

## FINDING AID

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

Series 506/1 Conference (Men) Lay Association

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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.

**506/1 Manitoba Conference Lay Association. – [ca.1910]-1962. – 10cm textual records.**

Laymen's Associations and Laymen's Missionary Movements existed in both the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches prior to Union in 1925. The Laymen's Missionary Movement was part of the interdenominational Laymen's Missionary Movement which had the aim of stimulating interest in and financial support for home and foreign missions. The demands of wartime likely precipitated its demise around 1916. The Methodist Laymen's Association, which was formed in 1918, had the aim of encouraging co-operation of all lay agencies to promote the evangelistic and missionary efforts of the Church. The Manitoba Conference Lay Association was the successor to these Conference Laymen's groups. The first meeting of the new Conference Lay Association took place at the same time as Conference in 1926. A resolution was passed to create an Executive Committee with the power to appoint other committees as may be required. All lay members of the United Church in the Conference would be eligible for membership. Officers elected included a President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer. In 1930, the Conference Lay Association was reorganised. An Executive was appointed as before with six additional members plus representatives from each Presbytery outside Winnipeg. By this time, a Lay Association had been formed in each of the eleven Conferences and all were represented at the General Council in London in 1930. By 1934, Lay Association activities included Laymen's Sunday, lay preaching and teaching Sunday School. Later, members would take on the delivery of Christmas hampers and the logistical support of worship services at Winnipeg's municipal hospitals. The Conference Lay Association endorsed Temperance and total abstinence for its members. In 1958, members of the Manitoba Conference Lay Association were placed on record as opposing the death penalty as contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ.

Nationally, a Board of Men came into existence in 1954 and by 1960 plans to create one Church organisation for men, the United Church Men (UCM), were well under way. A new Conference level organisation was formed composed of one layman and one minister from each Presbytery. In 1962, it was decided to create a joint Conference level committee, the Conference Co-ordinating Committee for Lay Activities, with representatives from the United Church Men and the United Church Women (UCW) as well as the Young People's Union and the Conference Christian Education Committee. This committee would assume the responsibilities previously delegated to the Conference Lay Association in *The Manual of The United Church of Canada* (1960, paragraphs 474-482). The Manitoba Conference Lay Association wound up its affairs in 1965 by dividing its remaining assets between the UCM and UCW. In 1967, Congregational Life and Work became a standing committee of Conference and assumed the work of the Conference Co-ordinating Committee for Lay Activities.

The provenance of these records is obscure, however, it is probable that they were brought to the Archives after the dissolution of the Conference Lay Association in 1965.

Surviving records include Minutes of the Executive of the Manitoba Conference Lay Association, 1931-1962; Resolutions, [before 1925]-1939; Annual Reports, [before 1925]-1940; and Correspondence, 1910-1962.

Title based on contents.

The Manitoba Conference Lay Association was also known as Manitoba Conference Lay Associations' Advisory Council.

File level description; box list available.

Location: Box 506/1-1.

**File Description**

1. Minutes of the Executive of the Manitoba Conference Lay Association. -- 1931-1962. -- 1 folder.

Items found here include the Minutes of the Executive of the Manitoba Conference Lay Association as well as minutes of Lay Association Sessions (of Annual Meetings of the Conference Lay Association during Conference week) and General Meetings.

Title based on contents.

2. Resolutions. – [before 1925]-1939. – 1 folder.

Items found here include copies of three resolutions passed at the meetings of the Conference Lay Association(s). Two are resolutions of condolence and one concerns ways and means to raise money for missionary purposes.

Title based on contents.

3. Annual Reports. [before1925]-1940. – 1 folder.

Items found here include three annual reports of the Conference Lay[men's] Association. Two pertain to the activities of the Laymen's Association of the Methodist Church, ca.1920-ca.1925, and a third pertains to the activities of the Lay Association, ca.1940.

4. Correspondence. – 1910-1962, predominant 1959-1962. – 1 folder.

Items found here include correspondence, the majority of which appears to be the correspondence of W.F. Lough (one time Secretary-Treasurer of Conference Lay Association). Also included here are miscellaneous documents pertaining to financial matters.

Title based on contents.

Metal clips and pins that secured bundles of correspondence have been replaced with plastic clips and original order has been maintained.

**Box List**

**Box 506/1-1**

**Records of Conference Men's Groups. Manitoba Conference Lay Association.**

**Accession Undetermined**

- Minutes of the Executive of the Manitoba Conference Lay Association. 1931-1962. -- 1 folder.
- Resolutions. – [before 1925]-1939. – 1 folder.
- Annual Reports. [before1925]-1940. – 1 folder.
- Correspondence. – 1910-1962, predominant 1959-1962. – 1 folder.