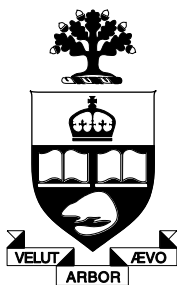


# University of Toronto Archives



## **Gerald Edward Blake Personal Records B2003-0023**

Garron Wells, December 2003  
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B2003-0023

Gerald Edward Blake Personal Records

Access: Open	Textual; graphic; publications; cartographic; artifacts	1892-1921 1.73 m
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### Biographical Note

Gerald Edward Blake was born in Toronto on May 28, 1892, the eldest son of Edward Francis Blake and Ethel Mary Benson. His father, Edward Blake (1860-1905) was the son of the Hon. Edward Blake, former Chancellor of the University of Toronto, and partner in the law firm Blake, Lash & Cassels. His mother was the eldest daughter of Judge Thomas M. Benson of Port Hope, and step sister of Clara Benson (See B2003-0008). The Blake family was also related to the Wrong family through the marriage of Edward Blake's sister Sophia Hume to George M. Wrong, professor of history at the University of Toronto. (See B2003-0005)

Gerald Blake's early education was at Ridley College, St. Catherines from which he graduated in 1910. In the fall, he entered the University of Toronto with double scholarship in Classics and Mathematics and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1914. During his years at the University he was a member of Kappa Alpha Fraternity, along with his cousins, Hume Wrong and Harold V. Wrong. He was studying law at Osgoode Hall when war broke out in 1914. He left for England in June, 1915 to join the British Expeditionary Force. During his time overseas, he became engaged to Katherine Ogden Jones and spent his last leave with her and his aunt, Emily Morris, in England during the spring of 1916.

He was commissioned as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. 4<sup>th</sup> Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry on July 22, 1915. He fought in France and Flanders from 31 October 1915 and was promoted to Lieutenant on April 1, 1916 and Captain on 13 July 1916. He was killed in action at Pozières during the Battle of the Somme on July 23, 1916. He was buried in Mash Valley, "1,250 yards due west of the centre of Pozières."<sup>1</sup>

### Scope and Content Note

This accession documents the short life of Gerald Edward Blake from his birth in 1892, his education at Ridley College and the University of Toronto, to his death on the battlefields of France during World War I in 1916. Series 1 and 3 contain his diaries and correspondence to family members in which he describes his experiences at school, his trips to Britain and France in 1913 and most significantly, his 13 months of service during World War I. The majority of his letters are to his mother during his months overseas, but there are also letters to his sisters, Margaret (1893-1963), Constance (1896-1979) and his brother, Verschoyle (1899-1971). Some of these letters are attached to typescript copies, prepared by his brother Verschoyle prior to 1971. Capt. Blake also sent postcards annotated by him which provide a photographic record of British army life in camp, as well as official coloured war service postcards of the British army in action. Other postcards of street scenes in France and Britain helped to illustrate the places he had been including the town of Pozières near which he was killed in 1916 (Series 5). Other war records include his military orders and notes while at the front, and his copy of active service bible.

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<sup>1</sup> The roll of honour. A biographical record of all members of His Majesty's Naval and Military forces who have fallen in the War. Volume II. By The Marquis de Ruigny (London: n.d.). Gerald Blake is recorded on page 31.

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Correspondence and photographs also document his close friendship with his cousins Hume Wrong (1894 – 1954; BA 1915) and Harold Wrong (b.1891; BA 1913), who was also killed in action in July 1916.

After Gerald's death, Hume Wrong assisted Mrs. Blake in making arrangements for her son's grave site in France and sent home photographs of the cemetery which he visited in 1920-1921. (Series 5) In addition, Mrs. Blake received other remembrances of her son's service such as a commemorative medal from the British Army, a copy of the history of his battalion's service in the War and a copy of Volume II of the British Roll of Honour (Series 4).

Related records: B2003-0005 George M. Wrong personal records  
B2003-0008 Clara Benson personal records

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<b>/Box (file)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Series 1 Diaries</b>		
/001		
(01)	Diary, 1911 and address book (undated)	1911
(02) – (04)	Diaries written during the last year of studies at the University of Toronto (1912-1913) and on trip to Britain during the summer of 1913	1912-1913
(05) –(06)	Diaries written sporadically between October 1915 when on leave in England and at the front to July 20, 1916	1915-1916
<b>Series 2 Education</b>		
(07)	School records for Ridley College and the University of Toronto; correspondence to his parents Edward and Ethel Blake	1903-1914
/002 (01)-(02)	Essay and notes book containing writings on British and Canadian history; scrap book of writings (poems, essays)	Ca 1908-1915 and undated
<b>Series 3 Correspondence</b>		
(03)-(05)	Correspondence from Gerald Blake to mother, siblings and other family and friends written during his war service. Some letters are accompanied by typescript copies.	June 1915-July 1916
(06)	Correspondence received by Mrs Ethel Blake, mother of Gerald Blake, mainly concerning condolences and circumstances on his death. Includes letters from Hume Wrong and others who served in the war and knew him. Also includes information on his grave site. Some letters are accompanied by typescript copies.	1916-1921
(07)	Other correspondence relating to Gerald Blake's death, mainly to Mrs. Emily Morris (sister of Ethel Blake), probably forwarded to Mrs. Blake.	1916-1918
<b>Series 4 World War 1 memorabilia</b>		
(08)	Military orders, notes and communiqués of Gerald Blake contained in canvas pouch.	1915-1916

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/Box (file)	Title	Dates
<b>Series 4 World War 1 memorabilia (cont'd)</b>		
/002		
(09)	War maps for British and French front lines	1914
/003 (01)	Publications: "Active Service Testament 1914-1915" bible given to Gerald Blake, 1915 and inscribed by Lord Roberts August 25, 1914; <u>War Record of the 1/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Oxfordshire &amp; Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.</u> Compiled by Major P. Pickford, 1919. Inscribed "To Aunt Ethel in token of a deep regard and in memory of an unforgettable comradeship from Hume Wrong, Sept. 1919". Brochure for Kappa Alpha fraternity "A memorial service held in honour of members of Kappa Alpha who have given their lives in the Great War". Toronto	1915 1919
(02)	Commemorative medal from the British Army inscribed "Jerrold [sic] Edward Blake"	Ca 1919
(03)	<u>The roll of honour. A biographical record of all members of His Majesty's Naval and Military forces who have fallen in the War.</u> Volume II. By The Marquis de Ruvigny (London: n.d.). Gerald Blake is recorded on page 31.	n.d.
/004	Promotion certificate to rank of Second Lieutenant dated 22 July 1915	1915

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### **Series 5 Graphic materials**

ca. 1893-1921	1.23 m.	31 photoprints 30 postcards 1 pencil drawing 18 digital scans of original prints	
/001P			
(01)	Portraits of Gerald Blake as a baby and child with siblings and mother; with grandfather, Judge T. M. Benson; portrait of Edward Blake, father of Gerald. Negatives of nature and boat scenes at "Proudfoot" 1908		Ca 1893-1908
(02)	Photoprints of Gerald Blake as an adult: at Ridley College (1911), at Cap a l'aigle, Quebec (summer home) with brother Verschoyle and sister Constance (ca 1914); in backyard of 449 Jarvis Street ca 1914; in England on leave with his aunt Emily Morris and fiancé Katharine Ogden Jones (1916)		1910-1916
(03)	Gerald Blake on his last leave in England posing with his Aunt Emily's spaniel. Accompanying frame is placed in artifacts box /001Art		Spring 1916
(04)	World War I military postcards: Coloured series produced by British Army showing British soldiers in action; B and A Company camp black and white photo prints showing Gerald Blake and fellow soldiers in various activities. Commentary on back by Gerald Blake.		Ca 1915-1916
(05)	Postcards of scenes in France and Britain during the war; nursing staff with Lady Menzies (Feb 5, 1918).		Ca 1915-1916, 1918
(06)	Photoprints showing where Gerald Blake died and was buried: Forceville Cemetary in France where Gerald Blake was buried (taken by Hume Wrong, 1921); "Albert from Aveluy Road, March 1920"; war monument at Thelus Village[?]		1920, 1921
(07) –(08)	Printed copies of scanned photographs contained on disc B2003-0023/001CD and /002CD, includes where relevant a photocopy of the back of the original print		1892-1915

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/002P	Group photo of members of Kappa Alpha fraternity, University of Toronto with individual names. Includes Gerald Blake, Hume Wrong, H. V. Wrong, F. H. Marani, W. H. Daniel.	1912-1913
/003P	Etching of Gerald Blake in uniform. By Walter R. Duff. (See letter, Walter R. Duff to Mrs Blake dated August 9, 1916 /002 (06))	Ca 1916
<hr/>		
/001fd	15 scanned photographs of Blake family members numbered – original prints were returned to the family	
01	Graduation portrait – Gerald Blake	1913
02	Margaret and Edward Blake	n.d.
03	Paul A., Gerald, Hume at the Manoir [Richelieu]	n.d.
04a	Kathleen Jones, Gerald's fiancée	
04b	Margaret Blake and Kathleen Jones	
05	Gerald Blake, Harold and Hum Wrong reading the news of the outbreak of war 1914 on veranda at Cap a L'Aigle, Quebec	1914
06	Gerald Blake in uniform	Ca. 1915
07	Gerald Blake on leave seen with his aunt's (Emily Constance Morn) spaniel	1915?
08	Gerald, Constance and Margaret Blake	1898
09	Gerald, Margaret, Vershoyle and Constance	1899
10	Gerald and siblings	ca.1900
11	Gerald and siblings	ca. 1905
12	E.F. Blake	1903
13	Mrs Blake	1897
14	Group photograph of Blake/Wrong /Benson families at Maison Rouge	1892
/002df	4 scanned photographs belonging to Edward Blake, numbered – original prints were returned to the family	
01	Kappa Alpha Society	1913-1914
02	Kappa Alpha Society	1911-1912
03	Kappa Alpha Society	1914-1915
04	Group portrait, unidentified	191-