

# MANY ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS DISPLAYED IN MacDONALD MEMORIAL'S MORSE ROOM

by Pam Campbell and Anna Cooke

"A library, of properly selected and studied, is one's best monument." The author of the preceding statement was Dr. William Inglis Morse, B.D., D.Litt., and its tangible proof lies in the Morse collection, the generous gift of this great benefactor to Dalhousie University.

Dr. Morse, a native of Paradise, Nova Scotia, was born on June 4, 1874, the descendant of pre-Loyalist settlers of Annapolis. Educated at Horton College, Acadia University and Harvard University he was also the recipient of honorary degrees from Cambridge, Dalhousie and King's College. Much of this man's time was engaged by historical research pertaining primarily to Eastern Canada and Maine. Among the several books of which he was author are "Acadian Lays" and "Lady Latour." In assembling the Morse Collection and bestowing it upon Dalhousie, not only has Dr. Morse increased the University's wealth of fine and invaluable objects but also he has saved some otherwise lost scholarship for ages to come.

Situated in the MacDonald Memorial Library, the Morse Room contains all manner of priceless books, manuscripts, letters, documents, maps, pictures and portraits.

The book collection is a large one and covers an extensive field of interesting topics. Many of the books are extremely rare and several first editions are included in the group. Of particular interest are some original manuscripts of Bliss Carmen, the famous poet from Fredericton, N. B. Dr. Morse was very impressed with Carmen's lyrical style of writing and included in his collection of the poets' work are: "A Winter Holiday," written to Edith Carmen Braithwaite; "A Seamark", a threnody for Robert Louis Stevenson, fifty copies of this book are on hand made paper by the Everett Press Company, Boston; and a very rare first edition of "Low Tide on Grand Pre".

Constituting the letter collection are those of many famous men including Kant, Kipling, Strauss, Haliburton and Greig.

Documents found in the Morse Collection are concerned chiefly with early French Canadian affairs. There is a Pension Decree from the War Department of the French Republic, Nancy, 1805. It is signed by Napoleon Bonaparte.

Prominently displayed about the well-appointed room are busts of the famous old masters, Beethoven, Carlyle, Dante, Dickens, Emerson, Homer and Shakespeare. The walls

are hung with pictures and maps depicting chiefly eighteenth century Nova Scotia. Included in the landscape drawings are examples of the work of Lieut. H. Pooley, R.E., William Hackman, J. E. Woolford and William Eager. "Halifax, N. S., from Fort Needham" and "Halifax, N. S., from Eastern Passage" are particularly excellent drawings by the talented Mr. Eager.

An extremely valuable collection of maps is "The Atlantic Neptune," published for the use of the Royal Navy of Great Britain by Joseph F. N. DesArres, under the directions of the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, London 1778-1779. The original cost of the venture is said to have been something in the vicinity of 100,000 pounds.

General James Wolfe seems to have been a favorite historical character of Dr. Morse. Some 23 portraits of the General are found in the collection.

Perhaps the most valuable and intriguing collection in the Morse Room is the Douglas Cocherell collection of rare old books and bindings. These books were collected by Douglas Cocherell, bookbinder, of Letchworth, England and brought from him by Dr. William

Morse in 1936. The books are primarily religious in nature, however, a few classical selections of Plato, Cicero, Pliny, etc., are present. The period represented dates from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, although several incunabula date back to the fifteenth century. We are given fine examples of beautiful bookbindings painstakingly created after the manner of old masters of the art such as Samuel Mearne, the Deromes, Robert Payne, Edwards of Halifax and Antoinette Rouette. It is possible that some of the bindings in the collection are the work of these men themselves. Types of bindings are numerous and varied including calf, morocco, pigskin, sheepskin, vellum and even fishskin. The ornamentation with blind tooling and gold tooling, wrought silver and brass clasps exemplify English, French, Scottish and Italian design.

Some of the books are especially interesting due to their association with historical figures. For example one of the bibles was bound for the Royal Library in the time of James I and may possibly have been his own copy.

The Morse Collection contains many miscellaneous items of interest. There are two beautiful vases from the kiln of W. B. Dalton of Kent, England. Also present is a scrapbook of English, Canadian and American Newspapers. The telescope of Captain John Harris of Clementsport, N. S., which was used by him on his voyages in 1815-1825 is on display.

Not only did Dr. Morse donate his precious collection to Dalhousie but he also established a fund for its maintenance. His daughter Mrs. Hiltes has continued to add valuable gifts to her fathers' collection.

The Morse Collection is something of which Dalhousie is truly proud. It commands nationwide respect and acclaim. All students are urged to inspect this wonderful gift of Dr. William Inglis Morse at some time during their stay at the University.

## Poem

It doesn't matter  
What is  
Said  
;  
Anything  
At all will do  
Just as long as it is  
Done with  
Strange  
Meter  
And punctuation  
:  
Then it is supposed to be  
Poetry  
,  
And the Dal Gazette prints  
It  
And everyone reads it  
And says oh  
Goody free verse  
!

I wish I could write poetry  
.  
You can you idiot  
.  
Just fracture the  
Prose from any piece  
Of trashy  
Pulp  
Fiction  
.  
And send it along  
Together with  
Your  
Name  
And address to the  
Dal Gazette  
.  
Yes  
.  
I know it wobbles  
.

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## Excerpts from the Diary of The Reverend Anderson Rogers, B.A. (Dal. 1878), D.D.

February 15, 1875: "Very cold; across to Dartmouth on the ice. Here and there open holes; five horses got in."

April 23, 1874: "Passed all examinations. Five of first year failed. 'Johnny'\* hissed and pelted with peas in the hall." (\*Johnny was Professor Johnston)

April 23, 1877: "Passed in all subjects; 13 failed . . . I have great reason to be thankful . . . How I pity the poor fellows who failed . . . Great indignation among the students."

March 4, 1878: "The students of the 4th year sent in a protest to the Senate about its attempt to supervise our Valedictory."

The graduating class declined to appoint a Valedictorian, and the diary contains a reference to a statement of the class to the professors setting forth the reasons for their refusal:

- "The fact that there is no precedent for the proceeding indicates a distrust in the members of our class."
- "We feel that under the restriction you have named, the Valedictorian could not properly represent the true opinions of the Valedictorian or of his class-mates."
- "No member of our class will consent to write a Valedictory under the proposed condition."

March 7: "Met Senate's delegation. Decision of class same as before."

April 8, 1875: "College closed. Compliments to the class by Johnny and Charlie."

Office of the President,  
Dalhousie University,  
Halifax, N. S.  
October 17, 1956.

## News Briefs

His many friends will be sorry to learn that Mr. H. E. Nickerson, caretaker of the Men's Residence, is ill in hospital. All the students will wish him a speedy recovery.

Found on the Campus. — One coat. It may be claimed at Room 38 in the Arts Building.

Don't forget the Blood Drive to be held on November 20, 21, 22. The hours will be 11.30-2.30 and 4.00-5.30 on the first two days and 11.30-2.30 on the 21st.

Then there was the tribal king somewhere in Africa who kept his chair of state in the rafters of his hut. One day it fell and killed him. The moral is that people who live in grass houses shouldn't stow thrones.

## Fossil Fanatics Meet Bi-Monthly

The Dawson Geological Club, founded in 1932 by Professor G. V. Douglas, was formed for the Engineering students and others taking geology on the Dal campus. The aim of the club, which is similar to others found in universities across Canada, is to promote interest in the geological and related sciences as well as the mining industry.

The activities consist of field trips in the fall to points of interest in the Province. A joint meeting of the Maritime Geological clubs of St. F.X., Mount Allison, Acadia, N. S. Technical College and Dal is held each fall, and this year Mount A. is the host. Papers on mining and geological subjects are read by the students in the afternoon, followed by a banquet in the evening.

Meetings are held in the Engineering Shack on the first and third Mondays of each month during which a guest speaker is featured. The activities of the club are open to any clubs or individuals interested.

The executive this year is: President, Nick Gass; Secretary, Len Compton and Treasurer, Pat Keene. The Honorary President, as well as activities counsellor is Prof. G. V. Douglas. The next meeting is on October 27 and will be a field trip to Hants County.

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