

Einar Nordstrom fonds

1903-1914, 1933-1980, predominant 1933-1980

108cm of textual records and audio tapes

Biographical Sketch

Einar Nordstrom was a Lakehead labour leader and Communist Party member. He arrived in Canada in 1930 from his native Finland and rode the rails in the west during the Great Depression. Locally he was active in the Scandinavian Workers Association, the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union and the Co-op movement. He was a member of the I.W.W. and the Fort William Trades and Labour Council. He was also involved with the running of the local Youth Communist League and spent many summers organizing a youth camp. Nordstrom was a great music fan who ran the Record Centre store in Port Arthur and was responsible for bringing to the city many top names in folk music, such as Pete Seeger. In his later years he collaborated on a book dealing with labour history and a film about the lives of Rosval and Voutilainen, two young communist union organizers who were allegedly murdered at the Lakehead in 1929.

Scope and Contents

The Einar Nordstrom fonds concerns labour and union activities at the Lakehead with a particular emphasis on the Finnish community and socialist movements locally. They are arranged into nine series and include taped interviews with past labour leaders, personal papers, research files containing historical clippings, local newspaper issues, copies of the *Canadian Tribune*, the *Pacific Tribune* and other left wing papers, books and promotional material relating to his occupation as a music salesman.

Series A 19/1/1-3 - Taped interviews - 8cm. - 1978-1979

- 1) Interviews of Einar Nordstrom conducted by Inga Holmberg for the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 18 May 1979 in Thunder Bay. Consists of eight cassette tapes dealing with Nordstrom's early years in Finland, emigration to Canada, and his work and political experiences in Canada.
- 2) Interviews with various local labour leaders: Roy Mannila on the Finnish labour movement, 24 May 1979 by Nordstrom; Bror Hammarstet interviewed by M. Magnuson; conversation between Hammarstet and Nordstrom, 11 Sept. 1979; Arnold Beck interviewed by Nordstrom, Sept. 1978; Jonas and Ellen Enstrom, Elis and Ruth Risberg, and Vallentin Bergman interviewed by M. Magnuson, 19 Apr. 1979; Walter Peterson interviewed by Nordstrom, date unknown.
- 3) Reel to reel tape, contents unknown.

Series A 19/2/1-9 - Personal papers - 5cm. - 1971-1980

- 1) Eulogy for Einar Nordstrom by Veronica Murray, no date
- 2) Manuscript by Nordstrom: "What is Folksongs?", no date
- 3-8) Six files containing personal papers dealing with Arnold Beck, the Co-op Bookstore, communism, letters to the editor, and research files for a "Labour History".
- 9) Letters to Nordstrom arranged chronologically mainly dealing with donations of articles by Nordstrom to Lakehead University and to libraries, 1971-1980

Series A 19/3/1-15 - Clipping files - 9cm. - 1903-1914, 1937-1976 (transcripts and photocopies)

- 1-13) thirteen files containing photocopies of clippings from the *Port Arthur Daily News*, *Fort William Daily Times-Journal* and the *Port Arthur News-Chronicle* dealing with local labour.
- 14) One file containing typed transcripts from local newspapers dealing with labour news.

15) One file of news clippings dealing with a strike at the Port Arthur Clinic, 1975-1976.

Series A 19/4/1 - Newspapers local - 3cm. - 1933, 1972-1976

A collection of local newspapers with articles in them either written about Nordstrom or which were of interest to him. Includes an interview with Nordstrom in the 12 Dec. 1972 edition of the *Stirring Giant*, five issues of *The Black Fly*, 1974-1975, an interview with Nordstrom in *This Magazine* by Satu Repo, July-Aug., 1979 and a single copy of *The Unemployed Worker*, 29 July 1933, issued by the Central Unemployed Council, Port Arthur.

Series A 19/5/1-7 - Newspapers - 53cm. - 1946-1980

1-3) Three boxes of issues of *The Canadian Tribune* (including the *Daily Tribune* from 2 May 1947 to 4 Nov. 1947): 1) 16 Feb. 1946 - 27 Dec. 1947 (204 issues)

2) 3 Jan. 1948 - 26 Dec. 1949 (92 issues)

3) 2 Jan. 1950 - 31 Mar. 1980 (67 issues)

4) Three issues of the *Pacific Tribune*, 25 Apr. 1975 - 3, 10 Sept. 1976

5) Three issues of *Vikko Sanomat*, 4, 11 Jan., 27 Mar. 1979

6) *The Worker*, 8 June 1935 - 9 Nov. 1935 (79 issues)

7) Seven issues of *The Young Worker*, June 1971 - Sept. 1974

Series A 19/6/1-6 - Magazines - 3cm. - 1950-1974

Six files containing magazines dealing with communism in Canada and Russia:

1) "Always Ready", Jan. 1951

2) "Last Post", Nov. 1970; Apr. & May, 1971; Oct. 1971; July 1972

3) "Northern Neighbours", June 1971; June, July-Aug. 1974; Sept. 1974

4) "Peace Review", Jan.-Feb. 1951

5) "Progressive Worker", Vol. 6, No. 1

6) "Youth Affairs", Jan. 1950

Series A 19/7/1-12 - Books - 20cm. - 1946-1963

Books on various aspects of communism and labour in Canada and elsewhere:

1) "Canada: The Communist Viewpoint" (1948) by Tim Buck

2) "30 Years 1922-1952: The Story of the Communist Movement in Canada" (1952) by Tim Buck

3) "What Kind of Government?" (n.d.) by Tim Buck

4-6) Three books published by the Industrial Workers of the World:

4) "The General Strike for Industrial Freedom", June 1946

5) "The I.W.W.: Its first 50 Years (1905-55)", Nov. 1955

6) "The I.W.W.: In Theory and Practice" n.d.

7) Nine issues of *The Little Sandy Review*: 1960-65

8) Twenty-four issues of *National Affairs Monthly*, Jan. 1950 - 1954

9) Information Bulletin - Workers Benevolent Assoc. of Canada, n.d.

10) "Sin and Science" (1945) by Dyson Carter

11) "The Marxist Quarterly", winter 1963

12) "A World to Win: An Introduction to the Science of Socialism (1946)

Series A 19/8/1-16 - Promotional material - 4cm. - [196?]

Sixteen files containing various promotional materials such as posters, biographies and programmes on entertainers who performed in the city of Thunder Bay in the 1960s, such as Pete Seeger, Peggy Seeger and Guy Carawon.

Series A 19/9/1-21 - Miscellaneous - 3cm. - 1933-1980

Various programmes, bulletins, booklets and letters relating to the private activities of

Nordstrom. Includes some records relating to the record store he operated, material related to various co-op movements, part of an I.W.W. song book, records relating to Labour Day activities, and booklets relating to socialism and communism.

Additional Information

Custodial History - Formerly catalogued into the museum collection 980.84.4, 8-13, 19-21, 23-27, 43-49, 57-8, 61, 72-4, 76-9, 81, 83, 85-9, 94-5, 98-111, 975.46.1, 6-9

Associated Material - See photo catalogue, 980.84