

# **John Smith Fonds**

An inventory

in

The Library of the University of British Columbia  
Special Collections Division

Prepared by:  
Nicole Maunsell  
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**Title: John Smith Fonds**

**Dates of Creation: ca. 1892-1949, 1952**

**Physical description: 17 cm of textual records; 1 CD-ROM**

**Biographical Sketch:**

John Smith was born on May 28, 1859 in Crownthorpe, Norfolk County, England. In 1887, he married Frances Rose Middleton. Together they had four children: John Douglas, Arthur Middleton, Lucy Margaret and Olga Marie. Smith was a graduate chemist in Norwich before immigrating to Canada in 1892, where he purchased and farmed a homestead above Pitt River, northeast of Port Coquitlam in British Columbia.

He and his wife were active in the community of Port Coquitlam, and helped to establish its Anglican church. His wife Rose was the first woman to hold civic office in Port Coquitlam when she was elected as a school trustee in 1913. During his time in British Columbia, Smith held many public positions. He was appointed Municipal Clerk of the Municipality of Port Coquitlam in 1899. In 1900 he was named Justice of the Peace for the counties of Victoria, Nanaimo, Vancouver, Westminster, Yale, Cariboo and Kootenay. He became a Police Magistrate for the City of Port Coquitlam in 1913. He was City Clerk of Port Coquitlam from the time it was incorporated in 1913 to 1937. In 1923 he became Justice of the Peace for British Columbia. He was the Stipendiary Magistrate for Counties of Vancouver and Westminster from 1933 to 1945.

In 1989 Smith travelled to the Yukon and kept an account of his experiences in a diary. This diary was later published in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* in 1952 with an introduction and annotations by Walter N. Sage. He died on January 24, 1950, at the age of 90.

**Scope and Content:**

The fonds contains 14 of John Smith's diaries, starting on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1892, and running until December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1949. (There are no diaries for the periods between March 1, 1901 to May 31, 1903 or February 24, 1912 to December 31 1922.) The first diary records his emigration to Canada and purchase of his homestead. The rest record daily activities and weather conditions relating to operation of his farm, the community, and family life.

A separate diary was kept by Smith when he traveled to the Yukon from March 15 to August 31, 1898. This diary was transcribed by his daughter Olga in the late 1940s. In 1952 this diary was published in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, with an introduction and annotations by Walter N. Sage. The diary was thought to have been donated to the provincial archives, although no record of the donation exists. A copy of the published article by Sage is included in the fonds. During Smith's absence, his wife Rose maintained the diary recording the daily events of their homestead.

The fonds also contains four letters patent appointing Smith to public office, and one letters patent rescinding one of these appointments.

**Source of Supplied title:**

Title based on contents of fonds.

**Immediate Source of Acquisition:**

Donated by Philip A. Jones, grandson of John Smith, on March 27, 2007.

**Arrangement:**

The fonds has been arranged into two series, the Diaries Series and the Letters Patent Series.

**Restrictions:**

No access restrictions.

**Finding aids:**

Series description and file list available.

**Accruals:**

No further accruals are expected.

## **Series Descriptions:**

### **1. Diaries series**

16.5 m of textual records; 1 CD-ROM

Series consists of 14 diaries kept by John Smith regarding his emigration from England to Canada, his purchase of a homestead in the Port Coquitlam area, and the daily activities and weather conditions related to farming, community life, and family life. Diary 2 also contains notes and sketches which Smith made at the Ambulance lectures he attended. A transcription of these diaries is also available on CD-ROM. The series also contains a bound copy of the published account of Smith's trip to the Yukon in 1898, published by Walter N. Sage in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* in 1952.

File list available.

### **2. Letters Patent series**

0.5 cm of textual records

Series consists of 5 letters patent: 4 appointing Smith to public office, and one rescinding one of these appointments.

File list available.

## File List

### Diaries series

Box/Folder	Dates
1-1 Diary 1	July 14, 1892—January 12, 1898
1-2 Diary 2	March 1, 1898—January 10, 1899 During the time that Smith was in the Yukon, his wife Frances Rose took over the diary recording.
1-3 Diary 3	January 1, 1899—January 11, 1900
1-4 Diary 4	January 1, 1900—February 28, 1901
1-5 Diary 5	June 1, 1903—November 8, 1904
1-6 Diary 6	November 9, 1904—April 30, 1907
1-7 Diary 7	May 1, 1907—April 10, 1910
1-8 Diary 8	April 11, 1910—February 23, 1912
1-9 Diary 9	January 1, 1923—December 31, 1926
1-10 Diary 10	January 1, 1927—December 31, 1929
1-11 Diary 11	January 1, 1930—July 31, 1933
1-12 Diary 12	August 1, 1933—May 31, 1938
2-1 Diary 13	June 1, 1938—February 29, 1944
2-2 Diary 14	March 1, 1944—December 19, 1949
2-3	Bound copy of “Record of a Trip to Dawson, 1898’: The Diary of John Smith” by Walter N. Sage, reprinted from the <i>British Columbia Historical Society</i> , Volume XVI, Nos. 1 & 2, Jan-April 1952.
2-4	“Very Fine” The Diaries of John Smith, transcribed by Philip A. Jones in October 2006. (Microsoft Word document containing transcriptions of all the diaries except the one recounting Smith’s Yukon trip. Embedded in the document are scans of some of the memoranda pages of the diaries, and sketches from the Ambulance lectures in Diary 2.)

## Letters Patent series

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Dates</b>
2-5 Justice of the Peace for the Counties of Victoria, Nanaimo, Vancouver, Westminster, Yale, Cariboo and Kootenay	April 21, 1900
Police Magistrate for the City of Port Coquitlam	March 31, 1913
Justice of the Peace for the Province of British Columbia	February 22, 1923
Stipendiary Magistrate for the Counties of Vancouver and Westminster	April 10, 1933
Handwritten note: This appointment as a Stipendiary Magistrate was rescinded, and his Commission cancelled.	July 25, 1945