

John Davidson fonds

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Last revised August 2017



University of British Columbia Archives



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



The Library

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Fonds Description

John Davidson fonds. – 1899-1970

2.6 m of textual records.

18 photographs.

Memorabilia.

Biographical Sketch

John Davidson (1878-1970) was born in Aberdeen, Scotland and graduated from Gordon's College. As botany assistant and later curator of the Botany Museum at the University of Aberdeen from 1893 to 1911 he developed significant skills in plant classification and general biology. In 1911, he was appointed as British Columbia's first Provincial Botanist. Davidson established Canada's first botanical garden at Essondale's Colony Farm near New Westminster. In 1916, the 25,000 plants were transferred to the new Point Grey site of University of British Columbia and the garden continued to develop under his supervision. Davidson joined the UBC faculty in 1917 as an instructor of Botany and remained at the university until his retirement in 1945. He was founder and, until 1937, president of the Vancouver Natural History Society.

Scope and Content

The fonds consists of biographical material (1901-1987), teaching material (1899-1948), publications (1913-1949), lectures (1919-1945), journals/notebooks (1911-1936), correspondence/subject files (1912-1962), Vancouver Natural History Society (1927-1941), printed/published material and photographs (1919-1949), and memorabilia (1922-1928).

Notes

Title based on the contents of the fonds.

Selected teaching materials and manuscripts have been digitized and are available online via links in the file list.

Photographs have been digitized and included in UBC Archives' Historical Photograph Database ([UBC 32.1](#)).

The collection of badges and judge's ribbons, was transferred to the Archives from Koerner Library in April 2017.

Series Descriptions

Biographical Material. - 1901-1987.

6 cm of textual records.

Memorabilia.

Series consists of historical accounts of Davidson and his family, copies of testimonials (references) for Davidson and other miscellaneous material.

Teaching Material. - 1899-1948.

66 cm of textual records.

Series consists of copies of examinations, lecture notes, course outlines, student lists for botany courses taught by Davidson.

Publications. - 1913-1949.

8 cm of textual records.

Series consists of copies of Davidson's publications.

Lectures. - 1919-1945.

5.5 cm of textual records.

Series consists of a list of lectures given by Davidson, copies of some lectures and associated correspondence.

Journals/Notebooks. - 1911-1936.

13 cm of textual records.

Series consists of daily journals (1912, 1917-1920) and notebooks chronicling various trips (1911-1936) taken by Davidson.

Correspondence/Subject Files. - 1912-1962.

93 cm of textual records.

Series consists of files that contain predominantly correspondence and also some other material.

As this material arrived in no discernable order, the files have simply been arranged alphabetically by the topic assigned by Davidson.

Vancouver Natural History Society. - 1927-1941.

13 cm of textual records.

Series consists primarily of correspondence (1923-1935) and camp records (1921-1941) of the Vancouver Natural History Society.

Printed/Published Material. - [n.d.]

30 cm of textual records.

Series consists of printed and published material relating to botany collected by Davidson.

Photographs. - 1919-1949.

18 photographs; 71 x 21 or smaller.

Series consists of eighteen photographs of various groups of people or botanical specimens.

Photographs have been digitized and included in UBC Archives' Historical Photograph Database ([UBC 32.1](#)).

File List

Box 1

BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

- 1-1 "A Ten Minute Summary of 32 Years Growth" by John Davidson (n.d.)
"Historical Sketch of the Late John Davidson and His Family" by Edna Davidson (1987)
- 1-2 **"Application for the Post of Professor of Botany in Point Grey University" by John Davidson** (n.d.)
- 1-3 John Davidson - "Firsts" (n.d.)
- 1-4 **Testimonials (References) for John Davidson** (1911)
"Our Portrait" - reprinted from "Transactions of Aberdeen Working Men's Natural History and Scientific Society" [n.d.]
- 1-5 **Education Department Certificate** (1901)

TEACHING MATERIAL

- 1-6 "Notes on Botany" (1899)
- 1-7 "Geographical Botany" - Notes (1906)
- 1-8 "Notes on Advanced Botany for Final B.Sc. of Aberdeen and London Universities" - Notes [n.d.]
- 1-9 "Notes on Advanced Botany" [n.d.]
- 1-10 "Notes on Physiological Botany" (May 1910)
- 1-11 **"Botany Notes"** (1912/13)
- 1-12 Lecture Notes - Advanced Botany (n.d.)
- 1-13 Lecture Notes (n.d.)
- 1-14 Lecture Notes - Misc.

Box 2

Botany 1 and 1(a)

- 2-1 Class Lists and Marks (1923-1946)
- 2-2 Examinations (1922-1945)
- 2-3 Exercises/Exams (1934/35)
- 2-4 Exercises/Exams (1935/36)
- 2-5 Exercises (1936/37)

- 2-6 Exercises/Exams (1937/38)
- 2-7 Exercises/Exams (1938/39)
- 2-8 Exercises/Exams (1939/40)
- 2-9 Exercises/Exams (1940/41)
- 2-10 Exercises/Exams (1941/42)
- 2-11 Exercises/Exams (1942/43)
- 2-12 Exercises/Exams (1943/44)
- 2-13 Exercises/Exams (1944/45)
- 2-14 Lab List (1945/46)
- 2-15 Exercises/Exams (1945/46)
- 2-16 Exercises/Exams - Summer Session (1933/34)
- 2-17 Exercises/Exams - Summer Session (1939, 1946)
- 2-18 Exercises/Exams - Spring Session (1946)
- 2-19 Biology 100 - Laboratory Outline (1947)
Laboratory Manual for Botany 1 (1948)

Dendrology [Botany 5(b), 1(b), 2(b)]

- 2-20 Exams - Botany 5b - First Term (1921-1946)
- 2-21 Exams - Second Term - Botany 5(b) (1922-1947)
- 2-22 Exams (1941-1945)
- 2-23 Class Lists/Grades (1923-1946)
Lecture Notes (n.d.)
- 2-24 Teaching Outlines (1923-1937)

Box 3

Economic Flora [Botany 5(a), 10(b)]

- 3-1 Lecture Notes (1923-1935)
- 3-2 Class Lists/Student Grades (1926-1947)
- 3-3 Exams (1920-1946)
- 3-4 Miscellaneous

Forest Botany [Botany 1(b)]

- 3-5 Exams (1937-1945)
- 3-6 Class Lists/Marks (1939-1945)
- 3-7 Lecture Notes (n.d.)
- 3-8 Miscellaneous

Descriptive Taxonomy [Botany 5 (c)]

- 3-9 Lecture Notes (n.d.)
- 3-10 Examinations (1928-1948)
- 3-11 Class Lists/Grades (1927-1943, 1947/48)

Box 4

Short Courses in Botany - Correspondence, Notes, Exams, Lecture Notes, Printed Material

- 4-1 1920/21
- 4-2 1922/23
- 4-3 1923/24
- 4-4 1924/25
- 4-5 1928/29
- 4-6 1930/31
- 4-7 1931/32
- 4-8 1936/37
- 4-9 1938/39

Short Courses in Botany (Evening) - Correspondence, Notes, Exams, Lecture Notes, Printed Material

- 4-10 1912-1919
- 4-11 1919/20
- 4-12 1921/22
- 4-13 1925/26
- 4-14 1926/27
- 4-15 1927/28
- 4-16 1929/30
- 4-17 1932/33
- 4-18 1933/34
- 4-19 1934/35
- 4-20 1935/36
- 4-21 1937/38
- 4-22 1939/40
- 4-23 1940-41
- 4-24 1941/42
- 4-25 1942/43

- 4-26 1943/44
- 4-27 1944/45
- 4-28 1945/46
- 4-29 1946/47
- 4-30 1947/48
- 4-31 Short Courses in Botany - Enrolment Figures (1911-1936)
- 4-32 Short Courses in Botany - Exams (1920-1946)
- 4-33 Short Courses in Botany - Class lists/Student Grades (1942-1951)
- 4-34 Lectures by Davidson:
 Summer School Victoria (1919) - Class list, lecture notes
 "Plant Study" - Preliminary Rural Science
 "Botany for Advanced Rural Science and High School Teachers"
 "Tree Botany for Teachers of Manual Training"
 "Notes During Summer School Session" (1925)
- 4-35 Pharmaceutical Association of British Columbia - Botany Examination Lists
 (1940-1948)

Box 5

PUBLICATIONS BY DAVIDSON

- 5-1 **Index to J.F.D. Publications** (1911-1957)
- 5-2 "First Annual Report of the Botanical Office of British Columbia" (1913)
- 5-3 "Second Annual Report of the Botanical Office of British Columbia" (1914)
- 5-4 "Third Annual Report of the Botanical Office of British Columbia" (1915)
- 5-5 **"Instructions on the Collection and Preservation of Plants for Private or School Herbia"** (1915)
- 5-6 "Douglas Fir Sugar" - Typescript (1919)
- 5-7 "The Morality of Plants" (1921)
- 5-8 "The Cascara Tree in British Columbia" (1922)
- 5-9 "Commercial Drug Plant Cultivation in British Columbia" (1923)
- 5-10 "Poisonous Plants of British Columbia" (1933)
- 5-11 "The Casera Tree in British Columbia" (1942)
- 5-12 "Edible Plants of British Columbia" (1943)
- 5-13 "The Cascara Tree in Relation to Drug Farming in British Columbia" (1949)
- 5-14 "A New Process for Retaining the Green Colour of Plants in Fluid for Museum Specimens" [n.d.]
- 5-15 Manuscript - "An Illustrated Botany of B.C." - Text by J. Davidson and Illustrations by Ivy Abercombie [n.d.]

LECTURES

- 5-16 Indexes to Lectures and Addresses by Davidson (1912-1951) - Arranged **chronologically, by topic, alphabetically by title**, and by **audience**
- 5-17 Copies of Lectures:
"The Tent Caterpillar, Its Life History and Means of Combating the Pest" (1919)
"Flora of British Columbia" (1930)
"The Structure of Flowers in Relation to Pollination" (1935)
"Theology and Modern Science" (1936)
"The Season's Wild Flowers" (1938)
"Trip East" (1938)
"Economic Aspects of the B.C. Flora" (1939)
"Wild Flowers and Wild Gardeners" (1939)
"British Columbia as a Source of Medicinal Plants" (1940)
"Flowers in Our Father's World" (1940)
"Plants by the Indian Trail" (1941)
"Medicinal Plants of British Columbia and Their Relation to Drug Farming" (1945)
- 5-18 Manuscript - "Is Nature Knowledge a Farce?" (n.d.)
- 5-19/21 Lectures - Correspondence (1939-1945) 3 files

Box 6

JOURNALS AND NOTEBOOKS

- 6-1 Daily Journal (1912)
- 6-2 Journal [Includes Letter Register and Diary] (1917-1920)

Notebooks

- 6-3 "Notes by John Davidson, Botany Dept., Aberdeen" (n.d.)
- 6-4 Seattle Visit - **August 20, August 27** (1911)
- 6-5 "**Trip to Black Tusk Area**" (1912)
"**Garabaldi Notes**" (1914)
"**Notes on the Flora of the Lower Thompson**" (1914, 1915)
- 6-6 "Skagit Trip" - **Book 1, Book 2** (1915)
- 6-7 "**Garabaldi Notes**" (1916)
"**Notes on a Trip to Botanical Congress, New York**" (1926)

- 6-8 **"Garabaldi Notes"** (1927)
 "Notes on Visit to Tenquille Valley" (1931)
 "A.A.A.S. Conference Notes" (1936)

Box 7

CORRESPONDENCE/SUBJECT FILES

- 7-1 Botanical Correspondence (1955-1965)
7-2 Botanical Price Lists (1921/22, 1923-1925, 1939/40)
7-3 Botanical Society of Edinborough (1911-1919)
7-4 Botanical Society of Edinborough (1920-1944)
7-5 Botanical Society of Edinborough - Notification of J. Davidson's Death by
 Edna Davidson (1970)
7-6 Botanical Society of America, Pacific Section (1936)
7-7 Botany 7 (1939)
7-8 Botany, Beginners
7-9 Botany Notes Prepared by John Davidson, University of Aberdeen (n.d.)
7-10 British Columbia Academy of Science - Correspondence, Printed Material
 (1953-1961) - also Constitution and By-Laws (1909)
7-11 British Columbia Industrial and Scientific Research Council - Subcommittee
 on Marine Plants of Economic Importance (1944-1946)
7-12 British Columbia Industrial and Scientific Research Council - Subcommittee
 on Marine Plants of Economic Importance (1945)
7-13 British Columbia Research Council (1950-1969)
7-14 Cascara - Clippings, correspondence, report (1948-1942)
7-15 Cascara - Clippings, correspondence, report (1942-1945)
7-16 Cascara Bulletin - Mailing list, correspondence (1942-1945)
7-17 Cascara - Provincial Advisory Sub-Committee on Medicinal Plants (1946)
7-19 Calder, C.C. - Calcutta Botanical Gardens (1923-1929)
7-20 Conifera

Box 8

- 8-1 Darbshire, O.V., Botanical Dept., University of Bristol (1912)
8-2 Davidson, Miss Annie M. (1912-1914)
8-3 Davidson, John F. - Correspondence, printed material (1943-1957)
8-4 Davidson, John F. - Copy of M.A. thesis - "A Revision of the Genus
 Astragalus in British Columbia" (1940)

- 8-5 Dawson, William (1912/13)
- 8-6 Ewing, James (1912)
- 8-7 Donald, T. Hunter (1912/13)
- 8-8 Douglas Fir Sugar (1919-1942)
- 8-9 Drug Investigations - Research Council (1921-1929)
- 8-10 Drug Plants - Correspondence (1916-1950)
- 8-11 Drug Plants - Correspondence (1917-1929)
- 8-12/13 Drug Plants
- 8-14 "Edible Plants of British Columbia" - Typescript and correspondence (1943)
- 8-15 Ericales - Printed material, notes
- 8-16 Extension Committee [UBC] (1921-1926)
- 8-17 Extension Committee [UBC] (1927-1935)
- 8-18 Extension Dept. [UBC] (1948/49)
- 8-19 Extension Lectures (1938)
- 8-20 Flora and Fauna
- 8-21 Flora, British Columbia

Box 9

- 9-1 Gage, A.T. [Director, Calcutta Botanical Garden] (1921-1923)
- 9-2 Hay Fever (1922-1943)
- 9-3 Hemlock Arboretum
- 9-4/5 Hydrastis - Enquiries and Replies (1950)
- 9-6 International Botanical Conference (1926)
- 9-7 International Botanical Congress (1930)
- 9-8 International Botanical Congress (1935)
- 9-9 International Horticultural Congress (1930)
- 9-10 Japanese Agar-Agar Industry
- 9-11 Linnean Society of London - Correspondence, printed material (1913, 1955-1970)
- 9-12 Linnean Society of London - Publications (1919-1938)
- 9-13 MacKenzie, President Norman - Correspondence (1945-1962)
- 9-14 Maddigan, S.E. (1946/47)
- 9-15 Mahony, J. (1913-1916)
- 9-16 Medicinal and Poisonous Plants (1933)
- 9-17 Medicinal Plants - Correspondence (1916-1928, 1948)
- 9-18 Medicinal Plants - Correspondence (1915-1920)
- 9-19 Miscellaneous Species
- 9-20 Nature Study Notes
- 9-21/22 Orchedaceae

Box 10

- 10-1 Pacific Science Conference (1933)
- 10-2 Pickford, A.E. (1942)
- 10-3 Pension Plan [UBC] (1954-1969)
- 10-4 Pensions and National Health, Dept. of - Minister - Correspondence (1941)
- 10-5 Penick & Company, New York (1943)
- 10-6 Perry, H.G.T. - Chair, Post-War Rehabilitation Board, Victoria (1942)
- 10-7 Plants, Descriptions - Kamloops (1939)
- 10-8 Plants Identified, etc. (1949-1954)
- 10-9 Poole, D.R. / Douglas D. Vollan / G.M. Shrum - Re: Cascara (1944/45, 1954)
- 10-10 Prain, Colonel D., Kew Gardens (1913-1916)
- 10-11 Provincial Secretary Office (1912)
- 10-12 Receipts - Misc. (1912-1917)
- 10-13 Rennie, John, Zoology Dept., University of Aberdeen (1912-1913)
- 10-14 Royal Botanical Society of London (1925-1937)
- 10-15 Royal Horticultural Society (1924)
- 10-16 Salicaceae
- 10-17 School Board (1913)
- 10-18 Shigematsu, S. - Correspondence re: Butterfly specimens (1943)
[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#)
- 10-19 Sprague, T. (1933)
- 10-20 Strachan, James (1912)
- 10-21 Sturdy, David A. Re: Opium poppy sample (1941)
- 10-22 Thomson, J. Arthur (1912)
- 10-23 Trail, J.W.H. (1911-1914)
- 10-24 Wells, Myrtle (1941)
- 10-25 Wesbrook, Frank F. (1913-1918)
- 10-26 Woodward Library (1969/70)
- 10-27 Correspondence - Misc. (1938-1958)
- 10-28 Correspondence - A - Misc.
- 10-29 Correspondence - B - Misc.
- 10-30 Correspondence - M - Misc.
- 10-31 Correspondence - N - Misc.
- 10-32 Correspondence - O - Misc.
- 10-33 Correspondence - P - Misc.
- 10-34 Correspondence - R - Misc.
- 10-35 Correspondence - S - Misc.
- 10-36 Correspondence - T - Misc.
- 10-37 Correspondence - Private (1919-1936)

10-38 Letters to answer

Box 11

VANCOUVER NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

- 11-1 Constitution (n.d., 1978)
Handbooks (1927-29, 1937-41)
- 11-2 Presidential Address - "The Hand-Writing on the Wall" (1924)
- 11-3 Notices of Meetings (1927-1935)

V.N.H.S. - Correspondence

11-4/13 1923-1935

V.N.H.S. - Camp Records

- 11-14 General (1922-1932)
- 11-15 Savary Island (1924)
- 11-16 Cameron Lake (1926)
- 11-17 Garibaldi Park (1927, 1928, 1929, 1932, 1941)
- 11-18 Tenquille Lake (1931)
- 11-19 Skagit Valley (1940)
- 11-20 Cameron Lake (1921, 1926)
- 11-21 Bootahnie Valley (1921, 1925, 1929, 1935)
- 11-22 V.N.H.S. Membership List (1949)
- 11-23 Notices of Summer Excursions (1924-1935)
- 11-24 Miscellaneous Records
- 11-25 Camp Songs

Scanned items:

British Columbia Mountaineering Club - **resolution calling for creation of Garibaldi Park** (1915)

VNHS - **"Quotations on Provisions for Natural History Society"** (1926)

VNHS - **letter to members re. prize for best collection of pressed plants from Garibaldi Camp** (1929)

Box 12

Trees of British Columbia - UBC Department of Botany (1926)
[Trees of British Columbia - no cover] [n.d.]

12-1 Pen Sketches, etc. (1913-1948?)

Scanned items:

Dicentra uniflora - Rossland B.C. (1913)

[untitled] [n.d.]

[untitled] [n.d.]

"Flowers" of Dogwood [n.d.]

Pharmaceutical Association of the Province of British Columbia - Semi-Annual Examination (1948)

[examination - page 2(?)] (1948?)

Camassia esculenta Leichtlini [n.d.]

Erythronium giganteum var. albiflorum [n.d.]

[untitled] [n.d.]

Fruits of "Cedars" [n.d.]

Birch / Hazel / Oak [n.d.]

[pine and fir cones] [n.d.]

12-2 Pencil Sketches (1899)

Scanned items:

Erythronium parviflorum (June 1899)

purple heather / white heather (July 1899)

L. arcticus (August [1899?])

Mimulus Lewisii (July 1899)

Castilleja (July 1899)

Aquilegia columbiana / Aquilegia irincula(?) / Brodiaea B. Douglasi (July 1899)

Tritellaria lanceolata [n.d.]

Epilobium alpinum (July 1899)

Calypus bulbosa / C.grandiflorum [n.d.]

Clintonia uniflora (July 1899)

Rhododendron albiflorum [n.d.]

Lilium columbianum (July 1899)

Pyrola rotundeflora ? [n.d.]

Anemone occidentalia (July 1899)

PRINTED MATERIAL AND PUBLICATIONS COLLECTED BY J.F.D.

Box 13

Box of Microscopic Slides Prepared By J.F.D. [n.d.]

PHOTOGRAPHS

- 32.1/1 Forestry Class (1919) - 2 views
- 32.1/2 B.C. Agricultural Production Committee (1949)
- 32.1/3 Botany specimens (n.d.) - 12 views
- 32.1/4 Taxonomy [Group portrait] (1926)
- 32.1/5 Fifth International Botanical Congress (1930) - 2 views (OVR)
- 32.1/6 Victoria Summer School Picnic at Elk Lake (1925) (OVR)

Oversize Material

OVR Box 11

3 Diplomas - Vancouver Exhibition Association (1917, **1935, 1938**)

Diploma - "Societas Botanica" [Botanical Society] [n.d.]

Plant drawings by J.F.D. (4) [n.d.]:

Mature flower

Ripe flower

Poplar / Alder

Maps:

Sketch Map of a portion of the Garibaldi Group of mountains... (1912)

Sketch Map of the Garibaldi District [n.d.]

Sketch maps for "Botanical Survey of B.C."

Sketch-Map to Illustrate "Botanical Survey..." (1914)

Botanie Camp (1922)

Photographs - 5th International Botanical Congress (1930)

Miscellaneous Botanical Charts and Tables [n.d.]

Analytical Table - Astragali of British Columbia

Astragalus - Analytical Table of B.C. Records

Fungi

Marine Rhodophyceae

Astragali of British Columbia

Key to Genera of B.C. Phaeophyceae

[Price list of medicinal plants] - [top](#), [bottom](#)

Memorabilia – Collection of badges and judge’s ribbons pinned to sash:

Provincial Exhibition – New Westminster B.C. – 1928 – Director

Provincial Exhibition – New Westminster B.C. – 1922 – Judge

Provincial Exhibition – New Westminster B.C. – 1924 – Judge

Judge – Vancouver Exhibition 1923

J. Davidson – Univ. Brit. Colum. [n.d.]

Vancouver Natural History Society’s Camp [n.d.]

Judge – Canada’s Pacific Exhibition – Vancouver B.C. [n.d.]

Reception and Entertainment Committee [n.d.]

Judge – Vancouver Exhibition Association 1922

Judge – Vancouver Exhibition Association [n.d.]

Hon. Director – Vancouver Exhibition 1926

British Columbia Forest Service – Volunteer Fire Warden [n.d.]