

Reading this document provides:

- A brief history and description of the records contained in this Bert Miller - Monroe Landon Botanical Collection manuscript
- Biographies of key persons involved with this manuscript
- Provenance of images of pages contained in this collection and relationship of the photographers of the manuscript, Robert Goldenberg and Tim Seburn, to Bert Miller

History and Description

This is a record of botanical collecting by Monroe Landon and Bert Miller within Lincoln, Welland, Haldimand and Norfolk counties during the late 1940s and early 1950s. The project was supervised under Dr. Lulu Gaiser at McMaster until her retirement in 1949. Thereafter it was supervised directly by Leslie Laking at the Royal Botanical Gardens. Three specimens of each species were collected for the herbarium of McMaster University, Toronto University, and the Royal Botanical Gardens. The original records for the collection and the manuscript are now held by the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton.

The collection is divided into three sections, Records, Correspondence, and Distribution & Summary, totaling almost 1000 photographic images. Finding records of specific interest can be facilitated through the google drive search functionality. However, you will need to have access to a gmail account and make arrangements for the manuscript collection to be shared with that account. Most typewritten records and some handwritten records can be found by using the search function. The Records folder contains the actual data sheets created by the collectors. There is a typewritten index for this folder created by Robert Goldenberg which provides the corresponding page numbers for each species collected. The Correspondence folder contains copies of typewritten and handwritten letters pertaining to the collection which may be of historical significance. The Distribution & Summary folder consists of analysis and summaries of the records created by the staff at McMaster University and Dr. Soper. There is an Index folder which contains an index page created by the McMaster staff. If you consult this index please be advised that three sections, Plants Not Listed in the Vascular Plants of Ontario (page 11), Collectors and Surveys of Their Work (pages 72-90), and Extracts from Literature and Literature (pages 91-99), are missing.

Biographies of Key Persons

Albert Weatherstone (Bert) Miller (1882-1972) was draftsman at Horton Steel, but better known as an avid amateur naturalist from Fort Erie. He was one of the founders of the Peninsula Field Naturalists in St. Catharines. The Bert Miller Nature Club of Fort Erie is named in his honour.

Dr. Lulu Odell Gaiser (BSc Windsor, MSc & PhD Colombia) became the first female professor at McMaster University in 1925. She retired in 1949.

Dr. Leslie Laking was Assistant Director and Horticulturalist at Royal Botanical Gardens from 1946 until his retirement in 1981, at which time he was awarded an honorary doctorate by McMaster University.

Dr. James S. (Jim) Pringle was appointed as botanist at Royal Botanical Gardens in 1981.

Dr. James Herbert (Jim) Soper (1916-2012) (BSc, MSc McMaster, PhD Harvard) was a Professor of Botany at University of Toronto (1946-67) and then Chief Botanist at the National Museums of Canada in Ottawa (1967-1981).

Monroe Landon (1887-1980) was a farmer and a successful breeder of purebred Jersey cows in Woodhouse Township, Norfolk County . He was the first president of the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce. He was well-known as an avid naturalist and as an effective lobbyist for environmental regulations. The Monroe Landon Woods at Long Point, and a scholarship at Guelph University have been named in his honour.

Provenance of Images

Robert Goldenberg, while studying at the University of Toronto in 1958, took a botany course taught by Dr. Soper. When Mr. Goldenberg later accepted a teaching position at Fort Erie Secondary School, Dr. Soper suggested he get in contact with Bert Miller. Mr. Goldenberg introduced Tim Seburn, a Fort Erie naturalist and friend of Bert Miller, to Dr. Soper, who was on a visit to Niagara Falls. Shortly thereafter, in April 1988, Dr. Soper sent the original of the Bert Miller - Monroe Landon Collection manuscript to Tim Seburn by post, with instructions, when he was done with it, to forward it to Dr. Pringle at the Royal Botanical Gardens. Tim Seburn shared the manuscript with Mr. Goldenberg, who made photocopies of the manuscript. The manuscript was then loaned for about a year to Patricia Eckel, research scientist at the Buffalo Museum of Science, and now at Missouri Botanical Gardens. The manuscript was then loaned for an extended period of time to John Riley, Research Scientist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in Richmond Hill. After the manuscript was retrieved from Mr. Riley, Tim Seburn, accompanied by Robert Eberly, President of the Bert Miller Nature Club of Fort Erie, took the original to the Royal Botanical Gardens, about 2003.

The images in the Records and Distribution and Summary folders were made by photographing the photocopy of the manuscript made by Mr. Goldenberg in 1988. Unfortunately, some of the text on the originals was cut off in the photocopying process. The images in the Royal Botanical Gardens Correspondence folder were made by Mr. Goldenberg while on a visit to the Royal Botanical Gardens with Albert Garafalo in 2018, and are not in chronological order.

It is unclear why the manuscript was never published. Those consulting it should be aware it is a draft manuscript, and certainly contains errors the authors intended to correct. It is hoped by making it available online, it can be of value to students of botany in Southern Ontario.