

**Records of the Women's Foreign Missionary
Society (Western Division), 1877-1914**

**Presbyterian Church
in Canada Archives
59 St. George St.
Toronto**

1988

Introduction

This collection of the records of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society (Western Division) consists of approximately 0.5 metre of annual reports, periodicals and publications. The records cover the period 1877-1914.

A fairly complete collection of the records of the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) is held at the United Church Archives. Also at the United Church Archives is related material within the records of the Foreign Missions Committee. Subsequent material may be found in the records of the Women's Missionary Society (Western Division) in the Presbyterian Archives and in the United Church Archives.

There are no restrictions on the material in this collection.

The arrangement and description of the records of the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) was undertaken by Elspeth Reid, supervised by Kim Moir, in 1988. The work was funded by the Arrangement and Description Backlog Reduction Cost-Shared Co-operative Program and by a grant from the Women's Missionary Society (Western Division) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Historical Sketch

The Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Western Division) was founded in Toronto in 1876 on the initiative of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. The Society merged with the Montreal Woman's Missionary Society and the Woman's Home Missionary Society in 1914 to form the Women's Missionary Society (Western Division).

The stated purpose of the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) was to aid the Foreign Mission Committee

by promoting its work among the women and children of heathen lands, and for this purpose it shall receive and disburse all money which shall be contributed to the Society, subject to the action [of the Foreign Missions Committee], in the appointment of Missionaries supported by the Society, and fixing their salaries and location. For the furtherance of this end it shall endeavour to organize ... Auxiliary Societies ... (1)

In sanctioning the founding of the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) the Foreign Missions Committee were careful to ensure that the society would be subject to the authority of the Church and would not have any control over the missionaries it supported. There was also considerable concern over the possibility that women would divert their financial contributions away from the congregations and into the society. The W.F.W.S. (W.D.) therefore was placed under the Foreign Missions Committee, and its constitution authorised by General Assembly.

The organization of the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) was based on similar women's societies in Presbyterian Churches in the United States. All officers were volunteers, and all financial support was entirely voluntary. The Board of Management, which met in Toronto, was composed of annually elected members who were resident in Toronto, and the Presidents of Auxiliaries and Presbyterials who were *ex officio* members. Auxiliary Societies were set up in congregations, with the purpose of educating women in missions and raising funds for the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) to support missionaries. Presbyterial Societies were composed of representatives of each Auxiliary within the bounds of the Presbytery. Mission Bands were also established for younger women or girls, and for children. In 1889 a new category of membership was introduced with the Scattered Helpers who were women unable to attend regular Auxiliary meetings.

The W.F.M.S. (W.D.) was initially responsible for the support of missionaries in India. As the Society grew in numbers and increased financial security the Foreign Missions Committee assigned additional mission fields in China, Formosa and the North West of Canada and British

1. Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1876 Appendix. p.230-253

Columbia. Along with support for the missionaries' salaries and expenses, the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) also contributed to building projects in the mission fields. In Canada the Society established the Ewart Missionary Training Home to train women candidates for the mission fields.

When the work of Home Missions became more urgent with the opening up of western Canada, the Church initially approached the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) for assistance, but the founding of the Woman's Home Missionary Society in 1903 met the need at that time. However, in western Canada, a number of Auxiliaries and two Presbyterials combined the work into a single society and in 1910 the General Assembly requested the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) to consider amalgamation at the national level. In 1914 the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) therefore became part of the Women's Missionary Society.

Archival Arrangement

This collection consists of approximately 0.5 metres of published Annual Reports, periodicals, a few publications and other material. The Annual Reports and periodicals are arranged in chronological order, and it should be noted that there are a number of gaps in the Annual Reports and The Foreign Missionary Tidings, and there are a few missing issues of the Monthly Letter Leaflet. The periodicals are located in the periodicals section and should be requested by title and year of issue. Missing issues are shown in brackets and indicated by the prefix "ex." The publications, which were all published by the W.F.M.S. (W.D.), are arranged in alphabetical order of title and smaller leaflets are placed at the end.

The finding aid is listed as FA-WFMS.

Records of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society (Western Division) 1877-1914

File List

File No	Date	Description
1988-7002-1-1	1877; 1880; 1881;	Annual Reports
1988-7002-1-2	1884-1889/90	Annual Reports
1988-7002-1-3	1890/91-1894/95	Annual Reports
1988-7002-1-4	1895/96-1899/1900	Annual Reports
1988-7002-1-5	1900/01-1904/05	Annual Reports
1988-7002-1-6	1904/05-1906/07	Annual Reports
1988-7002-1-7	1907/08-1908/09	Annual Reports
1988-7002-1-8	1909/10-1910/11	Annual Reports
1988-7002-1-9	1912/13 <i>not 1913-1914</i>	Annual Report
1988-7002-2-1	1897	List of Delegates to Annual Meeting
1988-7002-2-2	1884-1914	Annual Meetings - Agendas
1988-7002-2-3	1885.	Circular Letter Leaflet containing circular letter from the Board of Management of the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) to auxiliaries and mission bands concerning donations to mission work, with extracts of letters from missionaries
1988-7010-1-26	1900	Report of Mission in Trinidad Ms.; 3pp.
1988-7010-1-25	n.d. (c. 1900)	Scrapbook Contains newspaper clippings relating to overseas missions and other miscellaneous topics <i>Report of the Board of Management</i>
<i>2004-7001</i>	<i>1878-99</i>	
<u>Periodicals and Serials</u>		
	1885-1886	<u>Foreign News / Foreign Letters</u> Letters and reports from missionaries
	1887 May,Sept.,Oct.	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>
	1888 Aug.,Dec.	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>
	1889 Mar.-Dec.	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>
	1890 Jan.-Dec.	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>
	1891 Jan.-Dec.	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>
	1892 Jan.-Dec.	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>
	1893 Jan.-Dec.	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>
	1894 Jan.-Dec.(ex.Mar.)	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>
	1895 Jan.-Dec.(ex.Mar.)	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>
	1896 Jan.-Dec.(ex.Mar. Aug.)	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>
	1897 Feb.-Apr.	<u>Monthly Letter Leaflets</u>

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	1897 May-Dec.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1898 Jan.-Dec.(ex.Feb.)	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1899 Jan.-Dec. (ex.Apr.,July,Dec.)	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1900 Feb.-Apr.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1902 Dec.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1904 Feb.,July,Aug.,Dec.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1905 Apr.,June	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1906 May,July-Aug.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1908 July-Aug.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1909 Apr.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1910 June,July-Aug.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1911 Jan.,Feb.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1912 Nov.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1913 Mar.,Apr.,July-Sept.	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
	1914 Mar.,Apr.,June	<u>Foreign Missionary Tidings</u>
<u>Publications</u>		
1988-7002-2-4	n.d. (c. 1880s-1914)	Leaflets Leaflets published by W.F.M.S. (W.D.) mainly relating to organization and structure of the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) or containing parables and stories of missionaries and mission fields
1988-7002-2-5	n.d.	<u>A Manual for the use of Women offering for Foreign Mission Work and for Missionaries in connection with the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (W.D.)</u> n.d.; 8pp.
1988-7002-2-6	1901	<u>A Quarter of A Century (1876-1901)</u> Agnes F. Robertson; Toronto, 1901; 20pp. History of the W.F.M.S. (W.D.)
1988-7002-2-7	1888	<u>Some Things that should be known to the Ladies of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society</u> Annie C.S. Jamieson: 1888; 14pp. Concerns mission work in Formosa and work of Dr. George Leslie Mackay

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| 1988-7002-2-8 | 1894 | <u>Three Papers</u> Mrs. D.J. MacDonald; Toronto, 1894; 20pp. I. "The W.F.M.Society." II. "Our Plan of Work: Its Extent and Limitation." III. "Self-Questioning." |
| 1988-7010-1-24 | 1901 | <u>Trinidad, Its History and Resources, also Sketch of the Presbyterian Mission from 1868 to the end of the century</u> Rev. John Morton D.D.; Toronto, 1901; 31pp. |