



ARCHIVES

TRINITY COLLEGE

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

***Description and Finding Aid***  
**JOHN STRACHAN COLLECTION**  
**F2021**

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## JOHN STRACHAN COLLECTION

### Dates of creation:

[1778-1868]

### Extent:

2 m of textual records

4 artefacts

### Biographical sketch:

John Strachan, Anglican clergyman, bishop, and educator, was born on 12 April 1778 at Aberdeen, Scotland, and died on 1 November 1867 in Toronto, Ontario. He attended Aberdeen Grammar School and King's College, Aberdeen, but turned to teaching after his father died in 1794. In the fall of 1796 Strachan returned to Aberdeen and graduated with an A.M. in March 1797. In 1799 Strachan accepted a teaching position in Upper Canada, arriving at Kingston on 31 December.

He began tutoring the children of prominent townspeople, including those of Richard Cartwright. In 1803 Bishop Jacob Mountain ordained Strachan as a deacon, and he became a priest in 1804. He was given the mission at Cornwall, where he soon began taking students and set up a school. In 1807 he married Ann Wood McGill, the widow of Andrew McGill, a member of a prominent Montreal mercantile family, and they had nine children, James McGill, Elizabeth (died in infancy), George Cartwright, Elizabeth Mary, John, Alexander Wood, two daughters who died in infancy, and Agnes (who died at 16).

In 1811 Strachan received an honorary D.D. from the University of Aberdeen (in 1829 he received an LL.D. from St Andrews University). The same year, he advised James McGill of Montreal to leave his extensive property to the cause of education; provisions were made that led to the founding of McGill University. Also in 1811, Strachan was offered the rectorship of York (Toronto) and the chaplaincy of the garrison and of the Legislative Council.

Strachan arrived at York in June 1812, just as the United States and Great Britain were going to war, and he played a pivotal role during two successful invasions by U.S. forces, negotiating the terms of capitulation. He was made an honorary member of the Executive Council in 1815 and then served as a regular member from 1817 to 1836 and as a member of the Legislative Council from 1820 to 1841. In 1822 Strachan, who was headmaster of the York Grammar School, became president of the newly established General Board of Education. Interested in establishing a university in Upper Canada, Strachan travelled to England in 1826 and in 1827, when he obtained a royal charter for the University of King's College. Strachan was appointed archdeacon of York in 1827.

In 1839 the Diocese of Quebec was split and Strachan became bishop of the new Diocese of Toronto. After many difficulties King's College was finally opened in 1843. However, the Church of England's influence on the new university had been reduced well in advance of the opening, and in 1842 Strachan, foreseeing future difficulties, had founded the Diocesan Theological Institution at Cobourg for the training of clergy. In 1848 he resigned as president of King's College, which was secularized and brought under government control the following year, becoming the University of Toronto on 1 January 1850. Strachan then set about to found an Anglican university and after another trip to England to raise funds and obtain a charter, the cornerstone of the University of Trinity College was laid on 30 April 1851. Classes began in January 1852. Strachan accepted the election of a coadjutor bishop in 1866. He died the following year.

### Scope and content:

The collection is an eclectic group of material from every period of Strachan's life: official documents, correspondence, notes, newspaper clippings and writings.

*Contains series*

1. Early Life
2. Life in Canada
3. Notes
4. Official documents

**Notes:**

*Acquisition history:* The collection has a complex custodial history. Accession 985-0082 was passed from Christopher C. Robinson, the grandson of Sir John Beverley Robinson (a great friend of Strachan), to Professor Archibald Hope Young of Trinity College in 1927 before arriving at the Trinity College Archives. Accession 985-0084 is an artificial collection brought together by the archivist. Accession 985-0086 was previously two groups of "miscellaneous manuscripts." Accession 985-0106 was purchased from an antiquarian bookseller. Accession 988-0056 was found in an 1823 copy of the *Christian Observer* that came from Strachan's library. Accession 005-0010 was donated by James Bain. The silver epergne was left to Trinity College in Strachan's will.

*Arrangement:* The arrangement of this material is artificial but largely chronological within each series.

*Restrictions on access:* None.

*Terms governing use and reproduction / publication:* Public domain

*Associated material:* Other records relating to John Strachan exist at the Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Toronto, and at the Archives of Ontario.

*Related material:* Other records relating to John Strachan can be found in the A.N. Bethune fonds, F2022, and the Archibald Hope Young fonds, F2053.

**Provenance access point**

Strachan, John (1778-1867)

**SERIES 1: EARLY LIFE****Dates of creation:**

[1778]-1865

**Extent:**

3.5cm of textual records

**Scope and content:**

Series consists of documents, correspondence, writings about Strachan's early life in Scotland and his journey to Kingston.

**Location:**

Box 1

FOLDER/UNIT TITLE	START DATE	END DATE	CONTENTS	BOX/ FILE #
Early Life in Scotland	1778	1799	Extract from Register of Baptisms for Aberdeen.. Testimonial of Andrew Dun (?), 26 May 1796, that	1-1

Strachan was educated for five years at the Grammar School of Aberdeen.  
 Testimonial of Peter Barclay, 20 July 1799, re Strachan's teaching at Kettle School .  
 Testimonial from George Hill, D.D., principal of St Mary's College, University of St Andrews, 20 July 1799, that Strachan is qualified to discharge the duties of a teacher . For diploma from Aberdeen, see Box 2.

Early Life in Scotland	1795	1796	Minutes and Proceedings of the Disputing Society held in the Marischal College, Aberdeen, 9 November 1795 – 9 March 1796.	1-2
Early Life in Scotland and Journey to Kingston	1799	1865	Memorandum about his early life written by Strachan, dated 9 September 1865]. A sheet describing Strachan's stay in Montreal and the journey from Montreal to Kingston, 13-31 December 1799; file includes photocopy of this document.	1-3
Early Life in Scotland	1799	1799	Manuscript relic (bound), covering period up to 12 December 1799, written by Strachan on his journey to Upper Canada.	1-4

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## SERIES 2: LIFE IN CANADA

### Dates of creation:

1803-1868

### Extent:

6.5cm of textual records  
 3 artefacts

### Scope and content:

Series consists of official documents, correspondence, newspaper clippings etc. covering Strachan's life from his appointment as rector in Cornwall to his death

### Location:

Box 1. Map case 4, Vault

FOLDER/UNIT TITLE	START DATE	END DATE	CONTENTS	BOX/ FILE #
Rector, Cornwall	1803	1803	Declaration of conformity, 25 May. Appointment by Bishop Jacob Mountain as minister at Cornwall, 25 May 1803. Letter, Bishop Jacob Mountain to Richard Cartwright, 26 May 1803, on Strachan's character. Letter, James Green (on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor) confirming Strachan's appointment, 2 August 1803. For letter of orders, deacon, and letters of	1-5

			order, priest, see Boxes 3 and 4 respectively.	
Land grant document	1804	1804	Grant of 800 acres from the Crown to Reverend John Strachan in the Township of Elmsley, County of Leeds. Vellum, 14 ½ x 17 inches, including the original seal.	8
Doctor of Divinity Aberdeen	1811	1811	Letter, Roderick MacLeod to Strachan, 25 February 1811, telling him Aberdeen has awarded him a Doctor of Divinity and enclosing the diploma. Photograph of diploma: for original of diploma, see Box 5.	1-6
Minister, York	1812	1812	Letter, Isaac Brock to Chief Justice Thomas Scott, 24 February 1812 regarding appointment of Strachan at York, original and photocopy. Letter, Chief Justice Thomas Scott to Strachan, 24 February 1812, regarding his move to York. Strachan's appointment by Isaac Brock as officiating minister at York, 28 July 1812. Letter to Strachan from the Acting Secretary of the Council, informing him of his official appointment as minister at York, 28 July 1812. Strachan's appointment as chaplain to the Legislative Council, 28 July 1812.	1-7
Appointment/Payment of Clergy	1822	1822	Letter, Strachan to Major George Hillier, private secretary to Sir Peregrine Maitland, dealing with the appointment and payment of Church of England clergy, 16 April 1822. File includes a typed transcription of the letter by George Spragge.	1-8
Epergne presentation	1833	1833	<i>The Courier of Upper Canada</i> , 3 July 1833, containing a description of the silver epergne and its inscriptions, the address of the former students on presentation of the epergne, and Strachan's response	Map case 4-1
Epergne	1833	1833	Silver epergne with the following inscription: "PRESENTED / to the / Honorable and Venerable John Strachan, D.D. ' Archdeacon of York / In Upper Canada / President of King's College / and Member of the / Legislative and Executive Council / of that Province / By more than Forty of those / Who were his Pupils at Cornwall / And who though now widely dispersed / have united / After the lapse of twenty years / In offering to him this tribute / of affection and respect / In grateful recollection / of his work and constant friendship / and of the instruction and advice /	Vault

of which twenty years experience of life / Has taught them the value. / Presented / on the Second day of July / 1833 / SUNT HIC ETIAM SUE PRAEMIA LAUDI" – see Appendix below for a list of signatories.

Rector, Toronto	1836	1836	Instrument dated 6 October 1836 and signed by Archdeacon George Okill Stuart appointing Strachan rector of Toronto, two other instruments regarding his appointment, and Strachan's declaration of conformity. File includes a photocopy of the declaration of conformity.	1-9
Role in education	[1840s]	1864	Speeches (drafts?) for two annual prize-giving ceremonies at Upper Canada College (of which Strachan became principal in 1839); undated but likely early 1840s; includes typescripts of documents. One document is signed Scadding who became a tutor at the College in 1838. Newspaper clipping of Letter to the Editor dated 7 December 1840, published in the <i>Evening Mail</i> (London, England) of 18-20 January 1841 in which Strachan defends himself against attacks in the House of Commons. Answer to the address presented by the Convocation of King's College to Strachan on his retirement as president 16 February 1848. For the actual address, see Map case 4-1. Strachan's petition to the Legislative Assembly of Canada re the bill to secularize King's College, 13 April 1849. Letter from Strachan to the Reverend Henry Mackenzie, chaplain to the Bishop of Lincoln, with respect to raising funds for Trinity College, 6 January 1864.	1-10
Role as bishop	1840	1866	Notebook containing an address to Strachan by the Church of England, Town of Dundas and West Flamboro', on his first visitation as bishop, and Strachan's reply, 9 September 1840; notebook also includes resolutions re the stained glass window presented to the church 27 February 1854. Eleven letters sent by Strachan to the Reverend Arthur Palmer of St George's Church, Guelph, regarding both church (Clergy Reserves, clergy salaries, antipopery proceedings, rural deanery) and personal matters, dated from 25 February 1846 to 27 April 1866. Individuals named include the Rev.Mr. Rose, Mr Mercer Jones, the Rev.Mr. Drinkwater, Mme St Remy, the Rev.Mr.	1-11

Nesbitt – for a more detailed listing of these letters see note in administration file.

Regalia	[1839]	1867	Strachan coat of arms as bishop: copper plate & prints, wax seal in box.	1-12
Indenture to John Strachan (son)	1851	1851	Printed indenture between John Strachan, with his wife Margaret, and Henry James Grasset, George William Allen and Lewis Moffat regarding the sale of a parcel of land in the Town of Albert, County of Huron. Signed by Strachan and his wife.	1-13
Invitation to the Bishop's 'At Home'	1851	1903	Printed invitation dated 'Thursday evening, the 1 <sup>st</sup> of May, 1851' to the late Rev. Canon William Logan. With a letter to Provost Macklem, Macklem presenting the invitation to the Trinity Museum, dated 1903.	1-14
Death	1867	1868	"Music to be sung in the Cathedral Church of St James, Toronto, at the funeral service of the late Lord Bishop of Toronto". Photocopies of newspaper clippings reporting Strachan's funeral. Extract from Strachan's will bequeathing epergne and his library to Trinity College, with an accompanying letter from his son and executor, J.M. Strachan, November 1867. Clipping from a Cornwall newspaper of 1868 regarding the building of a church in memory of Strachan.	1-15
Will	1867	1867	Three separate copies of the will of John Strachan, each in a different hand.	1-16
Opinions upon the Will of the late Bishop	1868	1871	Three opinions, two by Mr. Moss (Patton, Osler & Moss), and one by Mr. Leech regarding the sale of property held in trust for the children of Strachan's deceased sons Alexander and John.	1-17

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### **SERIES 3: NOTES**

**Dates of creation:**  
[1820s-1850s]

**Extent:**  
2 cm of textual records

**Scope and content:**

Series consists of various notes, apparently in Strachan's hand, found in books in his library that had been bequeathed to Trinity College in his will.

**Location:**

Box 1

FOLDER/UNIT TITLE	START DATE	END DATE	CONTENTS	BOX/ FILE #
Sermons	1819	1829	Notes for a sermon probably delivered on 20 June 1819 & 18 October 1829. Found in Thomas Chalmers, <i>Sermons preached in the Tron Church Glasgow</i> (1821). Includes a typescript of manuscript	1-18
Sermons	1820	1823	Notes for a sermon probably delivered on 6 February 1820 & 2 March 1823. Includes a typescript of manuscript.	1-19
Sermons	[1823]	[1823?]	Three notes, including one that is likely a sermon dated 29 June 1823. Found in <i>The Christian Observer</i> (1823).	1-20
Notes	[Post 1826]		Note found in Thomas Chalmers, <i>Sermons preached on public occasions</i> (Glasgow 1823). The volume notes that it was "given to Dr Strachan with the author's best regards 1826").	1-21
Notes	[Post 1827]		Note re mission work. Found between pp 230-31 of 1827 Report of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.	1-22
Notes	[Post 1843]		Note found in James Garbett, <i>Dr Pusey and the University of Oxford</i> (London 1843)	1-23
Notes	[Post 1852]		Note (draft relating to Trinity College students) found in <i>Sermons by the late Thomas Chalmers, illustrative of different stages in his ministry, 1798-1847</i> (1849)	1-24
Notes	[18--]		Two notes found in volume 2 of <i>John Scott's Works</i> (1718)	1-25
Notes	[18--]		Notes found in <i>The Church Quarterly Review</i>	1-26
Notes	[18--]		Two notes – no information about place found	1-27
Notes	[18--]		Note about wine headed Athenceus [sic], said to have been found in Strachan's copy of Athenaeus, p. 42	1-28
Notes	[18--]		Note re "grace of god" found in Josephus, <i>Whole Works</i>	1-29
Miscellaneous note	[Pre- 1824]		Note from Alexander Wood, a friend of the Strachan family, to Chief Justice Thomas Scott	1-30



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**SERIES 4: OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS****Dates of creation:**

1799-1848

**Extent:**

140 cm of textual records, including 6 boxes 56 x 59 x 3 cm or smaller  
1 artefact

**Scope and content:**

Series consists of university diplomas, ordination documents, formal testimonials, a land indenture, a silver epergne

**Location:**

Boxes 2-7, Map case 4, Vault

<b>FOLDER/UNIT TITLE</b>	<b>START DATE</b>	<b>END DATE</b>	<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>BOX/ FILE #</b>
Official documents	1799	1848	A.M. Diploma, Aberdeen University, 25 May 1799 [985-0082/001] Indenture recording Strachan's purchase of various lands from Guy Carleton Wood and the registrations of these lands, 29 December 1828 Testimonial from the churchwardens of St. James, on Strachan's resignation as rector, 12 April 1847 Testimonial from the Convocation of King's College on Strachan's retirement as president, 11 February 1848	2
Official documents	1803	1803	Letter of Orders, Deacon, 22 May 1803	3
Official documents	1804	1804	Letter of Orders, Priest, 3 June 1804	4
Official documents	1811	1811	Diploma, Doctor of Divinity, Aberdeen University	5
Official documents	1821	1821	Summons to the Legislative Council, 2 January 1821	6
Official documents	1829	1829	Diploma, Doctor of Laws, St Andrew's University, 18 February 1829	7
Official documents	1848	1848	Address of graduates and undergraduates of King's College to Strachan, 11 February 1848, signed by a large number of them on separate attached sheet, with container. Container is in the vault.	Map case 4-1

## Appendix

Transcript of list of signatories to address presenting epergne to Strachan, July 2, 1833

John B. Robinson, York  
John Bethune, Montreal  
R.G. Anderson, York  
George Ridout, York  
J.G. Chewett, York  
Samuel P. Jarvis, York  
J.B. Macaulay, York  
Thomas G. Ridout, York  
Robert Stanton, York  
G.S. Boulton, Cobourg  
W.B. Robinson, Newmarket  
Jonas Jones, Brockville  
John Radenhurst, York  
W. Macaulay, Picton  
A.N. Bethune, Cobourg  
Henry Ahene, Vaudrieul  
John Crawford, London  
James G. Bethune, Cobourg  
James Duncan Gibb, Montreal  
G. Gregory, Montreal  
F. Griffin, Montreal  
J.B.C. Guky, Quebec  
A.Jones, Prescott  
J. Macaulay, Kingston  
J. M'Lean, Kingston  
A.M'Lean, Cornwall  
J. M'Donell, Montreal  
Duncan M'Donell, Cornwall  
Donald M'Donell, Cornwall  
A.M'Lean, Cornwall  
J.S. Macaulay, Woolwich  
G.H. Markland, York  
G. Mitchell, Penetanguishine [sic]  
T. Richardson, India  
W. Stanton, Africa  
P. Vankoughnett, Cornwall  
J. Weatherhead, Brockville  
G.C. Wood, Cornwall  
A.Wilkinson, Cornwall  
D.J. Smith, Kingston  
J. Macaulay, Cornwall  
T. Pyke, Halifax