

# S. J. McKee Archives



## Steele Briggs Seed Co. Ltd.

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4327>

Part Of: RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Company fonds

Description Level: Sub-series

Series Number: McS 3 3.2

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1893, 1931-1979

Physical Description: 25.7 cm

History /

Biographical:

On November 11, 1971, A. E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. acquired Steele Briggs Seed Co. Ltd., Rennie Seeds, and the Canada Seed Co. from Maple Leaf Mills Limited of Toronto, Ontario. The purchase included the packet seed business and most of the brand names and trademarks of the above companies as well as the Steele Briggs properties in Winnipeg and Regina, and all of the equipment in their Toronto location. This same location was leased by A. E. McKenzie Co. for a number of years. As a result of the acquisition of Steele Briggs, the name of A. E. McKenzie Co. was modified to A.E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. - Steele Briggs Ltd; each company continued to operate under its respective trade names in the marketing of Garden Seeds, Lawn Grass and other product lines across Canada.

The Steele Briggs Seed Co. was founded in 1873 in Toronto, although at the time of its inception, the company, which was a small retail seed store, was known as Steele Brothers and Company. Two of the company's founders, Mr. R. C. Steele and Mr. S. E. Briggs, were already involved in a grocery and produce business in Oshawa, Ontario together.

From the first store at 23 East Market Street, Toronto, Steele Briggs moved into a new warehouse at the Southeast corner of Front and Jarvis Streets in 1887. However, by 1888, new premises were required due to the rapid growth of the company, and a warehouse was leased at 107 Front Street East. Five years later, a separate store was opened to manage the local retail and mail order sections of the business at 132 King Street East. The annual increase in trade, however, made the construction of a new five-story building necessary in 1911-1912.

By 1902, the volume of business the company was receiving from Western Canada led to the establishment of a branch house in Winnipeg. Further expansion occurred in 1922, when Steele Briggs purchased a large warehouse and Seed Cleaning elevator at Regina in order to more adequately deal with the demands of the Western Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. In 1933, a branch house was opened in Edmonton, and in 1956 one was established in Vancouver.

In its formative years, prior to the 1930's, the management group was comprised of a number of well-known businessmen. These included: Mr. J.S. Steele, Mr. E. F. Crossland, second Vice-President and General Manager, Mr. W. D. Steele, first Vice-President and Manager of the List Seeds Department, Mr. C. J. Turnbull, General Manager of the Western houses and Seed Grain supplies, Mr. R. S. Ferguson, Assistant Manager of the Catalogue and Wholesale trade located in Winnipeg, and L. B. Robinson, Assistant Manager and Accountant at Regina.

Sometime between 1944-1948, Mr. W. D. Dack was appointed President of Steele Briggs, and, in 1951, he announced new executive appointments to the company. Mr. George F. Boyd was appointed Manager of Steele Briggs' Regina branch and later supervisor of all Western branches as Vice-President in charge of Western Canada Operations. Mr. C. S. Beattie was appointed Secretary Treasurer of the company. In June of 1964, D. H. MacKay, E. R. Seede of Regina and Tom Gray of Edmonton, were named to the Company's Board of Directors.

For many years Steele Briggs published and distributed a retail catalogue, the first was published in 1875.

Rennie Seeds Ltd. was founded by William Rennie in 1870 and incorporated in 1905. It was located in a small store at Adelaide and Jarvis Streets in Toronto. Following the death of Mr. Rennie, the business carried on under the leadership of his son Thomas Rennie, and subsequently under Thomas Rennie's son-in-law K. J. Harrison. Steele Briggs acquired Rennie Seeds in 1961.

The Ferry Seed Company, which operated primarily in Eastern Canada, was bought by the Steele Briggs Seed Co. in 1926, effectively ceasing all operations under the Ferry name.

#### Custodial History:

See fonds level description of custodial history of A. E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd.

#### Scope and Content:

Sub-series consists of financial records, miscellaneous documents, including some correspondence and files relating to the merger of Steele Briggs Seeds and McKenzie Seeds. Information regarding the Canada Seed Company can also be found in the sub-series.

The sub-series also contains a scrapbook (500 pages; 24 x 28 x 6 cm) dealing with Steele Briggs Seeds and the seed industry. Items in the scrapbook include newspaper/magazine clippings dealing with executives of the company (including the death of prominent members), commentaries on the seed industry and seed varieties and a number of general interest columns. A copy of the painting "A Gateway to Canada's Granary, Winnipeg 1872" by J.D. Kelly is also included. Photographs, magazine advertisements, correspondence and writings on seed varieties are also located in the sub-series. A page level inventory of the types of seeds included is available for the scrapbook.

A copy of the 1893 Steele Briggs catalogue is also contained within the sub-series. Special attention should be paid to the color covers included near the beginning of the book.

The sub-series is divided into five sub sub series, including: (1) Merger; (2) Financial; (3) Miscellaneous; (4) Canada Seeds; and (5) Scrapbook.

Storage Location:      RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Company fonds  
                                      McS 3 Acquisitions

Related Material: Historical information relating to Steele Briggs Seeds is located in the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. fonds, Series 2 (Office of the President/GM), sub-series 2 (J. Lasby Lowes), Historical Topics, file 10 (tape 23) and file 11 (tape 24).

Sales literature and seed packets for Steele Briggs Seeds are located in the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. fonds Series 2 (Office of the President/GM), sub-series 4 (Marketing).

One photograph of Steele Briggs Seeds can be found in Series 5 (Photographs) in the sub-series 5.17, Steele Robertson/Steele Briggs of the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. fonds. There is also a Steele Briggs poster located in oversized drawer # 4.

In Series 6 (Miscellaneous) of the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. fonds, under the Centennial Exhibition, there is a folder for Steele Briggs containing various records/documents for the company that were used in the display.



## A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. - scrapbooks

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4336>

Part Of: RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Company fonds  
Description Level: Sub-series  
Series Number: McS 6 6.3  
GMD: textual records  
Date Range: c.1903 - c.1940  
Physical Description: 27.5 cm  
Physical Condition: The scrapbooks in this sub-series are fragile, particularly the product book. They must be handled with great care.

### Custodial History:

See fonds level description of custodial history of A. E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd.

### Scope and Content:

This sub-series consists of three scrapbooks. Two of the three contain copies of advertisements for a number of businesses, including McKenzie Seeds, Steele Briggs, Patmore's, Rennie's, and McFayden Seeds. Clippings dealing with a variety of other companies in the seed industry are also included. The third scrapbook contains pictures of various flowers, vegetable, herbs and other seed products in alphabetical order. An inventory is available for the third scrapbook.

Notes: Date(s) of creation, including distribution, publication, etc.:

- a) [No title] ad book - 1906-1911
- b) "Scrap Book" ad book - 1917-1926
- c) [No title] product book - c.1903 - c.1940

Storage Location: RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Company fonds  
McS 6 Miscellaneous



## McFayden Seeds

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4330>

Part Of: RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Company fonds  
Description Level: Sub-series  
Series Number: McS 3 3.4  
GMD: textual records  
Date Range: 1941-1979  
Physical Description: 15.3 cm

### History /

#### Biographical:

Harris McFayden, who also acted as the company's managing director, established the McFayden Seed Co. Ltd. in 1910. G. P. Crossing, D. J. Daniel and D. A. Hagen completed the company executive as secretary-treasurer, manager of the Garden Seed Department, and Plant superintendent respectively.

Operating out of Winnipeg on a Canada wide basis, McFayden Seed Co. Ltd. was originally called Harris McFayden Seed Co. Ltd. and specialized in farm seeds. By the time of McFayden's death in April of 1941, the company had created the largest Mail Order House of Garden Vegetable and Flower Seeds in Canada.

McFayden Seed Co. Ltd. was purchased by A. E. McKenzie Co. Ltd. on August 15, 1941 from a Trust Company for \$75,000. At the time of the acquisition, it was decided by the parties involved that the two companies would continue operating as separate entities. This arrangement enabled the McKenzie Seed Co. to minimize the disruption created by the purchase; it also allowed for the perpetuation of the McFayden name and tradition.

Located in a rented property, the 5th floor of the John Deer Building in Winnipeg, the company was relocated to Maryland Street in Winnipeg during the 1950's. Finally, in 1965, McFayden Seeds was moved into the existing McKenzie Building in Brandon as a subsidiary company, continuing as a specialty Mail Order division of McKenzie Seeds to the present day.

#### Custodial History:

See fonds level description of custodial history of A. E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd.

#### Scope and Content:

This sub-series contains correspondence, documents, financial records and miscellaneous records relating to McKenzie Seeds first acquisition. The documents consist of costs of passing title, general by-laws, Companies Act returns, annual summaries, executor of Harris McFayden's estate, and a release between A.E. McKenzie Co. and National Trust. The miscellaneous records include board minutes/excerpts, memos and a share register.

The sub-series has been divided into four sub sub series, including: (1) Correspondence; (2) Documents; (3) Financial; and (4) Miscellaneous.

Storage Location: RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Company fonds  
McS 3 Acquisitions

Related Material:

Financial statements for McFayden Seeds as a subsidiary of A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. are located in Series 1 (Board of Directors), sub-series 5 (Financial) of the fonds.

Historical information regarding McFayden Seeds is located in Series 2 (Office of the President/GM), sub-series 2 (J. Lasby Lowes), Historical Topics files 7 and 8 (Tape 22) and file 30 of the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. fonds.

Sales literature, seed packets and McFayden catalogues are located in Series 2 (Office of the President/GM), sub-series 4 (Marketing) of the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. fonds.

Catalogues for McFayden can also be found in Series 5 (Photographs) in oversized drawer #4 of the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. fonds.

Series 6 (Miscellaneous), sub-series 1 (Centennial Exhibition) of the A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. fonds also contains catalogues and sales literature for McFayden Seeds.



## A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd. - miscellaneous publications

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4335>

Part Of: RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Company fonds

Description Level: Sub-series

Series Number: McS 6 6.2

GMD: textual records

Date Range: 1963, 1978, 1984-1985

Physical Description: 6 titles; 6 cm

History /

Biographical:

This sub-series consists of publications that did not fit into any of the preceding series or sub-series.

Custodial History:

See fonds level description of custodial history of A. E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd.

Scope and Content:

This sub-series includes one copy each of Manitoba Business Top 100 (June 1985), Trade and Commerce Supplement, Brandon (c. 1963) and Manitoba Business (November 1985).

It also includes a Christmas Song book, the book "By Gossip and Myth" by Prof. George MacDowell and a document entitled "Background Information re A.E. McKenzie Seed Co. Ltd."

The following newspaper clippings have been located in the map case drawer #4 located in the archives reading room:

1. \$175,000 Gift Set for College from City Man
2. McKenzie Will Leaves House to Arts Centre
3. The Old Alma Mater is Down on Her Knees
4. How to Help the Alma Mater
5. Good Things are "growing" on at McKenzie Seeds (ad)
6. Fire fails to halt work at McKenzie Seeds
7. McKenzie Seeds: new facilities are first in North America
8. A full-page advertisement for McKenzie Seeds from "The Brandon Sun" (September 24, 1971)

Storage Location: RG 3 A.E. McKenzie Company fonds  
McS 6 Miscellaneous