

S. J. McKee Archives



Robert Troy Blair fonds

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions13300>

Part Of:	RG 1 Brandon College fonds
Description Level:	Sub-series
Accession Number:	18-2013
GMD:	multiple media
Date Range:	September 1950 - June 1954
Physical Description:	2 scrapbooks (7.5 cm)
Physical Condition:	Excellent

Robert (Bob) Troy Blair was born on March 11, 1930 in Brandon, MB. His first six years were spent in Alexander, MB, where his father and uncle operated a grocery store. In 1936, his family moved to Souris, MB, where his father ran a grocery store. Blair received his primary and high school education, with the exception of Grade 12, in Souris.

Blair remembers his school years in Souris as mainly happy years. He was involved with both piano and organ music lessons. he was never interested in physical sports with the exception of golf. World War II broke out in September of 1939. Souris became the site of #17 SFTS and home base for the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Many of the service men came from England, Australia and New Zealand. Blair's mother always entertained at least two for dinner every Sunday. Rationing of sugar, tea and coffee, butter and meat became a way of life. Blair had the job every Saturday of pasting the ration coupons into booklets. It was also when he was in Grade 6, that Blair realized he was more attracted to boys than to girls. Perhaps it was because so many attractive airmen surrounded him!

In November of 1947, the Blair family relocated to Alexander where Bob Blair finished his Grade 11. This was not a good year due to bullying. In September of 1948, Blair moved to Winnipeg to attend United College for his Grade 12. Upon completion of Grade 12, Blair remained in Winnipeg until June 1950. he worked at a number of businesses - Gestetner, Eaton's Mail Order shoe department, Maple Leaf Milling, and the drug store in the Medical Arts Building. In September 1950, he entered Brandon College. Blair was very active in extra-curricular affairs while at Brandon College; particularly drama. Following his B.A. he enrolled in the Education Faculty, having decided to become a teacher.

Blair's teaching career spanned 34 years. All but one year was spent in the Brandon School Division. On his first day of teaching in the Division he met the man with whom he would spend the next 46 years. He was primarily a teacher of English and Music. A highlight of his career was exchange teaching in Sacramento, California in 1961. Orientation for exchange took place in August in Washington, D.C., where Blair had the opportunity to meet President J.F. Kennedy. He vividly recalls the morning that JFK was assassinated on November 22, 1963. In September 1965, Blair assumed the principalship of Park School and in September of 1969, the same position at George Fitton School where he remained until his retirement in 1989. He was a member of the Brandon Principals' Association, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and served as President of the Brandon Teachers' Association. Among his major accomplishments during his time as principal were the introduction of a centralized school library in both Park and George Fitton Schools and the integration of special needs students into regular classroom situations wherever possible. He was made a Life Member of the Manitoba Teachers' Society (Brandon) in June 1990. Following his retirement Blair worked as a Library Automation Consultant (1989-1993).

Blair also had numerous community involvements during his time in Brandon. he was active in the Brandon Little Theatre (Best Actor Award, Manitoba Drama Festival for One Act Plays in 1963), the Brandon Festival of the Arts, the Eckhardt-Gramatte National Music Competition, and Arm Industries to name a few.

Following the death of his partner in 2001, Blair moved to Saskatoon to live with a younger gay couple. He has been active in volunteerism: as an Ambassador for the Saskatoon Airport Authority, assistant with the Saskatoon Health Region's Immunization Clinics, information clerk for the Festival of Trees, data entry clerk for the Saskatoon Music Festival, on the Board of the Saskatoon Jazz Society, and Hospitality Coordinator for the Saskatoon Jazz Festival.

As of October 2013, Bob Blair continues to live in Saskatoon, SK.

Custodial History:

Records were in Blair's possession until he donated them to the McKee Archives on Homecoming weekend October 2013.

Scope and Content:

Fonds consists of two scrapbooks containing 145 photographs and ephemera (play and graduation programs, tickets, pins, newspaper clippings) documenting Bob Blair's days at Brandon College. Social events and extra-curricular activities are heavily featured in the two scrapbooks. Also included are graduation portraits for the Classes of 1951, 1952 and 1953. Of the 145 photographs all are black and white except for two photos of the Class of '53 reconconvocation (May 1993), and one from the Class of '53 reunion (2003).

Notes: History/Bio provided by Bob Blair (October 2013).

Name Access: Brandon College
Angus Jackson
Pat Magnacca
Freshie Week
Senior Stick
Lady Stick
Harvest Cabaret
Sigma Mu
Glee Club
Bob Blair
Jack Yeomans
Walter Dinsdale
Don Cronk
Bob McPherson
Lorne Watson
Marg Sanderson
Hazel Turnbull
Claudia Dickey
Gordon Bradley
Terry Prysiazniuk
Diane Lissaman
Joan Garnett
Doris Penstock
Dianne Macdonald
Ivey Graham
Joyce Pickard
Cathy Crawford
Roberta Wilkie
Marie Kullberg
Isabel Lyon
Shirley Pryce
J.R.C. Evans
Marjorie Kyles
Jo Thordarson
Ross George

Edward Perry
Ernest Birkinshaw
Barney Thordarson
Fall Formal
Variety Night
Installation Night
Paul McKinnon
The Saga of Brandon
Bill White
Ron Bell
Jerry Jerret
Rosa Ziolkowski
Murray Smith
Class of 1951
Harold Moffat
Bill Sutherland
Murray Coulthard
Frank Adamski
John McLean
Jack Medd
Jack Muir
Bill Fraser
Ken Morrison
Clifford Kitson
Ray Brown
Mike Doig
Ernie Shaw
Jack Scott
Doreen Dennison
Lois Kennedy
Lorna Prokaska
Ferne Henderson
Doreen Fedoruk
Marg Leckie
Freshie Parade
Helen Batho
Fred Calverly
Jim Crawford
Verda Peden
Olga Evasko
Betty Finch
Fred Schwarok
Jim Struthers
Muriel Bedford
John Brown

Freshie Royalty
Booster Night
Mary Jane Sexton
Marilyn Rust
Mildred McMurray
Mary-Jane MacLachlan
George Leask
George Jakubowski
Jack Purvis
My Sister Eileen
Edith Laycock
Ivey Robbins
Ken Campbell
Mac Andrews
Marion Simmons
Arnold Minish
Madeline Irving
Ernie Criddle
Don Dillistone
Gordon Hunter
Cathy Nelson
Jim Kelleher
Anne Kelleher
Neil McKellar
Ron Doupe
Bruce Watson
Neil MacKay
Peter Prokaska
Roger Ramsden
Bill Bridgett
Graham Hunt
John Muirhead
David Brodie
Murray MacDonald
Dr. Kidd
Cam Finlay
Blair MacRae
Donna McPhail
Louise Hoey
Agnes Nicholson
Jean Allan
Joan Urie
Royce Richardson
Don Rousell
Bill Black

Ken McNeeley
Rosalie Prokopchuk
Jean Morrison
Jacice Forrest
Fuzz Fedoruk
Brian Davison
Joan MacLachlan
First International Relations Club Conference
Minot Teachers' College
International Peace Gardens
Bruce McIlroy
Jean Shingfield
Campaign Week
Sigma Mu Dance
Arnold Wawruch
Jack Meyers
Jack Hilton
Bev Francis
Bert Gogol
Dick McDonald
Frank McKinnon
Stuart Craig
John Blackwood
Norman Hedison
Bob Hilton
John Minions
Kay Oliver
Mary Jane MacLachlan
Ben Ward
Ken Gunning
Trevor McNeely
Hilton Stewart
Jerry Graham
Bette Mitchell
Joan Curlock
Faye Myers
Jean Hannah
Mary Babuick
Mr. College Spirit
John Augustus McGee
Don Dillstone
Flora Johnson
Del Gusdal
Color Night
Don Burrows

Jim Casey Trophy
Marj Kyles
Prince Edward Hotel
Class Day
Dahl Harvey
Shirley Mitchell
Al Burton
Irving Bateman
Joyce Marie Thordarson
Eileen McFadden
Patricia Pope
Louise Astle
Ariel Genik
Western Canada Student Teacher Conference
Brandon College Glee Club
Be Your Age
Ike Prokaska
Joan Hilton
Fred Lynch
Garth Kidd
Ivy Robbins
Joyce Dunham
Shirley Popple
Grand March
Westley Wong
Stewart Perdue
H.V. Kidd
J.E.M. Young
Adelene Bailey
Mrs. Evans
Dennis Anderson
Stanley Knowles
Edward Schreyer
Lou Visentin

Subject Access: Student government
 initiations
 student activities
 dances
 basketball
 talent shows
 drama productions
 major productions
 Hockey
 graduations
 programs
 parades
 dorm rooms
 student housing
 literary "B's"
 college letters
 class flags
 banquets

Storage Location: 2013 accessions



Western Manitoba Philharmonic Choir fonds

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions14288>

Part Of: RG 5 Western Manitoba Manuscript Collection

Description Level: Fonds

Accession Number: 8-2001, 13-2016

GMD: multiple media

Date Range: 1965-1980, predominant 25 May 1965 - 30 September 1976

Physical Description: 12 cm textual records
 6 b/w photographs (loose)
 1 artefact

Physical Condition: Some of the items in the scrapbook have come loose from their pages,
 some documents are stained from a liquid, likely coffee

History /

Biographical:

In 1965, Chris Verhoef, member of the Overture Concert Association, Allied Arts Centre, and Brandon Citizens' Committee for the Performing Arts, called for a meeting of Western Manitoba citizens interested in the prospect of a Philharmonic Choir for the region. The meeting took place on 26 May 1965; the steering committee that gathered, led by Margaret Goodman, undertook the formation of the Choir. The Choir would have an Executive consisting of at least four members, and a committee consisting of a minimum seven members. Each executive member would be elected on an annual basis. The Choir's executive, in collaboration with the conductor, would determine the choir's repertoire for the year. The establishment of the Western Manitoba Philharmonic Choir (WMPC) sought to encourage amateurs to sing for enjoyment, provide the opportunity for a choir to perform choral compositions in collaboration with a symphony orchestra and promote and sponsor the

musical arts in the Western Manitoba region. Membership to the choir would be open to all citizens of the region, and members would be accepted based on the discretion of the conductor. The first meeting of prospective members took place on 27 September 1965 in St. Matthews Cathedral parish Hall where more than 90 people gathered and registered to become a member of the WMPC.

Chris Verhoef led the Western Manitoba Philharmonic Choir into its first season as President of the choir's Executive Committee. For the organization's first season, the WMPC hired two members of the Brandon College School of Music: Lucien Needham for the position of conductor and Louise Chapman for the position of accompanist. Brandon College, as well as other donors sponsored the choir for its first season. The Choir held its debut performance in collaboration with the Winnipeg Symphny Orchestra (WSO) on 12 March 1966, and the Choir's performance of Vivaldi's Gloria and Handel's Dettingen te Deum attracted an audience of more than 1400 people. The performance was well received by the public. The debut performance's asuccess earned the CHoir a rcommendation for a grant from the Manitoba Centennial Corporation that would sponsor a special concert during the centennial year. Furthermore, the Canada Council supported the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, by the means of special funds, to make the Symphony's appearance witht he Philharmonic Choir possible.

For the WMPC's second season, membership rose to 111 amateur singers. Verhoef remained as President of the Executive, while the Brandon Citizens' Committee for the Performing Arts provided sponsorship. Following the Choir's performance of Schubert's Mass in Eb Major on 17 November 1966, the membership increased to 132 singers. On 20 January 1967, the WMPC's first taped broadcast was released over CBC and CKX. The broadcast's success resulted in an offer from CBC to record another broadcast for a similar release. The Kiwanis Club of Rivers invited the Choir to perform in Rivers on 25 January 1967. On 7 April 1967, the Choir performed Haydn's oratorio, The Creation, in the Brandon College Gymnasium.

The choir elected Murray Ames as President to lead it through its thrid and fourth seasons. In its third season, the WMPC, conducted by Leonard Mayoh, performed Handel's Messiah on 22 November 1967 in the Brandon University Gymnasium. The Choir's spring concert, name the "Chris Verhoef Memorial Concert," in honour of Chris Verhoef who had passed away December 1967, featured works by Bach, Brahms and Perry. Held on 9 March 1968, in the Brandon University Gymansium, the concert featured Brandon university student James Stewart as soloist and was received with great praise. In addition to the memorial concert, the WMPC also established a \$500 scholarship for a Brandon University music student to honour Verhoef's substantial contribution to the community.

The first concert of the Western Manitoba Philharmonic Choir's fourth season was held on 10 December 1968, in the J.R.C. Evans Lecture Theatre at Brandon University and featured selections from Handel's Messiah. A piano trio comprised of Francis Chaplin (violin), Malcom Tait (cello) and Gordon Macpherson (piano), as well as a brass trio, also performed at the chori's winter concert. In its fourth season, the WMPC performed two concerts in the second half of its season. On 15 FEbruary 1969, in cooperation with CKX Radio and Television, the choir performed works by Mozart, Hindemith, and Mahler in collaboration with the Winnipeg Sympony Orchestra conducted by George Cleve. Later in the season, the choir performed Brahms' Requiem Mass, once again in collaboration with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

Dr. R. Parker filled the position of President of the Executive for the duration of the Choir's fifth, sixth and seventh seasons. The fifth season saw the WMPC performing four concerts. Conducted by Leonard Mayoh, it opened its season on 11 october 1969 with a performance at the Grand Finale of the Grand Opening of the Western manitoba Centennial Auditorium, performing theoverture to Mozart's The Magic Flute and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. Their Christmas concert, also conduceted by Mayoh, took place on 10 December 1969. The Choir's third concert of its fifth season was held on 31 January 1970, in cooperation with CKX Radio and Television, and featured works by Mendelssohn, Ravel, and Schubert, in collaboration with

the WSO under the direction of conductor George Cleve. The season concluded with another concert in collaboration with the WSO on 7 March 1970, conducted by Leonard Mayoh. This concert featured works by Vaughn Williams, Handel and Poulenc.

Seasons six and seven consisted of two concerts each. The Choir held its fifth annual Christmas Concert on 5 December 1970. Led by Leonard Mayoh, it performed its spring concert on 10 April 1971 in collaboration with members from the Winnipeg Symphony, featuring selections by Bach and Mozart in the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium. In its seventh season, the Choir performed Bach's Christmas Oratorio on 4 December 1971 in the Central United Church. For its final concert of the year, the WMPC revisited a piece that had been the main focus of its second season: Haydn's oratorio, *The Creation*. The Choir performed this Haydn masterwork on 8 April 1972 under the direction of Piero Gamba.

Helen Riesberry led the choir through its eighth and ninth seasons as President of the Executive. In its eighth season, the WMPC held its annual Christmas concert on 12 December 1972 in collaboration with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra in the style of a sing-along led by Mitch Miller. The choir's spring concert featured another masterwork, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, conducted by Piero Gamba. The WMPC and members of the WSO performed the Requiem Mass on 28 April 1973 at the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium. Despite the lack of attendance at rehearsals since the Christmas concert, the WMPC presented an overall effective performance of the challenging Requiem Mass.

In its ninth season, Derek Morphy took over the position of conductor from Leonard Mayoh. Morphy had his debut performance as conductor with the WMPC at the annual Christmas concert on 17 December 1973. In March 1974, in collaboration with members from the WSO, Morphy led the Choir in its performance of Mendelssohn's oratorio, *Elijah*, in the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium. Later in the season, the choir performed a concert entitled "Reflections," a choral programme for Lent and Easter, accompanied by organist Arthur Bower.

Nearing the end of its ninth season, the Philharmonic Choir encountered severe financial challenges. The Choir released a notice in the newspaper that the anticipated \$3000 grant from the Manitoba Arts Council had been cut to \$1000, leaving the Choir \$3100 in debt. The notice explained that the Choir needed funds in order to enable operation and continue hiring the WSO for concerts. The WMPC executive and committee held a Leonard Mayoh Night in an attempt to gain funds and donations. Although the Manitoba Arts Council raised the grant to \$2000 and the City of Brandon contributed \$500, the Choir's financial situation remained in a dire state as its ninth season came to a close.

The Choir elected Edith Hayden to lead it through its tenth and eleventh seasons as President of the Executive. The opening of the tenth season challenged the WMPC. In addition to its financial woes, the Choir's Executive struggled to overcome the lack of attendance at rehearsals and the shortage of male voices. The WMPC had experienced membership issues in earlier seasons as well. In its third season, despite a membership of 130 individuals, the choir had struggled to create a balanced sound due to a lack of male membership and therefore a lack of lower voices. In its sixth season, the Choir opened their concert year with an appeal for members. In an effort to improve the choir's financial affairs, the Choir Executive and conductor decided against hiring the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra for the time being. In an attempt to improve the situation, Derek Morphy wrote a letter to the members of the Choir outlining his concern that he may not be meeting their expectations as a conductor but hoped to generate positive and hopeful prospects for the future of music-making together.

The Choir's annual Christmas concert featured a collaboration with the Brandon School Division Music Department and Brandon School Orchestra and Band Association, as well as dancers choreographed by Barbra Enhes. The WMPC performed Haydn's Mass in D minor at its spring concert on 27 April 1975, accompanied by Arthur Bower. By the end of the season, the Western Manitoba Philharmonic Choir's financial situation had begun to improve.

The WMPC hired conductor Peter Allen to lead the Choir through its final season of operation. The Choir held its annual Christmas concert in the Central United Church on 7 December 1975, and featured Vivaldi's Gloria, accompanied by pianist Barry Anderson. The choir performed Deller's Psalm 148, Telemann's Cantata for the Fourth Sunday after the Feast of the Three Kings, and Dvorak's Stabat Mater at its spring concert held at the Central United Church on 25 April 1976.

Despite its best efforts, the Western Manitoba Philharmonic Choir's first rehearsal of its twelfth season saw just 26 members in attendance. As a result of lack of membership, the Choir Executive decided to disband the WMPC for its 1976/1977 season, with plans to reassess the situation in September of 1977 for the prospect of a 1977/1978 season. Matters were further complicated by financial considerations; by June 1977 the choir's financial situation had worsened as a result of the administrative fees that the WMPC covered for the duration of its unexpected inactive 1976/1977 season. Unlike past years, there were not any ticket sales to cover such expenses.

Following its year off, membership interest in the Western Manitoba Philharmonic Choir did not increase and the decision was made not to return for another season. In 1980, the WMPC revoked its registration as an organization and officially ceased to exist.

Custodial History:

Records in the 8-2001 accession were donated to the McKee Archives in 2001, by three representatives of the Philharmonic Choir: Dr. Bill Paton, Botany Department, Brandon University; Mrs. Edith Hayden, WMPC President; and Mary Davidson WMPC Archives Committee. Records in accession 13-2016 were given to Terry Stamper in the School of Music by Marilyn Hayden and then transferred to the McKee Archives on September 21, 2015.

Scope and Content:

Fonds consists of records that document the origin, activities, and ultimate disbandment of the Western Manitoba Philharmonic Choir. These records were created and accumulated during the eleven year existence of the WMPC.

Records include: the organization's constitution and history from 1965-1968; financial records, which include grants received from the Manitoba Arts Council, Canada Council, and City of Brandon, as well as materials documenting the organization's financial struggles from 1974-1976; minutes from executive and committee meetings from 18 June 1973 to 24 June 1974; correspondence in the form of letters between the president of the executive and the choir members, and between the conductor of the choir and its members; membership lists from each season of the WMPC; and concert programmes from every major Christmas and Spring concert that the organization performed. Fonds also contains newspaper notices, advertisements and reviews of various performances, as well as posters advertising performances of the WMPC in the 1967/68, 1970/71, 1971/72 and 1973/74 seasons; the posters advertise the choir, collaborators, patrons and featured works.

Also included in the fonds is a scrapbook detailing the choir's history. Each page of the scrapbook is decorated with hand painted images of plants native to the southwestern Manitoba region. The scrapbook includes concert programs and photographs of the choir from all years of the organization's operation. The scrapbook also contains an assortment of informal photographs from various WMPC events. There are also six black and white group photos of the WMPC from various seasons.

Finally, the fonds contains one artifact, a leather bag/zippered file folder with "WMPC" printed on it.

Notes:

History/Bio information was provided by representatives of the Western Manitoba Philharmonic Choir. Copies of the history can be found in the fonds. Description by Jessi Gilchrist (October 2016).

Name Access: Chris Verhoef
Margaret Goodman
St. Matthews Cathedral
Lucien Needham
Louise Chapman
Manitoba Centennial Corporation
Canada Council
Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra
Brandon College
Kiwanis Club
CKX
Helen Reisberry
Mary Donovan
Tom Inglis
Humphrey Davies
Muriel Bain
H.V. Kidd
Eileen Christ
Brandon College Auditorium
CBC Radio
J.M. Donovan
Murray Ames
Dr. R. Parker
Henry Stein
Ernie Pearn
Gerry Streuber
Dorothy McLean
Mayme Tucker
Margaret George
Bob Blair
Bud Keenan
Marilyn Johnston
Sister Mary Rose
Lou Brown
Jeanine Baker
Muriel Patmore
Leonard Mayoh
Jim Cory
Eric Davies
Phil Ricou
Elaine Dechka
Lester Spinaze
Archie Miller
High Rest
Lorna hamilton

Ruth Cutforth
Ollie Timkiw
Thelma Findogasson
A. Bayne
Dick Vanderveen
Lee Donnelly
M. Rogosin
Ken Nichols
Manitoba Arts Council
Piero Gamba
Mary Graham
Reuben Gurevich
Leonard Stone
Brandon Area Foundation
Arthur Bower
Derek Murphy
Judy Pringle
Irma Peters
John Martens
Robert Publow
Brandon Citizens' Committee for the Performing Arts
Brandon Musical Supply
P.A. Kennedy
Bond Books
Brandon Public Library
Phylis Thomson
Hilda Miller
Arthur Janzen
Walter Deller
Nora Needham
Jean Dorian
Margaret hammond
Eileen Blain
Brian Bailey
Brandon College Gymnasium
Brandon University School of Music
G.R. Rowe
Sylvia Richardson
Peter Koslowsky
Nelson Lohnes
James Stewart
Francis Chaplin
Malcolm Tait
Gordon Macpherson
J.R.C. Evans Lecture Theatre

	Lorne Watson
	Donald Henry
	Lawrence Jones
	Alice Hekster
	Walter Hekster
	Hilda Dridger
	Elizabeth Grant
	Dorothy Froese
	Robert Ford
	James Mendenhall
	Colin Cooper
	Allison Ryles
	Joy Crawford
	Audrey Farnell
	Maxine Miller
	Smith Miller
	Brandon Sun
	Barbra Ehnes
	Brandon School Division Music Department
	Brandon School Orchestra and Band Association
	Barbra Landry
Subject Access:	Kiwanis Club of Rivers philharmonic choirs
	amateur choirs
	amateur musicians
	symphony orchestra
	philharmonic
	classical music performance ensemble
	cultural organizations
	music
	community organizations
Storage Location:	2001 accessions
Related Material:	School of Music records
	Lorne Watson collection
	Lawrence Jones collection
	Brandon Women's Musical Club fonds
	Francis Chaplin collection
	Brandon Festival of the Arts fonds
	Fred McGuinness collection
	CKX fonds
	Music and the Brandon Community collection