

Guide to the Alexander Duff Robertson Papers

MS 1641



compiled by Cheryl Bliss

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1641

CREATOR: Robertson, Alexander Duff, 1926-1991

TITLE: Alexander Duff Robertson papers

DATES: 1893-1991

BULK DATES: 1948-1984

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 9.17 linear feet (14 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, topical files, photographs, writings, diplomas, awards, speeches, certificates, and curricula vitae that document Alexander Duff Robertson's career as a teacher of public health and preventive medicine, an administrator of health organizations, and a spokesman for social medicine. The papers form part of the Contemporary Medical Care and Health Policy Collection.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1641>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1641>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Richard Moore, 1993.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Alexander Duff Robertson Papers (MS 1641). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Alexander Duff Robertson was born on April 28, 1926, in Dunkfield, England. He received an M.B. from the University of Edinburgh in 1949, a D.P.H. from the University of London in 1955, and an M.D. from the University of Saskatchewan in 1961.

At the University of Edinburgh, Robertson was a researcher in social medicine (1941-1951), a lecturer in public health and social medicine, and a lecturer in the general practice teaching unit (1951-1954). From 1955 to 1958, he was a lecturer in social and preventive medicine at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine in London and in public health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

In 1958, Robertson became head of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan where he remained until accepting the executive directorship of the Milbank Memorial Fund in New York City in 1962. During his time at the Milbank Memorial Fund, he launched and developed the Milbank Faculty Fellowship which impacted the development of social medicine. From 1969 until 1990, he worked in several capabilities for the World Health Organization (WHO) beginning with the position of chief of human resources in the Caribbean for two years. From 1972 to 1973, he served as regional advisor for medical education and public health; public health administrator; director of health manpower development; and, finally, as the director of health services in the regional office for the Eastern Mediterranean in Alexandria, Egypt. In 1983, he moved to Geneva, where he was the program manager for staff development and training for WHO until 1986. From 1986 to 1990, he served as special advisor to the director general of WHO for the occupied Arab Territories, including Palestine.

Robertson also held part-time academic positions as a lecturer in Public Health and Administrative Medicine from 1963 until 1971 at Columbia University and as a lecturer in Public Health (International Health) at Yale University from 1966 to 1971. His publications focused on medical education, community medicine, and social science as related to medicine. He served on numerous boards and at times as an

officer in the public sector. He was a leading figure in the field of modern public health especially in the development of health services in the United States. He died on June 29, 1991.

Scope and Contents

The papers consist of correspondence, topical files, photographs, writings, diplomas, awards, speeches, certificates, and curricula vitae that document Alexander Duff Robertson's career as a teacher of public health and preventive medicine, an administrator of health organizations, and a spokesman for social medicine. The papers form part of the Contemporary Medical Care and Health Policy Collection.

General note

Forms part of the Contemporary Medical Care and Health Policy Collection.

Arrangement

Arranged in three series: I. Correspondence, 1948-1981. II. Topical Files, 1945-1984. III. Personal Papers, Photographs, and Writings, 1949-1991.

Collection Contents

Series I: Correspondence, 1948-1981

The series is arranged alphabetically within the following sections: Early years; the University of Saskatchewan; the Milbank Memorial Fund; and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The correspondence primarily documents Alexander Robertson's professional contact with physicians, public health educators and administrators, and professional organizations. The correspondence focuses on the day-to-day operation of each organization such as travel plans, scheduling of meetings, and summary of meetings with staff. A significant amount of the correspondence are copies of his letters. The series includes a substantial amount of correspondence with Maurice Backett, John Brotherston, Mac Dowling, Sheila Hart, J. M. MacIntosh, G. McKerracher, Samuel Milbank, Frederick Mott, and Sam Wolfe.

The correspondence of the University of Saskatchewan years is dominated by his administrative responsibilities connected with the running of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine. Also, the correspondence documents issues associated with the Canadian Public Health Association, of which he was chairman from 1960-1961. While at the Milbank Memorial Fund, his correspondence reflects the activities he dealt with on a day-to-day basis in his role as its executive director. There are three folders of correspondence with Samuel Milbank who was Chairman of the Board of Directors and President of the Milbank Memorial Fund. The correspondence highlights issues associated with the Health Research Council of New York City of which Robertson was a member from 1962 to 1969 and Mayor John Lindsay's Advisory Committee on Health Services in New York where he was chairman from 1966 to 1968. The majority of the correspondence focuses on WHO where he worked from 1972 to 1990. The correspondence reflects his administrative duties in the five positions he was assigned to in this organization.

b. 1, f. 1	Early years	1948-1954
	University of Saskatchewan	
b. 1, f. 2	B (General)	1961-1963
b. 1, f. 3	Backett, Maurice	1959-1963
b. 1, f. 4	Brotherston, John	1958-1963
b. 1, f. 5 - 6	C-D (General)	1958-1961
b. 1, f. 7	Douglas, T. C.	1958-1962
b. 1, f. 8	G (General)	1959-1961
b. 1, f. 9 - 10	H-J (General)	1959-1963
b. 1, f. 11 - 12	Hart, Sheila	1958-1962
b. 1, f. 13	Jurcic, Predrag	1958-1962
b. 1, f. 14	K-L (General)	1958-1962
b. 1, f. 15	Kirkaldy, J. K. S.	1958-1961
b. 1, f. 16	M (General)	1960-1962
b. 1, f. 17 - 18	MacIntosh, J. M.	1957-1961
b. 1, f. 19 - 20	McKerracher, G.	1958-1963

University of Saskatchewan (continued)

b. 1, f. 21 - 22	Mott, Frederick D.	1960-1961
b. 2, f. 23	O-R (General)	1957-1962
b. 2, f. 24	Rockefeller Foundation	1958-1961
b. 2, f. 25	Roemer, Milton	1959-1961
b. 2, f. 26	Roth, F. B.	1958-1960
b. 2, f. 27	S (General)	1958-1961
b. 2, f. 28	Scott, Richard	1958-1963
b. 2, f. 29	Silver, George	1958-1963
b. 2, f. 30	Steele, Robert	1958-1961
b. 2, f. 31	Stewart, C. B.	1959-1961
b. 2, f. 32	T (General)	1959-1962
b. 2, f. 33	Titmus, R.	1959-1961
b. 2, f. 34	W (General)	1960
b. 2, f. 35	Warren, Michael	1959-1961
b. 2, f. 36	Willard, H. N.	1958-1961
b. 2, f. 37 - 39	Wolfe, Sam	1958-1961
b. 2, f. 40	Y (General)	1961
Milbank Memorial Fund		
b. 2, f. 41 - 45	General	1962-1969
b. 2, f. 46	Badgley, Robin	1963
b. 3, f. 47 - 50	Lindsay, John	1966
b. 3, f. 51 - 53	Milbank, Sam	1962-1969
b. 3, f. 54	Congratulatory letters	1962
b. 3, f. 55 - 59	Correspondence relating to Robertson's resignation	1969
World Health Organization		
b. 3, f. 60 - 61	A (General)	1970-1980
b. 4, f. 62 - 64	B (General)	1970-1980
b. 4, f. 65 - 66	Backett, Maurice	1967-1980
b. 4, f. 67	Barnett, Robert	1973-1978
b. 4, f. 68	Barrow, Nita	1973-1980

World Health Organization (continued)

b. 4, f. 69	Bishop, John	1973-1980
b. 4, f. 70	Blaser, Larry	1971-1978
b. 4, f. 71	Boelen, Charles	1978-1980
b. 4, f. 72	Booth, Roger	1974-1978
b. 4, f. 73	Brago, Ernani	1971-1980
b. 4, f. 74	Brotherston, John	1970-1979
b. 4, f. 75	Burnery, Leroy	1970-1980
b. 4, f. 76	C (General)	1967-1979
b. 4, f. 77	Chang, Wen	1973-1980
b. 4, f. 78 - 79	D (General)	1970-1980
b. 4, f. 80 - 81	Dowling, Mac	1973-1980
b. 4, f. 82	E (General)	1966-1981
b. 4, f. 83	Elliott, Katherine	1971-1980
b. 5, f. 84 - 85	F (General)	1970-1980
b. 5, f. 86	Ford, David	1974-1980
b. 5, f. 87	Fulop, Tamas	1974-1979
b. 5, f. 88 - 95	G-J (General)	1970-1980
b. 5, f. 96	Joorabchi, Bachman	1973-1981
b. 5, f. 97 - 98	K (General)	1973-1979
b. 5, f. 99	Katz, Fred	1976-1980
b. 5, f. 100	Khan, Rafique	1973-1979
b. 5, f. 101 - 102	L (General)	1965-1980
b. 5, f. 103	Langmuir, Alexander	1970-1980
b. 5, f. 104 - 107	M (General)	1970-1980
b. 6, f. 108	Macleod, J. Wendell	1969-1976
b. 6, f. 109	Messih, J. Abdel	1974-1975
b. 6, f. 110	Miller, George	1974-1980
b. 6, f. 111	Mofidi, Chamseddine	1973-1980
b. 6, f. 112	Moore, Richard	1970-1979
b. 6, f. 113	N (General)	1970-1979

World Health Organization (continued)

b. 6, f. 114	Newell, Kenneth	1967-1975
b. 6, f. 115	O (General)	1973-1980
b. 6, f. 116 - 117	P (General)	1970-1980
b. 6, f. 118	Patino, Jose	1971-1979
b. 6, f. 119	Plaja, Antonio	1970-1975
b. 6, f. 120	Prywes, Moshe	1973-1980
b. 6, f. 121 - 126	R-S (General)	1967-1980
b. 6, f. 127	Sajid, Abul	1968-1980
b. 6, f. 128	Somers, Kris	1973-1974
b. 6, f. 129	Standard, Ken	1971-1980
b. 6, f. 130	Stensland, Per G.	1971-1979
b. 6, f. 131 - 132	T (General)	1970-1979
b. 7, f. 133	Taba, A. H.	1971-1980
b. 7, f. 134	Thuriaux, Michael	1974-1980
b. 7, f. 135	Tiddens, Harmen	1978-1979
b. 7, f. 136	V (General)	1971-1980
b. 7, f. 137	W (General)	1971-1980
b. 7, f. 138	Whitby, L. G.	1971-1975
b. 7, f. 139	Y (General)	1971-1979
b. 7, f. 140	Z (General)	1971-1980
b. 7, f. 141 - 143	Unidentified	1970-1980

Series II: Topical, 1945-1984

The series contains professional files that are arranged alphabetically by topical heading. The materials include memoranda, minutes, agendas, financial statements, and reports.

The majority of the folders contain information about the various public service organizations of which Robertson was a member during his career, especially when he worked in Saskatchewan and New York. During his time in Saskatchewan, he was involved with the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Medical Association, and the College of General Practice of Canada. Folders filed under College of Physicians and Surgeons in Saskatchewan and the Canadian Labour Congress include speeches, writings, and press releases regarding the Canadian government's proposal on prepaid medical care. Organizations in New York included the Health Services Administration, the Piel Commission, the Health Research Council, and the Task Force on Reorganization of City Government.

The remaining folders are related to the three institutions that define his professional career. There are six folders from the Milbank Memorial Fund focusing on a leadership resources survey and human resources development in the Caribbean. The World Health Organization (WHO) materials at the headquarters, in the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and the Pan American Health Organization focus on issues such as a leadership survey and finance. From his time at the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, there are three folders of minutes of meetings as well as reports. Correspondence relating to these organizations can be found in Series I.

b. 8, f. 1	Association of Canadian Medical Colleges	1959
b. 8, f. 2 - 3	Barbados [brochures]	1967-1970
b. 8, f. 4 - 5	Canadian Medical Association (Saskatchewan Division) Physicians in Public Service	1959-1960
b. 8, f. 6	Canadian Public Health Association	1960-1961
b. 8, f. 7 - 8	College of General Practice of Canada	1957-1963
b. 8, f. 9	Columbia University	1962-1969
b. 8, f. 10	Federación Panamericana de Asociaciones de Facultades de Medicina	1970-1971
b. 8, f. 11 - 16	International Epidemiological Association	1956-1971
b. 8, f. 17 - 20	Keppel Club Report	1957-1971
Milbank Memorial Fund		
b. 9, f. 21	General	1962-1972
b. 9, f. 22	Faculty Fellows	1970
b. 9, f. 23 - 25	Human Resources Development in the Caribbean	1969-1970
b. 9, f. 26 - 28	Leadership Resources Survey	1967-1968
b. 9, f. 29	Staff	1962-1963
New York City		
b. 9, f. 30	Health Research Council	1962-1966
b. 9, f. 31 - 32	Health Services Administration	1966-1967

New York City (continued)

b. 9, f. 33 - 35	Piel Commission	1966-1967
b. 9, f. 36	Task Force on Reorganization of City Government	1966-1967
b. 9, f. 37	Rockefeller Grant	1957-1958
b. 9, f. 38	Saskatchewan Association for Adult Education	1958-1962
	Saskatchewan, prepaid medical care	
b. 9, f. 39 - 40	Correspondence	1959-1960
b. 10, f. 41	Canadian Labour Congress	1956-1960
b. 10, f. 42 - 44	College of Physicians and Surgeons	1958-1962
b. 10, f. 45	Press releases and newsletters	1959-1960
b. 10, f. 46	Speeches	1959-1960
b. 10, f. 47 - 48	Writings	1945-1960
b. 10, f. 49 - 50	University of London, DPH course, journal	1955
b. 10, f. 51 - 53	University of Saskatchewan, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine	1961-1963`
	World Health Organization	
	Pan American Health Organization	
b. 10, f. 54	Correspondence	1969-1971
b. 10, f. 55	General	1967-1971
b. 10, f. 56	Finance	1969-1971
b. 10, f. 57 - 58	Confidential files	1970-1971
b. 10, f. 59	Leadership Survey	1971
b. 10, f. 60	Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office	1970-1971
b. 10, f. 61	Reassignment to headquarters	1982-1984

Series III: Personal Papers, Photographs, and Writings, 1949-1991

The series is arranged alphabetically into three sections: personal papers, photographs, and writings.

The personal papers include award certificates, diplomas, resumes, and congratulatory telegrams and letters. Robertson's degree of Doctor of Science, honoris causa, from Union College in 1964 includes a statement describing him as "a pioneering integrator of the behavioral sciences with medicine." The five folders of photographs predominately depict scenes of conferences that Dr. Robertson attended during his career. There is one folder of portraits of Dr. Robertson. His writings include both published works and unpublished manuscripts regarding various issues on medical education, community medicine, and social science as related to medicine. Robertson's speeches comprise the largest portion of the series. They were delivered at a variety of academic, governmental, and international meetings. There are folders with his remarks at the Annual Convention of the Canadian Public Health Association in 1959, the thirty-fifth Anniversary Congress of the Pan American Medical Association in 1960, and the one hundred twenty-fifth celebration of the founding of the Albany Medical Center in 1964 to name a few. Oversize photographs, diplomas, and award certificates are filed at the end of the series.

Personal Papers		
f. 14	Alistair Robertson diploma	1893
b. 11, f. 1b. 13, f. 2f. 14	Award certificates and diplomas	1947-1981
b. 11, f. 2	Curricula vitae	1975-1991
Photographs		
b. 11, f. 3	Portraits of Robertson	1972-1979
b. 11, f. 4 - 7b. 13, f. 1f. 14	Groups	1948-1984
Writings		
Speeches		
b. 11, f. 8	Canadian Public Health Association Annual Meeting	1959
b. 11, f. 9	4th National Scientific Convention of College of General Practice	1960
b. 11, f. 10	35th Anniversary Congress of Pan American Medical Association	1960
b. 11, f. 11	Introductory Remarks to the Advisory Planning Committee on Medical Care	1961
b. 11, f. 12	American Medical Association Conference on International Health	1963
b. 11, f. 13	Association of Colombian Faculties of Medicine, Cartagena	1963
b. 11, f. 14	Pennsylvania Health Council	1964
b. 11, f. 15	Luncheon for Cornell students	1964
b. 11, f. 16	Inaugural Conference of the Health Manpower Study	1964
b. 11, f. 17	Milbank Memorial Fund/International Epidemiological Association	1964

Writings > Speeches (continued)

b. 11, f. 18	Albany Medical Center, 125th Anniversary Celebrations	1964
b. 11, f. 19	White House Conference on Health dinner	1965
b. 11, f. 20	Seminar on epidemiology at Suescun, Colombia	1965
b. 11, f. 21	Milbank Memorial Fund 60th Anniversary	1965
b. 11, f. 22	Remarks and Mayor Lindsay's Talk at the National Health Council	1966
b. 11, f. 23	Lindsay speech to New York Academy of Medicine	1967
b. 11, f. 24	International and Inter-institutional Collaboration in the Health Manpower Study	1967
b. 11, f. 25	Closing speech-Maracay Conference On Health Manpower	1967
b. 11, f. 26	Health Manpower in Bogota	1967
b. 11, f. 27	Milbank Memorial Fund Conference	1967
b. 11, f. 28	Dinner Speech at the Plaza	1967
b. 11, f. 29	Vina del Mar	1968
b. 11, f. 30	Barbados Address to Graduation Ceremony Tercentenary Nursing School	1970
b. 11, f. 31	Care of the Aged	
b. 12, f. 32	Manuscripts	1957
b. 12, f. 33 - 35	Publications	1954-1967

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Medical care
Medicine
Public health

Preferred Titles

*Contemporary Medical Care and Health Policy
Collection*

Names

Robertson, Alexander Duff, 1926-1991

Corporate Bodies

Milbank Memorial Fund
University of Saskatchewan. Dept. of Social and
Preventive Medicine
World Health Organization