

THE JENKS FAMILY OF COATICOOK (P206)

Jody Robinson, Archivist
Bishop's University

The Jenks family fonds came to the ETRC in 2014 from Bill Buckland, a relative of the Jenks family. While not extensive in size (0.05 linear metres, 6 photographs), the fonds is significant for the quality of information contained in its pages.

Originally from Vermont, the Jenks family established themselves at Barnston Corner in the 1840s, where Nathaniel Jenks established his medical practice.¹ Leslie Hall Jenks, son of Nathaniel Jenks and Lucy Thornton, was born in Barnston on December 28th, 1849. He was a dentist in Coaticook and had a practice at the corner of Pleasant and Cutting Streets.² Leslie married Nancy Cushing on October 30th, 1879. Together they had four children: Charles Nathaniel (1882–1888), Cushing (1885–1885), Archibald Nathaniel (1889–1938), and Abbott Cushing (1893–1957). Leslie died in Coaticook on October 5th, 1910. The majority of the documents within the Jenks family fonds pertain to Leslie Jenks and two of his sons.



ETRC-P206-003_001 : Abbott Jenks holding horse, Archie Jenks sitting, in front of the Jenks home in Coaticook, ca. 1910, P206/003



ETRC-P206-003_002 : Abbott Jenks, ca. 1913, P206/003

While the majority of the documents pertain primarily to Archie and secondarily to Abbott, there is a file from the life of Leslie Jenks during his involvement with the Valley Road extension in Barnston in the 1870s and 1884. Despite consisting of only a handful of documents, they bear witness to the process of road-building and land expropriation in the latter 19th century.

Archibald (a.k.a. Archie) Nathaniel Jenks was born October 14th, 1889 in Coaticook, the second youngest son of Leslie Hall Jenks and Nancy Cushing. While still a dental student at McGill University, Archie enlisted with the 13th Battalion of Royal Horse Guards, C.E.F., in 1915 where he served as a medical officer during World War I. He transferred to the Royal Flying Corps in March 1917, scoring seven victories as an observer with the 20th Squadron and achieved the rank of Lieutenant. Archie was found temporarily unfit for active service in October 1917 and returned to Canada as an aviation instructor.³ He was honourably discharged in 1918 and went on to earn his degree in dentistry, establishing a successful practice in Montreal. He married Elizabeth McKim (1892–1980) and together they had one child, Anson N. Jenks (1929–1931), who drowned in the Rivière des Prairies at the age of two. Following his son's death, Archie suffered from mental illness, which eventually led to taking his own life on July 29th, 1938, after having shot his wife.⁴ He is buried in the Mount Forest Cemetery in Coaticook. Elizabeth McKim Jenks survived her injuries and died in 1980.

Abbott Cushing Jenks was born on February 17th, 1893 in Coaticook, the youngest son of Leslie Jenks and Nancy Cushing. He studied at the

Coaticook Academy and worked as an investment agent. He married Irene Buckland on February 23rd, 1924. The couple did not have any children. Abbott died on April 2nd, 1957 and is buried in the Mount Forest Cemetery in Coaticook.

The documents pertaining to Abbott's life consist of items showing aspects of his education and social activities. Although limited, they provide some perspective on his professional life, social activities, and education.

The material pertaining to Archie comes from the early part of his life in the form of a diary and correspondence and other documents

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED ABROAD.

To:-
The Director of Military Aeronautics,
Air Board Office,
Strand, W.C.

From..... *St. A. N. Jenks*
..... *13th Canadian, W.C.P.F.*

I have this day been examined by a Medical Board assembled
at..... *Hotel Cecil*

who find that I am

<i>Temporary</i>	UNFIT GENERAL SERVICE.....	MONTHS.....
	UNFIT HOME SERVICE.....	MONTHS.....
	UNFIT LIGHT DUTY.....	MONTHS.....

A.A.G.

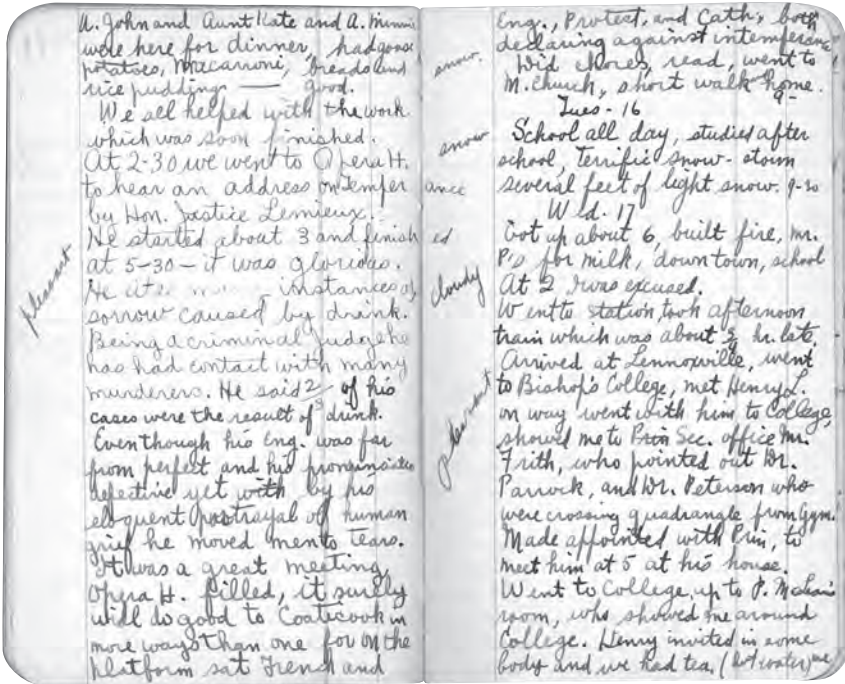
It is the opinion of the ~~Board~~ ^{Board} that a ~~Sea Voyage~~ will be
beneficial to my health and I hereby make application that I may be
allowed to proceed to my home in..... *Canada* for the period
of leave recommended, *after which I should attend a course of instruction in
aviation in Canada.*

My address there would be :-
..... *Coaticook*
..... *Quebec Canada*

My address in England is :-
..... *Montreal Star*
..... *20, Cochrane Street, S.W. 1.*

Date..... *11/10/17*
..... *A. N. Jenks*

ETRC-P206-001-002_001 : Form requesting leave to Canada from Archie Jenks, 1917, P206/001/002



ETRC-P206-001-001_p89_14 Feb 1909 : Entry from Archie's diary
 on a temperance speaker, 14 February 1909, P206/001/001

from his time in the military. The military records are useful in constructing an understanding some of his experiences, particularly what happened after he was declared unfit for service.

The gem among the documents, however, is Archie's diary, which he began in 1907, at the age of 17, recording passages in it until 1910. Though it covers a relatively short three year period, his entries contain descriptions of his varied activities. Notably, Archie goes beyond the straightforward listing of his activities, which is often characteristic of diaries from this period, and includes some commentary on his experiences. For example, he expresses his appreciation for books that he is reading or speeches he heard. After visiting North Hatley's regatta in 1909, he remarks "same thing year after year."⁵ One New Year's he was invited to a dance but declined the invitation, instead opting to stay home and read Latin.⁶ "Excitement lately by discovery of N[orth] Pole by two men Cook and Peary, Archie observes."⁷ Among his entries is also a description of a visit to Potton Springs, where he reports on – among other things – the numerous instances he drank from the springs. This little tidbit gives some perspective on how people made use of the springs beyond the information that is more commonly

found in advertisements for these popular turn-of-the-century tourist destinations. The second part of his diary was kept during Archie's time studying at McMaster University, which he attended prior to studying dentistry at McGill and provides us with a window onto student life at the time. Ultimately, Archie's diary, with its varied content, presents a particularly valuable source of information for researchers on the social life and cultural activities of a young man in the early twentieth century.

ENDNOTES

1. B.F. Hubbard, *Forests and Clearings: The History of Stanstead County*, (Montreal: Lovell, 1874), pp. 327.
2. *The Eastern Townships Business and Farmers Directory, 1892*, (Toronto: Might's Directory Co., 1892), pp. 380.
3. "[...]owing to some nervous trouble which prevents him from flying for 6 months, though he states he is otherwise physically fit.," Captain, C.A.M.C to A.D.M.S., 11 July 1918, file P206/001/002.
4. "Dr. A.N. Jenks Shot to Death Wife in Hospital Wounded," *Montreal Gazette*, 30 July 1938, pp. 1, 16 and "Mrs. E. McK. Jenks Has 'Fair Chance,'" *Montreal Gazette*, 1 August 1938, pp. 13.
5. A.N. Jenks, *Diary*, 14 August 1909, file P206/001/001.
6. A.N. Jenks, *Diary*, 1 January 1908, file P206/001/001.
7. A.N. Jenks, *Diary*, 8 September 1909, file P206/001/001.