

Saul Laskin fonds

1961-1975

1.2 m of textual records

Biographical Sketch

Saul Laskin was born in Fort William in 1918 and educated in Fort William and Toronto. He returned to the Lakehead in 1937 and worked at Stitt's Clothing store in Fort William in 1938 and in his father's Port Arthur business after that. Mr. Laskin served overseas in the army in World War II. He began to take over operations of his father's store in 1938, bought the property and build a new store that year (expanded in 1947). This he operated successfully from 1946-1958. He entered politics as alderman of Port Arthur 1959-1960 and served as mayor from 1962 to 1969 (Port Arthur) and 1970 to 1972 (Thunder Bay). He was Thunder Bay's first mayor. He ran as a Liberal in the 1963 Federal election but failed to achieve office. Amalgamation of the Lakehead communities was a principal goal for Laskin as a politician. Mr. Laskin belonged to the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary International. He served as president of the Port Arthur Bearcats hockey team and sat on the advisory committee of St. Joseph's Hospital.

He married Adele in 1940s. His father emigrated from Russia in 1903 and began farming in Neebing area, and in ca. 1918 rented and operated a small, clapboard second-hand store (clothing, furniture, hardware) in Port Arthur on S. Cumberland St. Saul Laskin's mother was born in Latvia. His brother was Bora Laskin, Chief Justice of Canada. Mr. Laskin claims the Jewish religion to be formative in his personal life.

Scope and Content

The fonds has five series: scrapbooks, reports, correspondence, speeches and ephemera. Each concerns his political activities as mayor of Port Arthur and Thunder Bay in the 1960s and 1970s and form an excellent insider's view of local political life in this period.

Series A 27/1/1-8 - Scrapbooks - 40cm. - 1962-1972

Six binders and two envelopes of newspaper clippings from both Fort William and Port Arthur papers. Kept by Mayor Laskin's secretary. These relate primarily to issues concerning the mayor himself, the city council or city government-related matters. The arrangement is chronological. Items are pasted onto dated sheets of paper and bound.

- 1) 2 Jan. 1962 to 27 Apr. 1962
- 2) 9 Jan. 1962 to 17 Nov. 1965 (covers mostly 1962)
- 3) 28 Aug. 1963 to 29 Dec. 1969
- 4) 2 Jan. 1970 to 26 Jan. 1971
- 5) 26 Jan. 1971 to 30 Jan. 1972 (arranged chronologically from back to front)
- 6) 1 Feb. 1972 to 28 Dec. 1972
- 7) 1 July 1968 to 26 Dec. 1968 (envelope)
- 8) 2 Jan. 1969 to 21 June 1969 (envelope)

Series A 27/2/1 - Reports - 20cm. - 1965-1972

Reports, studies, submissions and publications kept by Saul Laskin and relating to Port Arthur and Thunder Bay. Arranged chronologically

-City of Port Arthur and Township of Shuniah Annexation Report, 1962

-Annexation submission by Shuniah to Joint annexation committee, 1962, with attached

correspondence

- City of Port Arthur's alternate draft report re: annexation, 1962
- City of Port Arthur annual municipal report, 1964
- Lakehead Renewal Study, abridged ed., 1964
- Port Arthur downtown renewal scheme appraisal, by Proctor, Redfern et. al., 1965 (see also map 986.39.42)
- City of Port Arthur annual municipal report, 1965 (2 copies)
- Submission by Port Arthur to the Board of Transport Commissioners re: rail service, 1965
- Lakehead Local Government Review, Alternative for Local Government in the Lakehead, exploratory statement, 1966
- Lakehead Local Government Review, Information on the Lakehead, research report, 1966
- Brief of Public Utilities Commission, Port Arthur, to Lakehead Local Government Review, 1966
- Submission of Lakehead Chamber of Commerce to Lakehead Local Government Review, 1966
- Submission of City of Port Arthur, Port Arthur Board of Education and Roman Catholic Separate School Board and Port Arthur Board of Parks Management to Lakehead Local Government Review, 1966
- Downtown urban renewal scheme for Port Arthur, first interim report by Proctor, Redfern et. al., 1966
- A Blueprint for Local Government Re-organization, published by the Assoc. of Ont. Counties, 1967
- Notes form a seminar on Government at the Local Level, N.W.O. Municipal Assoc. etc., 1968
- Lakehead Local Government Review, Report and Recommendations of Eric Hardy, 1968
- Summary of the above report prepared by Dr. Evelyn Eager, 1968 (three copies)
- Report of the Northern Municipalities Committee of the Association of Ontario Mayors and Reeves to the 1968 Convention at Fort William
- Urban Renewal in Your City, City of Port Arthur, 1968
- Notes of an address by Justice Bora Laskin to 1968 conference of the Assoc. of Ontario. Mayors and Reeves
- Report of President of Assoc. of Ontario Mayors and Reeves, Saul Laskin, 1968
- Convention programme of 25th annual conference of the Assoc. of Ont. Mayors and Reeves, 1968
- Study of the feasibility of an amalgamated police service for Fort William, Port Arthur, Neebing, Shuniah and the District of Thunder Bay, by W.F. Johnston and J.S. McLaren, 1968 (two copies)
- Report of the Ontario Municipal Board re: Shuniah shopping mall application, 1968
- Design for Development, Phase two statements by J. Robarts, P.M. and D. McKeough, Min. of Municipal Affairs, 1968 (two copies) (see also map 986.39.43)
- Port Arthur, an economic and financial survey, by Wood Gundy Securities Ltd., 1968
- Submission from the Fort William Civic Administration to the Inter Municipal Committee, 1968
- Amalgamation of the Lakehead, an address by W. Darcy McKeough, 1969
- The Lakehead Amalgamation, a proposal from Wood, Gordon & Co., 1969
- Dialogue on Regional Government, seminar, 1969
- Report of municipal election results, 23 June 1969
- Inter-departmental committee on government at the district level in Northern Ontario, report and

- recommendations, Dept. of Municipal Affairs, 1969
- City of Thunder Bay organization committee agenda, 1969
 - Submission to...Prime Minister of Canada, by Saul Laskin for the City of Thunder Bay, 1969
 - City of Thunder Bay organization structure, Woods Gordon, 1969
 - City of Port Arthur budget, 1969
 - An act to incorporate the City of the Lakehead, Bill 118, 1968-1969
 - The municipality in the Canadian federation, a report, 1970
 - Seminar on Government at the district level, 1970
 - Submission of City of Thunder Bay to Canadian Transport Commission, 1970
 - Annual Report of City of Thunder Bay, 1970
 - City Coordinators summary of Annual Report of City of Thunder Bay, 1970
 - Submission by City of Thunder Bay on Parliament's hearings on the Constitution of Canada, 1971(two copies)
 - Brief of the City of Thunder Bay on the Design for Development document, 1971
 - Design for Development, a policy statement on N.W. Ont., 1971
 - 2nd Annual Report of City of Thunder Bay, 1971
 - Summary of above
 - Submission of City of Thunder Bay to Canadian Transport Commission, Air Transport Committee, 1972
 - Design For Development, Phase three, statements, 1972
 - Thunder Bay Citizen's Assoc. study on urban renewal, 1972
 - Development project for Thunder Bay North, by Irving Grossman, architect, 1972
 - Submission of the municipal delegation on Policies, Programs and Finance, to the first tri-level conference, 1972
 - Submission by Saul Laskin to provincial government regarding the future needs of N.W. Ontario, 1974
 - Redevelopment Opportunity Outline, City of Port Arthur Urban Renewal Commission, no date
 - Milestones in progress of Ontario's northwest, Northwestern Ontario Development Assoc., no date
 - Supplementary brief supporting the request for federal aid for Port Arthur Marine Project, no date
 - Report on Regency Park Project, no date
 - Short history of Port Arthur, no date

Series A 27/3/1-60 - Correspondence files - 30 cm. - 1961-1975

Files arranged by Mr. Laskin according to subject. Contains letters, minutes, agenda, memos, clippings, reports, speeches, pamphlets and publications. Some files are arranged chronologically. Subjects are:

- 1) Misc. correspondence, 1961-1975
- 2) Local/Regional government and the Hardy Report, 1964-1966
- 3) Clippings regarding Hardy Report and amalgamation
- 4) Police commission and police activities, 1968-1972
- 5) Port Arthur's celebration of Canada's centennial, 1965-1967
- 6) Civic finances, Port Arthur, Neebing, Shuniah, McIntyre and Thunder Bay, 1962-1972
- 7) Complaints to mayor primarily about city services (mostly 1971)
- 8) Development Bureau of City of Thunder Bay, correspondence with Mayor, 1972
- 9) Detoxification Centre and Mayors task force on "The Public Inebriate", 1970-1972. Includes

reports of Ross St. House, 1971-1972.

- 10) Municipal elections, clippings, letters poll results, 1958, 1961, 1965, 1969
- 11) Scrapbook of 1963 federal election campaign
- 12) Disqualification proceedings against aldermen - letters, clippings, submissions, 1972.
- 13) Urban renewal correspondence, 1965 and 1969
- 14) Urban renewal citizen's advisory committee, 1972 (organized in 1972 by Robert Andras M.P. to advise him on housing and social service needs)
- 15) Urban renewal, 1971-1972
- 16) Misc. amalgamation related material (publications, clippings, pamphlets, exhibits) 1969-1971
- 17) Misc. exhibits from school children
- 18) Clippings regarding Carter report on taxation, 1967
- 19) Clippings on misc. subjects, local, 1969
- 20) Misc. (poem, programmes, editorial on amalgamation, "The Snapshot" newspaper FWCI 1930, "Scribbles and Scribes" Press club paper 1969, council meetings agenda 1972, Act regarding Thunder Bay Foundation 1971, clippings)
- 21) Local/Regional government, seminar on government at the district level in N. Ontario, 1970
- 22) Local/Regional government, proposed study of regional government culminating in Lakehead Local Government Review, 1964-1966
- 23) Local/Regional government, Lakehead Local Government Review, 1965, 1973
- 24) Local/Regional government, Lakehead Local Government Review, 1967-1968
- 25) Local/Regional government, Lakehead Local Government Review, 1968-1969 (including briefs to the Inter Municipal Committee on amalgamation of the City of the Lakehead)
- 26) Local/Regional government, Lakehead Local Government Review, and Inter-Municipal Committee on amalgamation, minutes and reports, 1969
- 27) Amalgamation correspondence ad memoranda, 1969-1972
- 28) Amalgamation of police services, 1965-1968
- 29) Amalgamation of city newspapers (proposed), 1971-1972
- 30) City council-elect of Thunder Bay, minutes, 1969
- 31) Inaugural council, city of Thunder Bay, 1969-1970
- 32) Urban renewal, Port Arthur, 1967
- 33) Urban renewal, Thunder Bay citizen's advisory council for the development project in the Port Arthur ward, 1972. Includes the first report to the urban renewal committee, Dec. 1969
- 34) Thunder Bay Community Projects Inc., 1974-1975
- 35) Northwestern Ontario Municipal Development steering committee, 1970
- 36) Ibid., 1971
- 37) Birthday party committee minutes, 1969-1970 (established to coordinate celebrations for new city of Thunder Bay)
- 38) Birthday part committee correspondence, 1969
- 39) Ibid, 1970
- 40) Ibid, 1969-1970
- 41) omitted
- 42) Correspondence regarding the establishment of Mini-Queens Park in Thunder Bay, 1972
- 43) Correspondence regarding funding by the Municipal Affairs Dept. of Ont., 1971-1972
- 44) Reports and correspondence regarding a provincial municipal conference on the powers of municipalities, 1969

- 45) Correspondence on unemployment at the Lakehead, 1962
 - 46) Correspondence and minutes of the Canadian Lakehead Port Association, 1962
 - 47) Minutes of the joint liaison committee (Port Arthur/Fort William), 1962, 1965
 - 48) Correspondence and memoranda regarding the construction of the Pacific Ave. overpass, 1970
 - 49) Correspondence and memoranda regarding the City of Thunder Bay's crest and badge, 1971-1972
 - 50) Correspondence regarding the exchange of visits of dignitaries between Thunder Bay and St. Petersburg Beach, U.S.A., 1970
 - 51) Correspondence regarding the reconstruction of Old Fort William, 1971-1972
 - 52) Correspondence and memoranda regarding Robert Andras M.P., 1969-1970.
 - 53) Correspondence regarding Port Arthur's submissions to the Ontario Cabinet, Oct. 1964 (including submissions)
 - 54) Correspondence regarding the building of Port Arthur Arena, 1962
 - 55) Correspondence regarding the acquisition of the S.S. John Ericson, 1964
 - 56) Correspondence regarding the Mayor's trust fund, 1970
 - 57) Complaints to the mayor of Thunder Bay, 1972
 - 58) Correspondence and complaints registered at the Mayor's Open House, 1970-1971
 - 59) Correspondence regarding invitations to events, 1972
 - 60) Two files of miscellaneous correspondence, arranged chronologically, 1962-1971, 1972
- Series A 27/4/1-15** - Speeches - 28cm. - 1962-1972

Speeches written and delivered by Saul Laskin, usually in his capacity as Mayor of Port Arthur and Thunder Bay. Also contains some press releases. Most are typed with corrections and comments in hand writing. These are contained in fifteen files which are arranged chronologically:

- 1) 1962, 2) 1963, 3) 1964, 4) 1965, 5) 1966, 6) 1967 (two files), 7) 1968, 8) 1969 (four files), 9) 1970, 10) 1970, 11) 1971, 12) 1972, 13) Miscellaneous fragments and undated speeches, 14) Graduation speeches, 15) Inaugural addresses, 1962, 1967-1970

Series A 27/5/1 - Ephemera - one envelope - 1959-1972

Ephemera relating to Mayor Laskin's term in office. Includes certificates (centennial, election, carnival, special events); proclamation of navy week, 1963; City of Port Arthur debentures; programmes; menus; photograph of salvation army scroll; special invitations; greeting cards; uniform postage campaign envelopes; letterhead; envelopes; calling cards; walk-a-thon checkpoint form; Lakehead guest booklet, 1963; transit transfers; souvenir ribbon; plaques; arm patches; commemorative coins; lighter; buttons; medals.

Additional Information

Associated Material - See also museum archival collection 986.39.1-43 (photographs and artifacts).