

FINDING AID

Administrative Records of the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Fonds

Series 523/1

Manitoba Conference Woman's Association

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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.

523/1 Records of the Manitoba Conference Woman's Association. – 1946-1962. – 1m textual records and other materials.

The United Church Woman's Associations came into being soon after union as an organisation for women who wanted to work for the Church at the congregational level. The Woman's Association (WA) was a successor to the various social and benevolent women's groups of the uniting churches such as the Methodist and Presbyterian Ladies Aid, Sewing Circles and Guilds, and Willing Workers. These groups undertook tasks that ranged from organising fowl suppers, concerts and ice cream socials through teaching Sunday School and knitting socks to furnishing the manse. According to 'A Handbook for the Local Woman's Association' the aim and object of the Woman's Association of The United Church of Canada was to deepen the spiritual life of the women of the Church; to develop a programme of Christian fellowship and service, personal evangelism and stewardship; [and] to inspire the women of the church to an increasing knowledge of, interest in, and loyalty to the program of the Church. The aim and object of the local WA added to accept larger responsibility in the life, work and witness of the congregation and the Church at large by assisting the Church School in the programme of Christian Education for children, youth and young people; by providing funds for local church purposes through voluntary givings, through use of talents, and, if advisable through money raising projects; by having general oversight of the furnishings of the manse or parsonage; ...[and] to assist in the social welfare work of the congregation.

The WA did not, however, have a larger organisational structure until 1940 when the WA Dominion Council was formed at the national level. The Manitoba Conference WA did not come into being until three Presbytery Woman's Associations had been formed. This occurred in 1950 when Woman's Associations had been formed in the Presbyteries of Winnipeg (1947), Brandon (1949) and Rock Lake (1950) and an Interim Committee for Conference was set up. The Conference Woman's Association was formally organised in October 1951 and the inaugural meeting was held at Young United in June 1952. WA representatives served on the Conference Home Missions, Christian Education, Auxiliary (supporting girls for full time service in the church), Literature Depot, Fresh Air Camps and Senior Citizens Homes Committees as well as special committees such as the [Conference] Committee on Indian Work in existence from 1954 to 1956. All levels of WA were strongly encouraged to support the Christian Education initiatives of the Church. Conference WA also sent representatives to many ecumenical organisations including the Citizenship Council, the Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg, the John Howard and Elizabeth Fry Societies, the Manitoba Branch of the Canadian Association of Consumers and the Provincial Council of Women. Manitoba Conference WA Leadership Camps were held at Clear Lake from 1952-1956 and at the Prairie Christian Training Centre from 1957-1961.

The WMS and the WA co-operated on many levels. Some congregational Woman's Associations were affiliated with the WMS and as a result would have two or three programs a year that dealt with missionary topics. They were also asked to send a monetary gift to the Presbyterial WMS although there was no formal allocation. The President of the WA that affiliated with the WMS was a voting member of the Presbyterial WA as well as the Presbyterial WMS. In some congregations the WA and the auxiliary of the WMS united to form a Woman's Federation and the functions of each part were combined in the federation. Every member was a member of the WA and the WMS. The Manitoba Conference Co-operating Committee WMS and WA consisted of three members from each organisation and functioned to promote co-ordination in matters of common interest such as a response to the Bracken Liquor Report. In

1956 the WA responded to a special appeal to send a First Nations woman from Norway House for religious training in Phoenix, Arizona. The enthusiastic response encouraged the formation of a Bursary Fund for continued help with leadership training expenses for promising candidates for full or part time work in the church. The Manitoba Conference WA Bursary Fund was set up at the Conference WA Annual Meeting in 1958. Conference UCW carried on the work of the Bursary Committee after 1962. The WA was dissolved in 1962 as part of the restructuring process that led to the creation of the United Church Women as the sole group for women in the United Church.

The Executive officers of the Manitoba Conference WA included the President, four Vice-Presidents, the Recording and Corresponding Secretaries, the Treasurer and the Presbytery WA Organiser. Manitoba Conference WA Presidents during the period covered by these records were Mrs. K.A. Moyer, 1951-1953; Mrs. T. Spencer, 1953-1955; Mrs. E.J. Sward, 1955-1957; Mrs. H. Dodd, 1957-1959; Mrs. D.L. Holtzman, 1959-1961; and Mrs. D. M. McLean, 1961-1962.

The custodial history of many of these records is unclear. A number of WA yearbooks, programs, newsletters, books and pamphlets were accessioned as part of a larger collection of materials pertaining to Conference women's groups brought to the Archives in 1988 by Miss Laura Long, a long time member of various Manitoba Conference women's groups. The minutes and annual reports of the Manitoba Conference WA came to the Conference Archives in 1991 as part of a collection of materials from Crescent-Fort Rouge United Church and were included among the congregational materials.

Surviving records of the Manitoba Conference WA described as part of this series include Minutes, 1951-1962; Reports, 1956-1957; Annual Meeting Policy Motions/Minutes, 1950-1960; Annual Meeting Programs, 1952-1961; Annual Meeting Materials, 1961; records pertaining to the Committee on Co-operation with Christian Education, [195-]; records pertaining to the Study of Women's Work in the Church, 1956-1960; Yearbooks, 1955-1961; Lists of Names and Addresses, 1958-1961; Books and Pamphlets, 1946-[196-]; a Scrapbook of Manitoba Conference WA Activities, 1957-1961; Clippings, [195-]; Reports presented at the Annual Meetings of the Dominion Council of the WA, 1957, 1959, 1961; and the Bulletin, 1958-1961.

Title based on contents.

Unconfirmed minutes of the Executive Committee of the Dominion Council of the Woman's Association of The United Church of Canada have been culled.

File level description; box lists available.

Records of the Dominion Council WA, including histories, have been deposited in the Central Archives of The United Church of Canada.

Accessions: 1988-35; 1991-25; and others.

Location: Box 505/1-1; Box 505/1-2.

File Description

1. Minutes. -- 1951-1956. – 1 volume.

Included in this volume are the minutes of the Interim Committee for Conference, which was charged with the election of officers and laying the ground work for the formation of the Manitoba Conference Woman's Association. Also found here are the minutes of the meetings of the Executive of the Manitoba Conference Woman's Association. As well, minutes of Annual Meetings of the Conference WA are appended. Also attached to the pages of this volume are various newspaper clippings, a copy of the 1942 version of the WA Constitution, Meeting Programs and WA Camp Notices. Minutes of meetings of the Leadership Education Camp Committee are also found throughout.

Title based on contents.

These items were accessioned among the congregational records of Crescent Fort Rouge United Church.

A copy of the report of the 16th Annual Meeting of the Dominion Council Women's Association (1956) and a condensation of the Report of The Manitoba Liquor Enquiry Commission (Bracken Report) prepared by the Conference WMS and WA were removed from this volume and are now found in folder #4 (Reports. – 1956-1957).

2. Minutes. -- 1956-1962. – 1 folder.

Items found here include minutes of the meetings of the Executive of the Manitoba Conference Woman's Association dating from 1960 to 1962. Also found here are copies of the minutes of the meetings of the Manitoba Conference Co-operating Group of the WMS and WA dating from 1956 to 1960 including a copy of the policy minutes dated December 12, 1956.

Title based on contents.

This item was accessioned with the congregational records of Crescent Fort Rouge United Church.

3. Reports. – 1956-1957. – 1 folder.

Items found here include reports of the activities of the Manitoba Conference WA for 1957 as well as a copy of the Condensation of the Bracken Report jointly prepared by the Conference WA and WMS and reports pertaining to the 1956 annual meeting of the Dominion Council.

Title based on contents.

This item was accessioned with the congregational records of Crescent Fort Rouge United Church.

4. Annual Meeting Policy Motions/Minutes. – 1950-1960. -- 1 folder.

Items found here include a record of motions pertaining to matters of policy made at the annual meetings of the Conference WA from 1950 to 1960.

Title based on contents.

This item was accessioned among the congregational records of Crescent Fort Rouge United Church.

5. Annual Meeting Programs. – 1952-1961. – 1 folder.

Items found here include programs for the annual meetings of the Manitoba Conference Women's Association for the years 1952 (inaugural year), 1957, 1959, 1960 and 1961. Also found here is a program for the Conference WA 'Fellowship Camp' at the Prairie Christian Training Centre in September 1959.

Title based on contents.

6. Annual Meeting Materials. – 1961. –1 folder.

Items found here include a collection of materials pertaining to the annual meeting of the Manitoba Conference WA in 1961 including committee reports and financial statements. Also included here is a History of the Woman's Association, which includes histories of each Presbytery WA.

Title based on contents.

Location: 505/1-2.

7. Committee on Co-operation with Christian Education. – [195-]. – 1 folder.

Items found here include a guide of proposed discussion material put together by the Conference WA Committee on Co-operation with Christian Education for use in WA groups "to enrich our understanding of and responsibility to our WA Aim". Also found here is a pamphlet titled 'The Christian Education Committee and the Woman's Association'.

Title based on contents.

8. Study of Women's Work in the Church. – 1956-1960. – 1 folder.

Items found here include materials pertaining to the Report of the General Council Committee to Study Women's Work in the Church (1956) and the supplementary materials created by the Dominion Council of the WA in order to encourage study of this report at all levels of the WA.

Title based on contents.

9. Yearbooks. – 1955-1961. – 2 folders.

These folders contain the Yearbooks presented at the Manitoba Conference Woman's Association annual meetings from 1955 to 1961 (only called Yearbooks from 1956 on). Contents of the Yearbooks include the reports of the chairs of the Conference Committees, Presbytery WA Presidents' reports and the reports of representatives on wider Conference Committees such as Home Missions.

Title based on contents.

Folders do not include the Yearbook for 1958.

10. Lists of Names and Addresses. – 1958-1961. – 1 folder.

Items found here include published lists of names and addresses of the members of the Manitoba Conference Woman's Association specifically the Executive of Conference WA, the Executive of Presbytery WA and WA [Congregational] Presidents. Lists are for the years 1958/59, 1959/60 and to the close of 1961.

Title based on contents.

11. Books and Pamphlets. – 1946-[196-]. – 2 folders.

These folders contain a number of pamphlets including several versions of the Constitution of the WA dated 1946, 1952 and 1958; handbooks for local WA groups; a list of recommended books; a card with the WA prayer, motto and theme song; Dominion Council of the Woman's Association/The Dominion Woman's Association Council of The United Church of Canada 'Topics for Worship' pamphlets dated 1952-1957; and a number of instructional pamphlets with guidelines for WA activities such as fundraising, membership campaigns and congregational visiting. Also included here is a copy of the history of the Women's Association of The United Church of Canada titled 'and their work continueth...' by Ethel m. Bird. This publication includes a chapter on the activities of the WA in Manitoba Conference.

Title based on contents.

12. Scrapbook. – 1957-1961. – 1 volume.

Items in this scrapbook consist mainly of newspaper clippings documenting the activities of the Manitoba Conference Women's Association. Also included are copies of the reports of Presbyterial Publicity Chairs and copies of programs and agendas for WA events and camps.

Title based on contents.

Several of the items in this scrapbook have become separated from the scrapbook pages as the glue used to affix them has degraded.

This item was accessioned among the records of an unidentified United Church congregation.

13. Clippings. – [195-]. – 1 folder.

Items found here include a number of newspaper clippings documenting the activities of the Manitoba Conference WA during the 1950s.

Title based on contents.

14. Reports presented at the Annual Meetings of the Dominion Council of the WA. – 1957, 1959, 1961. – 1 folder.

Items found here include bound copies of the reports presented to the annual meetings of the Dominion Council of the WA including the Dominion Council standing committees and the annual reports of the Conference WAs.

Title based on contents.

15. [Woman's Association] Bulletin. – 1958-1961. – 1 folder.

Items found here include issues of 'The Bulletin' published by the Dominion Council of the Woman's Association of The United Church of Canada.

Title based on contents.

Box Lists

Box 505/1-1 (Former WO01)

Records of Conference Women's Groups. Manitoba Conference Women's Association.

Accession 1991-25

- Minutes. 1951-1956. – 1 volume.
- Minutes. 1956-1962. – 1 folder.
- Annual Meeting Policy Motions/Minutes. – 1950-1960. -- 1 folder.
- Reports. – 1956-1957. – 1 folder.
- Scrapbook. – 1957-1961. – 1 volume.

Box 505/1-2 (Former WO11/WO12)

Records of Conference Women's Groups. Manitoba Conference Women's Association.

Accession 1988-35 (Laura Long)

- Committee on Cooperation with Christian Education. – [195-]. – 1 folder.
- Annual Meeting Programs. – 1952-1961. – 1 folder.
- Yearbooks. – 1960-1961. – 1 folder.
- Books and Pamphlets. – 1946-1961. – 1 folder.
- Clippings. – [195-]. – 1 folder.
- [Woman's Association] Bulletin. – 1958-1961. – 1 folder.

Undetermined Accession (possibly 1984/85)

- Yearbooks. – 1955-1961. – 1 folder.
- Annual meeting materials. – 1961. –1 folder.
- Study of Women's Work in the Church. – 1956-1960. – 1 folder.

- Lists of names and address. – 1958-1961. – 1 folder.
- Books and Pamphlets. – 196-. – 1 folder.
- Reports presented at the Annual Meetings of the Dominion Council of the WA. – 1957, 1959, 1961. – 1 folder.