

University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections

Finding Aid - D.T. Willis collection (RBSC-ARC-1844)

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D.T. Willis collection

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Summary information

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| Repository: | University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections |
| Title: | D.T. Willis collection |
| Reference code: | RBSC-ARC-1844 |
| Date: | [189-?]-2023, predominant 1948-1962 (date of creation) |
| Physical description: | 57 photographs: b&w. 1.5 cm of textual material |
| Dates of creation, revision and deletion: | Collection arranged and described by Marion Arnott, January 2023. |
| Note [generalNote]: | Includes the following photographs: RBSC-ARC-1844-PH-01 to 57. |

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Douglas Theodore Willis (D.T. Willis) was born in Dauphin, Manitoba in 1911. He graduated from high school in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan in 1929 and enrolled at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon that same year. In 1934, he graduated with a B.Sc. Engineering (Civil) from the University of Saskatchewan.

After graduation, Willis worked with several companies in both Manitoba, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada. This involved geological surveys and roadwork projects (Canadian Mining & Smelting Co. 1934-1936), road and airfield construction (Routly Construction Co. 1936-1939), and site supervision for roads and airfields (Routly and Storm's Construction Co. 1939-1942).

In 1941, he was employed in an Extra-Regimental position as a Royal Canadian Engineer; from 1942-1946 he was an Officer in the Royal Canadian Engineers in the Overseas Canadian Army. In this role he was responsible for the construction of military roads and routes, forward advancing landing strips, bridges, and allied work. He directed several pavement plant operations for the repair of military and civilian roads.

Upon returning to Canada in 1946, he took on the role of Chief Surfacing Engineer with the Department of Highways (Ministry of Public Works) for the Province of British Columbia. He acted as supervising surfacing engineer for the major highways and bridges in the BC Interior. He was involved in several projects, including the Fraser Canyon reconstruction (Hope to Cache Creek), Hope-Princeton connection to the Okanagan Valley (Allison Pass) onto Calgary, AB, road approaches to new Hagwilget Canyon Bridge (Bulkley River), Salmo-Creston skyway (Kootenay Pass) and the Kinnaird Bridge (Columbia River near Castlegar).

Willis was a founding member, and served as President of the Canadian Technical Asphalt Association (CTAA). He maintained his involvement with the CTAA from 1955-1986. During this time he established

Willis, Cunliffe, Tait & Co. Ltd., an engineering consulting firm, while continuing to work as a consulting engineer for the BC Ministry of Public Works.

Douglas T. Willis began an international career in 1964, serving as a United Nations Technical Expert in Kuwait (1964-1966), Indonesia (1967) and Saudi Arabia (1968-1970) where he worked on road construction, paving and stabilization projects. He continued his work into the 1980s, senior engineer, Norconsult AS (global); transportation infrastructure oversight and water control management in The Philippines and East Africa (1970-1980); consulting engineer for Norconsult AS in Cyprus and Hoff & Overgaard, in Saudi Arabia (1981-1982). Repatriated to Canada and resident in Kaslo, BC, he died in 1986.

Scope and content

The collection pertains to D.T. Willis' career and involvement in construction projects throughout British Columbia predominately between 1948 and 1962. The collection includes numerous groups of photographs documenting the opening of the Hope-Princeton Highway, BC Department of Public Works construction projects and personnel, Engineering Conferences, BC Public Works Events and a 1948 image of the original 1880's wagon trail between Hope and Cache Creek, BC. Numerous photographs have annotations on the back, identifying subjects, dates, and contextual information. Textual materials also appear in the Collection, including a commemorative pamphlet for the Hope-Princeton Highway opening, car mileage recordings for several roadways, photograph indexes and identification sheets.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the provenance of the collection.

Physical condition

Photographs exhibit significant overall bowed structure, some have holes for binder storage, minor wear around these areas. Others have been adhered to department letterhead. RBSC-ARC-1844-PH-56 is fragile, a scanned reference copy is available RBSC-ARC-1844-PH-56-ReferenceCopy.

Immediate source of acquisition

Collection donated by D.T. Willis' daughter Dr. M.A. Susan (Willis) Marles in October 2022.

Arrangement

Collection was arranged by creator's daughter Dr. M.A. Susan (Willis) Marles based on the project or employment position photographs and materials relate to. Where possible file and item titles have been maintained.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** published

Access points

- Buildings and structures (subject)
- Transportation and utilities (subject)

Series descriptions

| Ref code | Title | Dates | Access status | Container |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------|---------------|-----------|
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-01 | File - Opening of the Hope-Princeton Highway | 1949 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-01-PH-01 to PH-17 | Item - [Photographs] Opening of the Hope-Princeton Highway | 1949 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-02 | File - [Engineering Conferences and BC Public Works Events] | 1955-1960 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-02-PH-18 to PH-29 | Item - [Photographs - Engineering Conferences and BC Public Works Events] | 1955-1960 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03 | File - [BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-30 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-31 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-32 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-33 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-34 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-35 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-36 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 | | |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-37 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 | | |

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|---------------------------|--|-----------|
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-38 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-39 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-40 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-41 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-42 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-43 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-44 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-45 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-46 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-47 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-48 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-49 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-50 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-51 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-52 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-53 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-54 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |
| RBSC-ARC-1844-01-03-PH-55 | Item - [Photograph - BC Department of Public Works Projects] | 1948-1962 |

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|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| RBSC-ARC-1844- PH-56 | Item - [Photograph - Wagon Trail to Yale on to Cache Creek - From Hope] | [189-?] |
| RBSC-ARC-1844- PH-56-ReferenceCopy | Item - [Scanned Reference Copy Photograph - Wagon Trail to Yale on to Cache Creek - From Hope] | [between 2000 and 2023] |
| RBSC-ARC-1844- PH-57 | Item - [Photograph] - Hagwilget Bridge | [ca. 1929] |