

University of Victoria Special Collections

Brown, Audrey Alexandra, 1904-1998

SC335

Title

Audrey Alexandra Brown fonds

Dates

1904-1998

Extent

60 cm of textual records and other materials

Biographical Sketch

Audrey Alexandra Brown was born in Nanaimo, B.C. on October 29th, 1904 to Joseph Miller Brown, a Nanaimo pioneer watchmaker and amateur historian, and Rosa Elizabeth nee Rummig. She was fifth in a family of 8. She was educated at St Ann's Convent Nanaimo, April 1912-September 1913 and at Nanaimo Public School March 1915-February 1917. She was a very keen reader and largely educated herself. She wrote her first verse at the age of 6. In May 1927 she was attacked by rheumatic fever and rendered unable to walk. She was taken into treatment at Queen Alexandra Solarium (Mill Bay) November 1934, operated on, and discharged able to walk, 1935. Brown was "discovered" in 1928 by Professor Pelham Edgar of Victoria College (Toronto) who promoted her career from 1928 to 1939. Between 1931 and 1948 she published 5 books of poems: *A Dryad in Nanaimo* (1931), *A Dryad in Nanaimo with 11 New Poems* (1934), *The Tree of Resurrection* (1937), *Challenge to Time and Death* (1943) all with Macmillan's Canada, and *All Fools Day* (1948) with Ryerson Press. In 1937 she published her only prose work, *The Log of the Lame Duck* (1937) about her hospital experience. In addition to this Ms. Brown published some of her poetry in newspapers and journals. From 1926 on, Audrey Brown published first poetry and later prose in newspapers. As a freelance journalist, she published the columns "Remember With Me" and "What Do You Think?" under the pseudonym "the Khoji" in the *Nanaimo Free Press* (1969-1974). Former Prime Minister Robert Borden admired her poem "Laodamia" and corresponded with her from 1934 until his death in 1937. She was also admired by and corresponded with Lorne Pierce intermittently from 1931 to 1960. Audrey received many awards: the Members Memorial Medal of the Canadian Women's Press Club (1936), the Lorne Pierce Gold Medal and the Royal Society of Canada (1944), the Order of Canada (Officer) (1968), and the Centennial Silver Medal (1967). She had honorary memberships in a number of women's clubs, was a member of the Canadian Authors Association (1948) and visited England (June-December 1950) as guest of P.E.N.

Scope and Content

The fonds consists of manuscripts published and unpublished, which include juvenilia, poetry and story drafts, and the author's annual holograph gatherings of completed poems. The fonds includes public addresses, children's stories, periodical off prints, page proofs of *A Dryad in Nanaimo*, reviews, family and biographical items, photographs, certificates, recordings of poems set to music, a printers plate, biographical material, and correspondence. Correspondence includes 34 letters from former Prime Minister Robert Borden. Artwork often accompanies juvenilia verse and later children's stories; the media used include ink on paper illustrations, pencil sketches, and watercolour drawings. Newspaper clippings include the author's columns, stories and poems. Also included are photocopies of 60 letters written by Audrey Brown to Professor Pelham Edgar (1929-47). The originals are in the Pelham Edgar collection at Victoria University, Toronto. The fonds also consists of: newspaper clippings and biographical material re Audrey Alexandra Brown and her family; correspondence between Brown and Pelham Edgar; correspondence between Brown and Earle Birney; correspondence from Martin Burrell to Pelham Edgar re Brown; manuscripts by Brown.

Finding Aids

Box list available.

Title Source

Title based on the contents of the fonds.

Brown, Audrey Alexandra (1904-1998)

Accessions: 1998-073, 1999-005

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BOX LIST

and brief description

Audrey Alexander Brown Fonds c. 1910-1998

45 cm of textual records and illustrations, 2 certificates, 8 medals, 1 printer's copper-cut, 1 audio tape.

Born Oct. 29, 1904 in Nanaimo B.C., Audrey A. Brown was the 5th of 8 children born to Rosa Elizabeth and Joseph Miller Brown. She was one of Canada's most celebrated lyric poets in the 1930's and 40's.

An avid reader, Audrey Brown had just 4 years of formal education. She began writing at age 6, and often illustrated her early work with drawings of fairy themes--a practice continued in her later children's literature. She first published locally at 16 and later made her living chiefly through freelance newspaper pieces. Audrey Brown continued to write into her 70's. However, with changing expectations in Canadian literature in the latter half of the century, her mode of verse, which echoed a 19th C. style, was increasingly overlooked.

In 1928 the Victoria College (Toronto) professor Pelham Edgar became an early Brown supporter, and in 1931 her first book, A Dryad in Nanaimo, gained national attention. A number of books followed including the biographical Log of a Lame Duck (1937) which drew from her extended time at hospital subsequent to a diagnoses of rheumatoid arthritis at age 18. From 1935 to his death in 1937, Brown had an active correspondence friendship with former Prime Minister Robert Borden.

Her awards include: Officer of the Order of Canada (1967); the Lorne Pierce Gold Medal (1944); the Memorial Gold Medal of the Canadian Women's Press Club (1936), and a number of honorary memberships.

The fonds consists of manuscript material of published and unpublished work, notebooks, drawings, correspondence, and medals.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series 1 Manuscript and Published Material.

Subseries 1: Juvenilia

Subseries 2: Poetry Manuscripts

Subseries 3 Poetry Manuscripts: Author's annual gatherings

Subseries 4: Public Addresses

Subseries 5: Children's Stories

Subseries 6: Periodical Offprints

Subseries 7: Newspaper Publications

Series 2: Sketches

Series 3: Music

Series 4: Reviews

Series 5: Correspondence: Incoming

Series 6: Correspondence: Outgoing
Series 7: Biographical Material and Brown Family
Series 8: Ephemera
Series 9: Recordings of Poems sung to Music.
Series 10: Printer's Plate
Series 11: Medals

Note re: Subseries 3 Poetry Manuscripts: Author's annual gatherings

Files 1.13-1.27 Manuscripts in this subseries are primarily finished holo. copies of poems, with multiple poems on both sides of a leaf, and with each poem dated. The manuscripts are individuated by year following the author's banded gatherings by year.

Files 1.12 and **1.27-1.29** These manuscripts form part of the subseries but were not annually banded by author.

BOX LIST

BOX 1

Series 1: Manuscript and Published Material.

Subseries 1: Juvenilia

- 1.1 Poetry [36 leaves in black notebook].
- 1.2 Drawings, poems and illustrated chapbooks, 1914-21.
- 1.3 Poems 1914-20 [transcribed by mother in green notebook].
- 1.4 6 watercolour place cards.
- 1.5 Newspaper clippings [poems, stories and illustrations].

Subseries 2: Poetry Manuscripts

- 1.6 The Dryad of Nanaimo [page proofs with holo. corrections].
- 1.7 "Laodemia" [ms 8 leaves]
- 1.8 Poems 1931-1934 [ms loose-leaf notebook]
- 1.9 "Yseult of the White Hands" [12 leaves of ms found in notebook 1.8 ; other poems on verso]
- 1.10 "The Death of Sir Thomas More" [19 leaves of ms found in poetry notebook 1.8 ; other poems on verso]
- 1.11 "The Ship of Glass"--story [3 leaves ts found in poetry notebook 1.8]

Subseries 3 Poetry Manuscripts: Author's annual gatherings

1.12 1931-1935 [20 leaves].

1.13 1936 [10 leaves].

1.14 1937 [14 leaves].

1.15 1938 [6 leaves].

1.16 1939 [16 leaves].

1.17 1940 [7 leaves].

1.18 1941 [8 leaves].

1.19 1942 [11 leaves].

1.20 1943 [11 leaves].

1.21 1944 [8 leaves].

1.22 1945 [4 leaves].

1.23 1946 [4 leaves].

1.24 1947 [6 leaves].

1.25 1948 [4 leaves].

1.26 1949 [4 leaves].

1.27 1950-1959 [36 leaves].

1.28 1960-1969 [24 leaves].

1.29 1970-1979 [18 leaves].

1.30 1981 (began 1948) [3 leaves].

1.31 Poems, carbon typescripts, 1950's and 60's [21 leaves].

1.32 Poetry chronologies [6 leaves, author's datings from 1935-1960's].

1.33 Manuscripts, untitled/drafts [4 leaves].

Subseries 4: Public Addresses

- 1.34 "The Thrill of Poetry" [5 leaves, ts address to The Women's Canadian Club].
- 1.35 "The Power of Poetry" [published address, 1951].
- 1.36 Radio Interview with A. A. Brown with King's Silver Jubilee Poem [3 pp. ts., 1935].
- 1.37 Strange, William [8 p. ts. broadcast re: A Dryad in Nanaimo].

Subseries 5: Children's Stories

- 1.38 The Very Brave Celluloid Doll [72 pp., ts. children's story, 1 watercolour ill.].
- 1.39 Michael Melody [26 pp. ts. children's play with 4 leaves of holo. additions].
- 1.40 Tenas Tillicum (Little Friend) [105 pp, carbon ts--children's story; t/s. from Macmillan ed. Dec. 1966].
- 1.41 Elizabeth and the Caterpillar [186 pp. ts children's story].
- 1.42 Elizabeth and the Caterpillar [27 25x35 cm. pen & ink illus.].
- 1.43 The Ship of Glass [51 pp. ts story; 1933; 1980].

Subseries 6: Periodical Offprints

- 1.44 "Testament of Failure," "Diana," "The Halcyon," "The Mermaid" [poetry offprints from Dalhousie Review].
- 1.45 "Art and Canadian Life" (2 copies) [2 leaf offprint article from the Dalhousie Review].

Subseries 7: Newspaper Publications

- 1.46 Published articles [16 leaves comprising loose clipped articles, and sheets with multiple clippings attached].
- 1.47 Remember With Me (1969), column series from the Nanaimo Times under pseud. "The Khoji."
- 1.48 What Do YOU Think? (1969), column series from the Nanaimo Times under pseud. "The Khoji."
- 1.49 What Do YOU Think? (1970), column series from the Nanaimo Times under pseud. "The Khoji."
- 1.50 What Do YOU Think? (1971), column series from the Nanaimo Times under pseud. "The Khoji."

- 1.51 What Do YOU Think? (1972), column series from the Nanaimo Times under pseud. "The Khoji."
- 1.52 What Do YOU Think? (1973), column series from the Nanaimo Times under pseud. "The Khoji."
- 1.53 What Do YOU Think? (1974), from the Nanaimo Times under pseud. "The Khoji."
- 1.54 Enclosures (letters; clippings) from What Do YOU Think? folder.
- 1.55 Tell Your Troubles to Nanaimo's Own Dan Sanders (pseud), (1969), column series from the Nanaimo Times.
- 1.56 Newspaper clippings--unsorted (mainly poems).

Series 2: Sketches

- 1.57 11 pen & ink sketches on 9x14 cm. pad.

Series 3: Music

- 1.58 "As I Walked in Bethlehem" [1 leaf folded 1948 published Christmas carol set to music by W. H. Anderson].

Series 4: Reviews

- 1.59 Newspaper and journal clippings.

BOX 2

Series 5: Correspondence: Incoming

- 2.1 Borden, Robert [9 letters+ enclosures; Oct. 4-Dec. 14 1934].
- 2.2 Borden, Robert [8 letters+ enclosures; Jan. 3-Dec. 14 1935].
- 2.3 Borden, Robert [17 letters+postcards; Oct. 4-Dec. 14 1936-37; note from Mrs. Borden, April 24, 1937].
- 2.4 British Columbia Lieutenant-Governor [invitation, 1936].
- 2.5 British P.M.O. and Buckingham Palace [3 notes of acknowledgement 1925; 1931].
- 2.6 Buchan, Susan (Lady Tweedsmuir) [7 tls+enclosures; 1 photo].
- 2.7 Canadian Women's Press Club [1 tls. re: medal, 1936].
- 2.8 Canadian Writers Foundation [2 tls. 1982, 1987].

- 2.9 Chaplin, H. Maud [3 hls. 1936].
- 2.10 Christmas cards--misc. [4 cards].
- 2.11 Davis, "Maggie" E. [7 letters; cf. Log of a Lame Duck].
- 2.12 Edgar, Pelham [14 letters+ 2 photos, 1928-1932].
- 2.13 Edgar, Pelham [20 letters+ 1 card, 1933-1939].
- 2.14 Flint, R. A. [1 letter; re: Log of a Lame Duck].
- 2.15 Hutchison, Bruce [tls. 1961].
- 2.16 Lorne Pierce Medal [4 letters+1 telegram].
- 2.17 MacPherson, J. E. [3 Christmas cards privately printed with poems by Audrey Brown].
- 2.18 Miscellaneous [18 letters].
- 2.19 Order of Canada (22/12/1967) [letters, invitations and enclosures].
- 2.20 Pierce, Lorne [12 letters; 1930-1960].
- 2.21 Podoski, Victor [5 letters+enclosures; 1943-44].
- 2.22 Pratt, E. J. [1 hls. Jan. 30, 1931].
- 2.23 Publishers [31 letters].
- 2.24 Public Lending Rights Commission [letters, data, receipts]
- 2.25 Revenue Canada [3 letters].
- 2.26 Stephen, A. M. [10 letters+1 card].
- 2.27 Trudeau, Pierre and family [4 signed Christmas cards]

Series 6: Correspondence: Outgoing

- 2.28 Brown, Audrey to Miss Robbie Hendricks [1 hls. 1941].

Series 7: Biographical Material and Brown Family

- 2.29 Notebook of England trip [10 leaves written, plus 2 loose folded leaves enclosed.

- 2.30 Address book [10x6.5 cm].
- 2.31 Biographical [C.V.'s, clippings, programs].
- 2.32 Photographs (A.A. Brown, family and friends) [42 exposures].
- 2.33 Photograph-Robert Borden [signed by Paul Horsdal (photographer) and inscribed by Borden: "To Audrey Alexandra Brown with the homage of Robert Laird Borden"].
- 2.34 Brown Family Genealogy and History [12 leaves].
- 2.35 "Life on Ashlar Farm"/"The Murder of James Hamilton" [3 pp. ts. story re: Brown family history].
- 2.36 Mrs. R. E. Brown [5pp hls. photocopies].
- 2.37 Letter to Audrey Brown from "Eddie" (brother) [2 pp. hls].
- 2.38 Joseph M. Brown (father) [4 hls. to Audrey, Jan. 1940-March 1940].
- 2.39 Joseph M. Brown (father) [5 photos, 8 photocopies, 1 notice].
- 2.40 Royal Jubilee Hospital [1 p. tls. re: A.A. Brown medical certificate, 1983].
- 2.41 Brown Burial Plot [1 p. photocopy].
- 2.42 Blood Donation Certificate.
- 2.43 Order of Canada Certificate [40x50cm. *in oversize **OS/04/08.2A/06**]

Series 8: Ephemera.

- 2.43 Envelopes, articles etc. collected by A.A. Brown.

Series 9: Recordings of Poems sung to Music.

- 2.44 "Robin Hood" and "To Beth Leitham" set to music by Graham George [1 audio cassette tape].

Series 10: Printer's Plate

- 2.45 Copper cut image of A.A. Brown's book All Fools' Day [4.5x6.5cm].

Series 11: Medals

- 2.46 George V Coronation Medal [June 22, 1911, in red leather case].
- 2.47 Queen Elizabeth 25th Anniversary Coronation Medal [1957-1977. with ribbon, in red case].

- 2.48** Order of Canada Medal [award date: 22/12/1967. with ribbon, in black case].
- 2.49** Order of Canada lapel pin [in plastic case].
- 2.50** Tenth Anniversary of the Order of Canada 1967-1977 [in brown case].
- 2.50** Canada Centenary Medal 1867-1967 [with ribbon, in brown case].
- 2.52** Lorne Pierce Medal [awarded to A.A. Brown 1944, in brown case].
- 2.53** Canadian Women's Press Club: Members Memorial Award, 1936 [in purple velvet case].

Additional items received with accession to be catalogued

Books

Brown, A.A. V-E Day [Ryerson Chap-Book, Toronto: 1946. With dedication: "To my dear little Mother with love from Audrey"].

Brown, A.A. All Fools' Day [Ryerson Press, Toronto: 1948. Dust cover. Enclosure: newspaper photo of Pelham Edgar and two others].

Brown, A.A. Challenge to Time and Death [Macmillan, Toronto: 1943. Dust cover. Inscription: "My own book--Audrey Alexander Brown 22nd September, 1943"].

Brown, A.A. Poetry and Life : An Address given at the Canadian Author's Association in Vancouver, on August 24th, 1941. [Macmillan, Toronto, privately printed.].

Brown, A.A. Log of a Lame Duck [Macmillan, Toronto: 1938, bound in green full calf, gilt stamped. Inscribed "For Audrey from her friend and publisher Hugh Eayrs-- Toronto--Christmas 1938. Enclosure: drawing and envelope "My drawing of the Lame Duck, which was on the Canadian edition".

Brown, A.A. A Dryad of Nanaimo [Macmillan, Toronto: 1931, blue and white buckram with cellophane dust cover. Inscribed: "With love to Audrey from Mother. 1931"].

Brown, A.A. The Tree of Resurrection [Macmillan, Toronto, 1937, vellum, gilt letters, gilt all edges, Hugh Eayrs bookplate].

Borden, Robert Laird. Letters to Limbo [U. of Toronto Press, 1971. Dust cover.
Enclosed card: "with the complements of Henry Borden"].

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Brown, Audrey Alexandra, 1904-1998

Accession Number: 2008-010

File List

1.66 Biographical Material, 1932-1998

newspaper clippings

- obituary for AAB, n.p., n.d.

- "UVic archives acquire Nanaimo poet's manuscripts", *Times-Colonist*, Nov. 10, 1998

photocopy of newspaper clipping, "Acclaimed poet's writing transcended her disability", *Times-Colonist*, Oct. 25, 1998

newspaper clipping, "My Father Built a Pipe Organ" by Cuthbert M. Brown, *Daily Colonist*, Jan. 24, 1971

newspaper clipping, "She's Fifth Generation", n.p., n.d.

photocopy of newspaper clippings

- *Daily Colonist*, Oct. 20, 1946

- "Distinction Comes to Nanaimo-Born Canadian Poet", *Daily Colonist*, May 31, 1944

print copy of electronic transcript, official speech given when AAB won the Lorne Pierce Medal, 1944

photocopy of TS, official speech given when AAB won the Lorne Pierce Medal, 1944, with holo. note by AAB

photocopy of newspaper clippings

- review, n.p., n.d.

- review, *The Vancouver Sun*, Oct. 23, 1943

photocopy of newspaper clippings

- "Audrey Alexandra Brown Visits Her Home Town", *Nanaimo Fair Press*, Feb. 12, 1969

- "Authors Honor Victoria Poet Audrey Brown", *The Daily Colonist*, Aug. 28, 1949

photocopy of article, "Pen Sketches of Canadian Poets" by John M. Elson, *Onward, a Paper for Young Canadians*, Oct. 15, 1932

photocopy of newspaper clipping, "A 'Canadian Keats' In British Columbia" by W.L. MacDonald, *The Province*, Dec. 1, 1935

photocopy of newspaper article, "Committee Names 100 Best Books Published in English by Canadians", *Times-Colonist*, May 9, 1948

1.67 Correspondence, 1928-1947

photocopy of TLS, Martin Burrell to Pelham Edgar, Nov. 30, 1934, 1 l., re raising money for AAB, from Victoria University (University of Toronto) Pelham Edgar fonds

photocopy of TLS, Martin Burrell to Pelham Edgar, Oct. 10, 1934, 1 l., re AAB needing financial support, from Victoria University (University of Toronto) Pelham Edgar fonds

photocopy of TLS, Martin Burrell to Pelham Edgar, Sept. 17, 1934, 1 l., re the down and out Browns--getting some help for AAB illness, from Victoria University (University of Toronto) Pelham Edgar fonds

photocopy of ALS, Geo. B. Brown to Pelham Edgar, Jul. 21, 1931, 2 l., from Victoria University (University of Toronto) Pelham Edgar fonds

photocopy of ALS, AAB to Pelham Edgar, Oct. 17, 1930, 3 l., re AAB over the moon about her work circulating/being published, from Victoria University (University of Toronto) Pelham Edgar fonds

photocopy of ALS, AAB to Pelham Edgar, 1930?, 1 l., re AAB wants her full name in print, from Victoria University (University of Toronto) Pelham Edgar fonds

photocopy of ALS, AAB to Pelham Edgar, Jan. 3, 1930, 4 l., re AAB feeling like she was left out of the loop by EP; "gulf" between her position and his; prospects of EP coming to Nanaimo, from Victoria University (University of Toronto) Pelham Edgar fonds

photocopy of ALS, Geo. B. Brown to Pelham Edgar, Jun. 26, 1928, 3 l., from Victoria University (University of Toronto) Pelham Edgar fonds

photocopy of ALS, AAB to Pelham Edgar, Dec. 5, 1929, 1 l., from Victoria University (University of Toronto) Pelham Edgar fonds

photocopy of ALS, AAB to Pelham Edgar, Jan. 2, 1929, 4 l., from Victoria University (University of Toronto) Pelham Edgar fonds

photocopy of TNS, Earle Birney to AAB, Aug. 15, 1947, 1 l., from the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

photocopy of TNS, Earle Birney to AAB, Jul. 23, 1947, 1 l., from the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

photocopy of ALS, AAB to Earle Birney, Aug. 13, 1947, 4 l., from the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

1.68 Manuscripts, 1941-1971

photocopy of TS, "James Miller Brown", 1971, 13 l., from the UBC Library Special Collections

photocopy of TS, obituary for James Miller Brown, *Nanaimo Free Press*, n.d., 1 l.

photocopy of holo., poems, 1971, 2 l., from UBC library collection

photocopy of printed material, "Poetry and Life: An Address given at the Canadian Authors' Association in Vancouver, on August 24th, 1941" by A.A. Brown, 1941, 8 l.

photocopy of signed TS, "The Sailor", Dec. 1947?, 1 l.

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Brown, Audrey Alexandra, 1904-1998

Accession Number: 2008-022

File List

- 1.69 - AAB's sister Wilma Brown's autograph book, contains a poem that AAB wrote for Wilma and also an illustration
- pink baby bootie belonging to AAB
 - B/W photograph of AAB as a baby, with her brother Cuthbert, caption on reverse: "Audrey Alexandra Brown in buggy. Cuthbert -- playing French horn."