

The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives

Finding Aid

Records of Bessie Margaret MacMurchy

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Catalogued by: Bob Anger, December 1998

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

Bessie Margaret MacMurchy fonds. – 1933-1962. – 26 cm of textual records. – 4 photographs. – 1 drawing.

Miss Bessie MacMurchy (1904?-1963) was born and raised in Collingwood, Ontario. She received a commercial diploma from Collingwood Collegiate Institute, before beginning training as a nurse at Montreal General Hospital. She graduated as a Registered Nurse in 1931, receiving first class standings. Upon graduation, she entered the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School in Toronto, to prepare for overseas work. In 1932, Miss MacMurchy was appointed by the Women's Missionary Society (W.M.S.) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to serve as a missionary nurse at the Jobat Christian Hospital, in the Bhil Field, India. She served at this hospital until 1948, when circumstances required the W.M.S. to remove the nursing staff. With this change, Miss MacMurchy worked on developing a Mobile Medical Unit to travel around to the various Bhil villages and provide medical supplies and services. In July, 1949, she travelled to Vellore Christian Medical College, India, where she was asked to teach a post-graduate course for nurses. Following this work, she was asked by the Mid-India Board of Examiners of Nurses of the Christian Medical Association of India to become Director of the Graduate School of Nursing in Indore, India. In preparation for this, she attended the University of Western Ontario, where she received a Bachelor of Science of Nursing degree in 1955. In the early 1960s, while on furlough from her duties in India, she again attended the University of Western Ontario, completing coursework for a Master of Science of Nursing degree. However, she passed away on June 16th, 1963, before being able to return to India.

Fonds consists of correspondence, notes, reports, news clippings, and other material created and accumulated by Bessie MacMurchy between the years 1932 and 1962. The material documents Miss MacMurchy's work as a missionary nurse, and as a nursing educator, in India. A large part of the fonds consists of letters sent by Miss MacMurchy to her mother in Collingwood, which give considerable insight into her daily life and activities in India. The fonds also consists of letters received by Miss MacMurchy from various organizations and people; newspaper clippings concerning life in India; notes about Indian customs; various reports written by Miss MacMurchy concerning her work and travels in India; a census report for the Jobat area for 1921; certificates and letters regarding her nursing credentials; a blueprint for the Graduate School of Nursing building in Indore; invitations received by Miss MacMurchy to various social events; a small file of letters concerning her work in nursing education in India; reports written by pupils of Miss MacMurchy; letters received from the Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada; and a copy of Miss MacMurchy's Master's thesis. The fonds also contains several photographs and a drawing. The drawing is a portrait of John MacMurchy (a minister in West Gwillimbury and Eldon from 1840-1866, and presumably an ancestor of Bessie MacMurchy). One of the photographs is of this drawing. Another of the photographs is a tintype of an unknown couple, presumably the parents of Bessie MacMurchy.

Title based on contents of the fonds.

Accession Number: 1973-5008

Some material in the fonds is written in Hindi.

No restrictions on access.

Material in this fonds may be protected by copyright until January 1st, 2049 (please ask the archivist on staff for clarification). 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 protected material is to be used for any other purpose. Protected material cannot be published without permission from the copyright holder.

A finding aid with file lists is available.

File List

1973-5008-1-1	1934-1950	Social Invitations in India
1973-5008-1-2	1948-1952	Services & Programmes
1973-5008-1-3	1933-1934	Hindi & Urdu Credentials of Mrs. MacMurchy
1973-5008-1-4	1945-1949	Nursing Credentials of Miss MacMurchy
1973-5008-1-5	[194-?]	Documents in Hindi
1973-5008-1-6	1936-1960	Clippings & Articles
1973-5008-1-7	1952	Bhil Area Evangelistic Survey
1973-5008-1-8	1921	Jobat census of 1921
1973-5008-1-9	[ca.1958-1962]	Nursing & Medical Work
1973-5008-1-10	1940, 1947-1949, 1952	Yearly Reports
1973-5008-1-11	1958-1961	Communications from W.M.S.
1973-5008-1-12	1934-1963	Letters to Miss MacMurchy from non-Indians
1973-5008-1-13	1936-1957	Letters from Indian people
1973-5008-1-14	[195-?]	Form Letters – undated
1973-5008-1-15	1940-1961	Form Letters – dated
1973-5008-1-16	1963	Master's thesis by Bessie MacMurchy
1973-5008-2-1	1933, 1943	2 letters to her mother 1933, 1943
1973-5008-2-2	1947	Letters to her Mother 1947
1973-5008-2-3	1948	Letters to her Mother 1948
1973-5008-2-4	1949	Letters to her Mother 1949
1973-5008-2-5	1950	Letters to her mother 1950
1973-5008-2-6	1951	Letters to her mother 1951
1973-5008-2-7	1952	Letters to her mother 1952
1973-5008-2-8	1957	Letters to her mother 1957
1973-5008-2-9	1958	Letters to her mother 1958
1973-5008-2-10	1959	Letters to her mother 1959

1973-5008-2-11	[195-?]	Plays for students
1973-5008-2-12	[ca. 1947]	News account & poems concerning the voyage of the "Marine Adder"
1973-5008-2-13	[195-?]	Letter & Reports by Indian pupils
1973-5008-2-14	[194-?] – [196-?]	Notes on trips-mostly in India
1973-5008-2-15	[194-?] – [196-?]	Notes and writings about Indian life and customs
1973-5008-2-16	1945-1961	Miscellaneous letters
1973-5008-2-17	[194-?] – [196-?]	Miscellaneous short notes
1973-5008-2-18	1946	Typed Excerpts from Miss MacMurphy's letters 1946

Photographs and blueprint

1973-5008-2-19	[186-?]-[194-?]	Photos
1973-5008-2-20	1963	Blueprint of Indore Hospital