

# FINDING AID

## Administrative Records of the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Fonds

### Series 500/3 Conference Offices

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United Church of Canada Archives Winnipeg  
University of Winnipeg  
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**500 Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Conference fonds. -- 1917 - 2004; predominant 1954-1993. -- 43m of textual records and other material.**

The Conference of Manitoba came into existence in June of 1925 with the creation of The United Church of Canada through the union of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Local Union Churches of Canada. The name was changed in 1980 to the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario as a result of a successful petition to the General Council of the United Church by Cambrian Presbytery. The Conference encompasses the entire province of Manitoba and the area of Northwestern Ontario drained by the Rainy River and Winnipeg River systems as far east as Marathon, Ontario and south to the United States border.

The Conference has an administrative as well as a geographic meaning. The thirteen conferences within The United Church of Canada function as a governing body or court of the church. Very simply, they are composed of members of the Order of Ministry on the roll of Presbyteries within the geographical bounds of the Conference and lay persons under appointment to administrative or staff positions within the Conference by a court of the church or the United Church General Council. These are matched by an equal number of lay representatives elected from the Pastoral Charges within the Conference. Chairpersons of Conference Committees and the President of the Conference United Church Women are also members of Conference. In addition to the obligation to meet annually and to appoint a Conference Executive, the Conference was charged with appointing Standing and Special Committees to carry out the day to day work of the Conference. In 1925 these were Education and Students, Evangelism and Social Service, Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Pensions, Publications, Religious Education, Missionary and Maintenance Fund, Church Property, Settlement, Statistics, Historical and Obituaries.

With a few exceptions, the structure of Conference remained essentially the same until 1972 when a major realignment of the administrative structure of the United Church at the General Council (National) and Conference levels took place. In 1972, the Boards of Home Missions, Evangelism and Social Service and Christian Education had ceased to exist along with the staff positions associated with that work. New paid staff positions which made their first appearance around this time were Regional Director of Broadcasting in 1971 (lasting only until 1972), the positions of Conference Personnel and Conference Administrative Support in 1972 and the positions of Leadership Development and Program Resource in 1973. In 1975 and 1976, and again from 1989 to 1993, a staff position for Communications was added. In 1983, the Conference staff position of Christian Development and Outreach was created and, in 1986, an Evangelism and Social Action staff person as well as a full time Conference Archivist was hired.

The changes in National and Conference administrative structure, which resulted from a move towards more regional and local control of church programs, were reflected in the evolution of Conference Committees. The powerful Conference Home Missions Committee and its sub-committees, responsible for overseeing the mission initiatives of Conference and the administration of mission grants according to Board of Home Missions directives, had been replaced by the Administrative Support Committee (briefly called the Congregational Support Committee) by 1973. Another major reorganisation of the Conference committee structure took place in 1983 when a system for the division of the work of Conference committees among four Councils (Stewardship, Worship and Education, Ministry and Personnel, Evangelism and Social Action) was devised. Committee chairs reported to their respective Councils that in turn were represented on the Conference Executive.

Another major reorganisation of Conference Structure took place in 1993. At that time, the pressure of meeting current demands with dwindling resources resulted in a move to reduce the number of Presbyteries from eight to six. The work previously allocated among four Conference Councils was then divided between three Program Units (Education and Justice, Ministry and Personnel, and Stewardship and Mission). The number of Committees reporting to the Program Units, and through them to the Conference Executive was reduced. Salaried staff were also decreased and reorganised to include the positions of Executive Secretary, Education and Justice staff person, Stewardship and Mission staff

person, Personnel staff person and Conference Archivist. Further changes to the Conference Structure were made in 2005.

Many of the materials which make up this Conference fonds had been stored in the basement of the Conference administrative offices at 120 Maryland Street in Winnipeg in an ad hoc manner for varying lengths of time over a period of approximately forty years before coming into the Archives. Generally, the records of Conference executive, staff and committee chairs were transferred to the basement at the end of their term of office. Renovations to and rearrangement of the basement area resulted in the movement of the materials around the storage area on more than one occasion. It is probable that space constraints resulted in the unrecorded disposal of an undetermined number of documents and other materials throughout the storage period. Administrative records in storage at 120 Maryland were formally transferred to the Archives in 1989. The movement of the Conference administrative offices to a new address in the fall of 1996 precipitated an inventory and the relocation of those records in 1995 prior to the move. The balance of the fonds consists of record series that had been accessioned by the Archives at various periods prior to 1995. The provenance of records accessioned prior to 1976 is often obscure.

The fonds consists of textual and other materials generated by the Conference, the Conference Executive, Conference Staff Associates and Conference Committee members in the fulfilment of their mandate as outlined in *The Manual of The United Church of Canada* from 1925 to 1994. Throughout the life of the fonds, several Conference staff members have served in more than one church or community administration simultaneously while keeping unified files. This has resulted in materials from other administrative jurisdictions being interspersed among the fonds.

Fonds are composed of the following series: Conference Annual Meetings, 1925-1993; Conference Executive, 1925-2002; Conference Offices, 1958-1989; Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups Answering to the Executive and Sub-Executive, 1968-1993; Manitoba Conference Branch of The United Church Woman's Missionary Society, 1918-1962; Manitoba Conference Branch Woman's Missionary Society Archives Collection, [ca.1885-ca.1960]; Manitoba Conference Lay Association, [ca.1910]-1962; District Council AOTS, 1964-1977; Conference Committee on Christian Education, 1927-1992; Conference Home Missions Committee, 1926-1973; Superintendents of Home Missions, 1926-1973; records of the Administration of Norway House Residential School, 1954-1967; Conference Hospitals, 1923-1982; Home Missions Inter-Conference and Ecumenical Groups, 1956-1969; Conference Evangelism and Social Service Committee, 1933-1976; Conference Congregational Life and Work, 1952-1979; Church in Society Committee, 1976-1983; Evangelsim and Social Action Council, 1983-1993; Inter-Conference and Ecumenical Groups reporting to the Evangelsim and Social Action Council, 1972-1999; Conference Communications, 1964-1992; Worship and Education Council, 1981-1994; Worship and Education Council Women's Groups, 1982-1992; Education and Justice Unit, 1987 - 2004 (predominately 1993 - 1998); Committee on Education, Students and Church Vocations, 1975-1978; Conference Education Committee, 1972-1983; [Interim] Placement Committee, 1970-1972; Conference Settlement Committee, 1971-1980; Conference Staff Committee, 1966-1992; Ministry and Personnel Council, 1982-1993; Conference Personnel Officer, 1972-1993; Conference Personnel Records, 1957-1993; records of the Conference Finance Committee, 1964-1974; records of Conference Administrative Support, 1973-1983; records of Administrative Support Staff, 1972-1993; Conference Stewardship, 1967-1993; Church Camps, 1918-1975; Church Home for Girls, 1945-1976; Women's Union, 1926-1958; Manitoba Conference Woman's Association, 1946-1962; Conference United Church Women, 1963-2002; Fellowship of Professional Women, 1949-1980; Manitoba Canadian Girls in Training, 1918-1990; and the Manitoba Student Christian Movement, 1923-1981.

Title based on contents of fonds.

The fonds also includes ephemera, photographs, slides, audio tape recordings, video tape recordings and 50 sets of blueprints, plans and architects' drawings.

Original order of many of the series of the fonds was substantially obscured during the storage period and many materials were in an extremely disorganised state with no original order or access points apparent;

where necessary, order based on administrative function has been reconstructed by the arranging archivist.

Some restrictions on access; see series descriptions.

Finding Aids consist of series descriptions and box lists; some sub-series and file level description available.

Further accruals are expected.

**500/3 Conference Offices. -- 1958-1989. -- 50cm textual records and other material.**

During the years immediately following union the Manitoba Conference office, which was also home to the Superintendent of Home Missions, was located in various suites (#543, #445, #231, #243) of the Somerset Block at 294 Portage Avenue in Winnipeg. By the mid 1930s, the Conference was sharing office premises with Winnipeg Presbytery. A second office was acquired at #441 of the Somerset Block in 1935 and it became home to all Conference staff, including Christian Education, by the following year. In 1945 the Conference Finance Committee recommended increasing the office accommodation by at least 50% and a special Conference committee (which included representation from the committees of Home Missions, Missionary and Maintenance, Christian Education and Finance as well as the Chair of Winnipeg Presbytery and the President of Conference) was appointed to look into the matter. In 1948, the Conference became the Somerset Building office leaseholder where previously the leaseholder had been Winnipeg Presbytery and the offices were remodelled soon after.

In 1957, the question of office space took on a new urgency when the Conference Committee on Information and Stewardship took over responsibility for the Woman's Missionary Society Literature Depot and requested space in the Conference offices. Conference Executive concurred with the request and appointed a special committee to investigate the question of a new location for the Conference offices. The decision by General Council Executive, taken in the fall of 1957, to establish a regional literature depot in Winnipeg gave impetus to the investigation. In 1958 the special committee recommended (and Conference Executive concurred) relocation of the Conference offices to the former Westminster United Church manse at 120 Maryland Street. Conference Executive appointed a House [Management] Committee in October of 1958.

By 1961, the Conference offices were home to the Superintendent of Home Missions, the Winnipeg Presbytery Director of Church Extension and Inner City Work, the Christian Education Field Staff, the regional Literature Depot and the Audio-Visual Education Library. At that time, Conference took the decision to develop plans for a new Conference office building and a special Committee was appointed to undertake the task. After consultation with all parties concerned it was recommended in 1963 that Conference accept Westminster Church's offer to erect a new office building on the site of the old Manse which would in turn be rented by Manitoba Conference. In 1965 a new Building Management Committee (also known as the Management Committee of United Church House) was created with members appointed every year at the annual meeting until 1983. At that time responsibility for overseeing management of the Conference offices was assumed by the newly created Stewardship Council.

In 1988, a House Committee was reconstituted as a sub-committee of the Stewardship Council and remained in existence until 1991/92 when responsibility for United Church House was given over to the Finance Committee. Finance Committee was also a sub-committee of the Stewardship Council until 1994/95 when it came under the Executive Unit following Conference restructuring.

The Conference offices remained at 120 Maryland until 1996 when they were relocated once again, to 170 St. Mary's Road.

This series consists of the records of the Conference House [Management] Committees, 1958-1974; the [Conference] Committee on New United Church House, 1961-1965; the Management Committee for United Church House, 1964-1968; Leases for 120 Maryland for 1958 and 1964; and Insurance Policies and Inventories for 120 Maryland, 1971-1981.

Title based on contents.

This series also includes an unknown quantity of photographs that are described as part of a still images collection for which provenance has yet to be re-established.

File level description; box lists available.

Accession: 1984-42; and others.                      Location: Box 500/3-1.

**File Description**

1. Conference House [Management] Committees. --1958-1974. -- 1 folder.

The Conference House Committees were responsible for the day to day management of the Manitoba Conference offices at 120 Maryland Street. This could include negotiating the terms of the leases (subject to the approval of Conference Executive), arranging for maintenance or care-taking services, the purchase of furnishings, and other planning regarding the physical characteristics of the office space. Also, the location of the regional Literature Depot on the same premises required close co-operation with the Management Committee of the Literature Depot.

Items found here include correspondence, minutes, reports and budget estimates generated by the committees responsible for the management of the Manitoba Conference offices. Included is a copy of the terms of reference for the new United Church House offices constructed in 1964. The folder also contains minutes of combined meetings of the Management Committee of the Literature Depot and the Conference House Committees and minutes of the Special Committee on Arrangements for United Church House which met in 1970.

Title based on contents.

Material for the years 1964-1968 is contained in folder #3.

2. Committee on New United Church House. -- 1961-1965. -- 1 folder.

In 1961, Conference took the decision to develop plans for new Conference office premises and a special Committee was appointed to undertake the task of investigating possible alternatives.

Items found here include correspondence, minutes, reports, drawings and draft leases generated by the committee in the course of its work.

Title based on contents.

3. Management Committee for United Church House. -- 1964-1968. -- 1 folder.

Items found here include correspondence, minutes, reports and budget estimates generated by the committee responsible for the management of the Manitoba Conference offices from 1964-1968. This includes detailed correspondence regarding tax assessments.

Title based on contents.

4. Leases. --1958, 1964. -- 1 folder.

Items found here include signed leases for Conference offices at 120 Maryland Street.

Title based on contents.

5. Insurance Policies and Inventories. --1971-1981. -- 1 folder.

Items found here include correspondence, copies of policies and inventories relating to insurance coverage for the premises and contents of the Conference offices at 120 Maryland from 1971-1981.

Title based on contents.

### **Box List**

#### **Box 500/3-1**

##### Records of Conference Offices

- Conference House [Management] Committees. --1958-1974. -- 1 folder.
- Committee on New United Church House. -- 1961-1965. -- 1 folder.
- Management Committee for United Church House. -- 1964-1968. -- 1 folder.
- Leases. --1958, 1964. -- 1 folder.
- Insurance Policies and Inventories. --1971-1981. -- 1 folder.

##### **Records of the Conference Finance Committee**

- Finance Committee Files. -- 1971-1973. -- 1 folder.

##### **Records of the Conference Administrative Support Committee**

- Minutes. -- 1974-1978. -- 2 folders.
- Treasurer's Files. -- 1968-1978. -- 6 folders.
- Funding Requests. -- 1966-1977. -- 5 folders.
- Conference Planning. -- 1974-1975. -- 1 folder.
  - Financial Statements. -- 1963-1981. -- 3 folders.