# Lincoln Public Library

Bedford Road,
Lincoln, Massachusetts

# Archives/Special Collections

## Donaldson Collection

2025.010
1851-2025
1970-1989

Created by Matthew Lincoln
December 2025

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## Summary Information

Creator: Various members of the Donaldson family and affiliate entities

Extent: linear feet 1.67 linear feet, 4 boxes

Abstract: The Donaldson Collection documents multiple generations of the Donaldson family of Lincoln, Massachusetts, with materials dating from 1851 to 2025 and bulk from 1970-1989. The collection reflects the family's migration from Nova Scotia to New England and their long-standing involvement in the civic, architectural, and social life of Lincoln.

The collection includes family correspondence, memoirs, notes, genealogical research, photographs, land and property records, trust and legal files, newspaper clippings, town documents, memorial materials, and artifacts. Particularly well documented are the family's landholdings on Todd Pond Road and related development, conservation, and trust matters from the 1970s to 1980s, portions of which are restricted due to financial and legal content. Also represented are records relating to local institutions, schools, town governance, and community life, as well as visual and material artifacts illustrating everyday life in Lincoln in the late nineteenth through early twentieth centuries.

This collection was ordered in original order

Call Number: 2025.010

Language: English

## Access and Use

Acquisition Information: Magruder C. Donaldson, Nathalie Rice

Access Restrictions: Portions of this collection containing financial, legal and tax information are restricted.

Copyright: On The Trail of the Tartan copyright belongs to Gordon A. Donaldson, news clippings copyright belongs to the newspapers they were cut from, A Celebration of Life copyright belongs to Harvard University

Cite as: [item], folder, box, Institution, place holding the records

## Background Information

History:  The Donaldson family has been closely associated with the town of Lincoln for multiple generations, contributing significantly to its civic, architectural, and cultural development. Family roots trace from Nova Scotia, Canada, with later migration to Massachusetts, where members of the family established farms, homes, businesses, and played active roles in town governance.

Robert D. Donaldson (1870-1964) was a prominent builder and civic figure in Lincoln, responsible for the construction of numerous residences and public buildings that helped shape the town's physical landscape in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His work included domestic architecture that reflected prevailing design trends while responding to local needs. Several family properties, including those on Codman Road, Tower Road, and Todd Pond Road, remained in family ownership for decades and became central to later discussions surrounding land use, conservation, and development.

Throughout the twentieth century, members of the Donaldson family were actively engaged in local government, town meetings, education, conservation efforts, and community institutions. The family maintained long standing connections with Lincoln schools, churches, and civic organizations, and supported local initiatives through service, philanthropy and the establishment of memorial funds. The Donaldson Room in the Lincoln Town Offices, featuring American Chestnut paneling, commemorates the family's civic contributions.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the family's landholdings, particularly the Todd Pond Road parcels, were the subject of extensive legal, financial, and environmental review. These activities included soil testing, appraisals, trust administration, conservation negotiations, and subdivision proposals, reflecting broader tensions between development and preservation in Lincoln during this period.

The collection also documents everyday life in Lincoln through photographs, memoirs, school records, newspaper clippings, and artifacts, illustrating seasonal activities, agriculture, recreation, and community traditions from the late nineteenth century through the early twenty-first century.

Custodial History: The materials in this collection were created and accumulated by multiple generations of Donaldson family members throughout their lives, including family life, property ownership, business activities, and civic engagement in Lincoln, Massachusetts. The records remained in the custody of family members until they were donated to the Lincoln Town Archives. Some materials, particularly legal and financial documents, were retained together as working files and remain grouped as recieved.

Scope and Content: The collection documents the Donaldson family of Lincoln, Massachusetts, with emphasis on family migration from Nova Scotia, land ownership and development, civic life, architecture, conservation efforts, and community institutions from the 18th through the 21st centuries.

The earliest material in this collection is an 1851 handwritten poem. The most recent materials include family histories and correspondence dated 2024-2025. The bulk of the collection documents the Donaldson family and the town of Lincoln, Massachusetts, primarily between 1915 and 200, with extensive land, civic, and community documentation from 1970s-1980s

## Subject Terms

Donaldson family
Donaldson family–Archives
Families–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Families–Nova Scotia–History
Family History
Genealogy
Scottish Americans–History
Migration, Internal–New England
Migration,International–Canada–History
Lincoln (Mass)--History
Lincoln (Mass)--Social life
Lincoln (Mass)--Politics and government
Lincoln (Mass)--Buildings, Structures,etc
Lincoln (Mass)--Photographs
Massachusetts–History–20th century
Nova Scotia–Emmigration and immigration
Concord (Mass)--History
Harvard University–History
Maine–History–Lamoine
Land use–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Real estate development–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Trusts and trustees–Massachusetts
Conversation of natural resources–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Land titles–Massachusetts
Easements–Massachusetts
Town meetings–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Local government–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Community life–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Education–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Public buildings–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Historic buildings–Massachusetts
Architecture, Domestic–Massachusetts
Builders–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Hospitals–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Dairying–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Livestock–Massachusetts
Sports teams–Massachusetts–Lincoln
Ropes & Gray

Matlock Associates
Foster Company
Rackmann, Sawyer & Brewster
Town of Lincoln (Mass)
Lincoln Conservation Commission
Emerson Hospital (Concord, Mass)
Atex, inc

Genre and Form:
Archival materials
Manuscripts
Correspondence
Legal documents
Financial records
Photographs
Negatives (Photographs)
Maps
Pamphlets
Newspaper clippings
Diaries
Memoirs
Memorials
Ephemera

Related Materials:
2002.001 Lincoln Buildings Collection
2002.004 Lincoln Center Photograph Collection
2003.002 Henry Kane Photograph Collection
2003.004 Inheritance Photograph Collection
2003.012 First Parish Collection
2003.026 Town of Lincoln, School Records
2003.038 Lincoln Mohawks Collection
2003.053 Pierce Park Report
2003.059 Lincoln 4th of July Photograph Collection
2003.062 Lincoln Personages Collection
2004.007 Miscellaneous Photograph Collection
2005.002 Town Building Program Transcriptions
2006.002 Jane Langton Papers
2023.001 Flint-Chaplin Collection II
Historic Building Street Index

## Container List

| Box # | Folder # | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | On The Trail Of The Tartan: Family Migrations and the Shaping of the Robert D. Donaldson Family Heritage by Gordon A. Donaldson, Jr, Lamoine, Maine. May, 2025 |
| | | A Celebration of the Life of David Murray Donaldson April 27, 1938-September 18, 1994: Remembrances and Letters, The Memorial Church, Harvard University |
| | | A letter by Gordon Donaldson, the letter explaisn how his family started in Nova Scotia, Canada to Lincoln, Ma. dated: October 9,2025 |
| 1 | 2 | Hoar Homestead pamphlet-The pamphlet is about John Hoar (1707-1786), Leonard Hoar (1758-), and Leonard Hoar (1800-1865) |
| | | Farm Team to show video by Sally Fink from Lincoln Journal, December 30,1999 (news clippings) |
| | | Top 10 Lincolnites of the millennium, November 18, 1999 (news clipping) |
| | | Daughters reminisce about League pioneers by Ruth Ragan, November 11,1982, Concord Journal: Lincoln Edition (news clipping) |
| | | Reflections on Town Meeting by Warren Flint Sr, Lincoln Journal, April 3,1986 (news clipping) |
| 1 | 3 | Ariel Survey of Lincoln, Ma, October 1, 1972 (contains folded materials) |
| 1 | 4 | Umbrello land changes hands by Julie McCay Turner, June 14, 1979, photocopy (news clipping) |
| | | Umbrello sale passed, (news clipping) |
| | | T.M. vote still needed for new commission by Susan O'Reilly, 1979 (news clipping) |
| 1 | 5 | Restricted Materials: The items contain financial information |

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| | | Warren F. Flint, Jr-Development Potential of the 36.97 acre Parcel of Land off of Todd Pond Road |
| | | 1979-Matlock Associates-Statement-For Study of Donaldson Property off Todd Pond Road |
| | | 1979-Letter from Warren F. Flint to Malcolm Donaldson about soil testing cost. |
| | | 1979-Letter from Warren F. Flint to Malcolm Donaldson about Jerome Long's report on the soil testing of family property |
| | | 1979-Letter to Warren Flint from Jerome Long about the results of the soil testing |
| | | Bryant O. Spencer receipt on work done on Donaldson Property |
| | | 1979-Letter to Malcolm Donaldson from Warren F. Flint, Jr about appraisors |
| | | 1979-Statement-cost of Field Work and Test Supervision |
| | | 1979-Letter from Joseph C. Skinner to Malcolm Donaldson about market date relative to land in Lincoln belonging to Donaldson trust |
| | | 1980-Matlock Associates Statement about Personal Services and Expenses |
| | | 1980-Matlock Associates Statement about Design and Expenses |
| | | 1980-Foster Company Statement about Appraisal Services |
| | | 1981-Foster Company document about Real estate appraisal, Todd Pond Road |
| 1 | 6 | Restricted Materials: The items in this folder contain financial information |
| | | 1982-1983-Handwritten documents about capital gains tax |
| | | 1982-Ropes & Gray letter about the sale report of the 35-acre woodlot |
| 1 | 7 | u.d.-Handwritten Thank you letter |
| | | 1982-Handwritten letter about Wiggin ST |

1982-Handwritten document about the 37 acres

1982-Tell-Dave +M.L.D-handwritten notes of phone calls made in May & June

1982-Dear Doug-typed letter about a recent throat operation and difficulty talking on the phone. The letter also inquires about the use of trails. (handwritten)

1982-Sunday May 14-notes on funds and legal fees (handwritten)

1982-David Mac-notes on the land (handwritten)

1982-Ropes & Gray-letter to David M. Donaldson from Henry H. Thayer about issues with restrictions, trail easement, and wood cutting rights being resolved (typed)

1982-Solution (??)-notes on the problems and the price of the land (handwritten)

1982-Wed Mon-notes on appointments (handwritten)

1982-Ropes & Gray-Letter to Malcolm L. Donaldson to David M. Donaldson about Uncle Butch's letter regarding his woodlot (typed)

1982-Ropes & Gray-copy of the letter from David M. Donaldson to Henry H. Thayer, Esq about the woodcutting uncle owning four or five acres opposite of Mr. Drane's home. (typed)

1982- Sat March 6-notes of a telephone conversation with Warren and Mac (handwritten)

1982-Gordon A. Donaldson M.D.-letter to David M. Donaldson about David's letter to Henry Thayer concerning the thirty acres. (typed)

1982-Ropes & Gray-types letter to Henry H. Thayer, Esq from David M. Donaldson about the Donaldson Domains-Purchased by Drane (typed)

1982-Rackemann, Sawyer & Brewster-a letter from Henry H. Thayer to David M. Donaldson about Donaldson Domains-Purchase of Portion by Drane (typed)

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| | | The end of an era at Atex Inc-newsclipping about Douglas Drane leaving Atex Inc. |
| | | Drane quits as Atex president by Rolnald Rosenberg-newsclipping about Douglas Drane resigning from Atex Inc to pursue other interests. |
| | | 1982-Town of Lincoln-Letter from Warren F. Flint to Malcolm L. Donaldson about his gift to the Conservation Commission |
| | | 1983-Dear Bob-a typed letter about proceedings of the past few weeks and months (typed) |
| | | 1982-Reckman, Sawyer, and Brewster Meeting at MLD's-a packet of notes taken during this meeting (handwritten) |
| | | 1980-Dear Mac-about the Land Parcelization Plan |
| | | 1980-Handwritten notes about phone conversations |
| | | 1981-Handwritten notes on various topics |
| | | U.S.-1977-1982-gives a brief notes on the 31 acres and meetings that took place |
| | | 1978-Handwritten notes about meetings that took place in that year |
| | | 1979-1980-Handwritten notes about meeting that took place during those years |
| | | 1975-The Woodlot Real Estate Trust-about real estate and trustees |
| | | 1975-Memorandum to the Clan-a proposed trust for the Tower Road-Todd Pond written by David M. Donaldson |
| | | Outline of events leading to the sale of 37 Acres on Todd Pond Rd |
| 1 | 8 | Restricted: The items in this folder contain financial information |
| | | Rider-Purchase to Sale |
| | | Purchase and Sale Agreement |

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| | | 1979-Handwritten letters about taxes<br>Donaldson Room-Town Offices Lincoln-list materials used with costs |
| | | 1978-35 acres real estate taxes for 1977 |
| 1 | 9 | 1915-Photograph of 5th graders at Center School on cardboard backing |
| 1 | 10 | 1915-Photograph of the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at Center School on cardboard backing |
| 1 | 11 | This folder contains the following news clippings: |
| | | RLF transfers the former Drane property to town by Stephen Hagan |
| | | Planners revisit Drane subdivision by Christine Moore |
| | | Developer seeks postponement by Christine Moore |
| | | 9-lot subdivision proposed on Drane property by Christine Moore |
| | | 1999-Spent shells may shoot down Drane proposal by Christine Moore, published in Vol 14, No.44 of the Lincoln Journal |
| 1 | 12 | This folder contains the following news clippings: |
| | | Chestnut paneled conference room dedicated to Donaldsons |
| | | 1983-picture of the Donaldsons family in conference room in the Town Office, Concord Journal: Lincoln Edition, photo by Karen Boyce |
| | | Donaldson Retiring from Town Position-about the retirement of Robert D. Donaldson |
| | | 1964-Robert D. Donaldson,93,Builder, Diary Farmer-about funeral service |
| | | 1983-Concord Journal:Lincoln Edition-an editorial on gun-control bylaw in Lincoln, photo of Norman Levy, preparing the chestnut paneling that was installed in the Donaldson Room of the Lincoln Town Offices |
| 1 | 13 | 1990-The American Chestnut Paneling-about the chestnut wood used in the Donaldson Room by Malcolm L. Donaldson |

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| | | 1999-Robert D. Donaldson Memorial-a brief history of the Center School Building and the Donaldson room |
| | | 1982-The Robert Douglas Memorial Fund-about intentions to establish the Robert Douglas Memorial Fund |
| | | 1983-Letter from Ann F. Sutherland to Malcolm Donaldson-about the board voting to establish the Robert Douglas Donaldson fund |
| 1 | 14 | The Lincoln Mohawks-a brief history of this sports team |
| | | Photograph of the Mohawks on cardboard backing |
| 1 | 15 | This folder contains the following photographs: |
| | | 1916-1917-Charlotte Louise Donaldson, Jean Elizabeth Donaldson, and Gordon Alcock Donaldson on commons across from Stone Church |
| | | Children playing in Lake Holden |
| | | The Town Hall Building in winter |
| | | People playing games on July 4th |
| | | Lincoln in Winter |
| | | Two images of Gordon Alcock Donaldson and Donald Price Donaldson playing with sleds in winter |
| | | Family being pulled by horse in a sleigh |
| | | 1917-Jean Donaldson posing for picture with her daughter |
| | | Long house with three children on the porch |
| | | Negative of Town Hill near Robert Douglas Donaldson home |
| 1 | 16 | 2001-The Lincoln Review Vol 25 No.2-Celebrating 25 Years (cover) |
| | | 1954-Lincoln Elementary School-about its layout |
| | | Lincoln Elementary School drawings-showing the layout and one classroom |
| 1 | 17 | 1851-copy of handwritten poem to Isabel |
| | | 1926-copy of the Report of Board Of Health |

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| | | 2009-news clipping-What's in a name? Tracing the origins of some of Lincoln's best-known monikers by Justine Selsing, Lincoln Journal |
| 1 | 18 | Magazine clipping-Jingle all the way by Florence White-about sleigh bells |
| 1 | 19 | List of teachers that taught in 1952 in the Little Red School house |
| | | A copy of an image of students in the school house |
| 1 | 20 | Comments by Malcolm Donaldson about Lincoln at the turn of the century |
| | | 1974-Memories of Old Lincoln by Mac Donaldson |
| | | 1979-Letter to Malcolm from Helena Lennon Dee |
| | | My Memories of Lincoln by Helena Lennon Dee |
| | | Notes on Growing up in Lincoln |
| 1 | 21 | Mac Donaldson on the Old Town Hall Exchange |
| | | The Old Town Hall of Lincoln Massachusetts brochure |
| | | 1947-Letter to Mac Donaldson from Edward W. Flint-about the Flint family in connection to the history of the church with genealogy |
| | | Xeroxed copies of notes on the Town House |
| 1 | 22 | 1887-Newsclipping-copy of For the Library Prize by H.J. Richardson, Boston Evening Record |
| | | Magazine clipping-America's Dream Towns by Babette Lazarus, Cachet Magazine |
| | | An advertisement for Jane Langton, discussing Chapin Journals |
| | | James Lorin Chapin's Private Journals from July 19th 1848 to Nov 26th 1850 excerpts from diary |
| 1 | 23 | Note-William Pierce House 27 Tower Road, first house built by Robert Douglad Donaldson<br>Copy of House layout and description, Shoppell's Modern |

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| | | Houses-Designs Patented, Cottage, Design No. 573 |
| | | William Pierce with Robert D. Donaldson Building Permit |
| | | 1895-Letter to Henry Brown from Co-op B.P. Associates-sending pages that illustrated their designs |
| | | List of items |
| | | 1899-List of materials with costs of each item |
| | | Copy of a letter referring to a house build for Russell Crook on Concord Road |
| | | Map with location of Lincoln Houses |
| | | Newsclipping-Donaldson patriarch shaped the town by Nan Schnitzler |
| | | Newsclipping-Donaldson images to be presented at library |
| | | 2024-Newsclipping-Donaldson houses sprinkle town by Barbara Myles |
| | | 2008-Newsclipping-Building on decorated history,Lincoln Journal |
| | | Emerson Hospital photograph of front card |
| | | Emerson Hospital card with information about the offerings of the medical institution |
| | | Newsclipping-The American Hospital about the Deaconess Hospital, Concord, Mass |
| | | 1986-Excerpt from Emerson Hospital Report |
| | | 2008-Projected drawing of hospital from Annual Report 2006-2007 |
| | | 1999-75th Anniversary of Emerson Hospital card |
| | | Photograph of house built by Robert Douglas Donaldson on Codman Road |
| | | 1911-Letters-three letters that deal with building supplies and costs |
| 2 | 1 | Glass Milk Bottle: W.A.B Lincoln Registered, One Quart Liquid |

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| 2 | 2 | Glass MIlk Bottle: Glendale Farm Dairy Registered Lincoln, Sealed |
| 2 | 3 | Note that W.A.B might have been dairy farmer at Codman<br><br>Note on W.A.B. milk bottle, and milk from Lincoln dairy<br><br>Email-Lincoln digitized records Ancestry.com-Glendale Farm was R. Donaldson's operation on Weston Road. W.A.B was William A. Blodgett who lived at the intersection of Lincoln and Codman roads |
| 2 | 4 | Herd Register by Winifred M. Carrigan-about the Donaldson Herd, with names and notes on livestock |
| 2 | 5 | Herd Register by Winifred M. Carrigan-about the Donaldson Herd, with names and notes on livestock |
| 3 | 1 | Gloves known as the Bearskin gloves |
| 4 | 1 | Sleighbells on leather strap |