

FINDING AID

Administrative Records of the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Fonds

Series 505/2 Manitoba Conference Branch Woman's Missionary Society Archives Collection

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United Church of Canada Archives

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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.

**505/2 Manitoba Conference Branch Woman's Missionary Society Archives Collection. – ca.1885-
ca.1960. – 1m textual records and other material.**

From 1928, the Manitoba Conference Branch of the WMS had an official archivist charged with the collection of all the records of the WMS work undertaken since church union. Conference archivists included Mrs. Luther Lennox, 1928-19//; Mrs. F. D. Baragar, 19//-1947; Mrs. A. W. Robinson, 1947-1952; and Mrs. Jean Spice (who preferred to be called Conference Historian), 1952-ca.1960.

Items found here include the records of the Conference Branch archivist as well as various historical reports, reference materials and first hand accounts collected by the archivist. These also include records pertaining to Presbyterian WMS histories, which were compiled in honour of the 25th anniversary of Union in 1950, and materials collected for the purpose of compiling a history of Conference Branch WMS published in 1959 in honour of the 75th anniversary of WMS in Manitoba. Few of the primary source materials collected here have been dated. Also found here are two scrapbooks containing materials which document Conference Branch WMS activities during the 1940s and 1950s.

Records described as part of this series include WMS Archives inventory and indexes, [before 1960]; records of the Conference Branch WMS Archivist, 1953-1959; Woman's Missionary Society Executive correspondence, ca.1895-1944; the Report of the Commission Appointed to Survey Indian Education, 1935; records pertaining to Conference Branch WMS Missionary Education Programming, [before 1960]; Presbyterian histories, 1936-1959; Historical narratives, ca.1885-ca.1960; Biographical Sketches, [before 1960]; Essays and addresses, [after 1890]; Pamphlets, [before 1960]; and Scrapbooks, 1946-1961.

Title based on contents.

Records include several photographs and other items mounted in scrapbooks.

File level description; box list available.

Location: Box 505/2-1.

File Description

1. WMS Archives inventory and indexes. – [before 1960]. – 4 volumes.

Items described here include a notebook titled 'Record of Archives Conference Branch of Manitoba WMS of United Church of Canada' and which contains what appears to be an inventory of WMS archival holdings. These include Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist records as well as Conference Branch WMS records and biographical tributes. The notebook also contains research notes on loose pages. Also described here is a two-volume index to the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Auxiliaries in Manitoba from 1884-1925 and a 'Harmonised Chronological Index' to WMS Auxiliaries in Manitoba from 1884-1959.

Title based on contents.

The notebook titled 'Record of Archives Conference Branch of Manitoba WMS of United Church of Canada' has suffered water damage and some entries are blurred.

2. Records of the Conference Branch WMS Archivist. – 1953-1959. – 5 folders.

These folders contain the correspondence of Conference WMS historian Jean Spice and reports of Conference WMS Archives activities which were presented to the Conference WMS Executive and Conference WMS Annual Meetings. Also found here are the archivist's research notes on the history of Conference Branch WMS including lists of auxiliaries by Presbytery with founding date and the name of the first President. As well there is a file containing notes on the history of the Congregational WMS.

Title based on contents.

The archivist's reports have suffered water damage and some items are blurred.

3. Woman's Missionary Society Executive correspondence. – [ca.1895]-1944. – 1 folder.

Items found here include correspondence sent and received by members of the Executive of the Conference Branch WMS and the antecedent Methodist and Presbyterian societies. Topics include the creation of new Presbyterian WMS Auxiliaries in Winnipeg, ca.1895, and the organisation of their work as well as a letter to Auxiliary Presidents from the Manitoba Branch President L. Jackson on the direction of Methodist WMS work in 1918.

Title based on contents.

4. Report of the Commission Appointed to Survey Indian Education. – 1935. – 1 folder.

Items found here include a copy of the Report of the Commission Appointed to Survey Indian Education jointly authored by the Board of Home Missions and the Woman's Missionary Society of The United Church of Canada. This report was produced with the participation of the Manitoba Conference Home Missions Committee and the Conference Branch WMS and includes information about the educational programs operated by these groups within the Manitoba Conference.

Title taken from cover of report.

5. Conference Branch WMS Missionary Education Programming. – [before 1960]. – 2 folders.

These folders contain items pertaining to missionary education programming conducted by the WMS including materials pertaining to missionary education for the Explorer program.

Title based on contents.

The Explorer materials have suffered water damage and some items are blurred.

6. Presbyterian histories. – 1936-1959. – 8 folders.

These folders contain material that was collected in order to document the histories of the Presbyterian WMS groups. Some of this material was likely compiled as part of the research which was conducted in order to write the history of the activities of the Manitoba Conference Branch WMS titled *The Woman's Missionary Society in Manitoba 1884-1959* which was published in 1959. Items include research notes on the history of Presbyterian WMS groups and notes on the location of existing records as well as written reminiscences from Presbyterian members and biographical sketches of Presbyterian WMS pioneers. Some primary source material pertaining to Presbyterian histories which was collected by the WMS archivist is also included here. Also found here is the correspondence of the WMS historian pertaining to Presbyterian histories. Folders exist for the following presbyteries: Birtle, 1947-1958; Brandon, 1936-1958; Carmen, 1949-1956; Dauphin, 1945-1958; Portage la Prairie, 1951-1957; Rock Lake, 1958; Superior, ca.1930-ca.1950; and Winnipeg, ca.1890-ca.1960.

Title based on contents.

For further materials pertaining to the histories of WMS Presbyteries in Manitoba see the records of the Presbyterian Woman's Missionary Societies, which were not described as part of this project and which are housed separately from these records in Boxes W0-3 to W0-10, W0-14, and W0-15.

7. Historical narratives. – [ca.1885-ca.1960]. -- 6 folders.

These folders contain a variety of historical narratives collected over a number of years by several WMS archivists. There are many hand-written eye-witness accounts of the early years of Woman's Missionary Societies and other women's groups in Manitoba including the Methodist Deaconess Aid Society and the Presbyterian Women's Union as well as those WMS auxiliaries of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches created prior to 1925. Also included are accounts of the founding and early years of Woman's Missionary Society institutions in Manitoba such as the Portage la Prairie Indian Residential School, the Teulon School Home, WMS Hospitals and the Methodist Pilgrim Institute on Aberdeen Avenue. The 'Report on Educational Work at Teulon' includes a list of all the boys and girls who attended there up to 1933. Also included with the records of early missionary institutions are hand-written accounts of early Baptist and Anglican missionary endeavours in the West. As well, there is a collection of reports, dating from 1943 to 1957 on Manitoba WMS projects. These include the Church Home for Girls, ca.1943; the Dr. Merle Patterson Memorial Scholarship Fund, 1953-1957; Leadership Training in Manitoba Conference, 1954; the '[World] Day of Prayer Committee, later called Inter-Board Committee, [before 1960]; and the WMS Literature Depot, 1957.

Title based on contents.

A key in an envelope labelled 'Key to WMS Locker in basement of United College' was culled from the folder labelled 'Manitoba WMS Projects'.

8. Biographical Sketches. – [before 1960]. – 1 folder.

Included here are biographical sketches of Mrs. L. Jackson, President of the Conference Branch of the Methodist WMS at the time of Union; of Mrs. S.C. Murray, nee Jessie Ellen Phinney, written by her husband; and of Mrs. John MacLean, nee Sarah Ann Barker.

Title based on contents.

9. Essays and addresses. – [after 1890]. – 1 folder.

Items found here include essays and addresses on WMS missions during pioneer days in Manitoba and the Northwest and in Korea as well as an address on the history of the WMS in Manitoba. Also found here are the texts of two speeches given by Mrs. Colin Campbell, and likely written in her own hand, on missions and on the 'model auxiliary'.

Title based on contents.

10. Pamphlets. – [before 1960]. – 1 folder.

Items found here include various pamphlets pertaining to the overseas missions of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church and Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church. Also found here are a number of programs for Presbyterial, Conference Branch, General Council and Dominion Board WMS annual meetings. There is a sample of a Life Member's Certificate of the WMS of the Methodist Church. There is also a photograph captioned 'Angola Jubilee at Bailundo'.

Title based on contents.

11. Scrapbooks. – 1946-1961. – 2 volumes.

These scrapbooks contain various items documenting the activities of the Woman's Missionary Society. Items are predominantly newspaper clippings but also include items such as a WMS skit titled 'Through Missionary Windows'; annual reports of WMS officers and committees; and photographs. The scrapbooks are dated 1946-1950 and 1952-1961.

Title based on contents.

The scrapbook dated 1946-1950 is heavily water damaged with significant amounts of silt still adhering to the pages and the presence of mould is suspected; access may be restricted due to conservation concerns.

Box Lists

Box 505/2-1 (previously WO13)

**Records of Conference Women's Groups. Manitoba Conference Branch Woman's
Missionary Society Archives Collection.**

WMS Archives Accession

- WMS Archives Inventory. – [before 1960]. – 1 volume.
- WMS Archives Indexes. – [before 1960]. – 3 volumes.
- Records of the Conference Branch WMS Archivist. – 1953-1959. – 5 folders.
- Woman's Missionary Society Executive correspondence. – ca.1895-1944. – 1 folder.
- Conference Branch WMS Missionary Education Programming. – [before 1960]. – 2 folders.
- Report of the Commission Appointed to Survey Indian Education. – 1935. – 1 folder.
- Presbyterial histories. – 1936-1959. – 8 folders.
- Historical narratives. Congregational/Methodist/Presbyterian/United WMS. – [before 1960]. -- 1 folder.
- Historical narratives. Women's Union. – [before 1960]. – 1 folder.
- Historical narratives. WMS Missionary Institutions. -- [before 1960]. – 1 folder.
- Historical narratives. WMS Missionary Institutions (Teulon). – 1933. – 1 folder.
- Historical narratives. WMS Project Reports. – 1943-1957. – 1 folder.
- Historical narratives. WMS Project Reports (World day of Prayer). – [after 1919]. – 1 folder.
- Biographical Sketches. – [before 1960]. – 1 folder.
- Essays and addresses. – [after 1890]. – 1 folder.
- Pamphlets. – [before 1960]. – 1 folder.
- Scrapbooks. – 1946-1961. – 2 volumes.