



University of Toronto Scarborough Library, Archives & Special Collections

Finding Aid - Frank Harbutt fonds (024)

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Frank Harbutt fonds

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Summary information

Repository:	University of Toronto Scarborough Library, Archives & Special Collections
Title:	Frank Harbutt fonds
Reference code:	024
Date:	[after 1946] - [ca. 1985] (creation)
Physical description:	36 photographs : col. slides 37.5 MB of digitized images
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	Created by KL - May 30, 2025

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Frank Harbutt was born on October 22, 1892, in Leicestershire, England. At the age of 15, he started to work in the optical glass trade and he would stay for 7 years until he joined the army to fight in World War 1. When he returned from the war in 1918 he married Lilian (1894-1972). In 1919 they moved to Spain where Frank worked in an import-export business but they soon left for the United States and immigrated to Rochester, New York where Frank worked for 10 years doing estate work and landscaping. Frank, Lilian and their young daughter Joyce then moved to Alliston, Ontario in 1929 as Lilian had an aunt living in the area. Frank established a greenhouse and worked landscaping jobs for farmers, although many farmers at the time did not have lots of work for him. In 1946 Frank and Lilian moved to the Highland Creek Valley when Mr. E.L. McLean offered him a job as a landscape gardener for the McLean estate. Frank was given free housing in the gardener's cottage east of the Miller Lash House and a starting salary of \$150 per month. Through his work he cared for a variety of different plants, built a swimming pool and pool house, and built a rock wall and gate posts at the entrance to the driveway to the house.

When Mr. McLean sold this property to the University of Toronto in 1963, Harbutt continued to work on the grounds as a gardener for Scarborough College. He was also allowed to continue living in his cottage rent-free for as long as he wished. He was forced to retire as a gardener at the age of 65 and was awarded a small pension from Scarborough College, but would occasionally do part-time work for the Miller Lash House until 1978. He continued to live on the property until 1992 when he moved to West Hill Legion Valley Senior's home at the age of 99. Frank died on March 24th 1993 in Sunnybrook Hospital at the age of 100.

Scope and content

The fonds consists of 36 images of the McLean Estate grounds, mainly the gardener's cottage (Harbutt house) where Frank lived and the Miller Lash House pool. The records show the area where Frank lived and the type of work he was doing on the property. Images of the Harbutt house show the garden outside the house and Frank and his wife Lilian, inside the house. The Miller Lash House pool photos highlight one of the projects that Frank completed as a gardener for the McLean family.

Some slides have dates indicating their creation date.

Notes

Physical condition

Digitized images are stored on a USB-A flash drive

Immediate source of acquisition

Materials were donated by Rosemary and Jonathan Oliver to the UTSC Library in 2024.

Note [General]

Accessioned as 2024-001

Note [General]

This fonds is stored in a box with Frederick A. Urguhart Collection (Box 1) and Stanley K. Todorow collection (Box 1).

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
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Access points

- Photographs and art (documentary form)