

# YMCA, Fort William fonds

1907-1981

45 cm of textual records

## *Administrative history*

The Fort William YMCA was formed by a small group of young men from Fort William who were formerly officers of the Young Men's Association. The YMA was considered by some to be elitist and unpopular with the working class. The YMCA in Fort William was perhaps an attempt to overcome that. The prime mover seems to have been Mr. C.R. Sayer who, along with his fellow YMA officers, got representatives from the Protestant churches of Fort William to form an official YMCA branch, adopting a constitution in 1908. Subscriptions were sought from the business community and George H. Williamson was soon hired as general secretary. The first president was Harold E. Copp. The aim of the Association was "to improve the moral, mental, social and physical condition of young men and boys." It adopted from the outset the fundamental principles of "evangelical Christianity" as a basis of its proceedings. Boys 18 or over who were members of an "evangelic church" were eligible to serve as active members. Boys 12-18 could become general members. Only those with the proper religious qualifications were eligible to vote and hold office in the Association.

Land was purchased for a building in 1912 on the corner of Archibald and Miles Streets and a large building was erected. It offered rooms for socializing, billiards, games, music, a cafeteria, a gymnasium, running track, laundry room, two bowling alleys, and a 60' x 20' swimming pool. Courses were offered in various educational pursuits such as drafting, arithmetic, manual training, book keeping, etc. As well, religious instruction was offered and considered the "central, fundamental and crowning feature of the association work." The YMCA building also contained 66 bedrooms, 50 of which could be rented for a maximum of ten dollars per month in 1913. The YMCA also acted as an employment bureau and as an organization to help immigrants assimilate into Canadian society.

Though talks were underway to form a YWCA in the same building as early as 1930, it was not until much later that this occurred.

## *Scope and Content*

The Fort William YMCA records are a collection of minute books, legal records, scrapbooks, clippings, pamphlets and newsletters all pertaining to the YMCA business and activities.

**Series E 10/1/1-2.** - Minute books. - 14 cm. - 1907-1930, 1933

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors and committees of the Fort William YMCA contained in two bound volumes.

1) 1907-1913, including subscription lists, from September 1907. Entries are both in hand script and type.

2) 1914-30, 1933, entries are mostly typed.

**Series E 10/2/1.** - Legal records. - 1 cm. - 1912-1981

The legal records of Fort William YMCA including the deed of land (1912) for the property on Archibald Street, the mortgage was taken in 1927, the purchase of the land near Lake Shebandowan in 1941, tax exemption and various legal correspondence. Also contains letters and documents relating to the disposition of the property of the Port Arthur YM and YWCA in 1975 and 1981 (350 Red River Road). It is all contained in one file.

**Series E 10/3/1-10.** - Scrapbook and files of clippings. - 30 cm. - 1949-1976

Newspaper clippings of the YMCA and YWCA activities:

1) Port Arthur YM-YWCA, 1949-1966.

2) Fort William YMCA, 1953-1956.

3) Fort William/Port Arthur YM-YWCA, 1956-1957.

4) Fort William YMCA, 1958-1962.

- 5) Fort William/Port Arthur YM-YWCA, late 1960s.
- 6) Fort William/Port Arthur YM-YWCA, 1969-1970.
- 7) Fort William/Port Arthur YM-YWCA, 1970-1971.
- 8) Fort William/Port Arthur YM-YWCA, 1972.
- 9) Fort William/Port Arthur YM-YWCA, 1973-1974.
- 10) Fort William/Port Arthur YM-YWCA, 1971-1976.

**Series E 10/4/1.** - Miscellaneous records. - one file. - 1912-1975

Pamphlet, 1912-13 (Fort William YMCA). A president's report from the Port Arthur YM-YWCA, 1966. A newsletter, *Y's Worker*, June 1970. Plus letters, financial statements and a membership tally, from 1966-1968.

*Notes*

*Custodial History.* - Donated in 1985 by H.C. Holman, of 2702 Churchill Drive. It was catalogued in 1987.

*Related Material.* - See also photographs catalogued in the photo collection, 987.30.1-251.