

# S. J. McKee Archives



## Provincial exhibition of Manitoba documents

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4353>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Description Level: Series

Fonds Number: RG2SF1

Series Number: 1.1

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1910-1972

Physical Description: 25 cm

History /

Biographical:

These documents were created between 1910 and 1972 by the administration of the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba.

Custodial History:

See sous-fonds RG2SF1 for custodial history.

Scope and Content:

This series includes various contracts and agreements between the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba and companies hired for the fair. These companies include musicians, entertainment, stage hands, concessions and more. The series also includes inventories, by laws, the 1920 Act of Incorporation. Most of the documents are from 1957 to 1962.

Notes: Inventory of documents in the series is available in the printed finding aid.

Storage Location: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  
RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba



## Provincial exhibition of Manitoba minutes

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4354>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Description Level: Series

Fonds Number: RG2SF1

Series Number: 1.2

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1903-1981

Physical Description: 1.17 m

History /

Biographical:

The minutes were created by the summer fair Board of Directors and the various committees and sub-committees associated with the Board.

There is ample evidence in the minutes of the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba that the administrative structure was largely one by committee. By 1903, there were at least nine separate committees. These committees were Grounds and Buildings, Sports and Attractions, Public Comfort, Advertising and Printing, Privileges, Gates, Finance, Excursion and Transportation, and Prize List. Of these committees only Public Comfort, Privileges, and Excursion and Transportation were comparatively short-lived. These committees are not mentioned after 1903, 1920, and 1925, respectively. The remaining six committees all survive in various forms to this day.

In 1908 there is mention of a Speed committee, which dealt with the racetrack at the fairgrounds. This committee was in existence until the early 1970s, when racing, along with the condemned grandstand, was discontinued. By 1915 there is mention of a Reception committee that continues on until the mid-1970s.

In the 1920 minutes several committees are mentioned. The committees included Concessions, Grandstand, Accommodation, Police/Security, and Wild Birds and Animals. The Wild Birds and Animals is not mentioned in further minutes, but Grandstand and Accommodation are mentioned into the mid 1950s. Both the Concessions and Police/Security are mentioned until the late 1970s.

In 1925, there are several new committees mentioned. They include Heavy Horse, Light Horse, Beef Cattle, Dairy Cattle, Sheep, Swine, Farm Boy's Camp, Poultry, Grains and Grasses, Horticulture, Dairy Competition, Machinery Row, Natural History, Fine Arts and School Exhibits, and Livestock Parade. The enormous expansion of committees is a reflection of the expansion of the exhibition. Almost all aspects of farming now had its own committee, and an effort to help young people continue in farming was made with the forming of camps for farm boys. All of these committees were long lived, although not necessarily with the original title. From approximately 1930 to 1940, all of the Cattle were lumped together, but by 1950 a Commercial Cattle committee was mentioned, and by 1974 there was also a Special Agriculture Display and Exotic Breeds. By 1979 there were Steer Show and Bull Sale committees. Around 1930, a Calf and Colt Competition committee was also added.

In 1930 there is mention of a Dining Room committee, but it is not mentioned again. In response to changing society, a Car Parking committee was created around 1935. This committee remained under various titles through to today. Another short-lived committee, Grandstand Gates, is mentioned from about 1935 to 1940. For some time there was also a Band Competition committee. It is mentioned from 1940 to 1945, and then not again until 1979.

In 1950 there was a Dogs committee, but no further mention is made of this committee. From 1955 to 1960 there was a separate Fire committee, until it was amalgamated with Police/Security. In 1955 two new committees are mentioned. These are the Trade Fair and Homecraft committees. While the Trade Fair is not mentioned after about 1960, the Homecraft committee seems to have been in existence until the mid 1970s.

A 4-H and Junior Activities committee was formed around 1960 to take the place of the Farm Boy's Camp. This committee continued the exhibition's attempts to keep young rural people interested in farming.

In the minutes for 1970, two more committees are mentioned. They are the Food and Beverage and the Bees and Honey committees. While one would suppose that the Food and Beverage Services committee was a new title for the Concessions committee, the Concessions committee is also mentioned. The Bees and Honey committee is mentioned until about 1974 in committee minutes.

By 1974 three more committees are mentioned in the minutes. They were the Baby Fair committee, which was a netting zoo, the Expansion Project and Grants committee and the

committee, which was a petting zoo, the Expansion, Project and Grants committee and the Midway committee. While the Midway and Baby Fair committees lasted until at least the late 1970s, the Expansion, Projects and Grants committee is not mentioned past the mid 1970s. Also mentioned in 1979 are the Pork Congress, Family Fair, Entertainment, and Exhibitor's Lounge committees.

Custodial History:

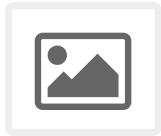
See sous-fonds RG2SF1 for custodial history.

Scope and Content:

The records consist of minutes created by the Board of Directors, Shareholders, and various committees and subcommittees of the Provincial Exhibition. It should be noted that while the minutes are extensive, they are not organized according to committee. Rather, they are organized by the year in which they were created.

Notes: Inventory of documents in the series is available in the printed finding aid.

Storage Location: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  
RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba



## Provincial exhibition of Manitoba photographs

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4361>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Creator:

Known creators of the records include:

#### PHOTOGRAPHERS AND PHOTO SERVICES

Ayers Photographs  
Bob Evans  
Donald Huskins  
Earl Kennedy Specialized Photographic Services, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Ernie Tayler, Brandon, Manitoba  
Frank Gowen, Brandon, Manitoba  
H. M. Salisbury, Brandon, Manitoba  
H. R. Hoffman Ltd., Brandon, Manitoba  
Harold K. White  
Hildebrand  
Hungry I. Agency  
Jerrett's Photo  
Lawrence Stuckey, Brandon, Manitoba  
Mid-Co.  
Pugh Mfg. Co. Ltd., Toronto, Ontario  
R. M. Coleman, Brandon, Manitoba  
Smith K. C. Mo.  
Stovel Co.  
Turofsky, Toronto, Ontario  
Western Engravings  
Wilkinson Photography, Newmarket, Ontario

#### NEWSPAPERS

Brandon Sun, Brandon, Manitoba  
Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg, Manitoba

#### PRINTING SERVICES

Leech Printing Ltd., Brandon, Manitoba  
Crawford Drug Store, Brandon, Manitoba

#### GOVERNMENT

Department of Industry and Commerce, Manitoba  
Frank Royal of the National Film Board

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Description Level:    | Series                                      |
| Fonds Number:         | RG2SF1                                      |
| Series Number:        | 1.9   |
| GMD:                  | graphic                                     |
| Date Range:           | 1885-1988                                   |
| Physical Description: | 793 photographs and other graphic materials |

## History /

### Biographical:

Many of these records were donated to the Board by exhibitors and participants in the fairs. Some are advertisements sent to the Provincial Exhibition Board by businesses such as Conklin Shows. Professional photographers, who were likely hired by the Board, generated others. As well, Brandon Sun photographers took a large number of the photos throughout the century. In the 1980s, the Sun photos were reprinted and then the reprints were added to the Exhibition's collection. Privately owned photos were also reprinted and added. Publishing houses generated some photographs, probably as services to participants and organizers of the fairs. Finally, the Canadian and Manitoba governments created a few of the photos.

### Custodial History:

Exhibitors and participants in activities at the summer fair donated many of these records to the Provincial Exhibition Board. The Manitoba Provincial Archives in Winnipeg housed other records, of which the McKee Archives acquired copies. Most of the records were stored in the offices of the Provincial Exhibition Association of Manitoba until they were brought to the McKee Archives ca. 1986.

### Scope and Content:

Series consists primarily of black and white photographs pertaining to the Provincial Exhibition. Subjects of the records vary over the century, but overall subjects included are buildings and grounds, horses, livestock, exhibits, youth activities, entertainment, and dignitaries. Almost all of the materials are in excellent condition.

## BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The graphics that depict the buildings and grounds of the summer fair are both ground and aerial photos. From the records generated between 1900 and 1930, there are pictures of the Crystal Palace, the Wheat City Arena, the Experimental Farm, the horse barns, the racetrack, and the grandstand. The pictures dating from the forties through the sixties are of the racetrack, the grandstand, the Provincial Display Building, the Trade Fair Building, and the Main Gate. The records from the 1970s and the 1980s feature the Keystone Centre, cattle buildings, and horse stables.

## HORSES

Graphics from the 1890s through the 1980s feature various light and heavy horses, from single horses to eight-horse teams. Pictures dating from the first fifty years of the fair are of stallion and purebred shows. Also depicted are racing events such as chuck wagon, bike, and single rider races. Graphics of equestrian events like jumping and hackney classes date from World War II until the 1980s. Dating from the fifties to the seventies are photos of children's events like costume classes and pony competitions. Finally, pictures of barrel racing and horse pulling competitions date from the 1970s and 1980s.

## LIVESTOCK

Livestock photos, which date throughout the twentieth century, are mostly of cattle and swine, but there are a few pictures of buffalo and sheep. Cattle photos depict purebreds such as Holstein, Jersey, Hereford, and Angus. Swine pictures are of Yorkshire sows and boars, as well as of market hogs.

## POULTRY AND EGGS

Graphics depicting poultry and egg shows date between 1950 and 1985.

## EXHIBITS

Photos of exhibits taken throughout the century feature home craft displays such as clothes

Photos or exhibits taken throughout the century feature home-craft displays such as clothes and quilts. Tack rooms, farm implement shows, and club displays, like those of the Brandon Lion's Club, are also consistent throughout the period. Other graphics of exhibits are particular to certain years: in the late 1940s through the 1950s auto shows are featured; and from the fifties to the eighties commercial exhibits are prominent.

#### YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Graphics of children and teens' activities form a large part of MG 1. From the 1920s and 1930s, there are pictures of boys and teens who attended the Farm Boys' Camp. Photos taken at the Agricultural and Homemaking School in the late 1940s and early 1950s depict male teens learning about mechanics, welding, and electricity. Photos of female teens at the camp depict weaving, sewing, and cooking classes. In the records dating from 1957 to the 1980s, photos feature both pig and calf scrambles. As well, some pictures are of male teens participating in seed, poultry, and judging courses. Photos of female teens during these years show them participating in such activities as clothes-making, 4-H Queen contests, and fashion shows.

#### ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment pictures include graphics of the midway, the carnival and travelling acts, parades, and miscellaneous events. Pictures of the midway are both aerial and ground photos, and date from 1913 to the 1970s. Ferris wheels and carousels are the main rides featured until the 1960s, after which many motorized rides like the Wild Mouse and the Tidal Wave are prominent.

Carnival pictures throughout the century include shots of aisles along which several attractions are set up. Photos of clowns and other costumed people are numerous. Graphics of travelling acts depict parachutists (1920s), follies (1950s), exotic dancers (1950s), trained animals (1950s-1970s), singers and bands (1970s-1980s), and trapeze artists (1970s).

Parade photos date throughout the century, and feature pipers, horses pulling carriages, people riding horses, clowns, soldiers, floats, and members of various clubs.

Miscellaneous events graphics include pictures of horseshoe throwing competitions, square dancing shows (1950s), fiddling contests (1970s), smash-up derbies (1980s), and tractor pulls (1980s).

#### FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

There are seven photos of First Nations people at the summer fair. In all but one of the pictures, they are in traditional costume. Depicted are pow-wows, parades, a female teen sewing a mukluk, and tee-pees. These records date from 1914 to 1969.

#### DIGNITARIES

Pictures of dignitaries are of members of the Provincial Exhibition committees and boards; federal, provincial, and municipal politicians who attended the summer fair; and various business, medical, and judicial representatives. Especially notable are the group photos of the Board of Directors for the years 1894, 1900, 1941, 1949, 1951, 1952, and 1968.

The graphic materials of RG2SF1 are useful for many purposes. For one, they offer a rich visual history of the fair. Agricultural historians will find poultry, horse, livestock, horticultural, and farm implement images informative. Such images describe how farming has changed through the last century. The records offer many clues into the cultural history of Brandon and surrounding area. The nature of the carnival, for instance, changes. At the turn of the century, attractions of various booths were not advertised overtly; one had to pay before they were

given hints as to what they were going to view. By the Second World War, however, attractions' exteriors were more garish. Because the carnival was more open in its advertisements, one can determine that the boundaries between the private and public shifted in the first forty years of the twentieth century.

The pictorial history of the exhibits at the fair reveals much about the city's culture. The pictures from the post-World War II era, for example, are indicative of the period's climate of consumerism: a commercial display building was built and commercial exhibits were added to the displays of the fair. Also signified in the postwar photos is the emphasis upon family values that pervaded the fifties; for instance displays of home-crafts became prominent in these years.

Social historians will find in these records a vibrant portrait of the social composition of twentieth-century Brandon. The community's leaders, for example, are represented in the pictures of the Boards of Directors. From these photos, one can ascertain the social characteristics of Board members: white, male, and middle class. Parade photos are also indicative of social composition, as organizations from all classes of society participated in parades. Agricultural clubs, unions, women's organizations, and church groups are just a few of the entries featured in the parade pictures.

Historians of gender will find that throughout the fairs' years definitions of femininity changed. In the early fairs, women are shown in their booths at home shows, demonstrating their association with the private sphere. During the Second World War, some photos start to appear of women doing secretarial work. After World War II, however, gender norms constricted. Pictures of female teens taking classes at the Agricultural and Homemaking School depict them learning about how to run a well maintained home: they learn about sewing, cooking, and weaving. In the seventies, gender boundaries again shifted: for example, female teens began to participate in the previously male-only calf scramble events.

Finally, these records are useful for any historian of Brandon and area history. There are thousands of people from the region featured in these records. Different places and buildings in Brandon are also a prominent part of the collection. Together, the pictures of RG2SF1 offer a vivid history of both Brandon and the Provincial Exhibition.

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Storage Location: | RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds<br>RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba  |
| Related Material: | Pictures of the Provincial Exhibition may also be found on the National Archives of Canada website. The Western Canadian Pictorial Index in Winnipeg, Manitoba, houses additional graphic records of the summer fair. |

#### Arrangement:

Item-level descriptions of the graphics of RG2SF1 through RG2SF4 are located on a searchable database. This database is entitled "Brandon Photographs" and can be read using Microsoft Access. "Brandon Photographs" is located on a 3½ floppy disk entitled "Provincial Exhibition Association of Manitoba fonds Series 9" included in this finding aid. The description of each photograph on this database includes the following information: accession number, title, date, place, physical description, scope and content, notes, creator, and copyright. By searching the database, individual photographs can be located easily. See the printed finding aid for instructions on how to use the photograph database.

Graphics for RG2SF1 through RG2SF4 are located in boxes. Graphics larger than 24 x 35 cm are located in the image mapcase, which is located in the reading room. The graphics are filed chronologically by accession number. The arrangement is as follows:

Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds; RG2SF1-RG2SF4, Series 9  
Boxes 1 through 15, as follows:

Box 1 EX0001 to EX0125  
Box 2 EX0157 to EX0263  
Box 3 EX0265 to EX0399  
Box 4 EX0400 to EX0499  
Box 5 EX0500 to EX0599  
Box 6 EX0600 to EX0699  
Box 7 EX0700 to EX0799  
Box 8 EX0800 to EX0899  
Box 9 EX0900 to EX0921  
Box 10 EX1000 to EX1099  
Box 11 EX1100 to EX1199  
Box 12 EX1200 to EX1299  
Box 13 EX1300 to EX1399  
Box 14 EX1400 to EX1499  
Box 15 EX1549 to EX1859





## Provincial exhibition of Manitoba scrapbooks

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4362>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Description Level: Series

Fonds Number: RG2SF1

Series Number: 1.10

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1968, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1975

Physical Description: 8 cm

History /

Biographical:

The records were created by a member of the administrative staff of the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba.

Custodial History:

The scrapbooks were housed at the PEM and MEA until c1986 when they were transferred to the S.J. McKee Archives at Brandon University.

Scope and Content:

The scrapbooks mainly contain newspaper clippings that deal with the Provincial Exhibitions of various years. Most pictures and articles that appeared in various newspapers during this time are included in the scrapbooks.

Notes: Part of RG2SF1. Inventory of the documents in the series is available in the printed finding aid.

Storage Location: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  
RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba



## Provincial exhibition of Manitoba miscellaneous

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4363>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Description Level: Series

Fonds Number: RG2SF1

Series Number: 1.11

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1920, 1966-1980

Physical Description: 6.5 cm

History /

Biographical:

See Administrative History RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba.

Custodial History:

The scrapbooks were housed at the PEM and MEA until c1986 when they were transferred to the S.J. McKee Archives at Brandon University.

Scope and Content:

The file consists of various records that in some way involve the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba, but do not belong to a specific series. There are newspaper clippings, a cartoon, a file believed to have originated with the Schidlof family, and some letters.

Notes: Inventory of the documents in the series is available in the printed finding aid.

Storage Location: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  
RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba



## Provincial exhibition of Manitoba financial records

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4355>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Description Level: Series

Fonds Number: RG2SF1

Series Number: 1.3

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1903-1939, 1963-1969

Physical Description: 9 cm

History /

Biographical:

See Administrative History for RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba.

Custodial History:

See sous-fonds RG2SF1 for custodial history.

Scope and Content:

The series consists of the financial records, transfer ledgers and prize money lists created by the Provincial Exhibition.

Notes: Inventory of documents in the series is available in the printed finding aid.

Storage Location: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  
RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba



## Provincial exhibition of Manitoba administrative files

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4356>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Description Level: Series

Fonds Number: RG2SF1

Series Number: 1.4

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1980, 1982

Physical Description: 71 cm

History /

Biographical:

See Administrative History for RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba.

Custodial History:

The records were housed with the MEA until c1986 when they were transferred to the S.J. McKee Archives at Brandon University.

Scope and Content:

The series include various files from the Provincial Exhibition from 1980 and 1982. The contents include staff meetings, mailing lists, insurance, contracts, tenders, trophies and ribbons, animal events and shows, exhibits, results, etc.

Notes: Inventory of documents in the series is available in the printed finding aid.

Storage Location: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  
RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba



## Provincial exhibition of Manitoba news releases

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4358>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Description Level: Series

Fonds Number: RG2SF1

Series Number: 1.6

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1984-1990

Physical Description: 13.5 cm

History /

Biographical:

This series is a product of the Publicity committee of the Board of Directors. The collection has minutes from this committee from 1903, when it was known as the Advertising and Printing committee, until approximately 1979. The name change occurred in the 1920s.

Custodial History:

The records were housed with the MEA until c1986 when they were transferred to the S.J. McKee Archives at Brandon University.

Scope and Content:

The series contains copies of the news releases that went out to various forms of media before, during, and after the Provincial Exhibitions from 1984 to 1990.

Notes: Part of RG2SF1. Inventory of documents in the series is available in the printed finding aid.

Storage Location: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  
RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba



## Provincial exhibition of Manitoba original results

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4359>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Description Level: Series

Fonds Number: RG2SF1

Series Number: 1.7

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1935-1949, 1984, 1985

Physical Description: 13 cm

History /

Biographical:

See Administrative History RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba.

Custodial History:

The records were housed with the PEM and the MEA until c1986 when they were transferred to the S.J. McKee Archives at Brandon University.

Scope and Content:

This series contains records from the horse races from 1935 to 1949. These ledgers contain information regarding the horse, the horse's owner, who entered the horse, who is riding or driving the horse, where the horse is from, the color, sex, gait and age of the horse, what race he is entered in, and what prize money is to be won. As well, the series contains the original results files from 1984 and 1985. These files include the results of several different events and competitions, and include information on the exhibitor and exhibit, as well as the prize money to be collected.

Notes: Inventory of documents in the series is available in the printed finding aid.

Storage Location: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  
RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba



## Provincial exhibition of Manitoba prize lists and programs

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4357>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Description Level: Series

Fonds Number: RG2SF1

Series Number: 1.5

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1910-1991

Physical Description: 62.5 cm

History /

Biographical:

The Prize Lists and Programs are products of the Prize List Committees and the Programs Committees respectively. The committees were attached to the Board of Directors. The history of the committees can be traced from 1903 to 1979 by using Appendix 1 in the printed finding aid.

Custodial History:

See sous-fonds RG2SF1 for custodial history.

Scope and Content:

The series consists of five boxes containing the prize lists and programs from the summer fairs. The prize lists and programs encompass virtually all events held at the summer fair. The programs include daily programs, as well as the programs for specific events and competitions. The competitors for each class are also listed. The prize lists include all classes and list the amount of prize money or the prize to be won in each class.

Notes: Inventory of documents in the series is available in the printed finding aid.

Storage Location: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  
RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba



## RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4351>

Part Of: RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds

Description Level: Fonds

GMD: multiple media

Date Range: 1884-1992

Physical Description: 9.46 m textual records; 1919 photographs & graphics

History /

Biographical:

Brandon, Manitoba was incorporated as a city in 1881. In 1882, led by Charles Whitehead and a small Board of Directors that included J.W. Vantassel, Charles Pilling, George Halse, J.E. Smith, William Johnson, R.T. Evans, and Thomas Lockhart, it was decided to hold an agricultural exhibition. These men were all involved in the farm business in one way or another, and they wanted an opportunity to help residents realize the agricultural potential of the region. In October of that year, the fledgling community held its first agricultural exhibition. The fair was held in downtown Brandon at what was known as "Market Square." Market Square was two acres of land located on Princess Avenue between Eighth and Ninth Streets. Due to poor weather, and the fact that not many people were ready to show animals and grain, there was a relatively small turnout. The following year was much improved. There were 730 entries into the

relatively small turnout. The following year was much improved. There were 700 entries into the exhibition. By 1884, the Board of Directors of the Brandon Agricultural Society, which was in charge of the exhibition, realized that they were in poor financial shape, to the point of being personally out of pocket. It was realized that October was not the best time for farmers to be leaving their farms to go to an exhibition. In 1888, it was decided to move the exhibition to the summer time, when it was much easier for people to attend.

The first Brandon Summer Fair was held in July 1889, and it was a resounding success. The Board of Directors had added many items of interest to appeal to the entire public, not just agricultural people. In 1892, the Western Agricultural and Arts Association (WAAA) was formally established to take over duties from the Brandon Agricultural Society. However, it was not until 1897 that the WAAA held its first meeting. There is no explanation as to why there is a five year gap between the formation and the first meeting of this organization. 1897 was the turning point of the Brandon Exhibition. The fair was now firmly established in Brandon, and the Board of Directors was instrumental in ensuring that it remained so. This was done by petitioning to both the municipal and provincial governments for grant money. As well, the Board booked midway and grandstand acts that would bring the city dwellers to the agricultural exhibition.

There were also early attempts at holding an agricultural exhibition in the winter. The first such attempt was in 1884. There was also a Spring Stallion show held in 1891. By 1904, however, a petition by J.D. McGregor had gone out to formally establish a winter exhibition. This effort also failed, but by 1906, it was decided by businessmen, politicians, and farm representatives in Brandon, including McGregor, to organize a winter fair. Rather than seeing this new fair as competition, the Board of Directors of the summer fair felt that it would complement their exhibition. The new fair would remain primarily agricultural. The first winter fair was held in 1906. While the two fairs were not amalgamated, they did share the same secretary-manager. The secretary-manager was responsible for the day to day management of the fair, as well as keeping track of meetings and decisions reached by the various fair boards and committees. In 1907, the Brandon Winter Fair and Livestock Association (BWFLA) was formed to act primarily as a land-holding joint stock company. The following year the Provincial Winter Fair and Fat Stock Association (PWFFSA), an entirely separate organization from the BWFLA, was formed to manage the activities of the winter fair. The PWFFSA name was soon changed to the Manitoba Winter Fair and Fat Stock Association (MWFFSA).

By 1906, Brandon could boast two full size exhibitions, one in the summer and one in the late winter, both of which were considered to be premiere events. In 1908, the Brandon summer fair was renamed the Inter-Provincial Exhibition, and in 1912 it held it's first Traveller's Day, an event which would soon become an important addition to the fair and is still in existence today. It is thought that the name "Traveller's Day" came from the fact that it was held on a Saturday, a day when many people could travel to Brandon for the exhibition.

In 1913, Brandon was bestowed with the honour of hosting the Dominion Exhibition. This was a national exhibition sponsored by the federal government. It was held in a different city every year. There were several cities vying for the 1913 Dominion Exhibition, but it was Brandon that impressed the sponsors the most. With the government funds received for this honour, the Board of Directors supervised the building of a new grandstand, display buildings, and racetrack, as well as the general expansion and improvements to the fairgrounds.

In the spring of 1912, it was decided by the Board of Directors of the winter fair that the facilities they were currently housed in were inadequate for their needs. The mayor and city clerk of Brandon went to the provincial legislature in order to request that there be an amendment added to the Brandon city charter. This amendment would allow the city to guarantee bonds issued by the winter fair board to help pay for the construction of a new facility. This request was granted, and a \$70 000 addition was built next to the original winter fair building. The new building was opened in 1913.



Throughout the First World War, both the winter fair and Provincial Exhibition buildings were used for the war effort. There was one distinct difference however. The summer fair Board was able to negotiate a deal with the army that enabled it to reclaim the fair buildings during fair week. The winter fair, however, had to give up the idea of holding fairs in 1915 and 1916. It was not until 1917, that the winter fair was able to resume.

During this time, due to the financial problems that had beset the winter fair, the two exhibitions considered amalgamation. The Board of Directors of the winter fair felt that because they were the smaller of the two fairs, their interests would be swallowed up by the summer fair. The winter fair withdrew from the negotiations to amalgamate. With this rather sudden turn of events, the Board of Directors of the summer fair petitioned the government to be allowed to incorporate. This was granted, and in 1920, the WAAA was incorporated as the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba. From 1920, the summer fair was officially known as the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba. This was the first time that the summer fair was incorporated, and received the "status and financial assistance" that came with incorporation.

More problems beset the winter fair in the 1920s. In 1920, a fire burned down the winter fair pavilion, located at the south end of the winter fair buildings, and caused the Board to cancel the 1921 winter fair. It was not until 1922, that a new building was completed. By 1929, both fairs were well regarded throughout Canada. In 1929, a decade long Depression hit the west. While many fairs closed during this time, Brandon struggled to keep its open. The Directors of both fairs felt that the agricultural shows "encouraged excellence at a time when faith and enthusiasm were at a low ebb." The summer fair proved to be quite successful during the Depression, likely as a result of the few moments one was able to forget one's troubles while there. The winter fair was not quite as successful, although both fairs received government grants and work relief projects. There was little new entertainment in these exhibitions.

There were changes about to manifest themselves at the summer fair, however. While the winter fair had representatives from various associations on its Board of Directors, the summer fair Board of Directors was a small close-knit group of men. Citizens saw entry into this elite group as elusive and difficult. To ward off the possibility of the Board becoming a "self-sustaining clique," that only chose Directors from within, it was decided by several citizens to try and elect some new blood into the fair Board. In 1933, there was a general election for the Board. Instead of the usual men shuffling positions, there were forty-four nominations for the twenty positions. When the voting was all over, seven new men sat on the Board. Despite some inner rumblings, especially on the summer fair Board over the next few years, both exhibitions survived the Depression.

During the Second World War the fairs once again were forced to operate under adversity. Once again, the buildings were requisitioned for the army, although they were released during fair week. The summer fair was forced to make several concessions, and the winter fair was relocated to the summer fair grounds for the duration.

The winter fair did not survive the Second World War intact. Due to financial reasons, in December of 1945, the Board of Directors turned the winter fair buildings over to the City of Brandon. By 1946, the BWFLA, which was the joint-stock land holding company, had ceased operations because the city now controlled the winter fair land and buildings.

The next fifteen years would be a time of rebuilding for both of Brandon's exhibitions. Children especially were more active participants in the agricultural exhibitions. The summer fair continued to diversify and look for new ways of entertaining the public at large. The winter fair remained primarily agricultural. By the end of the 1950s the winter fair, which was used to struggling, was now both successful and stable; and the summer fair, a perennial success, was starting to fade.

By 1969, both the winter and summer fair Boards had realized that amalgamation was the best possible decision, both practically and financially, for the future of the two fairs. On 29 October,

1969, the two exhibitions amalgamated to become the Manitoba Exhibition Association. The reconstituted Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba was now responsible for both the winter and summer fairs. A new building was erected on the summer fair grounds to house both of the exhibitions. On 2 April 1973, the Keystone Centre was officially opened at the winter fair, although it had been in use since October of the preceding year.

In 1970, Manitoba's Centennial, it was decided that an organization in Manitoba would receive the title of "Royal," as a way to celebrate the centennial. Although many organizations applied for the honour, it was the Brandon winter fair that received the accolades. The winter fair was bestowed with the title "Royal", and became known as the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair.

In 1975, a third exhibition was added, this time a purely agricultural fall show known as the Agricultural Exhibition, or AgEx. This fair was partly organized on behalf of the cattle growers, who found that the summer and winter fairs did not give them adequate time and space to properly show their cattle. The return to a fall show, which had not existed since 1888, would be the return to a purely agricultural exhibition. This show was to be primarily a show and sale event. On 3 November 1975, the first AgEx was opened to resounding success.

The Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba, the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair and AgEx are all still in existence in Brandon. They are regarded as three of the most important events to take place annually in the city.

#### Custodial History:

These files were housed with the Manitoba Exhibition Association until c1986 when they were transferred to the S.J. McKee Archives at Brandon University.

#### Scope and Content:

The fonds consists of textual records and photographs comprised of the records from the three annual exhibitions that are held in Brandon, Manitoba: the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba, the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair, and the Agricultural Exhibition (Ag-Ex). The textual records include prize lists, programs, minutes, financial, administrative files, original results, scrapbooks, tickets, news releases, contracts, by laws, documents as well as a miscellaneous section. There are approximately 1846 photographs that include scenes from these three exhibitions. These records provide a unique perspective on the development of agriculture and rural life in southwestern Manitoba. Fairs such as these have been and remain prime media of farm improvement, technological and scientific advancement in rural Canada, and the promoters of country living. These fairs also reflected the long tradition inherited from Britain and Europe of country fairs as centers of entertainment, social interchange and diversion. These records are a principal source of information about the most broadly based vocational, entertainment and social events held on an annual basis in southwestern Manitoba over the last century. The records are vital to academic research on agriculture or fairs, individual biography, or community history.

Notes: The RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association finding aid was created by Karyn (Riedel) Taylor with the exception of Series 9 and the accompanying database, which were created by Donica Belisle. This finding aid was created in August 1999.

Name Access: Charles Whitehead  
J.W. Vantassel  
Charles Pilling  
George Halse

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Subject Access:    | Brandon Agricultural Society<br>Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba<br>Royal Manitoba Winter Fair<br>Agricultural Exhibition<br>Brandon Manitoba<br>AgEx  |
| Repro Restriction: | Researchers are responsible for observing Canadian copyright restrictions.  |
| Finding Aid:       | Available   |
| Storage Location:  | RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  |
| Storage Range:     | RG 2 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association fonds  |
| Related Material:  | Additional records regarding the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba, the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair, and AgEx are housed at the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association offices. To gain access to these records, it is necessary to contact the general manager of the Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Association. |

Arrangement:

The fonds is divided into sous-fonds by exhibition. There is a Provincial Exhibition sous-fonds, a Royal Manitoba Winter Fair sous-fonds, an Ag-Ex sous-fonds, and a Miscellaneous sous-fonds that holds information that could not be easily broken down into one exhibition. The arrangement is as follows:

RG 2 Provincial Exhibition Association of Manitoba fonds

RG2SF1 Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba

- 1.1 Documents
- 1.2 Minutes
- 1.3 Financial Records
- 1.4 Administrative Files
- 1.5 Prize Lists and Programs
- 1.6 News Releases
- 1.7 Original Results
- 1.8 Tickets
- 1.9 Photographs
- 1.10 Scrapbooks
- 1.11 Miscellaneous

RG2SF2 Royal Manitoba Winter Fair

- 2.1 Documents
- 2.2 Minutes
- 2.3 Financial Records
- 2.4 Administrative Files
- 2.5 Prize Lists and Programs
- 2.6 News Releases
- 2.7 Original Results
- 2.8 Tickets
- 2.9 Photographs
- 2.10 Scrapbooks
- 2.11 Miscellaneous

RG2SF3 AgEx

- 3.4 Administrative Files
- 3.5 Prize Lists and Programs
- 3.6 News Releases
- 3.7 Original Results
- 3.9 Photographs

RG2SF4 Miscellaneous

- 4.1 Documents
- 4.2 Minutes
- 4.3 Financial Records
- 4.4 Administrative Files
- 4.9 Photographs
- 4.10 Scrapbooks
- 4.11 Miscellaneous