

Thomas Franklin Holgate (1859-1945) Papers, 1892-1973

Series 3/12

Boxes 1-5

Biography

Thomas Franklin Holgate was born on April 8, 1859, in Hastings County, Ontario, Canada, the son of Thomas and Eleanor Wright Holgate. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Victoria College, University of Toronto, in 1884, and a Master's degree, in absentia, from the same institution in 1889.

Holgate began his professional teaching career in 1874, teaching in the public school system of Ontario. Upon graduation from college in 1884, he became a mathematics master (instructor) at Albert College, Belleville, Ontario. He remained in this position until 1890 when he became a fellow at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. He received a Ph.D. from Clark University in 1893. He joined the Northwestern University faculty in 1893 as an instructor in the Mathematics Department. During the year, he became involved in the activities of the first International Congress of Mathematicians held in conjunction with the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893. He also devoted considerable attention to the preparation of a series of Colloquium Lectures by Felix Klein held in Evanston following the Congress.

In 1894, after only one year at Northwestern, he was made a full professor. In 1897, he played an instrumental role in the formation of the Chicago section of the American Mathematical Society and served as Secretary from 1897 to 1905. In 1902, he was appointed Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, a position he held for the next seventeen years.

In 1904, following the resignation of President Edmund James, Holgate was appointed President Ad Interim of Northwestern University. He served in this capacity until the selection of Abram Harris as President in 1906. During his first two-year term as acting president, the Norman Harris Lecture Foundation was established, a department of education was added to the College of Liberal Arts, a training school for nurses was established, the geology, zoology, and romance language departments were enlarged, the athletic field on Central Street was opened, and the University was able to pay off a quarter-million-dollar debt. Additionally, he served as Secretary for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition held in St. Louis in 1904.

Between 1906 and 1916, Holgate held the Noyes Professorship of Pure Mathematics, secured legislation for revision and codification of the Illinois school laws, traveled to Rome where he was Secretary/Delegate to the International Congress of Mathematicians in 1908, and was a member of a commission to reorganize the Chicago Public Library.

In 1916, with the resignation of Abram Harris, Holgate was once again called upon to serve as acting president of the University. As acting president from 1916 to 1919, Holgate instituted democratic reforms in the selection of deans; Northwestern was elected to membership in the Association of American Universities; the Law School's course of study was lengthened to four years; degree courses in physical education and public speaking were installed; student military training was established on campus; and 3,600 soldiers and sailors were trained in mechanical subjects as part of the University's commitment to the United States' war effort.

During World War I, Holgate assisted Walter Dill Scott in personnel work for the War Department. He was also influential in the formation of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and served as President from 1917 to 1918.

Thomas Franklin Holgate (1859-1945) Papers, 1892-1973

Series 3/12

Boxes 1-5

In 1919, with the selection of Lynn Harold Hough as President of the University, Holgate retired from his major administrative duties and was made Dean Emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts. He continued, however, to teach mathematics for the next fifteen years, retiring in 1934. He spent the 1921-'22 academic year in China as a visiting professor at the University of Nanking. His experiences in China served to reinforce an interest in foreign students and he acted as their advisor upon his return to Northwestern.

Holgate's research interests were in the fields of pure geometry and ruled surfaces of the fourth order. His translation of Theodore Reye's *Geometrie der Lage* (*Geometry of Position*) was published in 1898. His other published works include *Elementary Geometry* (1901) and *Projective Pure Geometry* (1930). He also wrote a "History of the Mathematics Department at Northwestern University, 1855-1905," and a thirty-page summary of Northwestern University's activities during World War I, "Northwestern in the Great War."

Holgate received honorary Doctor of Law degrees from the University of Illinois in 1905, Queen's University in 1919, and Northwestern University in 1937. He was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a member of the University Club of Evanston, the University Club of Chicago, Phi Beta Kappa, and Sigma Xi.

In addition to his university activities, Holgate was prominent in civic and religious affairs and was particularly concerned with administrative problems of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He served five terms as a member of the Methodist Church's General Conference; was a member of its Board of Education for Negroes; and from 1924 to his death in 1945, was a member of the church's Board of Education, serving as its treasurer from 1934 to 1938. From 1923 to 1925, he was president of the Chicago Church Federation. In recognition of his support of educational opportunities for black students, the library at Bennett College in North Carolina was named for him.

Dean Holgate was married twice. On August 2, 1885, in Bath, Ontario, Canada, he married Julia Caroline Sharp, the daughter of a local farmer, John Sharp. She died in 1887. His second marriage to Georgina Angela Burdette, the daughter of Daniel Burdette, a manufacturer, took place in Newburgh, Ontario, Canada, July 23, 1890. The Holgates had four children: Eleanor, born in 1894, who later married the noted scholar, Owen Lattimore; Robert Burdette, born in 1895; Barbara (Mrs. George H. Young), born in 1899, and Frances Burdette, born in 1902.

Thomas Franklin Holgate died of a heart ailment in Evanston at the age of 86 on April 11, 1945. Funeral services were held on April 13, 1945 at the First Methodist Church of Evanston.

Despite the fact that his formal title was that of President Ad Interim, Holgate was one of the most accomplished, significant, and influential administrators in Northwestern's history, and enjoyed an extraordinarily long and productive academic career, while maintaining an avid interest in foreign, civic and religious affairs.

Description of the Series, Boxes 1-4

The Thomas Franklin Holgate Papers offer a brief glimpse of the work of a competent university administrator during the first two decades of the Twentieth Century; a view of an

Thomas Franklin Holgate (1859-1945) Papers, 1892-1973

Series 3/12

Boxes 1-5

effective and practical promoter of higher education for blacks; a productive and stimulating teacher and writer in mathematics; and an administrator (especially in financial matters) sought-after by many educational and religious organizations.

The papers are arranged in five main categories: biographical material; addresses and writings; correspondence; material relating to Holgate Library and Holgate Science Speaking Competition; and material concerning mathematics. All of the material in individual folders is arranged chronologically by date.

The biographical material includes articles, diaries, newspaper clippings, obituaries, and some material concerning Georgina Burdette Holgate (Dr. Holgate's second wife). The diaries are especially valuable because they record many of Holgate's major appointments in Evanston and elsewhere, provide data concerning his many trips, and accounts of his expenses. The later diaries also contain information about the four Holgate children and their families, occasional personal items and lists of his reading, and more detailed financial records.

The addresses and writings include some reprints of mathematical articles by Holgate and typescripts of his two unpublished historical essays, "A History of the Department of Mathematics, Northwestern University, 1855-1905," and "Northwestern in the Great War, 1917-1919."

The general correspondence is primarily administrative and relates to his two terms as acting president (1904-1906, 1916-1919) and to his service as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts (1902-1916). Among the letters from Holgate's first term as acting president are many bitter ones concerning the marketing and text of Arthur H. Wilde's "Northwestern University - A History, 1855-1905" (1906). There are smaller amounts of correspondence with officials of the Norwegian-Danish Theological Seminary (1904) and the Swedish Theological Seminary (1904-1905). Most of the material during Holgate's term as Dean relates to appointments and curricular matters. Some of the personal correspondence during these first two periods contains invitations to Holgate to assume positions at other colleges and universities. The correspondence during Holgate's second term as acting president includes material on the admission of Northwestern to the Association of American Universities; the search for a new head of the Chemistry Department; the search for a new librarian (ultimately Theodore Wesley Koch); the School of Commerce; and the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The correspondence with various individuals may be described briefly as follows:

<u>Correspondent/span dates</u>	<u>Topic</u>
William Deering /1903-1912	Financial and administrative matters, Board of Trustees business.
Ulysses S. Grant /1906-1920 – Holgate's closest friend.	Administrative material pertaining to the College of Liberal Arts (Professor Grant was acting dean, 1907-1908), personal items.
Ludwig Muller /1937-1939 – Visiting Professor of German at Northwestern, Muller family lived in the Holgates' home.	Personal letters growing out of the year 1928-1929.
Walter Dill Scott /1917-1944, NU president	Administrative and curricular matters, personal items dealing with Holgate's working and retirement salaries.

Thomas Franklin Holgate (1859-1945) Papers, 1892-1973

Series 3/12

Boxes 1-5

<u>Correspondent/span dates</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Henry Seely White /1897-1944 – Holgate's colleague in the Department of Mathematics (to 1905) and later at Vassar.	Technical subjects in mathematics, obituaries of White and some personal letters from his survivors.
Abram van Epps Young /1918-1922 – Chairman of the Department of Chemistry.	Letters regarding Young's leave of absence and retirement, the seven-page text (May 10, 1918) of Young's comments to Holgate at a dinner at the University Club of Evanston while inducting Holgate into the "ancient order of the XXV's."

Completing the correspondence section is a substantial folder of letters pertinent to the Holgate's stay in China (1921-1922) and a small amount of letters and other items related to the Holgate's European visits in 1903 and 1907. Some of the Chinese items are photocopies of letters to Professor Grant in which Holgate describes in some detail his work, the scenery, and the educational and political institutions. Included here is the carbon of a general two-page letter (April 2, 1927) from A. J. Bowen (President of the University of Nanking) describing the attacks in Shanghai by revolutionary Chinese soldiers (March 21) on Bowen and other foreigners, in which seven were killed and the rest were saved primarily by shelling from U.S. and British ships.

The folder of material on the Holgate Library at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, primarily contains items concerned with the groundbreaking for and dedication of the library named for the man who served as Treasurer of the College's Board of Trustees for many years.

The mathematics category includes correspondence and reviews concerning Holgate's tests of geometry and his translation from the German of Reye's standard works on the geometry of position. Also here are correspondence and notes dealing with various mathematical topics and courses, and a partial draft for a book entitled "Elementary Plane Geometry, A Second Course." Of special interest are Holgate's brief accounts of the early days of the Chicago Chapter of the American Mathematical Society and of the "Evanston Colloquium" held at the time of the Colombian Exposition (1893).

Provenance: 1) Material transferred to the University Archives at an unknown date prior to June 1, 1974, and arranged in 2 boxes as Series 3/12; 2) Gifts from Miss Frances Holgate and Mrs. Barbara Holgate Young, March 7, 1977; 3) Materials removed during the processing of the Walter Dill Scott Papers (Series 3/15).

Restrictions: None .

Processors: Robert J. Schmid; September - December, 1975. William K. Beatty; November - December, 1980.

Reformatted by: Rachel C. Teuer; July 1, 2004

Thomas Franklin Holgate (1859-1945) Papers, 1892-1973

Series 3/12

Boxes 1-5

Description of Addition to the Series, Box 5, folders 1-3

This addition to the Thomas Holgate Papers consists of three folders, containing letters of condolence sent to Holgate's family, correspondence between Mrs. Henry Crew and the Holgates, and documents relating to the sale of the Holgate's home at 617 Library Place.

The bulk of the addition is made up of condolence letters sent to the children of Thomas Holgate upon his death in 1945. Many were addressed to Holgate's daughter, Frances, who never married and remained at home, looking after her father after her mother's death in 1934. The letters, arranged in chronological order, reflected two of the chief interests in Holgate's life: many of the letters came from persons and groups affiliated with Northwestern University and many others from people who knew Holgate through his work in the Methodist Church.

The second part to the addition is correspondence from Helen Coale Crew to Georgina, Thomas Holgate's wife, and Frances, his daughter. Helen Crew was the wife of Henry Crew, a Professor of Physics at Northwestern University. Henry Crew and Thomas Holgate knew each other through the University—their families were neighbors on Library Place in Evanston, and the Holgate and Crew children were playmates as children. Helen Crew was a published author of children's stories and verse, and the letters she wrote to Frances show an active wit and imagination. There is also a much later letter from Helen's daughter, Alice, to Frances and Barbara, Thomas Holgate's daughters. The correspondence is arranged chronologically and includes a few clippings of Crew's poetry and stories.

The final folder relates to the Holgate's home at 617 Library Place. There are appraisals from 1939 and 1967. In 1967, Frances Holgate and Barbara Holgate Young sold the house to Northwestern University. Documents include appraisals of the house from 1939 and 1967, as well as the sale contract, closing statement, etc., from the sale.

Provenance: This addition to the Thomas Holgate Papers was separated from Accession Number 02-22, donated to the University Archives by Holgate's grandson, Thomas Young, on March 12, 2002.

Restrictions: Permission to view the folder relating to the sale of 617 Library Place should be sought from the University Archivist.

Separations: A small amount of duplicate and extraneous material was discarded.

Processor: Sarah Rose; August 2003.

Reformatted by: Rachel C. Teuer; July 7, 2004.

Thomas Franklin Holgate (1859-1945) Papers, 1892-1973

Series 3/12

Boxes 1-5

Description of the Addition to the Series, Box 5, folder 4

The addition to the Thomas Holgate Papers consists of three news-clippings (added to Box 1, folder 2) and one folder of correspondence with Leslie Tihany, linguist, historian, and diplomat.

Tihany (born Ladislaus Tihanyi in Hungary, in 1911) received his master's degree and Ph.D. from Northwestern University in 1933 and 1936, respectively, and formed a friendship with Holgate that lasted until Holgate's death. After graduating from Northwestern, Tihany taught at Harvard, the University of Denver, American University, and Northern Kentucky University. He was also a professional diplomat and career officer in the US foreign service, serving in Asian, Middle Eastern, and European cities, as well as in Washington, DC. Tihany's correspondence with Holgate dates between 1938 and 1945, and includes an account of Tihany's 1939 escape from Finland (where he was studying dialects among the Lapps) by boat to Sweden and then, after their ship successfully ran the blockade, to the US. Later letters describe Tihany's various jobs; the letters seldom fail to express his appreciation for Holgate's friendship. One note dated 1973 and several undated sheets, written by one of Holgate's descendents, describe Tihany's continued contact with the family (involving them in altercations between Tihany and his wife). Tihany died in 1997.

Provenance: This addition to the Thomas Holgate Papers was donated to the University Archives by Holgate's grandson, Thomas Young, on February 10, 2006, as Accession Number 06-25.

Restrictions: None

Separations: A number of photographs were separated and added to the relevant folders in the University Archives' Photograph Collection: several photographs of Thomas Holgate and of the trophy he was awarded by Northwestern University students (added to the Thomas Holgate file); one photograph of a mathematics classroom in University Hall (added to the University Hall—Interiors file); several photographs of the Northwestern University campus model that Frances Holgate built (added to the Frances Holgate file). Newspaper clippings relating to the 1968 takeover of the Bursar's Office at Northwestern were added to the relevant subject file. Two letters and some architectural sketches by Frances Holgate were added to her file in the University Archives, Room 110.

Processor: Janet Olson, February, 2006

Thomas Franklin Holgate (1859-1945) Papers, 1892-1972

Series 3/12

Boxes 1-5

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
		Biographical Material	
1	1	Diaries	1916-33, 1935-36, 1938-45
	2	Newsclippings	
	3	Obituaries and Eulogies	
	4	Georgina Burdette Holgate Material	
	5	Addresses and Writings	1892-1944
	6	"A History of the Department of Mathematics, Northwestern University, 1855-1905."	1905
		Addresses and Writings	
2	1	"Northwestern University in the Great War, 1917- 1919"	1919
		Correspondence	
	2	General	1897-1915
	3	General	1916-1918
	4	General	January-March, 1919
	5	General	April-December, 1919
	6	General	1920-1934
	7	General	1935-1940
	8	General	1941-1945
3	1	Board of Trustees	1902-1933
	2	History of University (Wilde)	1906
	3	New Librarian	May, 1918 - June, 1919
	4	Methodist-Episcopal Church	May, 1917 - July, 1919
	5	School of Commerce	August, 1916- June, 1919
	6	William Deering	April, 1903-Jan, 1912
	7	Ulysses Sherman Grant	Jan, 1906 - August, 1920
	8	Ludwig Muller	July, 1937 - Oct,1939
	9	Walter Dill Scott	Oct, 1917 - May, 1944
3	10	Henry Seely White	Nov, 1897 - March, 1944
	11	Abram van Epps Young	May, 1918 - Jan, 1922
	12	China Visit	April, 1920 - Aug, 1937
	13	European Tours	1903 and 1907
		Holgate Library and Science Speaking Competition	
4	1	Holgate Library, Bennett College	1938-1972

Thomas Franklin Holgate (1859-1945) Papers, 1892-1972

Series 3/12

Boxes 1-5

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
4	2	Holgate Science Speaking Competition	Dec, 1947 - April, 1948
		Mathematics	
	3	"Elementary Geometry", Correspondence and Reviews	Feb, 1899 - Jan, 1902
	4	"Lectures on Geometry of Position" (Reye)	May, 1894 - June, 1898
	5	"Projective Pure Geometry"	Feb, 1930 - July, 1943
	6	Correspondence	April, 1892 – July, 1940
	7	American Mathematical Society	1938
	8	Notes on Course in Theoretical Mechanics	
	9	Elementary Geometry, C42, Outline and Notes	Fall, 1942-1943
	10	"Elementary Plane Geometry, A Second Course" draft	1944 (?)
	11	Miscellaneous Notes	n.d.
		Additions	
5	1	Correspondence: Helen Crew to Georgina and Frances Holgate	1910-27, 1952, 1972
	2	Letters of Condolence: to the Holgate family	1945
	3	Property: 617 Library Place, Evanston, IL	1921-1967
		Addition	
	4	Correspondence: Leslie C. Tihany	1938-1945, 1973, n.d.