

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

Donald F. Putnam Personal Records

Finding Aid

**Prepared by: Marnee Gamble
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B1997-0029

Biographical Note:

Donald Fulton Putnam was born in Lower Onslow Nova Scotia in 1903. He received a BSA from the Ontario Agricultural College in 1931 and completed his Ph.D in Botany at the University of Toronto in 1935. In 1938, while working part-time as a lecturer and conducting research at the Ontario Research Foundation, he approached Griffith Taylor for a position in the newly formed Department of Geography. Thus began his lifelong career in the Department from 1938 to his retirement in 1974, succeeding Griffith Taylor as Chair from 1953-1963 and moving to Erindale campus in 1966.

His research interests lay mainly in the study of agriculture, soils and geomorphology on which he published numerous articles. His hallmark work The Physiography of Southern Ontario, written with colleague Lyman Chapman of the Ontario Research Foundation was a culmination of 16 years of field research and is still widely consulted. Putnam collaborated with other geographers to write the first modern systematic geography text Canadian Regions, which was widely adopted at both the university and senior high school levels. It was first published in 1952 and survived eight editions. Other books along the same lines include A Regional Analysis of Canada and its updated version written with his son Robert Putnam, Canada: A Regional Analysis.

Through his writings and teaching activities, Putnam was influential in defining how Geography was to be studied and taught. In the Department of Geography, he was praised for his field trips that inspired many of his students to make a career of geography. Many went on to teach and set up geography programs and departments at both the highschool and university levels. In 1951 he helped found the Canadian Association of Geographers and was honoured at being elected its first President. In the mid- 1950s, he was an active member of the Geography Teachers' Association of Ontario that wrote curriculum for the teaching of senior high school geography.

Putnam was recognized for his achievements with several awards including the Massey Medal from the Royal Canadian Geographical Society in 1969 and the Service to the Profession Award from the Canadian Association of

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Biographical Note (cont'd)

Geographers in 1972. York University bestowed an Honorary Degree upon him in 1974. Putnam died in 1977. His obituary in *Canadian Geographer* (XXV, 4, 1981) called him "The dean of English-speaking Canadian geographers".

Scope and Content

192- - 1985

2.33 m

Multi-media

Records document Putnam's career including his research, writings, teaching, professional activities, administrative duties, and student work. They are arranged in the following series:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Series 1 | Personal and Biographical |
| Series 2 | Diaries |
| Series 3 | Correspondence |
| Series 4 | Articles, books and addresses |
| Series 5 | Teaching |
| Series 6 | Notes |
| Series 7 | Department of Geography |
| Series 8 | Canadian Association of Geographers |
| Series 9 | Ontario Educational Association –Geography Teachers' Association of Ontario |
| Series 10 | Student Papers |
| Series 11 | Graphic |
| Series 12 | Resource Material on Putnam |

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Series Descriptions

Series 1

Personal and Biographical

1921-1977 0.02 m

Includes Putnam's obituary, bibliography of his works, early education certificates and family memorabilia.

See Box /001 (01) – (04)

Series 2

Diaries

1938 – 1965

Daily diaries kept sporadically by Putnam throughout a large part of his career. Entries are both personal and professional in nature.

See Box /010.

Series 3

Correspondence

1927-1975 0.5 m

This series contains most of Putnam's professional correspondence arranged by year. Earliest years contain mainly incoming correspondence but later years also include copies of Putnam's outgoing correspondence. This series offers researchers a good overview of all aspects of Putnam's career since letters relate to his publishing activities, his research, his administration of the Department of Geography, his friendships with geographers in other universities and government departments. There are also references for students and correspondence relating to his work with the Canadian Association of Geographers.

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Series Descriptions

Series 3 (cont'd)

Correspondence

Filed at the end of the chronological files, are four files of correspondence with specific colleagues, which include Louis Gentilcore, Angus Hill, Donald Kerr and Bill Wonders. There is also two with family members, mainly his wife Jean Putnam and son Robert. Researchers should note that this series was artificially arranged before the Archives took custody of the records and that correspondence with the above individuals is not limited to these six files.

See Box /001, /002 and /003 (01) – (17).

Series 4

Articles, books and addresses

1943 – 1972 0.4 m

This series contains draft and edited manuscripts and typescripts of books, chapters of books and articles authored by Putnam throughout the course of his career. Included is a complete typescript of his book Canadian Regions first published in 1952 and subsequently revised several times. There are also files relating to his numerous contributions about Canadian geography to encyclopaedia such as the Chambers's Encyclopaedia, the Encyclopaedia Americana and the Encyclopaedia of Britannica which also contain correspondence with the publishers.

Also in this series are addresses made by Putnam and memorandum written by him, most of which are undated. Of some interest are addresses "Thoughts on Geography in Canada" and "Geography in Canadian Universities" which detail Putnam's thought on the state of the discipline, its teachers and practitioners. There is also a manuscript of a memorandum written in 1951 to Dean Beatty entitled "Geography at Toronto, - Past, Present and Future" which describes the history of the department and its current state.

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Series Descriptions

Series 4 (cont'd)

Articles, books and addresses

Arrangement is as follows: 1) Articles and Chapters of Books 2) Books 3) Contributions to encyclopaedia 4) Addresses 5) Memoranda

See Box /004 – /005.

Series 5

Teaching

1938-1971 0.3 m

Includes Putnam's early lectures on physical geography, agricultural geography, conservation, penology, Latin American geography and geomorphology (1904s). Lectures through the 1950s, 60s and 70s deal mainly with land use, conservation and natural resources. Interfiled with the lecture notes are some course outlines and class assignments. In 1938, Griffith Taylor, then head of the Geography Department asked Putnam to develop curriculum for an Honours course in Geography, which he did in collaboration with Steven Jones. Both notes from Putnam and Jones are filed at the beginning of this series.

See Boxes /006 and /007 Files (01) – (17).

Series 6

Notes

Ca. 195- - 196- 0.05 m

This series contains of sampling of notes taken by Putnam on various of occasions. Some, for example relate directly to the research of his books while other files contain notes take during visiting lecturers, student seminars and professional conferences.

See Box /007 Files (18) – (31).

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Series Descriptions

Series 7

Department of Geography

1951 – 196- 0.13 m

Records in this series mainly documents Putnam's tenure as Chair of the Department of Geography from 1953-1963. The bulk of the records relate to budget matters, appropriations, staff evaluations and promotions. They include memos, correspondence, notes, and budget summaries and are arranged chronologically. Much of the memos and correspondence are in draft form and contain candid remarks about the running of the Geography department and the competence of its staff. Also in this series are Putnam's notes on such topics as Ph.D. candidates, record keeping, staff training, personnel selection as they apply to the Geography Department. Finally this series includes Putnam's proposal for the establishment of an outdoor laboratory for Geomorphology at Erindale (although undated, this piece probably post-dates his tenure as Chair).

See Box /008

Series 8

Canadian Association of Geographers

1950 – 1962 0.1 m

Includes records of the Canadian Association of Geographers, an association which Putnam helped to establish and for which he was elected to serve as its first President in 1951. Includes circulars, memos, correspondence, minutes and programmes of annual meetings, newsletters and membership lists.

See Box /003 (18) – (25).

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Series Descriptions

Series 9

Ontario Educational Association – Geography Teachers' Association of Ontario

ca. 1953 – 1956 0.05 m

These records document Putnam's involvement in the development of high school geography curriculum through the Geography Teachers' Association of Ontario. Included are notes, correspondence, memoranda and reports.

See Box 009 (01) – (05).

Series 10

Student Papers

1928 – 1935 0.15 m

Course notes, class assignments, illustrations, manuscripts of his BSc. and Ph.D. theses make up this series which documents his accomplishments as a student and his grounding in the natural sciences.

See Box /009 Files (06) – (20).

Series 11

Graphic

192- - 1975 0.46 m

Photographs and negatives document Putnam, his family, the Department of Geography field trips and research field trips. Many photographs were taken by Putnam and later, his son Bob Putnam, for possible use in books.

There are photographs of Putnam and Lyman Chapman working in the field during the 1930s, Geography field trips with student through the 1940s and 1950s and of Canadian landscapes and geographical highlights photographed during various trips. There is also one group shot of the Geography Department taken in either the late 1950s or early 1960s.

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Series Descriptions

Series 11 (cont'd)

Graphic

Finally, there is one box of unidentified early negatives. These have yet to be processed but seem to be a mix of early family images 1910s and 20s and some documenting Putnam's early field trips.

For photographs See Boxes /001P and /002P

For related negatives see /003P

For unidentified negatives see /004P.

Series 12

Resource Material on Putnam

1981-1985

0.05 m

Records in this series do not belong to the Putnam Fonds. Most were created by Bill Irving, a former student of Putnam's, in the course of his research and writing on Putnam. They include: an early draft and published copy of his article; original tapes and related notes of his interview of Dr. Lyman Chapman in 1984; notes relating to Putnam's diaries; and correspondence between Irving and Putnam's colleagues with the hopes seeking out further Putnam correspondence.

This series also includes an Honours paper on Putnam written by geography student, Steve Charbonneau. Included is a good bibliography of Putnam's works as well as a compiled chronology of his accomplishments. According to many of the footnotes Charbonneau interviewed several of Putnam's colleagues and students in the course of his research.

See Box 007 (32) – (34).