

History

History of Victoria University Archives

The history of the Archives is intertwined with that of the United Church, as it was initially a repository primarily concerned with records created by the Church.

In 1953, the Archives was given space in the Wymilwood Building, under the direction of the Archivist-Historian who was jointly appointed by the Church and University.

In 1961, the holdings were moved to the newly opened E.J. Pratt Library.

Then in 1972 a new agreement was reached and the Archives was set up in the Birge-Carnegie Building, where it would operate as the United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives until 2008.

In 2008, the United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives split and a separate United Church Archives was formed. The University Archives became part of the Victoria University Library system.

As of 2024 the Victoria University Archives has completely moved out of Birge-Carnegie, into off-site storage, and are waiting to see what the future holds for a permanent space on campus.

Timeline

See also:

[History of Victoria](#)

1829: The conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada votes to appoint a committee to consider establishing a seminary.

1830, August 23: At the Conference of 1830, the constitution of the new seminary is adopted. It states: "Resolved, that this shall be purely a literary institution. That no system of Theology shall be taught therein, but all students shall be free to embrace and pursue any religious creed..."

1831: Cobourg is selected as the site of the new Methodist seminary, to be named "Upper Canada Academy". All itinerant preachers of the Conference are asked to collect subscriptions.

1832, June 7: Laying of the cornerstone of Upper Canada Academy.

1832, June 18: Official opening of Upper Canada Academy, offering pre-university instruction to both sexes. Matthew Richey is installed as the first Principal.

1836, October 12: The Great Seal is affixed to the Charter of Upper Canada Academy, bringing the Academy into official existence.

1839: Egerton Ryerson is appointed Principal of Upper Canada Academy.

1841, August 27: The act changing the name of the Academy to Victoria College and giving it degree-granting powers is given royal assent.

History

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1842, June 21: Induction of Egerton Ryerson as Principal of Victoria College.

1842, October: Instruction at the university level begins. Women are excluded from the College.

1845: The first B.A. earned by study in course in Ontario is granted by Victoria to Oliver Springer.

1850: The College is at low ebb; only four students turn up for the beginning of term.

1854: After the discontinuation of medical teaching at the [University of Toronto](#), Dr. John Rolph's Toronto School of Medicine turns to Victoria for its degrees and is known as the Medical Department (later, Faculty of Medicine) of Victoria College.

1856: Founding of the Literary Association.

1860: Founding of the [Alumni Association](#).

1862: The Faculty of Law is added.

1862: The first conversazione is held by the Literary Society. Since dancing was not permitted at the College, the conversaciones were the major Victoria social events for many years.

1866: The Montreal branch of the Faculty of Medicine is added.

1867: The Montreal branch of the Faculty of Law is added.

1868: English Literature, taught by Alfred Henry Reynar, is added to the curriculum.

1870: Founding of the Glee Club.

1871: Inauguration of the Senior Stick, awarded annually to a Junior selected by his classmates as being "intellectually, morally, physically and erratically preeminent in virtue and otherwise, especially otherwise" (Acta Victoriana, 1885).

1871: The Department of Theology (two years later made the Faculty of Theology) is added. Nathanael Burwash (Vic 1859) is appointed Dean of Theology.

1874: December—The first Bob party, named in honour of Robert Beare, the caretaker of Victoria. The annual Bob party, featuring farce of the broadest variety at the expense of freshman and faculty, became a Vic institution. Since World War II, it has developed into a revue.

1874: Founding of the V.P. Society (a science club) and the Jackson Society (a literary club for theology students).

1876: Laying of the cornerstone of Faraday Hall, the first building in Ontario devoted to the teaching of science.

1876: Victoria awards its first B.Sc. to William Renwick Riddell.

1877: Mary Crossen (later Burns), the first woman permitted to take the lectures with male students at Victoria College, is awarded the degree of M.E.L (Mistress of English Literature) by Brookhurst Academy and Victoria jointly.

1878: Founding of Acta Victoriana, the longest-running student publication in Canada.

History

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1878: Founding of the Natural Science Association.

1879: First Senior Dinner given for graduands.

1880: Founding of the Y.M.C.A. at Victoria.

1881: Andrew James Bell is appointed Lecturer in Classics.

1882: Arthur Philemon Coleman (Vic 1876), who had taught Classics and Science after graduating in 1876, is appointed Professor of Natural History and Geology.

1883: Augusta Stowe (later Stowe-Gullen) receives the M.D. from Victoria, becoming the first woman graduate of an Ontario university and the first woman to graduate from a Canadian medical school.

1884: Nellie Greenwood (later Andrews) receives the B.Sc. from Victoria, becoming the first woman to complete the undergraduate programme at Victoria.

1884: Victoria College and Albert College federate to form Victoria University.

1886: Isabella Willoughby becomes the first woman to receive the B.A. from Victoria.

1887: Nathanael Burwash is appointed President and Chancellor.

1889: Founding of the Ladies' Literary Society.

1890, November 12: Proclamation of the University Act federating Victoria University with the University of Toronto. Victoria agrees to hold in abeyance its degree-granting powers (except in Theology) and decides to move to Toronto.

1891: Founding of the Missionary Society, the first society at Victoria in which both men and women participate.

1891, June 15: Laying of the cornerstone for the new Victoria building in Toronto.

1892, October 25: Official opening of the new Victoria College building. The College had 226 students (including 14 women) and a staff of 11, all Canadian-born.

1894: Founding of the Athletic Union

1894: The Jackson and Literary Societies amalgamate to form the Union Literary Society.

1897: Founding of the Barbara Heck Memorial Association (later the [Victoria Women's Association](#)).

1898: Inauguration of the Athletic Stick, awarded annually to an outstanding male athlete in his final year.

1898: Founding of the Alumnae Association.

1899: The Methodist Church establishes its [Archives](#) at Victoria University.

1900: Frances Huston Wallace is appointed Dean of Theology.

1903: Opening of [Annesley Hall](#), women's residence, with Margaret Addison (Vic 1889) as its head.

1906: Founding of A.S.G.A. (Annesley Student Government Association).

History

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1909: Victoria wins the Mulock Cup as interfaculty rugby champions for the first time.

1909: Victoria wins the Jennings Cup as interfaculty hockey champions for the first time.

1910: Opening of the Birge-Carnegie Library.

1910: Alfred LeRoy Burt becomes the first Victoria student to win a Rhodes scholarship.

1913: Richard Pinch Bowles (Vic 1885) is appointed President and Chancellor.

1913: Founding of the [Victoria Student Council](#).

1913: Opening of [Burwash Hall](#) and four houses of men's residence (North, Middle, Gate and South), the gift of Chester D. Massey.

1914-18: World War I. 530 members of the College served, 67 died.

1915: Ladies Senior Stick given to College by Class of 1915. Eleanor Davis (Vic 1T5) first student to carry it.

1918: Women's Athletic Stick given to College by Class of 1918. Beatrice Flanders (Vic 1T8) first carried the Stick.

1919: Appointment of Mary Coyne Rowell (Vic 1898), first woman faculty member at Victoria.

1920: John Fletcher McLaughlin (Vic 1888) is appointed Dean of Theology.

1920: Margaret Addison is appointed Dean of Women in Victoria College.

1925: Mrs. E.R. Wood gives her home, to the College as a centre for women students. Lady Flavelle pays to have it remodelled and furnished.

1925: Presentation of The Wishing Cap, the first student production of light opera at the University of Toronto by the Victoria College Glee and Choral Club (later Music Club).

1926: Dancing is officially sanctioned at Victoria.

1928: The Victoria Faculty of Theology and Union Theological College (composed of staff and students of Knox College who supported the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches) unite to form [Emmanuel College](#), a theological college of the newly-formed United Church of Canada. Alfred Gandier is appointed Principal.

1931, September 22: Official opening of Emmanuel College. Opening of five houses of residence for Emmanuel College (Ryerson, Nelles, Caven, Gandier and Bowles).

1932: The 100th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of Upper Canada Academy is marked by a pilgrimage to Cobourg.

1932: A. J. Bell leaves his library, the finest private collection in Canada, to Victoria University. It becomes the nucleus of the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies.

1934: Jessie MacPherson is appointed Dean of Women.

1936: The centenary of the granting of the Charter is marked by celebrations.

History

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1937: Reba E. Hern becomes the first woman to receive a diploma from Emmanuel College.

1939-1945: World War II. Over 1400 members of the College (including graduates) served; 76 died.

1939: Stephenson House acquired by Victoria for use as a co-operative residence.

1951, October 12: Laying of the cornerstone of the new Wymilwood Students' Union.

1951: Founding of *Victoria Reports* (later [Vic Report](#)), the Victoria alumni publication.

1952: Founding of *The Strand*, the Victoria student newspaper.

1954: Kathleen Coburn (Vic 2T8), the General Editor of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, becomes the first woman to reach the rank of full professor at Victoria.

1955: The [Coleridge Collection](#) is acquired by Victoria University.

1959: Opening of Margaret Addison Hall women's residences.

1961: Opening of the new [Victoria College Library](#).

1963: Publication of the first volume of the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. General Editor John M. Robson.

1964: Founding of the [Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies](#), F. David Hoeniger (Vic 4T6), Founding Director. The Centre houses one of North America's finest collections of Erasiana, built on the library of A.J. Bell.

1966, November 1: Opening of the New Academic Building (renamed Northrop Frye Hall in 1983).

1967: The new Victoria College Library is renamed in honour of E.J. Pratt (Vic 1T1), the poet and teacher whose manuscripts are housed in the library.

1969, September: [Toronto School of Theology](#) begins its co-operative teaching in the basic degree programs and continues the advanced degree programs that had been directed by the Toronto Graduate School of Theological Studies. Emmanuel College and seven others are participating members.

1970: Emmanuel College becomes a partner in the Toronto School of Theology.

1973: *The Ontario Historical Studies Series*, under the General Editorship of President Goldwin S. French (Vic 4T4) is published at Victoria.

1974: *Memorandum of Understanding* between the University of Toronto and the colleges.

1974: The Bob Revue celebrates its 100th anniversary.

1978: Toronto School of Theology, its member colleges and the University of Toronto sign a Memorandum of Agreement whereby their regular degrees are conjointly awarded.

1979: Publication of the first volumes in the [Records of Early English Drama](#) under the General Editorship of Alexandra F. Johnston.

1981: Alexandra F. Johnston (Vic 6T1) is appointed Principal of Victoria College becoming the first

History

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woman principal on the St. George Campus of the University of Toronto.

1982: [The Institute for History and Philosophy of Science and Technology](#) moves to Victoria.

1982: The Athenians Project, a complete computer file of the known inhabitants of ancient Athens, begins under John Traill (Vic 6T1).

1982: Initiation of the Jackman Project: History of the Methodist Church in Canada.

1982: Building of the [George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art](#) on the campus of Victoria University.

1983, June 3: The New Academic Building is renamed Northrop Frye Hall.

1984: Memorandum of Agreement between the University of Toronto and the Federated Universities.

1985: Agreement with United Church for Victoria to administer [United Church Archives](#).

1986: Celebration of the Sesquicentennial of Victoria.

1986: Renewing the Heritage Campaign raises over \$6 million.

1986: Almuth Lutkenhaus' sculpture, Crucified Woman, is installed in the gardens of Victoria University.

1988: Burwash Dining Hall renovated and reopened, serving both men and women residents through amalgamated food services.

1989: Annesley Hall renovated and reopened during "Annesley Anew" weekend reunion for all former residents.

1989: Establishment of the [Northrop Frye Centre](#).

1991: Renovation of the foyer of Old Vic. Renamed the A.B.B. Moore Foyer in honour of Dr. Arthur Bruce Barbour Moore, president emeritus of Vic and Chancellor Emeritus of U of T.

1991: [Friends of Victoria University Library](#) founded.

1992: [Victoria College Book Sale](#) begins.

1992, October 17: Celebration of the Centenary of Old Vic following the sod-turning ceremony for Rowell Jackman Hall.

1993, October 2: Official opening of Rowell Jackman Hall

1995: World Leadership Program held at Victoria, November 29, 30 and December 1.

2000: The Lester B. Pearson Garden for Peace and Understanding is created to recognize gifts made to Vic.

2001: The E.J. Pratt Library re-opens after its 'Library of the Future' renovations.

2001: Opening of the Bader Theatre, which has become a staple of the city's film festival circuit, while serving as a lecture hall, learning space for student groups, concerts, theatrical productions and conferences.

2003: The [Vic One](#) program is introduced.

History

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2005: The E.J. Pratt Library acquires the archive of [Norman Jewison](#), Chancellor of Victoria University and celebrated Canadian film director-producer.

2006: The E.J. Pratt Library acquires the [Bentley Collection](#) of approximately 2,500 works by and about William Blake and his contemporaries.

2008: The [United Church Archives](#) leaves Victoria University and forms a separate United Church Archives at the church House offices in Etobicoke. The Victoria University Archives continues on.

2009: The establishment of the Jane and Geoffrey Martin Chair in Church and Community at Emmanuel College.

2009: The establishment of the [Muslim Studies Program](#) at Emmanuel College.

2010: The establishment of the Deer Park Professor of Sacred Music.

2011: The introduction of a new stream in Vic One: The Jewison Stream in Imagination and the Arts.

2011, May 28: Groundbreaking ceremony is held for the [new Goldring Student Centre](#).

[Contact us](#) if you have any dates to add to this timeline.

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