

S. J. McKee Archives



The Quill

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions3484>

Part Of:	RG 6 Brandon University fonds
Description Level:	Sub sub series
Series Number:	14.5.3
Accession Number:	13-2006, 23-2006, 1-2007
GMD:	textual records
Date Range:	1910-2006
Physical Condition:	Generally good. Some editions are fragile.

History /

Biographical:

The Quill was established in 1910, and is the second oldest student newspaper in western Canada. It was also the first student run publication at Brandon College. The December (Vol. I, No. 1) edition states that "the demand for such a paper [had] been steadily increasing until at last some definite steps towards bringing one into existence became absolutely necessary." The first step was the election of a committee by the Literary Society to look into the possibilities of the project and report at a special meeting. Following the acceptance of the committee's favorable report, another committee was appointed to outline a policy and nominate officers and staff.

The inaugural staff of the Quill, "having examined the reasons for the discontinuance of the Brandon College Monthly some years ago, [found] that these have been to a large extent removed by the development of the College in the intervening years." They felt that the "student body [had] grown to such an extent that the problem of getting sufficient material for a paper, as well as the financial difficulty, [had] been appreciably reduced." For them, this development "not only justified but demanded the advent of a College paper." The creation of the Quill was also influenced by the awareness of the students involved that their college was in a state of constant change. They felt that they "[could not] allow this important period of [their] College history to pass away and be forgotten." The newspaper enabled them to record the growth and changes on campus for the benefit of the students and friends of the College.

Originally the publication of three editions of the Quill, i.e. Christmas, Easter and a special graduates' number, were planned; the policy on the limited number of issues was to allow the Quill and its staff time to establish themselves, with the aim of expanding into a monthly paper as soon as it was thought advisable to do so. In 1911, the Quill was printed quarterly, with the first three issues of the school year consisting of student publications and professors writings, as well as containing various columns on campus activities. The final issue of that year, and subsequent years, was called the Commencement Issue, and it contained a brief biographical sketch of each member of the graduating class.

In 1927, the Quill was split into two separate entities. In the April edition (Vol. XVI, No. 11), the editorial staff wrote that the Quill's "... function and the efficiency with which it has performed that function in the immediate past are ... doubtful. The present management realize this and feel that the "Quill" as conducted at present can assume neither the utility of a newspaper nor the intrinsic value of a year-book." Subsequently it was decided to publish a fortnightly, or bi-weekly newspaper, which retained the title of "The Quill," as well as a new publication, named

The Sickle, which was to act as a yearbook. This decision was also influenced by the belief that by creating a separate newspaper and yearbook "Brandon College [would] then be on a similar basis in this respect as her sister institutions throughout the Dominion." Although the Quill has occasionally ceased production (for a week or two at most) throughout its history, usually due to a lack of student participation in its production and/or financial troubles, it has continued to be published as a newspaper since 1927.

In 1933, the Quill was presented in an entirely new form. Weekly, for three issues a month, a bulletin was published, with a fourth and more substantial issue at the end of the month. The introduction of the new broadsheet form was an attempt to "reduce stale news" and allow the publication to operate with a "greatly reduced budget." The broadsheet format of the Quill was abandoned in 1934-1935.

Further changes were introduced with the January 15, 1963 (Vol. 53, No. 6) edition of the Quill. In the editorial section of that issue, the staff commented that "the Quill has remained as it is, in size, pattern and almost in content for the last fifty years!" In response, they introduced a weekly Quill (the Quill was first published as a weekly in 1937) and proclaimed that "we find the miserly, pamphlet-sized, shrunken-like Quill no more. In its stead, a fully-grown, broad-shouldered, new Quill has risen." Changes included the creation of the Feature and Intervarsity sections, with their own editors, a definite format in the 'lay-out' of articles, and the 'set-up' of pages, as well as a basic and overall reorganization of the Quill staff.

In September 1969 (Vol. 60, No. 1), Acting Editor Tom Brook and the Quill staff clarified the position and purpose of the Quill as follows: "The primary purpose of the Quill is to bring to the attention of the students of Brandon University the issues and events that have direct implications on the lives of these people. We do and will continue to editorialize in our reporting. It may be not as strong as that seen in the past. But the Quill staff does feel that subjective evaluation of events after the case has been put factually is valid, and this shall be a policy that will be adhered to during the coming year." They also took a moment to point out that the Quill, although a student press, was not a commercial newspaper. Furthermore, they wanted "to see the Quill move closer to the concept of the bourgeois press but not so close that it loses its identification with students and the issues that concern them."

By 1971, the Quill had adopted the statement of principle of the Student Press in Canada as outlined in the Resolutions of the Canadian University Press. Printed on the front page of the September 24 edition, the Quill stated the following policy: It is "... our belief 'that the major role of the student press is to act as an agent of social change, striving to emphasize the rights and responsibilities of the student citizen', and 'that the student press must in fulfilling this role perform both an educative and an active function.'" The policy went on to declare that the Quill, as an alternative press (an alternative to the commercial press), rather than a newspaper, was "limited to presenting news which the commercial press does not handle and to providing news analysis." The democratic nature of the Quill was also clearly stated in the policy.

The structure of the Quill was altered again in 1984, when an editorial board was instated, replacing the previous editor-in-chief system (although in most cases there was more than one editor in any given year). This board was to function as an organizing unit, with the collective electing officers for a one year term. The collective was made up of members, who had to contribute something to the Quill in one out of every three issues, in order to vote. Contributions included actual content for the paper, production, typing, photography work, office clean-up, or anything else that helped the Quill function. The central concern of the Quill, at the time of these changes, was to represent the "wide variety of social issues which interest Brandon University students." (September 27, 1984). The 'wide variety of social issues' was expanded upon in the September 3, 1987 edition of the Quill's editorial section: "A major purpose of THE QUILL is to provide the community with news and information pertaining to local, regional, national and international issues of concern to students."

By 1993, the Editorial Board was comprised of the News Editor, the Co-ordinating Editor and

By 1996, the Editorial Board was comprised of the News Editor, the Co-ordinating Editor and the CUP Editor and was responsible for the direction and content of the newspaper each week. By 1996, the CUP Editor had been replaced by the Business Manager on the Editorial Board. Clarifying its relationship with BUSU in the November 18, 1996 edition, Co-ordinating Editor Stacey Brown quoted the Quill Constitution: "The Quill collective shall determine and regulate editorial content and policy and shall set such perimeters on acceptable advertising as it shall collectively see fit. Debate and reasonable documentation must be given before boycotting anything in the newspaper." She went on to state that "final decisions on most issues are made by the Editorial Board. . . ." The position of Editor-in-Chief was reintroduced sometime around 2001.

Throughout its history, the Quill has been a quarterly, a bi-weekly and a weekly publication. It has been printed in various formats, by a number of different companies and has been financed primarily through funding from BUSU, and at present, advertising and a student levy. In 1997, the Quill became one of the first student newspapers in Canada to produce the paper in a completely digital format.

The Quill has been located at a number of locations on campus. Its first home was at the base of the Bell Tower in the original Clark Hall. In the 1970s it was produced in a mobile trailer near the gymnasium, before moving to the former Students' Union office in the lower level of the McMaster Building in 1980. Finally in 1991, the Quill was moved to its current location on the second floor of the Knowles-Douglas Student Centre.

At present (January 2007), the Quill continues to be a member of the Canadian University Press (CUP), and as such is provided with feature articles, news, graphics and fieldworker assistance. The Quill adheres to the CUP Statement of Principles. As a democratic collective, the Quill is open to all students and staff at Brandon University. An autonomous corporate entity since 2005, the Quill is a student run publication; the articles, editing, layout and distribution are done by the students.

Custodial History:

Editions of the Quill have been acquired by the McKee Archives from BUSU and former Alumni.

Scope and Content:

Sub series has been divided into three sub series, including: (1) The Quill editions; (2) The Quill duplicates and microfilm; and (3) The Quill special editions.

Notes:	Administrative information in the History/Bio field was taken from the "Brandon College finding aid" prepared by Karyn Reidel for the McKee Archives in 1998 and various editions of the Quill. Post-1927, a handful of Quill editions contain Literary Supplements.
Subject Access:	college newspapers yearbooks history
Accruals:	Further accruals expected.
Repro Restriction:	Copyright provisions apply.
Location Original:	S.J. McKee Archives
Location Copy:	See sub series 14.5.3.2 The Quill duplicates and microfilm for information on copies.
Storage Location:	RG 6 Brandon University fonds Series 14: BUSU 14.5 BUSU publications

Related Material:

Editions of the Brandon College/University Sickle are located at RG 6, sub sub series 14.5.1 (The Sickle).

The Quill and Sickle account book for [1939-1941] is located in the Alfred Angus Murray McPherson collection (21-2006) Box 7, File 7.