Photographic resources in Special Collections
Mary Sabiston, May 2015

The University of Aberdeen has made high
definition digital images from the collection available online with the continued support of the Aberdeen
Harbour Board.
See: www.abdn.ac.uk/diss/historic/harbour/

University institutional collections
Throughout the University’s institutional archives there are rich photographic sources depicting
buildings, staff, students and important occasions.

Student photographs and academic portraits
This core collection comprises academic and class photographs from the Arts, Divinity, Law, Medical
and Science faculties. This collection also includes portraits of prominent individuals connected with
the University, including teaching staff, benefactors, and some photographs of various groups such as student magazine editorial staff and national student bodies (MSU 591).


Student bodies and sports clubs
There are other collections which include photographs of students: The Students' Representative Council (S.R.C.) and Union Management Committee papers (MSU 301) and The University of Aberdeen Students’ Charities Campaign papers (MSU 1073).

The Sports Union photographs record the development of the various sports clubs from their
beginnings in the nineteenth century to the present day. The photographs include staff and student administrative officers, individual clubs, buildings and important events (MSU 1452).

Aberdeen Colleges of Education
This major institutional archive of the teacher training colleges (from the Church of Scotland in
1874 to the Northern College of Education in 2001) includes numerous photographs of staff, students,
buildings and events (MSU 1421).

Other selected collections
Dr William Clark Souter
Comprising 51 annotated prints, this collection illustrates Dr William Clark Souter’s Antarctic voyage aboard the Terra Nova, as ship’s surgeon, to free the ice-bound Discovery from Winter Harbour in 1903 – 1904. An introduction to this collection and digital images can be found at: www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/Antarctic_Index.shtml

The Wolfson Reading Room
Special Collections Centre
The Sir Duncan Rice Library
University of Aberdeen
Bedford Road
Aberdeen
AB24 3AA

Tel. (01224)272598
E–mail: speclib@abdn.ac.uk
Website: www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/

Introduction
With material dating from the 1850s, the University of Aberdeen’s photographic collections illustrate the
history of north-east Scotland and beyond through its people, landscapes, industries and travel.
Throughout the archival collections, photographic materials often form integral parts of larger groups
of materials. These materials include glass plates, lantern slides, stereoscopic cards and prints. The
two largest collections, ‘George Washington Wilson and Co.’ and ‘The Aberdeen Harbour Board’
collections account for over 40,000 glass plate negatives. Smaller collections include the University
of Aberdeen’s own institutional photographs and deposited collections such as Dr William Clark
Souter, Grampian Regional Transport Ltd and the Cairngorm Club.

Major collections
George Washington Wilson and Co.
photographic collection consists of over 37,000 glass plate negatives produced by the Aberdeen
firm between the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century. The University of
Aberdeen has made high resolution digital images from the collection available online.
The collection has much related material, which includes research papers, sales catalogues and a
collection of the company’s commercial products. These products include lantern slides, stereoscopic
cards and prints. See: www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/gww/index

Aberdeen Harbour Board
The ‘Aberdeen Harbour Board’ collection consists of approximately 6,000 glass plate negatives,
dating from the 1880s to the 1930s, taken by the Board’s engineering staff as a record of port
developments and activities.