

**University of Toronto Archives
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Barker Fairley fonds

B2024-0026

Sarah Paiva, 2025

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Biographical note

Barker Fairley is a renowned academic scholar, art and literary critic, author, and artist in the medium of painting. He is a recognized prominent scholar of German literature who has also been impactful in the Canadian art world. Fairley was born in 1887 in Barnsley, Yorkshire, England. He attended the University of Leeds, where he graduated with First Class Honors in both German and French. He then continued his education at Germany's University of Jena, where he completed his Ph.D.

Fairley remained at the University of Jena from 1907 to 1910. He then accepted a position at the University of Alberta, where he stayed from 1910 to 1915. While working at this institution, Fairley met fellow educator, Margaret Keeling, whom he married in 1914. He accepted a job in the German Department at the University of Toronto in 1915, teaching German literature. Other than a short tenure at the University of Manchester from 1932 to 1936, Fairley taught at University College at the University of Toronto until he retired in 1957.

Fairley was internationally renowned as a key authority on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. His works included, *Goethe as Revealed in His Poetry* published in 1932 and *A Study of Goethe*, printed in 1947. These books by Fairley legitimized his reputation as a prominent German literature scholar, particularly as an expert on Goethe.

Fairley was a member of the Arts & Letters Club of Toronto. While in this club, he came in contact with members of the Group of Seven. Fairley co-founded *The Canadian Forum* in 1920. It was a resource where he could exercise his thoughts on cultural issues and advocate for Canadian art, with particular interest in the Group of Seven. Both Fairley and Margaret demonstrated their support of the Group of Seven through this publication, despite many critics harshly judging the Group of Seven's artwork. He demonstrated his loyalty to the Group of Seven, by travelling with them on some of their art expeditions and collecting numerous paintings they created.

The Fairley couple's life was not without controversy. In March of 1949, Barker and Margaret, who was both an author and political activist, travelled to New York as delegates for the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at the Waldorf Astoria hotel. During this conference, Margaret was questioned by the United States Immigration Service. Barker and Margaret were deemed a threat to national security and were deported from the country. That same year, Bryn Mawr College invited Barker to provide a lecture on Goethe. However, he was denied entry as he was barred for life to enter the United States of America. Instead, Barker later printed his essays on Goethe.

Fairley pursued being a painter himself when he was 45 with the encouragement of one of his colleagues, Robert Finch. Over time, Fairley adopted a Fauvist approach to his artwork, distinguished by a limited colour palette and spare linework that critics appreciated for both capturing simplicity and emotional undertones. His artwork subjects included still life, portraits, and landscapes. Fairley garnered numerous honours throughout his life, including a variety of honorary degrees and the Order of Canada. After the death of Margaret, Fairley married Nan Purdie who was a key figure in encouraging Fairley's later pursuits in painting. Fairley died in 1986 at the age of 99 in Toronto.

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<https://doi.org/10.2307/25143677>

Scope and content

1830 – 2013

0.52m of artwork

1.2m of textual records

1 videotape

1.03m of photographs and slides

The records in this fonds mainly document the biographical, artistic, and academic life of Barker Fairley. The records depict his careers as an educator, artist, and scholar, with an emphasis of materials related to his work with his translations and in the visual arts. Series 1 documents Fairley's life, including a substantial amount of newspaper clippings that note important moments in Fairley's life. There are original artwork sketches (Series 2), translations of German works for plays (Series 3), and his works related to Doughty (Series 3). There is a minimal amount of correspondence in Series 3.

Arrangement: In Series 1 and Series 2 the files are arranged chronologically. In Series 3 the files are arranged in their original order.

Access: All files are open with the following exception:

- Series 1: B2024-0026/001(01)-(04)

Boxes:

Textual Records: B2024-0026/001 - /005

Moving Images: B2024-0026/001M

Photographs: B2024-0026/001P - B2024-0026/006P

Related material: Ezra Schabas fonds

Series 1: Biographical

1907 - 2013

0.40m of textual records

This series highlights the achievements and personal life of Fairley. It includes honours such as his Doctor of Letters degree from York University, his personal diaries, and correspondence ranging from numerous decades. This series also contains writings that memorialize the life of Fairley, his poetry, and newspaper clippings.

Arrangement: Files are arranged chronologically.

Access: Open

Boxes: B2024-0026/005(01) - (57)

Series 2: Art

1930 – 2007

0.52m of artwork

0.40m of textual records

This series includes sketchbooks and published content of Fairley's artwork, including illustrations, landscapes, and portraits. There are original sketches by Fairley and also his published illustrations for *Georgian Bay Sketches* by Barker Fairley and *Beams from the Beacon Poems of Georgian Bay* by Sylvia Du Vernet. Also includes documents records connected to Fairley's articles about his artwork, art exhibition materials, and promotional events related to his work in the art field. It includes promotional materials such as posters, minimal correspondence, and early manuscripts of Barker Fairley's book, *Barker Fairley Portraits*.

Arrangement: Files are arranged chronologically.

Access: All files are open with the following exception:

- Series 1: B2024-0026/001(01)-(04)

Boxes: B2024-0026/001(01) - B2024-0026/002(19)

Series 3: Academic/Authorship

1917 - 1989

0.40m of textual records

1 videotape

This series displays Fairley's essays, academic contributions, literary criticism, and translations. Notable translations by Fairley are present, including his manuscripts of *Nathan the Wise* and *Selected Poems of Heinrich Heine*. His research on Charles M. Doughty is also present, including some correspondence related to this topic. There are textual documents related to the theatrical production of *Faust* that document Fairley's involvement in this project.

Arrangement: Files are arranged in original order.

Access: Open

Boxes: B2024-0026/003(01)-(14), B2024-0026/004(1)-(32), and B2024-0026/001M

Series 4: Photos

1830 - 1989

1.03m of photographic records

This series consists of photographs that record Fairley's life and his artwork. It includes pictures of Fairley with his family, his portraits, at events, and with peers such as

the Group of Seven. There are photos of Fairley's paintings of landscapes and portraits. This series also includes prints from photoshoots of Fairley and a photo album.

Access: Open

Boxes: B2024-0026/001P(01) - B2024-0026/006P(03)

Appendix

Series 1: Biographical

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/005(01)	Barker Fairley Universität Jena (contains German content)	1907-1910
B2024-0026/005(02)	Exhibit Item Cards	1910-1972
B2024-0026/005(03)	Barker Fairley's copy of Requiescant And Other Poems by William Quintard Ketchum	ca. 1919
B2024-0026/005(04)	Notes related to Barker Fairley	[ca.1933] - [ca. 1988]
B2024-0026/005(05)	Gifted Articles and Journals to Barker Fairley	1934-1986
B2024-0026/005(06)	Personal Diaries (contains French content)	ca. 1944-1955
B2024-0026/005(07)	Correspondence from the 1940s	ca. 1949
B2024-0026/005(08)	University of Leeds presenting the Doctor of Letters honoris causa degree to Barker Fairley	May 19 1950
B2024-0026/005(09)	"Barker Fairley" by Humphrey Milnes in German Life and Letters	April, 1957
B2024-0026/005(10)	Poetry and Criticism in Delta edited by Louis Dudek	January, 1958
B2024-0026/005(11)	Newspaper Clippings related to Barker Fairley	1958-2008
B2024-0026/005(12)	University of Toronto Faculty Club	ca.1960s – 1982
B2024-0026/005(13)	University of Waterloo Convocation program	May 27 1961
B2024-0026/005(14)	"Barker Fairley on Charles Doughty" by Douglas Grant	April, 1967
B2024-0026/005(15)	Birthday Card to Barker Fairley	1967
B2024-0026/005(16)	Correspondence from the 1960s	May 25 1968
B2024-0026/005(17)	Correspondence from the 1970s	1970-1978
B2024-0026/005(18)	Magazine Clippings related to Barker Fairley	1970-1998
B2024-0026/005(19)	Honours for Barker Fairley	1971-1984

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/005(20)	Convocation Addresses and Programs - York University	June 6 1975 - June 12 1981
B2024-0026/005(21)	York University Doctor of Letters honoris causa degree diploma	June 6 1975
B2024-0026/005(22)	"Barker Fairley: On The Occasion Of The Award Of Life Membership In The Ontario Association Of Teachers Of German" by George Kirk	October 23 1976
B2024-0026/005(23)	The University of Western Ontario Spring Convocation program	1976
B2024-0026/005(24)	National Library of Canada News Release on the Barker Fairley: Scholar-Poet-Painter exhibition	May 4 1977
B2024-0026/005(25)	Invitations to Events	1977-1986
B2024-0026/005(26)	Poetry celebrating Barker Fairley's 90th birthday	ca. 1977
B2024-0026/005(27)	Mr. B. Fairley 90th Birthday Card	ca. 1977
B2024-0026/005(28)	Articles about Barker Fairley in the UC (University College) Newsletter	1979-1986
B2024-0026/005(29)	"The Prime of Barker Fairley" by Tom Daly	1980
B2024-0026/005(30)	The Arts and Letters Club Newsletter	April, 1981
B2024-0026/005(31)	Correspondence from the 1980s	August 13 1981 - March 21 1989
B2024-0026/005(32)	University College Spring Dinner menu	1983
B2024-0026/005(33)	Condolence Cards and Messages	1986-1987
B2024-0026/005(34)	"Thoughts On The Passing Of Barker Fairley" by Al Cox	1986
B2024-0026/005(35)	Memorial Service and Celebration of Barker Fairley schedule	1986
B2024-0026/005(36)	"Barker Fairley As A Scholar: A Tribute" by Rodney Symington	ca. 1986
B2024-0026/005(37)	Council of University College on the passing of Barker Fairley	ca. 1986
B2024-0026/005(38)	Rough draft notes regarding the passing of Barker Fairley	ca. 1986
B2024-0026/005(39)	Writing on Barker Fairley's Life	ca. 1986
B2024-0026/005(40)	"Barker Fairley" by Martin Swales in German Life and Letters	July, 1987

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/005(41)	"In Memoriam: Barker Fairley 1887-1986" by Rodney Symington	May, 1987
B2024-0026/005(42)	Barker Fairley Distinguished Visitorship in Canadian Culture University College program details	1987-1997
B2024-0026/005(43)	125 Years Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures University of Toronto exhibit advertisement	1991
B2024-0026/005(44)	Correspondence from the 1990s	May 13 1993 - October 14 1999
B2024-0026/005(45)	Promotional Material for the Group of Seven	1995
B2024-0026/005(46)	Program for Gossip, Denunciation and Praise, The 20th University College Symposium	1998
B2024-0026/005(47)	Correspondence from the 2000s	May 16 2001 - June 9 2009
B2024-0026/005(48)	Correspondence from the 2010s	September 18 2013
B2024-0026/005(49)	"Barker Fairley, Nationalism, Humanism, and Art in Canada" by David Kimmel	n.d.
B2024-0026/005(50)	Water-colours by John Sell Cotman from the British Museum	n.d.
B2024-0026/005(51)	The Canadian Forum advertising material	n.d.
B2024-0026/005(52)	"Barker Fairley" by Anonymous	n.d.
B2024-0026/005(53)	Music for Barker Fairley (including Stars and Grass, In the Secret Hollow, and Tears and Hunger)	n.d.
B2024-0026/005(54)	"Academic Freedom, Political Discrimination and the "Berufsverbot" in the FRG " by Heidi, Andreas Dress, and Bielefeld (contains German content)	n.d.
B2024-0026/005(55)	Biography on Charles M. Doughty by William Blissett and John Arthur Tucker	n.d.
B2024-0026/005(56)	Edits for an unknown book	n.d.
B2024-0026/005(57)	Holiday card to Barker Fairley	n.d.

Series 2: Art

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/001(01)	Sketchbook [RESTRICTED]	[193-] - [198-]
B2024-0026/001(02)	Sketchbook (Sketches of landscapes and people) [RESTRICTED]	[193-] - [198-]
B2024-0026/001(03)	Sketchbook (Sketches of landscapes and people) [RESTRICTED]	[193-] - [198-]
B2024-0026/001(04)	Sketchbook (Mainly sketches of portraits) [RESTRICTED]	[193-] - [198-]
B2024-0026/002(01)	<i>Georgian Bay Sketches</i> By Barker Fairley	1957
B2024-0026/002(02)	Promotion Materials for Exhibitions	1960-2006
B2024-0026/002(03)	<i>Barker Fairley Portraits</i> by Barker Fairley Early Manuscript known as Book of Portraits (part 1 of 3)	[ca.197-] - [ca. 198-]
B2024-0026/002(04)	<i>Barker Fairley Portraits</i> by Barker Fairley Early Manuscript known as Book of Portraits (part 2 of 3) (contains German content)	[ca.197-] - [ca. 198-]
B2024-0026/002(05)	<i>Barker Fairley Portraits</i> by Barker Fairley Early Manuscript known as Book of Portraits (part 3 of 3)	[ca.197-] - [ca. 198-]
B2024-0026/002(06)	"Three Selections From 12 <i>Georgian Bay Sketches</i> " by Barker Fairley for the Northern Journey	1972-1973
B2024-0026/002(07)	<i>Beams from the Beacon Poems of Georgian Bay</i> by Sylvia Du Vernet and illustrated by Barker Fairley	1974
B2024-0026/002(08)	<i>Barker Fairley Portraits</i> By Barker Fairley	1981
B2024-0026/002(09)	"Barker Fairley at Sword Street" by Gary Michael Dault	1981
B2024-0026/002(10)	Article on Barker Fairley's Portraits for The Graduate	1981
B2024-0026/002(11)	Poster for <i>Barker Fairley Portraits</i> by Barker Fairley	1981
B2024-0026/002(12)	"Portraits" for the Graduate University of Toronto Alumni	1981
B2024-0026/002(13)	An Evening with Barker Fairley: promotional event	1981-1983
B2024-0026/002(14)	Correspondence mentioning the presentation of Barker Fairley's portrait of the Principal	March 15 1983

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/002(15)	Correspondence between Ann Schabas and John Rottenberg re. finding a location for the Fairley Art Collection	1986
B2024-0026/002(16)	"Barker Fairley Painting Donated to Erindale" for The Dale	January, 1988
B2024-0026/002(17)	Donation letter from Sylvia DuVernet for A <i>Portrait of Herbert Whittaker</i> by Barker Fairley	November 14 2000
B2024-0026/002(18)	"An Evening Honouring Three Creative Humanists" by Judy Goldie	2003
B2024-0026/002(19)	Correspondence between Peter Alker and Jeff Duns regarding Barker Fairley's paintings in the Ingram Gallery	September 20 2007

Series 3: Academic/Authorship

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/003(01)	The Sloth by Wilhelm Raabe with edits	n.d.
B2024-0026/003(02)	Correspondence about Charles M. Doughty with William Blisset and Guy Davenport	1982
B2024-0026/003(03)	Nathan the Wise by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and translated by Barker Fairley Draft #1	December 10 1974
B2024-0026/003(04)	Nathan the Wise by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and translated by Barker Fairley Draft #2	April 14 1975
B2024-0026/003(05)	Nathan the Wise manuscript translated by Barker Fairley (contains German content)	1947 - ca. 1970s
B2024-0026/003(06)	"The Humanities in Higher Education" by Dr. Barker Fairley	[ca. 1950] - [ca. 1971]
B2024-0026/003(07)	Selected Poems of Heinrich Heine Translated by Barker Fairley (contains German content)	1965
B2024-0026/003(08)	The Rebel journal volumes	1917-1919
B2024-0026/003(09)	Convocation Speech Carleton University	May 26 1970
B2024-0026/003(10)	"3 Fairleys = 3 Books" in the Staff Bulletin	January, 1961
B2024-0026/003(11)	"Art - Canadians, For The Use Of" by Barker Fairley	December 1 1944
B2024-0026/003(12)	Doughty Glossary A-M (part 1 of 2)	[ca. 192-] - [ca.198-]
B2024-0026/003(13)	Doughty Glossary N-Y (part 2 of 2)	[ca. 192-] - [ca.198-]
B2024-0026/003(14)	Tense Cards for William Blisset	ca. 1980s

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/004(01)	The Darkling Plain by John Heath-Stubbs edits	ca. 1950
B2024-0026/004(02)	Mansoul (Or, The Riddle Of The World) by Charles M. Doughty edits	1920
B2024-0026/004(03)	Translation of Stopfkuchen by Wilhelm Raabe	ca. 1891
B2024-0026/004(04)	Poems of 1922 or not long after by Barker Fairley	ca. 1970s
B2024-0026/004(05)	Notebook on English Germanists and tenses in The Dawn in Britain by Charles Doughty	1964
B2024-0026/004(06)	Notebook of the Glossary to The Dawn in Britain by Charles M. Doughty	[ca. 192-] - [ca.198-]
B2024-0026/004(07)	Notebook on The Utmost Isle(s)	n.d.
B2024-0026/004(08)	Under Arms 1900 by Charles M. Doughty	1900
B2024-0026/004(09)	"On Translating Faust" by Barker Fairley in German Life & Letters (contains German content)	October, 1969
B2024-0026/004(10)	Speech for York University by Barker Fairley	n.d.
B2024-0026/004(11)	Programs and Advertising of Faust in a New English Stage Version by Barker Fairley	1970
B2024-0026/004(12)	Memorandum of Agreement regarding "Goethe"	October 2 1931
B2024-0026/004(13)	Research, Correspondence, and Newspaper Clippings on Doughty (part 1 of 2) (contains German content)	1926-1957
B2024-0026/004(14)	Research, Correspondence, and Newspaper Clippings on Doughty (part 2 of 2) (contains German content)	1926-1957
B2024-0026/004(15)	Nathan the Wise Rejects	ca.1970s
B2024-0026/004(16)	"Heine and the Festive Board" by Barker Fairley in the University of Toronto Quarterly	April, 1967
B2024-0026/004(17)	Script of Faust by Goethe, English stage version by Barker Fairley & Peter Raby	[ca.196-] - [ca.197-]
B2024-0026/004(18)	Edits on the paper, "W.H. Hudson"	n.d.
B2024-0026/004(19)	Faust - Stenographic Assistance	1966-1968
B2024-0026/004(20)	Script and Glossary of Adam Cast Forth by Charles Doughty	n.d.
B2024-0026/004(21)	Original Manuscript of Poems by Barker Fairley	1976- 1977
B2024-0026/004(22)	Correspondence regarding Barker Fairley sending his works	1957- 1972
B2024-0026/004(23)	Notes on the "Lay of the Long-One"	n.d.

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/004(24)	Edits on the paper, "What's Wrong"	n.d.
B2024-0026/004(25)	Edits on an unknown paper	n.d.
B2024-0026/004(26)	Research and Newspaper Clippings on Doughty	1935-1936
B2024-0026/004(27)	Doughty Glossary	[ca. 192-] - [ca.198-]
B2024-0026/004(28)	Northscapes: Four Songs on Poems of Barker Fairley for Mezzo-soprano and String Quartet	2001
B2024-0026/004(29)	U of T Conferring of Degrees with Convocation Address by Barker Fairley	May 29 1968
B2024-0026/004(30)	Edits on the paper, "The Nurse"	n.d.
B2024-0026/004(31)	Reference Materials on German, Poets and Veronese Masterpieces	ca. 1960s
B2024-0026/004(32)	Lecture Presentation List including The Dawn in Britain after Fifty Years lecture by Professor Barker Fairley	n.d.
B2024-0026/001M	Barker Fairley Reading his Poems	May-June, 1984

Series 4: Photos

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/001P(01)	Slides of Barker Fairley Artwork	1932-1986
B2024-0026/002P(01)	Fairley Portraits and Landscapes Part 1 of 3	1937-1978
B2024-0026/002P(02)	Fairley Portraits and Landscapes Part 2 of 3	1958-1977
B2024-0026/002P(03)	Fairley Portraits and Landscapes Part 3 of 3	ca. 1965-1969
B2024-0026/002P(04)	Barker Fairley with his family	[ca.193-] - [ca.194-]
B2024-0026/002P(05)	Exhibition Event of Barker Fairley's Artwork	[ca.196-] - [ca.197-]
B2024-0026/002P(06)	Barker Fairley attending a black tie event	[ca.195-] - [ca.196-]
B2024-0026/002P(07)	B. Fairley and Margaret Fairley (?)	[ca.193-] - [ca.194-]
B2024-0026/002P(08)	Barker Fairley Portrait Photos Black and White	[ca.191-] - [198-]
B2024-0026/002P(09)	Barker Fairley Portrait Colour Photos	[ca.197-] - 1981

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/002P(10)	Charles Montagu Doughty	[ca.190-] - [ca.1926]
B2024-0026/002P(11)	Group photos with Barker Fairley	[ca.1905] - [ca. 194-]
B2024-0026/002P(12)	The Group of Seven	1920-1977
B2024-0026/002P(13)	99th Birthday Photo by Terence McCartney-Filgate	1986
B2024-0026/002P(14)	Barker Fairley with his artwork and unknown individuals	1961- [ca.197-]
B2024-0026/002P(15)	Barker Fairley at a Convocation	[ca.197-] - [ca. 198-]
B2024-0026/002P(16)	Photoshoot with Tess Boudreau	ca.198-
B2024-0026/002P(17)	Barker Fairley	ca. 1980 – 1986
B2024-0026/002P(18)	Barker Fairley at an event	[ca. 194-] - [ca.195-]
B2024-0026/002P(19)	Photo negatives of Barker Fairley	[ca.194-] - [ca.197-]
B2024-0026/002P(20)	Photo Album pages with Barker Fairley	[ca.190-] - [ca.191-]
B2024-0026/002P(21)	Young Barker Fairley With His Family	[ca.190-] - [ca.192-]
B2024-0026/002P(22)	Group photo of unknown Fairley ancestors	[ca.183-] - [ca.189-]
B2024-0026/002P(23)	Family Photos of Barker Fairley's Children (?)	[ca.193-] - [ca.196-]
B2024-0026/003P(01)	Barker Fairley with the Group of Seven	ca. 1920
B2024-0026/003P(02)	Barker Fairley with his artwork photographed by Mike Pearce	[ca.197-] - ca.1986
B2024-0026/003P(03)	Barker Fairley Photoshoot with Dove Boulton	[ca.197-] - ca.1986
B2024-0026/004P(01)	Fairley Paintings	n.d
B2024-0026/004P(02)	Fairley Paintings	n.d
B2024-0026/004P(03)	Fairley Paintings	n.d.
B2024-0026/004P(04)	Fairley Paintings	n.d.
B2024-0026/005P(01)	Fairley Paintings	n.d.
B2024-0026/005P(02)	Fairley Paintings	n.d.
B2024-0026/005P(03)	Fairley Paintings	n.d.
B2024-0026/006P(01)	Fairley Paintings	n.d.

File number	File title	Date range
B2024-0026/006P(02)	Fairley Paintings	n.d.
B2024-0026/006P(03)	Fairley Paintings	n.d.