

MS.
COLL.
155

ALEXANDER (WILLIAM JOHN), 1855-1944 ✓

Papers, 1874-1944

3 boxes

The collection consists mainly of accounts written by Dr. Alexander of his own family and of his wife's family, the Morrows and Richeys of Halifax; a few letters; a large clipping file of events from W.J. Alexander's life; some family photos.

The W.J. Alexander papers were presented to the University of Toronto Library in 1974 by his daughters, Laura Wheeler and Mary Alexander. A small addition was made in 1983 by Mrs. F. L. Quartermaine. Library has literary rights.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

William John Alexander was born of Scottish parents in Hamilton, Canada West, in 1855. He was educated in Hamilton and at the University of Toronto where he won a scholarship which enabled him to study English at the University of London, 1874-77. Upon his return to Canada he taught at Prince of Wales College in Charlottetown for two years. He obtained a PhD in Greek and Philology at the newly constituted Johns Hopkins University in 1883, and spent a further year studying modern languages in Heidelberg.

Dr. Alexander was appointed professor of English language and literature at Dalhousie University in 1884. Attracted by Alexander's reputation as a scholar and teacher, the University of Toronto hired him as Professor of English in 1889. He occupied the chair of English at University College until his retirement in 1927, enriching the lives of several generations of students by his knowledge and enthusiasm. He worked with the Department of Education in improving English text books for public schools and high schools. He edited *Shorter Poems* and *Short Stories and Essays* for use in Ontario high schools. His selection of poems is especially interesting, covering the entire range of English literature from the early ballads (one of his great loves) to the free verse of this century.

Dr. Alexander's published works included *An Introduction to the Poetry of Robert Browning*, and *Select Poems of Shelley*.

He died in 1944 while visiting his daughter, Mrs. Carleton Stanley, in Halifax.

BOX 1. FRAGILE. USE BOX 2.

NO PHOTOCOPYING

- Folder 1 W.J. Alexander. *The Alexanders*. Notes and correspondence.
Use photocopies, Box 2
- Folder 2 W.J. Alexander. *The Buchans*. Holograph.
- Folder 3 W.J. Alexander. Notes on antecedents. (Alexanders & Buchans).
- Folder 4 W.J. Alexander. Letters and information relating to Laura (Mrs.
W.J. Alexander's ancestors - the Morrors, Murdochs, Salters,
Duffuses, Richeys, mainly of Halifax, N.S).
- Folder 5 [Reminiscences at the time of his wife's death].
- Folder 6 A.L.S. from James Morrow to his daughter Laura (later Mrs. W.
J. Alexander), 1876.
- Folder 7 A.L. to Laura Morrow from her grandmother (incomplete).
- Folder 8 Address from students of Prince of Wales College, P.E.I. upon
departure of W.J. Alexander, 1879.
- Folder 9 W.J. Alexander's notes made during a walking tour of Nova
Scotia, 1886.
- Folder 10 A trip in Italy, notes by W.J. Alexander, 1884
- Folder 11 Typed copy of a poem to Heidelberg. Translation by W.J.
Alexander, of a poem by Viktor Scheffel.
- Folder 12 Holograph poem by W.J. Alexander, translated from Goethe.
1883.
- Letters addressed to W.J. Alexander**
- Folder 13 Child, Francis James. A.L.S. 1889.
- Folder 14 Furnivall, Frederick James. 2 A.N.S. 1889.
- Folder 15 Lynda, Carleton J. T.L.S. 1942

BOX 1 (cont'd)

- Folder 16 Thomson, E.A. T.L.S. 1941.
- Folder 17 Letters of condolence received upon the death of Mrs. W.J. Alexander, 1913
- Folder 18 Poems to W.J. Alexander upon his retirement as head of English Dept., U.C., by G.O. Smith, R.S. Knox, E.J. Pratt and others. Two printed programmes in Dr. Alexander's honour, 1926.
- Folder 19 W.J. Alexander. The Alexander family register (Pages from the family Bible).
- Folder 20 W.J. Alexander. A.L.S. to his niece, Cynthia Walker Heidenreich, 1935.
- Folder 21 W.J. Alexander. A.N.S. to his nephew, Edmund Walker, n.d.
Folder 21b W.J. Alexander. A.N.S. to Professor Woodhouse., Nov. 22. Removed from *Representative poetry*.
- Folder 22 Drawing of Mintla Village, near the birth place of W.J.A's mother in Scotland.
- Folder 23 Manuscript notes by James B. Morrow, Mrs. W.J. Alexander's father
- Folder 24 Obituaries of James B. Morrow and Matthew Richey, D.D.
- Folder 25 Reviews of Dr. Alexander's Books
- Folder 26 Drawing of W.J. Alexander at De Grassi Point
- Folder 27 Large file of clippings on Dr. Alexander's career:

Winning of Gilchist scholarship. 1874.

Receiving PhD from Johns Hopkins University, 1883.
Appointment to chair of English at Dalhousie, 1884
Appointment to chair of English at U of T., 1889.
Death of Mrs. W.J.A., 1913.
Retirement of W.J.A., 1926.
Setting up of Alexander lectures.

Box 1 (Cont'd)
Folder 27

Death of Mrs. W.J.A., 1944; various obituaries and a copy of the funeral oration.

The work of Mrs. W.J. Alexander at the Toronto General Hospital (setting up of social services).

Folder 28

Family photos of the Alexanders and Morrows, ca. 1875-ca. 1930.

Box 2

Photocopies of Box 1; and Photographs

Box 3

Shakespeare, William. Harper edition annotated by Dr. Alexander:

King Henry the Fifth
The Merry Wives of Windsor
King Henry the Eighth
Measure for Measure

Neaves, Charles. Neaves, Lord. *The Greek Anthology*.
Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1884. Autographed by W.J. Alexander

The Antigone of Sophocles. Printed for the representation of the play by the students of University College, Toronto, February 1894. Boston: Ginn, 1894.

With autograph of W.J. Alexander on fly leaf. From the Library of Sir Edmund Walker.

The Browning Society's Papers, Part XII, 1890-91. Contains Professor Alexander's *Analysis of "Sordello"*.

Representative poetry: selected and annotated for class work in the University of Toronto. 3rd ed., revised and enlarged. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1920. With autograph of Alexander on fly leaf, and holograph notes tipped in.