

# University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections

## Finding Aid - Ukrainian Male Chorus of Winnipeg fonds (MSS 479)

---

Generated by Access to Memory (AtoM) 2.3.1 Printed: September 07, 2017

Language of description: English

University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections

330 Elizabeth Dafoe Library

Winnipeg

Manitoba

Canada

R3T 2N2

Telephone: 204-474-9986

Fax: 204-474-7913

Email: [archives@umanitoba.ca](mailto:archives@umanitoba.ca)

<http://umanitoba.ca/libraries/archives/>

<http://umlarchives.lib.umanitoba.ca/index.php/ukrainian-male-chorus-of-winnipeg-fonds>

# Ukrainian Male Chorus of Winnipeg fonds

---

## Table of contents

---

Summary information .....	3
Administrative history / Biographical sketch .....	3
Scope and content .....	4
Notes .....	4
Access points .....	5
Series descriptions .....	5
, History/Biography, 1938-1997 .....	5
, Minutes of Meetings, 1945-1968 .....	6
, Correspondence, 1946-1993 .....	6
, Financial Records, 1946-1971 .....	6
, Miscellaneous Material, 1969-1997 .....	7
, Artefacts and Oversized Materials, 1946-1967 .....	7

## Summary information

---

**Repository:** University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections

**Title:** Ukrainian Male Chorus of Winnipeg fonds

**ID:** MSS 479

**Date:** 1938-1997 (date of creation)

**Physical description:** 0.9 m of textual records and other material

**Language:** English

**Language:** Ukrainian

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

---

## Administrative history / Biographical sketch

---

### Note

Biography of Walter Bohonos and the history of the Ukrainian Male Chorus of Winnipeg  
Walter Victor Bohonos (1913-1997) was born in St. Julian, Saskatchewan to Ukrainian pioneer settlers. Educated in Winnipeg's public schools after the family moved to Winnipeg in 1919, and active in youth organizations sponsored by the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, he first thought of establishing a male chorus in the early 1930s after teaming up with Winnipeggers Myron Mason (Marian Masniak), Peter Collins and Ralph Wickberg (Ralph Gerry) to form the "Cavaliers," a popular vocal group that performed on network radio. The group's repertoire included songs in 14 languages and they dedicated their radio broadcasts to Manitoba's many ethnic groups. Later the group changed its name to "The International Quartet" and finally to "The Four Toppers." Under that name it moved to Toronto in 1939 and gained recognition as "the best of its kind in Canada." While singing baritone with the quartet and arranging its music, Bohonos also studied music at the University of Toronto. He returned to Winnipeg during the war, and in the fall of 1944 organized the 16-voice Ukrainian Male Chorus. All of the choristers were Canadian-born and they included businessmen, tradesmen, students, and professional men. Although it held its rehearsals in the Ukrainian National Home Association building at the corner of Burrows and MacGregor, the Chorus was not affiliated with any community organization and it was open to men of all religious denominations. By 1946 Bohonos was also voice teacher and instructor of liturgical music at St. Andrew's College and choir conductor first at St. Michael's Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church and then at Holy Trinity Ukrainian Greek Orthodox cathedral in Winnipeg. The Ukrainian Male Chorus won local recognition after winning the Manitoba Music Festival Folk Song Competition in 1946, 1947 and 1948. Although it was established to present Ukrainian folk and religious songs to Canadian and American audiences, the Chorus, which soon expanded to 30 voices, also included the folk songs of other peoples ("Blue Bells of Scotland," "Loch Lomond," "Annie Laurie," "The Happy Wanderer," "Let My People Go") in its repertoire. The Chorus performed at Ukrainian-Canadian events throughout Manitoba,

and occasionally visited Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, and the United States. In Winnipeg it also sang at a command performance for Their Royal Highnesses, Princess Alice and the Earl of Athlone in 1945; at the City's 75th Anniversary Concert in 1949; with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra under Walter Kaufmann in 1951 and under Victor Feldbrill in 1961 and in 1967; at the nationally broadcast and televised 1957 CBC "United Way" spectacular that also featured vocalists Juliette, Robert Goulet, and Joan Maxwell, and comedian Dave Broadfoot; at numerous conventions; and at gatherings of various service clubs including the Rotarians, Lions, Kinsmen, and the I.O.D.E. Performances by the Chorus were also broadcast by the CBC radio and television network, by NBC and by the BBC. Under contract with MGM records the Ukrainian Male Chorus recorded two 78 rpm albums of Ukrainian folk songs and Ukrainian Carols on the Quality label in 1950. At the time, it may have been the first Western Canadian choir to make records in a language other than English. In 1965 the Chorus recorded two 33 1/3 rpm albums produced by RCA Victor Recording Services. During the fall and winter of 1967-68 the executive addressed the issue of growing "complacency" among Chorus members and tried to "find a basic solution to the present low quality of some sections of the male chorus." Although plans were made to reorganize the Chorus it became inactive. One of its last performances was at the September 1970 "Starburst 100" concert sponsored by the Ukrainian Professional and Business Men's Club in celebration of Manitoba's Centennial. Over the years prominent soloists and singers included John Marian and Myron Mason (who had also toured with Serge Jaroff's Don Cossack Choir), Emile Budnick, Joseph Popiel, Walter Mudry, Cecil Semchychyn, Serge Radchuk and Jerry (Jaroslaw) Schur, and William (Bill) Solomon (Conductor of the Hoosli Ukrainian Male Chorus).

## **Custodial history**

The accession was donated by William Solomon in 2015.

---

## **Scope and content**

---

The fonds contains brief historical sketches, minutes of meetings, correspondence, financial records, membership lists, scrapbooks and newspaper clippings, photographs, artefacts, and four record albums produced by the Ukrainian Male Chorus of Winnipeg directed by Walter V. Bohonos during the years 1945-1970.

---

## **Notes**

---

### **Title notes**

### **Finding aids**

A finding aid can be downloaded from this description by clicking on the download link under "Finding aid" on the right-hand side of this description.

## Accruals

This fonds consists of one accrual: A2015-020.

## Other notes

- **Publication status:** published

## Access points

- Sound recording (documentary form)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Textual record (documentary form)
- Object (documentary form)

## Series descriptions

### History/Biography

Date: 1938-1997 (date of creation)

#### File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
	File - Brief historical articles	1949-1993		File 0001 A2015-020, Box 0001
	File - Walter V. Bohonos, obituary and memorial card	1997		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0002
	File - Lists of chorus members/ attendance at practices	1946-1969		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0003
	File - Reorganization plan	1967-1968		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0004
	File - Concert programs and reviews	1950-1970		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0005
	File - "Cavaliers"/"International Group"	1938		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0006
	File - Ukrainian Male Chorus Tour	[ca. 1950]		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0007

	File - Ukrainian Male Chorus	195-		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0008
	File - Ukrainian Male Chorus	1964-1965		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0009
<b>Minutes of Meetings</b>				
<u>Date:</u> 1945-1968 (date of creation)				
<b>File / item list</b>				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
	File - Minutes	[1945-1956]		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0010
	File - Minutes	1958-1964		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0011
	File - Minutes	[1965-1968]		A2015-020, Box 0001 File 0012
<b>Correspondence</b>				
<u>Date:</u> 1946-1993 (date of creation)				
<b>File / item list</b>				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
	File - Correspondence	1946-1949		A2015-020, Box 0002 File 0001
	File - Correspondence	[1950-1960]		A2015-020, Box 0002 File 0002
	File - Correspondence	1961-1967, 1993		A2015-020, Box 0002 File 0003
<b>Financial Records</b>				
<u>Date:</u> 1946-1971 (date of creation)				
<b>File / item list</b>				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
	File - Accounts	1946-1963		A2015-020, Box 0002 File 0004
	File - Accounts	1963-1971		A2015-020, Box 0002 File 0005

	File - Special recordings account	1965-1966		A2015-020, Box 0002 File 0006
<b>Miscellaneous Material</b>				
<u>Date:</u> 1969-1997 (date of creation)				
<b>File / item list</b>				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
	File - Music scores (samples, fragments)	n.d.		A2015-020, Box 0002 File 0007
	File - Programs, bulletins, addresses	1969-1997		A2015-020, Box 0002 File 0008
<b>Artefacts and Oversized Materials</b>				
<u>Date:</u> 1946-1967 (date of creation)				
<b>File / item list</b>				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
	File - Cut-out figures of chorus members	196-		A2015-020, Box 0003 File 0001
	File - Printer's blocks	196-		A2015-020, Box 0004 File 0001
	File - Ukrainian Male Chorus seal/stamp	195-		A2015-020, Box 0004 File 0002
	File - Ukrainian Male Chorus scrapbook	1946-1967		A2015-020, Box 0005 File 0001
	File - "Ukrainian Male Chorus sings Folk Songs," record album	1950		A2015-020, Box 0005 File 0002
	File - "Ukrainian Male Chorus singing Christmas Songs," record album	1950		A2015-020, Box 0005 File 0003
	File - "Ukrainian Male Chorus of Winnipeg conducted by Walter V. Bohonos. Volume III. 20th Anniversary Concert Program," record album	1966		A2015-020, Box 0005 File 0004
	File - "Ukrainian Male Chorus of Winnipeg conducted by Walter V. Bohonos. Volume IV. Ukrainian Christmas Carols," record album	1966		A2015-020, Box 0005 File 0005