

University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections

Finding Aid - Tom McEwen fonds (RBSC-ARC-1363)

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University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections

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Tom McEwen fonds

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Summary information

Repository: University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections

Title: Tom McEwen fonds

ID: RBSC-ARC-1363

Date: 1914-1977 (date of creation)

Physical description: 1.2 m of textual records

**Dates of creation,
revision and deletion:**

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Thomas McEwen was born in Scotland and moved to Canada in 1912. A blacksmith by trade, he was active throughout his life in the labour movement and as a member of the Socialist Party of Canada and its successor, the Communist Party of Canada. He was also Secretary-General of the Workers' Unity League before its demise in 1936. Between 1931 and 1944, he was imprisoned for seven years for his communist activities. In 1944, McEwen began his career as a newspaper editor, first with the Yukoner and later with the Pacific Tribune in British Columbia. He also ran unsuccessfully in the 1945 federal election as a labour candidate in the Yukon.

Scope and content

The fonds consists of documents made and received in the course of pursuing activities and interests in labour and communist issues. Fonds includes books, correspondence, magazines, manuscripts, newsletters, pamphlets, press clippings, and reports.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the contents of the fonds.

Finding aids

Inventory available.

Related material

Lily (Steinman) Greene, who worked with the W.U.L., was a close friend of the McEwen family for many years. The Lily Green Fonds contains a rich collection of 171 letters from Tom McEwen spanning the decades from 1944 to 1976, as well as 4 letters from his wife, Rose McEwen; her sister, Anne Belenkaya; and Norman McEwen, Tom and Rose's son, and his family. The letters are mostly of a personal nature but many contain discussions of, or references to, issues important to the Communist Party in Canada and elsewhere, including Tom's observations of and opinions on events occurring both at home and internationally, like the Vietnam war.

In this fonds are 22 photographs of Tom McEwen and various family members. A clippings file contains an assortment of newspaper clippings, some columns and opinion pieces written by Tom McEwen, with the majority on issues or events concerning a member of the McEwen family. The clippings cover the period from 1950 through to 2000. The fonds also contains two essays written by Tom McEwen and an audiocassette of a talk he gave in 1974 to a Grade 11 class taught by his grandson, Harry Ewen. The cassette also contains a recording of a CBC program "This Morning" that aired in 2000 and which incorporated that lecture as part of the program.

Accruals

No further accruals expected.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** published

Series descriptions

Correspondence - General

Date: 1951-1972 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series contains personal correspondence, mostly incoming (with one copy of an outgoing letter from Tom to Mr. Donald Evans, dated June 3, 1966). Letters are both handwritten and typed, from a single page to multiple pages.

Physical description: 1 file folder, approx. 22 pieces of correspondence.

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-01	File - Correspondence - General	1951-1972		

Correspondence - Pacific Tribune

Date: 1949-1966 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series contains correspondence directed to Tom in his capacity as editor of the Pacific Tribune. Letters are both handwritten and typed, from a single page to multiple pages.

Physical description: 1 file folder, approx. 10 pieces of correspondence.

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-02	File - Correspondence - Pacific Tribune	1949-1966		

Correspondence - Letters of Testimony

Date: 1941-1942 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series contains correspondence relating to Tom's release from Headley provincial jail and subsequent internment in the Hull Concentration Camp in Hull, Quebec. The bulk of the correspondence are letters of testimony asserting the good character of Tom McEwen, solicited by Tom's family as support for the efforts to have him released. Series also contains correspondence from government departments and officials commenting on Tom's case.

Letters are typed and range from a single page to multiple pages.

Physical description: 1 file folder, approx. 59 pieces of correspondence.

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-03	File - Correspondence - Letters of Testimony	1941-1942		

Yukon election materials

Date: 1935-1945 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series contains materials relating to Tom's campaign as a candidate for the Labour-Progressive Party in the June 11, 1945 Federal Election. Included in the series are statistical and informational campaign materials, correspondence, and publications such as the Labour Election Campaign Bulletin and copies of The Yukoner and The Dawson News. There are also miscellaneous promotional materials relating to Yukon Carnival Week, including copies of the Carnival Daily Bulletin.

Physical description: 5 file folders.

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
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RBSC-ARC-1363-1-04	File - Yukon election materials	1940-1945
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-05	File - Yukon election materials	[1945]
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-06	File - Yukon election materials	1945
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-07	File - Yukon election materials	1935-1945
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-08	File - Press clippings related to Yukon election	1945
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-09	File - Yukon election materials	1945

Written material - personal

Date: n.d. (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series contains a handwritten journal of notes relating to the development of Communism.

Physical description: 1 file folder.

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-10	File - Journal of notes relating to the development of Communism	n.d.		

Written material - draft manuscripts

Date: 1936-1971 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series contains drafts of books and essays written by Tom McEwen. Included in the series are drafts for a Labour History of Canada, "Prison Bars", "Vignettes of the Red Army", "Aviation Day in the U.S.S.R.", "Maoism – Now a Shameless Auxiliary to U.S. Imperialism", "The History of the U.L.F.T.A.", and "Men of the Forest – The Story of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union of Canada." Drafts are both handwritten and typed, single page, on legal and letter-sized paper.

Physical description: 5 file folders.

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-11	File - Draft of Labour History of Canada			
RBSC-ARC-1363-1-12	File - Draft of "Prison Bars"			
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-01	File - Draft of "Vignettes of the Red Army" and "Aviation Day in the U.S.S.R."			
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-02	File - Various draft manuscripts			
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-03	File - Various draft manuscripts			

Collected written material

Date: [19-?] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series contains drafts of essays not written by Tom McEwen. Included in the series are: “The Mine Workers’ Union of Canada and the Great Pass Strike of 1932” by Allen Seager; “Basic Highlights of the Labor History – Lakehead and Canada”, by A.T. Hill; and a computer printout of an untitled work that describes events related to the confrontations between CPC Party members and Toronto police during the late 20s and 30s. The printout is dated September 4, 1976 and contains editing notes throughout. It is not known who wrote this piece. Also contained in this series are political and union essays: “Some Notes of the AHT Indians” by Morris Swadesh, “Strengthen the Struggle Against the Right Danger! (Statement of the Political Committee, Communist Party of Canada)”, and a few other writings which do not have titles.

Lastly, there is a collection of poems by Jake Bell which date from 1960 – 1965.

Materials are all typed, single page, on legal and letter-sized paper.

Physical description: 3 file folders.

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-04	File - Drafts of essays not written by Tom McEwen			
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-05	File - Political and union essays			
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-06	File - Poems by Jake Bell	1960-1965		

Pamphlets, Bulletins, Newsletters, Reports

Date: 1909-[197-] (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series contains numerous publications and reports on a variety of subjects relating to Tom McEwen’s Communist and socialist interests.

Physical description: 6 file folders.

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-07	File - Yukon related pamphlets, bulletins, newsletters, reports	1906-1927		
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-08	File - Pamphlets, bulletins, newsletters, reports	1937-1956		
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-09	File - Pamphlets, bulletins, newsletters, reports	[1960-1967]		
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-10	File - Pamphlets, bulletins, newsletters, reports	1970-1976		
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-11	File - Pamphlets, bulletins, newsletters, reports			
RBSC-ARC-1363-2-12	File - Pamphlets, bulletins, newsletters, reports	[1919-1975]		

Labour Union materials

Date: 1928-1977 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series contains material relating to various labour unions and associated activities, as follows:

- Workers' Unity League – History [Phillip Rankin]
- Workers' Unity League – Executive membership list and minutes
- The Marine Workers' and Boilermakers' Industrial Union – Survey Report
- National Council for Democratic Rights – bulletins, pamphlets and proceedings
- Labour Union – general correspondence and reports

Physical description: 5 file folders.

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1363-3-01	File - Workers' Unity League - History [Phillip Rankin]			
RBSC-ARC-1363-3-02	File - Workers' Unity League - Executive membership list and minutes	1935-1936		
RBSC-ARC-1363-3-03	File - The Marine Workers' and Boilermakers' Industrial Union - Survey Report	1939-1953		
RBSC-ARC-1363-3-04	File - National Council for Democratic Rights - bulletins, pamphlets and proceedings	1939-1942		
RBSC-ARC-1363-3-05	File - Labour Union - general correspondence and reports	[1917-1948]		

Press Clippings

Date: 1914-1975 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

This series contains numerous newspaper clippings from a variety of publications.

Physical description: 4 file folders.

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1363-3-06	File - Newspaper clippings	1914-1975		
RBSC-ARC-1363-3-07	File - Newspaper clippings	1919-1968		
RBSC-ARC-1363-3-08	File - Newspaper clippings	1951-1975		
RBSC-ARC-1363-3-09	File - Newspaper clippings	1918-1965		