1957-61
- 2-13 Rogers (BC Sugar) 1940-66
- 2-14 Ross (Phyllis/Frank) 1949-72
- 2-15 Sandwell [Agnete/Dick] 1966-68

### BOX 3

- 3-1 Sedgewick? [Garnet Gladwin Sedgewick – also Ruth ap Roberts] 1939-41
- 3-2 Selous 1945-73
- 3-3 HTS/MCS – HT Smart 1930-53
- 3-4 Dorothy Somerset 1954-75
- 3-5 Sugarman [Anne/Budd] 1965-75
- 3-6 Austin (& Babe) Taylor 1947-73
- 3-7 Todd [Wilma] 1955-75
- 3-8 Ethel Wilson & husband Wallace Wilson – 1950's letters to Zipporah Ritchie Woodward 1952-59
- 3-9 Ethel Wilson – Wallace Wilson – 1960's – to Zipporah Ritchie Woodward 1960-69 [3 folders]
- 3-10 1970's & undated – Ethel Wilson – to Zipporah R. Woodward 1970-74
- 3-11 Mr. Justice Wilson (Wilson, J.O.) – BCSC/BCCA 1962-67
- 3-12 Freddy [Frederic] Wood 1952-74
- 3-13 Woodward Store Family 1941-61
- 3-14 Dick Wylie [Wyllie] 1954-74  
- includes poetry

### BOX 4

- 4-1 Prominent People – Individual cards, notes or letters 1930-74  
- includes list of correspondents provided by donor Paisley Woodward

- 4-2 [Unidentified] "Possibly prominent people but I don't know who they are"  
1941-68

## MEMORABILIA SERIES

### Writing and speeches

- 4-3 1930 Bizzy script – "Three Pills in a Bottle" [unpublished] [1930]  
4-4 Unpublished play, "Hot Lemonade" 1935  
4-5 "Letters of a Mother to Her Son" 1945  
- original typescripts of columns published in Vancouver "Province"  
4-6 Unpublished short story, "South Wind – North Wind" 1945  
- written under pseudonym "Cynthia Woodward"  
4-7 Unpublished essay, "The Shortsighted Angel" 1949  
- includes rejection letters from both "Reader's Digest" and a literary agent  
4-8 Speech to Georgian Club – "Teahouse of the August Moon" [ca. 1955]  
4-9 Speech[?] by Zipporah Woodward about Dal Grauer [ca. 1957]  
4-10 "Sonnet" for Shirley and Dal Grauer [1950s?]  
4-11 Speech to Community Arts Council May 1960

### Miscellaneous

- 4-12 [Alpha Delta Phi fraternity material] 1929-30, 1938  
- includes convention pin belonging to G.G. (Geoffrey) Woodward stored separately in UA/RBSC vault  
4-13 [Rejection letters] 1930, 1945  
- from MGM re. "Big Boy" script  
- from Vancouver Province re. unidentified article [possibly from the "Letters of a Mother to Her Son" series?]

## BOX 5

- 5-1 "Candida" 1941  
- includes newspaper clippings and correspondence  
5-2 Handwritten note from Garnet Sedgewick to Zipporah's sons May 1943  
- includes explanatory note from donor Paisley Woodward  
5-3 "Claudia" – programme, Players' Club Alumni June 1945  
- directed by Zipporah Woodward



- 5-4 [Farris/Woodward "Timely Inn" collaboration] 1946-47  
- includes explanatory note from donor Paisley Woodward
- 5-5 Players' Club Memorabilia 1949-54
- 5-6 Friends of the Library 1960-61
- 5-7 [Albert Edward Grauer – Zipporah Woodward's son-in-law – memorial]  
1961
- 5-8 [Letters re. Bruce Hutchison's nomination for Royal Bank Centennial Award]  
February 1967
- 5-9 Speech by Bice Caple introducing Dorothy Somerset, University Women's  
Club July 1969
- 5-10 Cast reunion of "Candida", May 1972 1972-74  
- photographs removed and listed separately  
- includes explanatory note from donor Paisley Woodward
- 5-11 Undated poems to Bizzy [Zipporah Woodward] [n.d.]

## PHOTOGRAPHS SERIES

- /1 Ernie [Woodward] & friend. – 9 x 13.5 cm BW print. – [1906?]
- /2 [Aerial view near Winnipeg]. – BW matted print. – 12 x 9 cm; matte 17 x 14.5  
cm. – 29 October 1921  
- inscription on back, almost illegible: "The Air Board, Ottawa, Official  
Photograph – Subject: City Park from the South – Map Ref. ----- - Pilot:  
Caldwell – Photographer: J.R. Cairns – Machine: ??? – Altitude: 1500 ft. –  
Negative number: F200 – Date: 29-10-21 – Station: Winnipeg"
- /3 OS Photo: Zipporah Ritchie Woodward. – BW matted print. – 15 x 20 cm; matte  
24 x 31.5 cm. – [ca. 1942]
- /4 OS Photo: Zipporah Ritchie Woodward. – BW matted print. – 19 x 25 cm; matte  
27 x 40 cm. – [ca. 1942]
- /5 [Cast and staging of "Candida"]. – 25 x 18 cm BW print. – [March 1941]  
- originally found among memorabilia in file 5-1
- /6 John Glen and Mary McLorg (now Mary Hill) in "Candida", prod. by Z.R.W.  
for UBC Players' Club 1941. – 26 x 21 cm BW print. – [March 1941]  
- originally found among memorabilia in file 5-1
- /7 [Ethel Wilson at her desk]. – 9 x 9 cm colour print. – [ca. 1969]  
- originally found among correspondence in file 3-9  
- inscription on back: "Zipporah with fond warm love from Ethel"
- /8 [Ethel Wilson]. – 11 x 8 cm BW print. – 1965  
- originally found among correspondence in file 3-9

- /9 [Wallace Wilson]. 11 x 8 cm BW print. – 1965
  - originally found among correspondence in file 3-9
  - inscription on back: “Wallace – to Zipporah – from Ethel – taken by Nan”
- /10 [“Candida” cast reunion]. – 9 x 12.5 cm colour print. – May 1972
  - L-R : Arthur Hill, [?], Zipporah Ritchie Woodward, Lister Sinclair, [?]
- /11 [“Candida” cast reunion]. – 9 x 12.5 cm colour print. – May 1972
  - L-R : Arthur Hill, [?], Zipporah Ritchie Woodward, Lister Sinclair, [?]
- /12 [“Candida” cast reunion]. – 12.5 x 9 cm colour print. – May 1972
  - L-R : Arthur Hill, [?], Lister Sinclair, [?]
- /13 [“Candida” cast reunion]. – 12.5 x 9 cm colour print. – May 1972
  - L-R : Arthur Hill, [?], Lister Sinclair, [?]
- /14 [“Candida” cast reunion]. – 9 x 12.5 cm colour print. – May 1972
  - L-R : Arthur Hill, Frederic Wood, Lister Sinclair
- /15 Zipporah Ritchie Woodward. – 9 x 12.5 cm colour print. – May 1972
  - taken during “Candida” cast reunion
- /16 [“Candida” cast reunion]. – 12.5 x 9 cm colour print. – May 1972
  - L-R standing: [?], Lister Sinclair, Zipporah Ritchie Woodward, [?], [?].
  - Seated: Arthur Hill

Photograph album with 14 24 x 19 cm BW prints 1922-23

- 5 photographs of Ernest Woodward’s Terminal Elevator “K” under construction, March-June 1923.
- 9 photographs of Ernest and Zipporah Woodward’s house “Seagate” on Point Grey Road, Vancouver, ca. 1922.
- address was 2831 Point Grey Road, now the site of Volunteer Park
- stored separately in UA/RBSC vault