

S. J. McKee Archives



A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. fonds

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4309>

Part Of: RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Company fonds
Description Level: Fonds
GMD: multiple media
Date Range: 1887-1996; predominantly 1910-1974
Physical Description: 7.47 m of textual records
500 photographs

History /

Biographical:

The A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. originated with the McKenzie family Flour, Grain and Seed business, started by F. B. McKenzie in the early 1880's. When F. B. McKenzie passed away in 1896, his son, Albert Edward McKenzie, assumed control of the company, and renamed it The Brandon Seed House. With its main office and plant in Brandon, Manitoba, the company specialized in the production and sale of field seeds and service exclusively to seed buyers in the prairie provinces and British Columbia. In later years, a complete line of products including garden seeds, lawn grass, and other allied lines was developed for sale across Canada.

In 1906, the company underwent a change of name when A. E. McKenzie determined that the growth of the country demanded a larger seed institute than could be managed by one man. As a result, the company was incorporated under provincial statutes and the federal Joint Stock Companies Act as A. E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd., and new personnel were hired.

Under the Joint Stock Companies Act, A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. was required to elect a Board of Directors of not less than three, and not more than nine individuals. Only shareholders of the company were eligible for election, and election was to take place yearly with each shareholder entitled to as many votes as shares owned in the company. The Act also dictated that the directors were, from time to time, to elect from among themselves, a president of the company. They were also able to appoint and remove all other officers of the company and to create company by-laws. The directors were not obliged to pay any dividend on shares if the company should become insolvent. Under the Act, the stock of the company was deemed a personal estate and was only transferable as such. In addition, the company could acquire, hold, and transfer real estate, and was required to submit annual statements.

A. E. McKenzie was elected President of the newly constituted company. For the remainder of his natural life he remained in this position and supervised the operation of the company. S. A. Bradford, who was given responsibility for various company departments, filled the position of General Manager. H. L. Patmore became the Vice-President, overseeing the nursery business, while W. A. McCracken was put in charge of the warehouse stock, and shipping department. McCracken also supervised the mail order department.

The Company was initially comprised of three divisions: The Brandon Seed House, Brandon Nurseries, and Brandon Greenhouses. Each division was registered under Dominion Patents. Later, the company was divided into Retail Mail Order, Wholesale and Commission Packet Trade divisions. It also undertook some export business.

By registering the divisions of the company under federal legislation affecting trademarks and industrial designs, McKenzie and the Board, were able to register both the company's trademarks and to protect the company's industrial techniques. The company could thus patent the methods and processes of its operations so that no other individual or business could duplicate them.

Located at 30 9th Street, the head office and plant of A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. housed all the facilities and staff of the company, with the exception of the regional sales offices and warehouses. The business of the A. E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. was conducted from a frame warehouse until the current McKenzie building was constructed on the same site after a fire destroyed the original premises. Designed by architect Thomas Sinclair, and built by the Brandon Construction Company, the new building opened in 1911. In time, The A. E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. came to be known as Western Canada's Greatest Seed House.

During the 1930's, before a new building was erected in 1945, the A. E. McKenzie Co. occupied space at five different locations in Brandon, including the Massey Harris Building, the International Harvester Building and the Security Building. The last of these premises was destroyed by fire in 1972. As a result of its proximity to the Security Building, the main McKenzie Building also suffered heavy fire and water damage. A. E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. also utilized a warehouse on the north side of Pacific Avenue alongside the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks between 5th and 6th streets. This building and its contents were destroyed by fire (1946). In May of 1949, the company purchased and erected a Quonset structure on the west side of 15th Street between Rosser and Pacific Avenues.

In 1908, the first branch of the A. E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. was established at Calgary. In the following sixteen years, additional branches were established in Edmonton and Saskatoon (1923), Moose Jaw, Toronto (1934) and Winnipeg (1935). Both the Edmonton and Saskatoon branches were seasonal, operating for a four-month period, March to June inclusive. Business in the Maritime Provinces of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick further extended the company's operations by the mid 1940's. In 1946, the company purchased property in Gilbert Plains, Manitoba, 120 miles north of Brandon. This purchase enabled the company to handle larger quantities of Sweet Clover, a popular crop that was grown in the surrounding area. Additional offices were opened in Vancouver and Quebec City in rented premises by the early 1960's.

In the years 1944-1945, the McKenzie Foundation was created. Through the Foundation, arrangements were put in place to transfer shares of the company to the Manitoba Government for the benefit of higher education, specifically Brandon College. In return for this gift, which included 90% of all capital resources of the company together with all of the income earned each year, except for the amount retained annually to ensure sufficient operating capital, the A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. received exemption from paying Corporate Tax.

Prior to the establishment of the McKenzie Foundation, in 1945, the National Trust for the benefit of the College held the shares of McKenzie Seeds. On April 7, 1945 the Manitoba Legislature passed legislation whereby A. E. McKenzie retained effective management control of his company, but 1031 shares out of 1145 issued shares were gifted to the Provincial Government. In return, the government agreed that all financial benefits from the shares would go to Brandon College through the A. E. McKenzie Foundation. When Mr. McKenzie passed away in 1964, the primary responsibility of appointing the Board of Directors for McKenzie Seeds passed to the Provincial government.

The remaining 114 shares of the Company were turned over to the Crown on July 16, 1975 in accordance with an agreement between Brandon University, A. E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. and the Manitoba government. The same agreement also turned the McKenzie Foundation over to Brandon University. Therefore, since 1975 the crown has held all shares of the McKenzie Co. through the Province of Manitoba.

A.E. McKenzie died on September 25, 1964 at the age of 94 and was succeeded as President of the company by J. Lasby Lowes. When Mr. Lowes retired in 1968, A. R. Swanson was appointed by the government to fill the position and was responsible for all operations of the company under a Board of Directors comprised mainly of appointees of the government. It has proven impossible to establish a complete list of those individuals who held the positions of President/General Manager of McKenzie Seeds after 1964. A partial account is as follows: Anthony J. Maruca became President of A. E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. in 1972. In 1975, the Board of Directors appointed William Moore General Manager, creating a new position to relieve the President of the company from management of plant operations. At the same time, Pat Kelleher was named new interim President. Following the resignation of Kelleher, William Moore assumed the role of President as well. Moore left the company in the early 1980s. He was later convicted of criminal misconduct as President of the company. Keith Guelpa became President/General Manager in the mid 1980's; Raymond West was his successor.

Beginning in 1969, the A. E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. began phasing out the Field Seed division of their company, including business related to forage crops and cereals. Seed cleaning equipment located in Brandon and the company's Calgary and Toronto cleaning plants was sold. The Company concentrated its resources on the production and sale of vegetable and flower seeds, and lawn and turf grasses. It acted as a wholesaler and conducted business through chain stores, grocery, hardware and general stores.

Late in 1971, A. E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. purchased its largest competition in packaged seeds - Steele Briggs Seed Co. from Maple Leaf Mills Inc. for two million dollars. At the time of the acquisition the company changed its name to A. E. McKenzie Co. - Steele Briggs Seeds, in order to benefit from the favorable reputation held by Steele Briggs Seeds across Canada. In the early 1970s, the acquisition of Brett-Young Seeds Ltd., a Winnipeg company that dealt exclusively in the production and sale of field seed, brought the A. E. McKenzie Co. back into the field seed market.

In 1994 the Manitoba Government sold the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. to Regal Greetings and Gifts, Canada's largest non-retail mail-order catalogue company, which is owned by MDC Corporation of Toronto.

In 2001, McKenzie Seeds is Canada's leading supplier of packaged seeds and related gardening products. It is divided into a Retail Consumer Products division which features well known seed brands including McKenzie Seeds, Pike Seeds and Thompson & Morgan Seeds from England. As well, this division also carries a complete range of lawn seeds and perishables. It also continues to ship the seed racks invented by A.E. McKenzie to numerous retail stores. The second division, Direct Mail, consists of the McFayden and McConnell catalogues which reach over 500,000 Canadian homes each year.

Custodial History:

Following the sale of the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. to Regal Greetings and Gifts, the records of McKenzie Seeds and its subsidiaries were retained in the McKenzie Plant on 9th Street. In April of 1997, the records were transferred to the McKee Archives at Brandon University. Because the company was a crown corporation, the records of McKenzie Seeds belonged to the Province of Manitoba and might have been placed in the Provincial Archives. However, Provincial Archivist Gordon Dodds permitted the retention of the records in Brandon at the S. J. McKee Archives. The minutes of the Board of Directors, previously transferred to the Provincial Archives, remain in Winnipeg. Until 1960 these minutes, by-laws of the Company, and the letters patent of incorporation (April 7, 1906) were in the possession of the Company's lawyers, Johnson, Garson, Forrester, Davidson, & Steen.

Scope and Content:

The fonds consists of textual records, photographs and artifacts from A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. The textual records include minutes, documents, financial records, administrative records, by-laws, legal records, catalogues, sales literature, seed packets, newspaper clippings, appraisals, publications, scrapbooks and miscellaneous sections.

In addition, some of the records within the fonds relate to the operations of McKenzie subsidiaries -- Brett-Young Seeds, Steele-Briggs Seeds, Pike & Co. and McFayden Seeds -- and various properties owned by McKenzie Seeds.

Fonds contains approximately 500 photographs. These depict the operations and employees of McKenzie Seeds and the seed industry in general. Artifacts contained in the fonds include blueprints, newspaper clippings, copper printing plates, seed bags and plaques.

Fonds also includes an artificially created series of records dealing with Brandon College Inc., the A.E. McKenzie Foundation, the Brandon Allied Arts Council and the Brandon Board of Trade. These records stand outside the provenance of the McKenzie Seed Co.

Of particular interest within the textual records are the transcripts of various features of the company's history as dictated, researched and recalled by its second President/General Manager, J. Lasby Lowes. The fonds also contains a collection of company catalogue which is almost complete. Outside of the seed industry, the records dealing with both Brandon College Inc. and the McKenzie Foundation are significant records relating to the history of Brandon College/University and the City of Brandon.

Notes: Description written by Christy Henry (2001).

Name Access: A.E. McKenzie
J. Lasby Lowes
Irene Cullen
Joseph Airey
Alan R. Mundie
Sandy Black
Brett-Young Seeds/Sabetha
McFayden Seeds
Steele-Briggs Seed Co
Pike & Co
Davidson & Gowen
Davidson Studio
Frank Gowen
Dean Photo Service
Jerrett's Photo-Art Studio/Jerrett's Photo Service
Crawford Drug Store
Leech Printing Ltd
Eastman Photographic Materials Ltd

Subject Access:	Seed Industry Seed Catalogues Brandon Business Seed Photographs Brandon Photographs Seed Packets Agriculture Women Workers Labour Relations A.E. McKenzie J. Lasby Lowes A.R. Swanson William Moore Anthony J. Maruca Pat Kelleher Keith Guelpa Raymond West Brett-Young Seeds Sabetha Steele Briggs Seed Co Pike & Co McFayden Seeds Seed Marketing Co Brandon Board of Trade Brandon Allied Arts Council McKenzie Foundation Regal Greetings and Gifts
Repro Restriction:	Because the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. was a crown corporation, the records in the fonds are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).
Storage Location:	RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Company fonds
Related Material:	Additional records regarding A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. are housed at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. In order to gain access to these records it is necessary to contact the Archives of Manitoba.
Arrangement:	RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. Fonds McS 1 Board of Directors 1.1 Documents 1.2 Minutes/Meetings 1.3 Management Consultant Reports 1.4 Miscellaneous 1.5 Financial Records McS 2 Office of the President/General Manager 2.1 A.E. McKenzie 2.2 J. Lasby Lowes 2.3 Comptroller 2.4 Properties

- 2.5 Marketing
- 2.6 Reference Library
- 2.7 Miscellaneous Publications/Correspondence

McS 3 Acquisitions

- 3.1 Brett-Young Seeds/Sabetha
- 3.2 Steele-Briggs Seed Co.
- 3.3 Pike & Co.
- 3.4 McFayden Seeds

McS 4 Seed Marketing Co.

McS 5 Photographs

- 5.1 McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. Executives
- 5.2 Construction at McKenzie Seed Co. Brandon (two files)
- 5.3 Exterior Photographs of the A. E. McKenzie Co. Building
- 5.4 McKenzie Seed Co. Plant Operations and Workers (2 files)
- 5.5 McKenzie Seed Co. Equipment and Plant - Head Office 1983
- 5.6 McKenzie Seed Co. Field Operations and Workers
- 5.7 McKenzie Seed Co. Strike 1944
- 5.8 Fires at McKenzie Seed Co. 1910, 1945, 1972
- 5.9 McKenzie Seed Co. Centennial Exhibition 1996
- 5.10 Miscellaneous McKenzie Seed Co. Photographs
- 5.11 People Connected to McKenzie Seed Co.
- 5.12 Princess Anne's Visit to McKenzie Seed Co. 1982
- 5.13 Onion Set Production Book
- 5.14 Irene Cullen Photographs - McKenzie Seeds Employee Photos
- 5.15 Josiph Airey Photographs - McKenzie Product Photos
- 5.16 Alan R. Mundie Seed Production Photographs
- 5.17 Steele Robertson/Steele Briggs Seeds Photographs
- 5.18 Seed Packet Display Units Photographs
- 5.19 Product Photographs
- 5.20 Parade Photographs
- 5.21 Oversized Photographs
 - 5.21.1 Drawer #1: Executive Photographs
 - 5.21.2 Drawer #2: Office and Equipment/Plant Photographs
 - 5.21.3 Drawer #3: Miscellaneous Oversized Photographs
 - 5.21.4 Drawer #4: Artifacts

McS 6 Miscellaneous

- 6.1 Centennial Exhibition
- 6.2 Miscellaneous Publications
- 6.3 Scrapbooks

MG 1 A.E. McKenzie Fonds

- 1.1 Brandon College Inc.
- 1.2 McKenzie Foundation
- 1.3 Brandon Allied Arts Council
- 1.4 Brandon Board of Trade
- 1.5 Miscellaneous

RG 4 Manitoba Pool Elevator fonds



<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4344>

Part Of: RG 4 Manitoba Pool Elevator fonds
Description Level: Fonds
Accession Number: 16-1998, 28-1998, 16-2002
GMD: multiple media
Date Range: 1874-2001, predominant 1930-1970
Physical Description: 64.69 m textual records
photographs
slides
audiovisual materials

History /

Biographical:

The forerunner of Manitoba Pool Elevators (MPE), the Manitoba Wheat Pool was created in 1924 as a mechanism to allow for the co-operative marketing of wheat by Manitoba producers by the United Farmers of Manitoba. The Manitoba Wheat Pool was initially intended to be a provisional organization until the establishment of an interprovincial Pool, but when Alberta and Saskatchewan established their own permanent Pools the United Farmers decided to do the same. The Manitoba Pool was different from the SK and AB Pools in that the municipality was the primary unit of organization; members belonged to their municipal Pool associations first, rather than having direct membership with the central Manitoba Wheat Pool. Manitoba Pool Elevators was established in 1925 as a subsidiary of the Pool in response to local members complaints about the unfair business practices of privately owned elevators. The private elevators also slowed up the shipment of grain to the Central Selling Agency employed by the Wheat Pool, acting as a barrier between the local Pools and the Manitoba Wheat Pool. Once established MPE quickly began to build new elevators and acquire privately owned elevators.

MPE's approach to marketing grain promised to stabilize the market price of grain and ensure a fair market price to producers. Initially the Manitoba Wheat Pool was very successful. However, in 1930, the Manitoba Wheat Pool found itself burdened with an unsold surplus from the preceding year that had been bought from the farmers at a price that was significantly higher than any possible return during the Depression. As a result, in 1931 the Manitoba Wheat Pool's Central Selling Agency defaulted on its bank loans. Despite attempts to save the organization, it was forced to declare bankruptcy in November 1932. The financial difficulties of the Wheat Pool had little to no effect on the Pool Elevators, and so this former subsidiary organization became the main Manitoba Pool organization. This change meant MPE had to reorganize, which they were able to do with funds from the provincial government. The company was successful enough in subsequent years that it was able to finish repaying the Manitoba government a full year early in 1949.

MPE did not limit itself to grain handling; they wished to enrich the lives of rural families through education and to provide economic stability through diversification.

MPE established a lending reference library for members and a traveling library for rural families in 1926. With the passing of the Public Libraries Act in 1948, the province took over responsibility for providing rural families with books. MPE decided that since their traveling library would no longer be needed when rural libraries were established, the best course of action was to donate their library to the Provincial government. They also established and supported programs that educated young people about agriculture and ag business.

Subsidiary companies that dealt with course grains, livestock, packing and fertilizer were established by MPE to streamline and stabilize business for its members.

1961 marked the high water mark for the number of local associations within Manitoba Pool Elevators with 225 local associations. After this date the associations began to amalgamate

and consolidate. Improvements in rural roads and rail systems and increases in the size of farms and mechanization of farm labour meant that fewer elevators were needed to service all members and regions. These changes led to an organizational restructuring of Manitoba Pool Elevators in 1968. Membership became direct, and the main unit of organization became the central office. The central office administered the Pool through districts, which were further subdivided into sub-districts. The locals which were formally the main organizational unit came under the immediate direction of the sub-district they were located in. Local association could opt out of this system if they wished, but by 1975 all but 29 associations had become part of the new structure.

In 1998 Manitoba Pool Elevators merged with the Alberta Wheat Pool to form Agricore Co-operative, Ltd. In 2001 this organization merged with the United Grain Growers to become Agricore United, and in 2007 AU was taken over by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool; the new company is currently known as Viterra.

Custodial History:

The bulk of this fonds was accessioned in 1975, when the forerunner to the McKee Archives at Brandon University, the Rural Resource Center, was founded. The original mandate of the Rural Resource Center was to house the records of the Manitoba Pool Elevators. Previous to this, most of the fonds was stored at MPE's head office in Winnipeg. Many accruals to this collection have since taken place, with some of the larger ones being received in 1997, 2001, and 2002.

Scope and Content:

Fonds contains records dealing with every aspect of the Manitoba Pool Elevators organization, from the events leading to its formation in the 1920's, to its amalgamation as part of Agricore beginning in the late 1990's.

Fonds includes records of the local co-operative elevator associations established in the period 1925 - 1968 under the Co-operative Associations Act including: organizational papers; minutes of executive boards; minutes of shareholders annual meetings; financial statements; correspondence; membership lists; and miscellaneous documents.

Also to be found are: documents related to the Royal Commission re the Manitoba Pool Elevators Limited ca. 1931; miscellaneous reports and submissions documents (1925 -1952); central office papers consisting of annual reports, circulars to local co-operative elevator associations and documents related to various other activities of the Manitoba Pool Elevators organization. Fonds also contains documents pertaining to the Manitoba Co-operative Poultry Marketing Association Limited and its successor, the Manitoba Dairy and Poultry Co-operative Limited, and related agencies.

Other items in the fonds (dating from the 1890's to 2001) include: books acquired for the Manitoba Pool Elevator Library, including a complete run of both the Scoop Shovel (MPE's first newspaper) and the Manitoba Cooperator; photographs; slides; audiotapes; and reel-to-reel videos.

Finally, the fonds contains a small number of miscellaneous items such as banners, and company issued briefcases.

This fonds is organized into four series, (A) Local Association records, (B) Central Office Records, (C) Subsidiary Companies and Co-operatives, (D) Commissions, Committees and Inquiries

Notes: Description by Mike White (2002), revised and enlarged by Jillian Sutherland (2009-2010).

History/Bio taken from F.W. Hamilton, "Service at Cost: A History of the Manitoba Pool Elevators 1925-1975" (Saskatoon: Modern Press) and from records within the fonds.

Preparation of this description made possible in part by a generous grant from the Brandon University Student's Union Work Study Program 2009.

Name Access: F.W. Hamilton
Paul F. Bredt
Colin H. Burnell
John I. McFarland
A.J. McPhail
J.R. Murray
W.J. Parker
Henry W. Wood

Subject Access: Manitoba Co-operator
Canadian Agriculture
Cooperative Unions
Grain Trade
The Scoop Shovel
Winnipeg Grain Exchange
Agricore
United Grain Growers
Manitoba Wheat Pool
Canadian Cooperative Wheat Producers Ltd
Canadian Wheat Board
Alberta Wheat Pool
Border Fertilizer Ltd
Canadian Council of Agriculture
Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator Company
Saskatchewan Wheat Pool
United Farmers of Manitoba
United Farmers of Alberta

Repro Restriction: Researchers are responsible for observing Canadian copyright restrictions.

Finding Aid: File level inventory available for some boxes. The Pool Elevator library and publications are available online through the Brandon University Library catalogue.

Storage Location: RG 4 Manitoba Pool Elevator fonds



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 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 its 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.

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
Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba
Royal Manitoba Winter Fair
Agricultural Exhibition
Brandon Manitoba
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