

University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections

Finding Aid - Rachel Epstein fonds (RBSC-ARC-1859)

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University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections
Irving K. Barber Learning Centre
1961 East Mall
Vancouver
British Columbia
V6T 1Z1
Telephone: 604-822-2521
Fax: 604-822-9587
[Email: rare.books@ubc.ca](mailto:rare.books@ubc.ca)
<http://rbsc.library.ubc.ca/>
<https://rbscarchives.library.ubc.ca/rachel-epstein-fonds>

Rachel Epstein fonds

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Summary information

Repository:	University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections
Title:	Rachel Epstein fonds
Reference code:	RBSC-ARC-1859
Date:	1883-1983 (date of creation)
Physical description:	46.5 cm textual records, 8 negatives (on 2 film strips), 1 contact sheet
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	Finding aid prepared by Malcolm Fish, November 2023.
Note [generalNote]:	Includes RBSC-ARC-1859-PH-01 to 09.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Rachel Epstein has been involved in activist work since at least the 1960s. While living in Vancouver, she worked with and for the International Committee Against Racism, helped found the Labour Advocacy and Research Association (LARA), did typesetting and publishing work for New Star Books and Press Gang (both activist publishers), worked with and for the Women's Research Centre (WRC), and helped organize events for International Women's Day (1977 and 1979). She was also involved with various feminist groups, including Act Up, a participatory theatre group.

Epstein later moved to Toronto where she worked for the Participatory Research Group (PRG), with which group she served as the North American coordinator for an international conference on the impact of micro-technology (microchips) on women's work. After leaving the PRG, she worked as a coordinator for Second Look Community Arts, specifically with their Theatre of the Oppressed program, then as a teacher at Seneca Community College in the women in trades and Ontario basic skills programs. She received her Masters of Arts in Sociology from York while working at Seneca. She helped develop the Dykes Planning Tykes program for The Queer Exchange; with her female partner, Epstein had a daughter, Sadie, in 1992 using a sperm bank at a fertility clinic, an experience which she used along with interviews and research to help build up a community for LGBTQ+ prospective parents in Toronto. She started working for the LGBTQ (then LGBT) Parenting Network circa 2001 and was still working for them at the Sherbourne Health Center in 2015. She also partnered with a researcher at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) on several projects surrounding LGBTQ+ parenting and fertility clinics, and through that research became involved with the Assisted Human Reproduction Agency; she has served on several committees for that group.

Throughout her career, Epstein has published papers, articles, and contributed to various books and anthologies. Her book *Who's Your Daddy*, a collection of writings on LGBTQ+ parenting and family

planning, was published in 2009. She was the recipient of the Steinert Ferreiro Award (Community One Foundation) in 2008.

Custodial history

The contents of the fonds were created and accumulated by Rachel Epstein beginning in the late 1960s/early 1970s. They were at an unknown time transferred to her father, Norman Epstein, who held them through his life. The fonds was donated to RBSC in 2023 after his death.

Scope and content

The fonds includes records pertaining to Rachel Epstein's involvement with LARA (correspondence, promotional and educational materials, project files), the establishment of the FLIS (a LARA initiative), International Women's Day event and committee organization records, and research on the history of domestic and farm workers in B.C. ranging from the late 19th century to the mid-20th.

Notes

Title notes

Arrangement

Finding aid organization is based on original file order and the contents of the files.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** published
-

Access points

- Events and celebrations (subject)
 - Labour (subject)
 - Organizations (subject)
 - Women (subject)
-

Series descriptions

Labour Advocacy and Research Association

Date: [1960-1983] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series contains promotional and educational materials, administrative records for LARA, project files, and newspaper clippings. Rachel Epstein was involved in establishing LARA. She began working with immigrant domestic workers through a Company of Young Canadians where she met with domestic workers and learned about their lives, the poor quality of their working conditions, and the uncertainty of their immigration status. Epstein helped domestic workers in Vancouver to organize and, through LARA, helped lobby the provincial government for changes to labour legislation to include and protect domestic and farmworkers.

Series contents include: promotional and educational materials (pamphlets, posters, and information booklets), administrative records (incorporation documents for LARA, meeting minutes, correspondence, fundraising and endorsement solicitation and receipt, and an application to Young Canada Works), individual project files (slide tape program, community awareness program), and several files relating to the establishment of the Farmworker Legal Information Service (FLIS).

Physical description: 34 cm textual records

Language of the material:

Chinese

English

Punjabi

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-01	File - [CARDWO and Visa Application]	1979-1982		
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-02	File - LARA - Slide tape show	1978-1980		
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-03	File - LARA - Minutes of meetings	1978-1980		
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-04	File - LARA - Community Awareness Project	1979-1980		
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-05	File - News Clipping	1973-1983		
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-06	File - LARA - Correspondence	1975-1982		
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-07	File - LARA - Administrative	1976-1979		
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-08	File - World Council of Churches	1979-1980		
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-09	File - Jamaica-Caribbean Association	1976		

RBSC-ARC-1859-01-10	File - Labour and the Law Workshop Legal Services Comm. - Feb. 1977	1977
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-11	File - LARA - Fundraising - Endorsements	1976
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-12	File - LARA - Young Canada Works	1979
RBSC-ARC-1859-01-13	File - LARA - International Year of the Child	1979-1980
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-01	File - LARA	1976-1979
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-02	File - LARA - Constitution and By-laws	1976-1977
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-03	File - LARA - Legal Service Programme for F and D workers - Proposal and budget	n.d.
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-04	File - Law Foundation	1976-1979
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-05	File - Farmworkers	1975-1980
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-06	File - Rape Relief - WAVAW etc.	1980-1982
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-07	File - Fundraising LIP	1976
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-08	File - LARA - Secretary of State Fundraising	1976
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-09	File - LARA - Fundraising Federal Dept. of Justice	1977
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-10	File - LARA - Fundraising Strategy	1974-1976
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-11	File - LARA - Fundraising L.I.P.	1976
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-12	File - LARA - Fundraising Legal Programme for Farm and Domestic	1976
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-13	File - Legal Services Commission	1976-1978
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-14	File - The Law Foundation	1976-1977
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-15	File - LARA - Pamphlets	1977-1978
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-16	File - LARA - Current	1977-1980
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-17	File - Leaflet Masters	n.d.
RBSC-ARC-1859-02-18	File - LARA - Slide-tape Programme	1976-1979
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-01	File - LARA - Federal Justice Department	1979-1980
<p>International Women's Day</p> <p><u>Date</u>: 1977-1979 (date of creation)</p> <p><u>Scope and content</u>:</p>		

Series includes materials related to the organization of International Women's Day events in 1977 and 1979. In 1977, Epstein assisted in organizing marches and a series of workshops, and the organizing committee produced pamphlets on women's and family issues (eg. daycare affordability) in cooperation with the Women's Research Centre. In 1979, the IWD Coalition worked with a variety of other women's and labour groups, including the Canadian Proletarian Party newspaper, SORWUC, the Vancouver Council of Women, AUCE, CUPW, and the BC Federation of Labour. They produced a variety of information pamphlets, hosted an information day on women's issues with speakers and a bake sale, hosted a concert, and advertised for a rally and demonstration about various issues related to women's liberation.

Series contents include photograph negatives and textual records relating to the organization of International Women's Day events in 1977 and 1979. Textual materials include administrative records (meeting minutes, committee reports, handwritten notes, mailing lists, correspondence, and event itineraries), promotional materials (flyers, posters, pamphlets, and information sheets), and newspaper clippings. Mailing lists cover organizations and individuals from the greater Vancouver region.

Physical description: 2.8 cm textual records, 8 negatives (on 2 film strips), 1 contact sheet

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-29	File - Mailing Lists	n.d.		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-33	File - International Women's Day - 1977 Leaflets	1977		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-33-PH-01 to 09	Item - Photographs			
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-34	File - IWD Coalition - 1977	1977		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-37	File - International Women's Day 1979	1978-1979		

Research

Date: 1883-1979 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series includes research conducted by Rachel Epstein and for her by others. Research materials include: articles, book chapters, and research reports (written by students). Articles are frequently from the Labour Gazette about domestic and farm workers, including reports on working conditions and worker testimonials. Book chapters are mostly written by Studs Terkel. One file contains pay stubs and time sheets for workers of a company called Comcare.

Physical description: 9.7 cm textual records

<u>Publication status:</u>				
published				
File / item list				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-02	File - Revolution in Agriculture 1953	1953		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-03	File - Annual Convention - B.C. Federation of Agriculture 1954	1954		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-04	File - UFW (Labour Gazette - 1968)	1968		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-05	File - Labour Gazette 1974 (Farm Worker Abuse)	1974		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-06	File - Farm Worker (description)	1974		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-07	File - My Life (Description of farmworker)	1978		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-08	File - Effects of Farm Mechanization on Labour - Labour Gazette 1931	1931		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-09	File - "The Oriental Agriculturalist in B.C. - 1928"	1928		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-10	File - Notes from Labour Gazette	n.d.		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-11	File - Domestic Helpers Need New Deal from Sat. Night 1946	1946		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-12	File - Shortage of Home Helpers from Sat. Night 1946	1946		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-13	File - Domestic Servants 1883-84 B.C. Sessional Papers	1883-1884		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-14	File - Domestic Service (Labour Gazette 1902)	1902		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-15	File - Home and Domestic Employee's Union - Labour Gazette 1914	1914		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-16	File - Statistics on Japanese Labour 1908-1921	n.d.		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-17	File - Immigrant Workers Labour Gazette 1974	1974		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-18	File - Excerpts "Special Committee on Orientals in B.C."	n.d.		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-19	File - Research: Sources	n.d.		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-20	File - C.C.F. Oriental Immigration	n.d.		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-21	File - Domestic (Description)	[1974]		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-22	File - Women and the Helping Associations (YWCA, Salvation Army) from B.C. Women's Institute	[1888-1944]		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-23	File - Notes on B.C. Sessional Papers 1880-1904	n.d.		
RBSC-ARC-1859-03-24	File - Excerpts Early Forms of Political Activity Among White Women in B.C.	1971		

RBSC- ARC-1859-03-25	File - Excerpt from 1909 "Women's Life and Work in B.C."	1909
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-26	File - Domestic Service in Canada	[1974]
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-27	File - Corporate Research	[1970-1976]
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-28	File - Oppressed Workers Society	1975
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-30	File - Why Some Women Can't Get Household Help - Chatelaine 1969	1969
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-31	File - Scandalous Conditions of Women Workers at C.P.R. Hotel 1919	1919
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-32	File - Homemakers	Aug. 1979
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-35	File - Research done by W.S. students on domestic labour 1976-77	1976-1977
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-36	File - [British Colonial Homemaking in B.C.]	2 May 1971
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-38	File - [Domestic Workers - General Articles]	1913-1974
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-39	File - Contracting out, agencies, etc.	1976-1978
RBSC- ARC-1859-03-40	File - Janitorial Subcontractors	Feb.-Jul. 1977