

Additional Background, Historical and General Information

February 2015

Regrettably, while much valuable old equipment has been lost, a nucleus of archival materials and equipment was saved over the years by Patricia Meindl (Chemistry Librarian) and myself. I have subsequently completed an exhaustive search of all locations in the Department for additional pieces, and this draft catalogue represents everything that I have been able to locate to date. Despite the fact that much remains to be done in terms of complete cataloging of each item, at this time I am posting the current compendium of what we have and where the items are located, so that a record is publicly available without delay to everyone. This will be an ongoing project, and additional materials, especially old papers and records from the University Archives, will be added as they are identified, together with expanded descriptions and provenances.

In the meantime, Patricia Meindl (416-978-3587, pmeindl@chem.utoronto.ca), is actively upgrading the material, with detailed descriptions and provenances, in a museum-calibre, searchable format that will permit scholars and researchers to readily access all information, and that will eventually be posted on the web via a separate link from the Chemistry homepage

The University of Toronto Archives and Records Management Services (UTARMS) located in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, is an invaluable resource (see "University Archive" folder) on records of the Department from the beginning, and the chemistry materials that have been deposited with them. It is intended that a representative selection of these materials will be added to this catalogue. In the meantime, this resource can be visited by those interested via the link <http://utarms.library.utoronto.ca/about>. The highly knowledgeable staff is listed in <http://utarms.library.utoronto.ca/contact-us>. Please note that preclearance by UTARMS is required before any database access is granted.

In addition, the catalogue contains folders of material under the care of Chemical Engineering (Dr Chris Ambidge, Wallberg Building Room WB207, phone: 416-978-3106, e-mail: chris.ambidge@utoronto.ca) and the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (contact Dr Erich Weidenhammer erich.weidenhammer@utoronto.ca or Kristen Schranz kristen.schranz@gmail.com).

I also draw your attention to the book "*Historical Distillates*", by A.G. Brook and W.A.E. McBryde, 2007, ISBN 978-1-55002-724-2, describing the history of chemistry at the University of Toronto since the Department's inauguration on 8-9 June 1843, with Henry Croft as its founding faculty member. Initially, the Department was located in the Upper Canada Houses of Parliament at Front and John Streets. It then moved to King's College when the University of Toronto was inaugurated in 1850, with Croft as the first Professor of Chemistry and Experimental Philosophy, and eventually in 1859 to University College (located in the Roundhouse, formally named the Croft Chapter House in 1915). Excitingly, our oldest piece of equipment, a Becker and Sons (Rotterdam) balance from ~1890, dates from only ~10 years after Croft stepped down as Department Head in 1879. Subsequent to its University College location, the Department had several other homes before moving to its current site at 80 St George Street in 1963, coincidentally the year in which I joined the Department.

Our intent is to consolidate all items (apart from those in Chemical Engineering and the Institute for History and Philosophy) into the minimum number of locations. Ultimately, the main repository is intended to be the Chemistry Library (Davenport 4th floor, Room DB 480) under the care of the librarian Patricia Meindl (416-978-3587, pmeindl@chem.utoronto.ca). Also, display cabinets are planned for the Chemistry lobby, in addition to the display case already outside the library.

The eventual goal is to provide the provenance of each item, and assign appropriate classification numbers, so that scholars and researchers can use the catalogue most effectively. In this we will coordinate with the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, Victoria College, which has a university wide collection of scientific equipment, see <http://utsic.escalator.utoronto.ca/home/>. Thankfully, when old equipment was cleared out of the Department periodically, some of it was sent to UTSIC for archiving. I have documented this collection in the various “**Institute for History of Science**” folders, but it has yet to be properly itemized and catalogued. The various “**Chemical Engineering**” folders list pieces in the collection of Chris Ambidge, Chemical Engineering, Room WB207, Wallberg Building, U of T. The descriptions of the items in this location were all provided by Professor Ambidge. (Phone: 416-978-3106; chris.ambidge@utoronto.ca).

Since this Chemistry Archive is a work-in-progress with many gaps in provenances, full identification of pieces, dates, etc., I would appreciate any input that will correct errors, or expand and clarify the descriptions, backgrounds or identifications of any item. Such contributions and comments should be sent to me, by email to bryan.jones@utoronto.ca

Finally, I'd like to emphasize that we would very much appreciate any donations of chemistry-related archival materials that you may have. All donors to the collection will be individually identified and thanked.



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