

The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives

Finding Aid

Records of The Rev. William Gregg and Family

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Catalogued by: Bob Anger, January 1999

Notes on using the Finding Aid

First consult the fonds description (fonds being an archival term used to denote the whole of the records created by a specific individual or family and held within an archives). The fonds description includes a biographical sketch of the individual or family that created the records, a scope and content note which briefly describes the records within the fonds (this generally starts with "Fonds consists of..."), and several notes at the bottom, which provide information on access restrictions and copyright restrictions.

Some finding aids also provide series descriptions on subsequent pages which further describe the records within the fonds.

After reading these descriptions consult the file list and notify an archivist of the individual files you wish to view.

Fonds Description

W. Gregg family fonds. – 1840-[1929?]. – 65 cm of textual records. – 2 reels of microfilm.

William Gregg (1817-1909) was a Presbyterian minister and Professor of Apologetics and Church History at Knox College. His son, William Rufus Gregg (1852-1930), was an architect and writer, while his grand-daughter, Marjorie Shaver (daughter of William Rufus) was a United Church deaconess. William Gregg was born in Killycreen, County Donegal, Ireland. He worked for a merchant in Londonderry for eight years before going to Scotland, where he studied at Glasgow University – receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1843 – and at Edinburgh University, where he received a Master of Arts degree in 1844. He did his theological studies at Free College, Edinburgh, and moved to Canada in 1846 to work as a missionary for the Colonial Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church. He was ordained as minister of John Street Presbyterian Church, Belleville, Ontario, on June 22, 1846, and remained as minister until 1857. In 1849, he married Phoebe Holden. Their children included: Elizabeth Jane (b. 1850), William Rufus (b. 1852), James Edwards (b. 1855), Robert Daniel (b. 1857), Charles Henry (b. 1859), Mary Eleanor (b. 1861), George Arthur (b. 1863), Albert Graham (b. 1865), Alfred Holden (b. 1868), Isabelle (b. 1870), and Richard Clement (b. 1876). In 1857, Gregg moved to Toronto where he served Cooke's Presbyterian Church until 1872. In 1867 he began lecturing in Apologetics at Knox College, Toronto, and in 1875, was appointed Professor of Apologetics and Church History. He retired in 1895. During his life, Gregg published several books, including the "The History of The Presbyterian Church in Canada". Other books published include "A Book of Prayers for Family Worship", and "The Presbyterian Book of Praise". William Gregg also served as Moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church of Canada, in 1861.

William Rufus Gregg, became an architect and worked in various areas including Chicago, Montreal, Ottawa, Boston, Detroit and Albany. Primarily, however, he worked in Toronto. He also wrote on a variety of subjects, including urban development, the history of Toronto, and on African Americans. William Rufus Gregg married Grace Angus in 1890. They had four children: Marjorie, Angus Holden, William Donald, and Grace Muriel. Marjorie Gregg, studied at the University of Toronto, where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Household Science in 1914, and a Master of Arts degree in Social Services in 1916. She married C.A. Shaver, a High School Principal and lay preacher for the United Church, and became a United Church deaconess.

The fonds consists of the following series: Papers of William Gregg; Published works by Gregg; Scrapbooks compiled by Marjorie Shaver (nee. Gregg); Newspaper clippings concerning Church Union; and photocopies of William Rufus Gregg's article "The African in North America: Their Welfare after Freedom as Effected and Influenced by the Life of William King".

Title based on contents of the fonds.

The microfilm reels are copies of originals held by the Archives of Ontario.

Accession Number: 1973-5004

No restrictions on access.

The material in this fonds is protected by copyright until January 1st, 2004. A single copy of items in the fonds may be made for purposes of research and private study. Authorization must be obtained from the copyright holder if the material is to be used for any other purpose. The material cannot be published without permission from the copyright holder.

A finding aid with series descriptions and file lists is available.

See also F712 – Gregg family fonds, at the Archives of Ontario.

Series Descriptions

Papers of William Gregg. – 1840-1909, microfilmed 1978. – 2 reels of microfilm.

Series consists of correspondence, diaries, cashbooks, and writings of William Gregg. Correspondence includes letters from university colleagues, from his father Daniel Gregg in Ireland, from relatives in the United States, some correspondence relating to his appointment as a missionary in Upper Canada, and a few letters relating to his work at Knox College. The diaries cover the years 1842-1849, 1862 and 1909, and address subjects such as his studies at university, theological arguments, his trip to Belleville in 1846 via New York, Montreal, Gananoque, Kingston and Wolfe Island, his activities in Belleville, and various events in the last year of his life. The series also includes cashbooks detailing Gregg's income and routine expenses for the years 1840-1848; handwritten sermons on a number of different topics; poems and tracts written between 1843 and 1868; university records, including certificates of attendance and examination papers; and various clippings relating to his retirement from Knox College, his funeral oration for Alexander Mackenzie, his portrait, his history of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, his golden wedding anniversary, the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination, and other subjects.

Originals held by the Archives of Ontario.

Published works by Gregg. – 1885-1895. – 4 items of textual records.

This series consists of copies of books authored by William Gregg, including "A History of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (1885)", "A Short History of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (1892)", and "A Book of Prayers for Family Worship". The series also includes a copy of Gregg's article, "Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister: Prohibited by God", which was written in response to a paper by the John Laing which stated the Bible did not prohibit such a union.

Copies of William Rufus Gregg's article "The African in North America: Their Welfare After Freedom as Effected and Influenced by The Life of William King". – [ca. 1929]. – 2 items of textual records.

Series consists of two photocopies of William Rufus Gregg's article on the life of The Rev. William King, published by The Brooks Print Shop, Ashtabula, Ohio, ca. 1929. The article was originally published in the Toronto Sunday World, in 1924., and discusses the life of William King (a class-mate of William Gregg at the theological Free College in Edinburgh), slavery, and the Underground Railway.

Scrapbooks compiled by Marjorie Shaver (nee Gregg). – 1893-1916. – 2 volumes of textual records.

This series consists of two scrapbooks compiled by Marjorie Shaver. The one contains material from 1909 to 1916 and documents her activities while at the University of Toronto, where she completed studies for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Household Science and a Master of Arts degree in Social Studies. Items in the scrapbook include letters from friends and family, programmes of university events such as musical performances, conferences, plays, and commencement ceremonies, invitations to dances, society events and class parties, and student evaluations. The second scrapbook contains clippings collected by Marjorie Shaver and includes pages from the "Free Church of Scotland Monthly" for July 1893 (which consists of photos of the Moderators and Ex-Moderators of the Free Church of Scotland, photos of Thomas Chalmers, photos of Free Church schools and colleges in Scotland, and various other pictures), a newspaper article on Alexander Stewart (Marjorie Shaver's uncle, and minister of Willis Church), the order of service for Willis Church, Sept. 11, 1903, photographs of the Moderators of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and a newspaper obituary for William Gregg. It is unknown when this second scrapbook was compiled.

An index exists for the second scrapbook mentioned above. Please see Appendix A.

Newspaper clippings concerning Church Union. – 1923-1924. – 52 cm of textual records.

This series consists of newspaper articles documenting the debate, developments and controversy surrounding the proposed union of the Methodist Church, the Congregational Church and parts of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to form The United Church of Canada. The articles are from a variety of newspapers from across the province and country. The majority, however, are from Toronto area papers. There are also articles from various church publications, such as the Presbyterian Witness. The clippings were most likely compiled by Marjorie Shaver (nee Gregg).

File List

Papers of William Gregg

1978-8001-Reel 1	1840-1909	Papers of William Gregg
1978-8001-Reel 2	1840-1909	Papers of William Gregg

Published works by Gregg

1973-5004-1-1	1885	"History of The Presbyterian Church in Canada"
1973-5004-1-2	1892	"A Short History of The Presbyterian Church in Canada"
1973-5004-1-3	1895	"A Book of Prayers for Family Worship"
1973-5004-1-4	1868	Article – "Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister: Prohibited by God"

Copies of William Rufus Gregg's article "The African in North America: Their Welfare After Freedom as Effected and Influenced by The Life of William King".

1973-5004-1-5	1924	"The African in North America: Their Welfare After Freedom as Effected and Influenced by The Life of William King". (Original and photocopied versions)
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Scrapbooks compiled by Marjorie Shaver (nee Gregg)

1973-5004-1-6	1909-1916	Scrapbook of Marjorie Shaver
1973-5004-2	[ca. 1893-1916]	Scrapbook of Marjorie Shaver (an Index exists for this scrapbook, please Appendix A) [Appendix A is not available in the PDF version of this Finding Aid. If you would like a copy, please contact the Presbyterian Church Archives].

Newspaper clippings concerning Church Union

1973-5004-3	1923-1934	Newspaper clippings concerning Church Union
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