

S. J. McKee Archives



Stephen Adolph Magnacca fonds

<http://archives.brandonu.ca/en/permalink/descriptions4788>

Part Of:	RG 5 Western Manitoba Manuscript Collection
Creator:	Stephen Adolph Magnacca
Description Level:	Collection
Accession Number:	5-1998
Date Range:	1884-1981; predominant 1955-1975
Physical Description:	32.5 cm of textual records 21 photographs, various sizes
Material Details:	Includes 5 audiocassettes, 1 scrapbook, 2 maps, 2 theatre programs, ca. 40 postcards, ca. 25 brochures and programs, ca. 20 posters
Physical Condition:	Very good

History /

Biographical:

Stephen Adolph Magnacca was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on 12 October 1902. He joined the Winnipeg Highland Cadets at the age of twelve. In 1940 he was posted to Brandon, Manitoba, where he opened the A4 Training Camp. After the Second World War, Magnacca was transferred to the militia from active service and became a hospital manager with the Department of Veteran Affairs. He resigned in 1947.

Although he left the service, Magnacca remained interested in military matters. For the next three decades, he attended functions at CFB Rivers and CFB Shilo. He also collected clippings about the activities of the Canadian militia. As well, Magnacca was interested in civic affairs. In 1961 he was elected mayor of Brandon, a position he held until 1969. Many of his mayoral projects were connected with the military, including an attempt to build a new road to CFB Shilo, an effort to prevent the closure of CFB Rivers, and the coordination of a Freedom of the City Ceremony. In 1967, Magnacca was made honorary colonel of the 26th Field Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery.

A construction boom in the city marked Magnacca's term as mayor. Throughout the sixties, Magnacca was instrumental in the building of the Keystone Centre, the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium, a new city hall, and the residential subdivisions of Riverheights and Kirkcaldy Heights. Magnacca's business interests aided the development of these subdivisions—during this time he was president of Magnacca Real Estate and general manager of the Magnacca Housing Project.

Besides being a colonel, a mayor, and a president of a real estate company, Magnacca held numerous other titles. These included at different times president of the Brandon Lions Club, president of the Royal Canadian Legion Brandon Branch No. 3, treasurer of the Brandon Progressive Conservative Association, and director of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind in Brandon. In recognition of these efforts, Magnacca was named a member of the Order of Canada in 1973. In the middle of the seventies, Magnacca was active in historical pursuits. He became president of the Assiniboine Historical Society and helped to establish the Brandon Daly House Museum. To prevent Brandon's Prince Edward Hotel from being demolished, he formed a protest group called "Save the Eddy." In his spare time, he wrote unpublished accounts of local political figures and collected various artifacts.

A member of St. Matthew's Cathedral, religion was important to Magnacca. Also important to him were hard work, efficiency, and hierarchy. He was a British loyalist and was devoted to public service and political life. As mayor, he prized industrial and urban development. Much of his public life was dedicated to furthering awareness of governmental and industrial activities.

Magnacca's wife, Grace, played an integral role in her husband's career, attending numerous networking and volunteer functions, and often organizing his activities. They had two children, Patricia (Coleman) and Allan. On 4 August 1980, at the age of seventy-seven, Stephen Adolph Magnacca passed away due to heart failure.

Custodial History:

Little is known of the custodial history of the fonds. On 1 May 1995 Magnacca's Thomas Mayne Daly collection and Magnacca's Manitoba Historical Society papers were deposited in the Archives.

Scope and Content:

The fonds consists of minutes of meetings; correspondence with politicians and military officials; newspaper clippings of military affairs; documents about governmental and military celebrations; notes on Louis Riel; a manuscript about Thomas Mayne Daly and other local politicians; papers of the Daly House museum; issues of nineteenth-century Brandon newspapers, and various historical artifacts.

The fonds is valuable for researchers interested in Brandon city council history 1882-1969, regional military history 1955-1975, and general Manitoba history 1882-1981. For social historians, this fonds is important because it demonstrates which actions and which beliefs gave Magnacca access to his many esteemed positions. Historians of gender will discover that Magnacca had a specific definition of masculinity that permeated all his activities in the public realm.

The fonds is divided into four series, including: (1) mayoral papers; (2) historical interests; (3) military interests; and (4) photographs.

Notes: Description by Tom Mitchell. Biographical sketch: Information in the biographical sketch comes from the fonds itself, as well as from two articles of the Brandon Sun: "Steve Magnacca warmly recalled," Tuesday, 5 August 1980, p. 1; and "Brandon loses one of its finest," 5 August 1980, p. 3. Biographical information about Stephen Adolph Magnacca is located in the Biography Files of the McKee Archives.

Associated material: Brandon Sun: "Man for the Sixties," 30 December 1969; "History Comes Alive," 15 June 1978; "Tenure Appointment," 18 October 1978; "Steve Magnacca warmly recalled," Tuesday, 5 August 1980, p. 1; "Brandon loses one of its finest," 5 August 1980, p. 3; and "Magnacca," 9 August 1980, p. 16, located on microfilm in the John E. Robbins Library at Brandon University.

Conservation: Original processing of records and preparation of finding aid by Donica Belisle (22 July 1999)

Finding Aid: Patricia Coleman, daughter of Stephen Adolph Magnacca, provided the funding for the creation of this finding aid.

Storage Location: 1998 accessions

Related Material: Twenty-four file drawers at the Brandon Daly House Museum contain records donated by Magnacca that deal with local political, military, and economic history.