

University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections

Finding Aid - Calgary First Spiritualist Church fonds (MSS 451)

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Calgary First Spiritualist Church fonds

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Summary information

Repository: University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections

Title: Calgary First Spiritualist Church fonds

ID: MSS 451

Date: 1995-2016 (date of creation)

Physical description: 0.13m textual records

**Dates of creation,
revision and deletion:**

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

The Calgary First Spiritualist Church (CFSC), formally incorporated on 18 November 1920, began life during WWI with the invitation in a local paper in 1915 from Mrs. Ada Garrad (ca. 1881-1962), a medium, to meet with those interested in psychic work. Various informal groups formed, as well as the First Spiritualist Progressive Lyceum, which was established on 10 July 1915. The Lyceum was the Spiritualist equivalent of Sunday School, but based on the teachings of Andrew Jackson Davis; it was well attended in its early years. In 1920, the Lyceum joined the Western Star group in forming the Calgary First Spiritualist Church under the direction of Mrs. Garrad as medium and lecturer and her husband Gerald Harry Garrad (1879-1963) as board president. The new church purchased a building on the corner of 7th Avenue and 3rd Street Southeast, which had been an old Moravian church. The church received its charter from the Government of Alberta; the founding members included Robert and Alice E. Rushton, Edward and Nellie Leighton Potts, William Charles and Annie Biles, and William and Anne Eshelby. In the church's early years, a professional medium from the United States, Mrs. Z. Duval, was in Calgary and trained many of the mediums who continued to work at the local level for many years. Other notable leaders in the early church were Rev. Matilda Louise Parkyn, Rev. Harry Collett, Rev. Eleanor Collett, Rev. Jack Ross, Helen Davis, Annie Slater, Tom and Tomena Merrifield, and Myra Harshman. In 1929, the Spiritualists' National Union of Canada (now the Spiritualist Church of Canada) recognized CFSC's affiliation, with Rev. Martha S. McGuire as a signatory.

In the 1950s, the Lyceum, which had been dormant for some years, was re-established, but officially closed in 1961. The teaching aspect of the CFSC, however, has remained, as it offers a number of courses for adults and children involving Spiritualism, mediumship, and other topics. In 1972, the Church was required to vacate its building due to urban renewal plans by the City of Calgary, and moved to its present location at 1601-1603 6th Avenue North; this second church building was dedicated in 1974. Throughout, the CFSC has offered regular healing, message, and meditation services, as well as workshops and séance circles, and has a large library of books and other publications relating to Spiritualism. Many of the

children who attended the Lyceum later became mediums and ministers, including two daughters of the Harshman family who currently (2015) serve the Church, Rev. Ella Groves and Rev. Jane Fleming.

Custodial history

About 2000, the Survival Research Institute of Canada (SRIC) received the Guardian Angels book from Ella Groves, and the CFSC Information Sheets from Reverend David Oliver. The Harshman family history interview was conducted by Walter Meyer zu Erpen on 17 April 2000. Those records were transferred to the University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections (UMASC) by Walter Meyer zu Erpen (President, SRIC) in 2015. The remainder of the accession was transferred directly to UMASC by Marlene Harris, library and archives director for CFSC, in 2015.

Scope and content

This fonds consists of the newsletters and information sheets of the Calgary First Spiritualist Church (CFSC) from the 1990s onwards, as well as materials from the millennium celebrations (2000) and CFSC's 90th anniversary (2010), and historical compilations, including a history of the church by Sally Jennings.

Notes

Title notes

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in consultation with the donating body.

Restrictions on access

There are no restrictions on access.

Conditions governing use

Users must abide by the relevant copyright legislation.

Finding aids

A finding aid can be generated from this description.

Related material

This fonds is one of a series of fonds and collections transferred to the Archives by Walter Meyer zu Erpen, President of the Survival Research Institute of Canada. It is related to the various other

Psychical Research and Spiritualist Collections that the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections has attracted since it acquired the Hamilton Family fonds (MSS 14), especially the Winnipeg Spiritualist Church fonds (MSS 425 (A13-139)), as a similar institution.

Accruals

Further accruals are expected, including missing newsletters and a history of the Harshman family by Margaret McLeod.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** published

Series descriptions

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
Accession MSS 451-A2015-068: Calgary First Spiritualist Church Accrual				
<u>Date:</u> 1995-2015 (date of creation)				
File / item list				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
	File - CFSC Monthly Newsletters 1995-2005, incomplete			A2015-068, Box 0001 A2015-068, File 0001
	File - CFSC Monthly Newsletters 2006-2015			A2015-068, Box 0001 A2015-068, File 0002
	File - CFSC Information Sheets 1999			A2015-068, Box 0001 A2015-068, File 0003
	File - "Guardian Angels: A Heritage Collection of Spiritualist Silver Chain Recitations, Musical Readings, and Lyceum Songs compiled from The Lyceum Manual, and the Spiritual Songster [which were] First Published [in] 1887" 1999			A2015-068, Box 0001 A2015-068, File 0004
	File - "History of the Calgary First Spiritualist Church and Lyceum 1920-2000" by Sally Jennings + 90th Anniversary materials 2002, 2010			A2015-068, Box 0001 A2015-068, File 0005
	File - Article by East Village Action Committee + "History of CFSC and Lyceum" (lecture by Ella Groves) 2011, 2014			A2015-068, Box 0001 A2015-068, File 0006

	File - Transcript of Harshman family interview with Walter Meyer zu Erpen 2000	A2015-068, Box 0001 A2015-068, File 0007		
Accession MSS 451-A2017-059: Calgary First Spiritualist Church Accrual				
<u>Date:</u> 2016 (date of creation)				
<u>Scope and content:</u>				
Accrual consists of monthly newsletters.				
 <u>Alternative form available:</u>				
Newsletters are also available in pdf format.				
File / item list				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
	File - CFSC Newsletters	2016		A2015-068, Box 0001 File 0008