

GARTH BROWN COLLECTION

Inventory

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Prepared by: Norman Amor

GARTH BROWN COLLECTION

Introduction

Donald Garth Brown, born Nov. 22, 1942, in Kimberley, B.C., came to Vancouver in 1960 as a student at UBC; settling here, he became an active presence in several aspects of the labour movement in B.C. between 1961 and his accidental death in 1987. Politically, he was a founding member of the NDP, ran as an NDP candidate in Point Grey in 1966, and was an active committee member in the TEAM campaigns in 1968-72; he ran also as an aldermanic candidate for TEAM in 1970. He was active in many NDP committees, including particularly the Labour Policy Committee, which he chaired 1973-79, and he was chairman of the Scott/Swanson NDP provincial campaign in Vancouver-Little Mountain, 1981-82.

In the trade union movement Brown was prominent in union activities at Eburne Sawmill in South Vancouver. He had joined IWA Local 1-217 in June 1964, as a student working his way through university (by 1968 he had completed the course work at UBC toward an honours degree in Political Science, but he never got around to completing his graduating essay). A shop steward in 1969, he was elected to the Plant Committee in 1970, and was quickly appointed Plant Chairman; he kept this position at the head of the Plant Committee through most of the 1970s. Meanwhile, he completed his qualifications as a millwright, finishing the 4-stage millwright program in two and a half years, 1974-76, at the top of his class. A regular convention-goer, he also sat on various IWA committees.

In 1976 (a tumultuous year which saw also his divorce from his wife, Jill, and the completion of the final two segments of his apprenticeship training), and in 1978-79 he attended the CLC Labour College of Canada, and this seems to have sparked his active interest in Labour Education (though he had known Art Kube, CLC's Regional Director of Education, since the mid-60s). In January 1979 he

attended the Instructors' Training course at the CLC Winter School at Harrison; in the fall of that year he was himself running a Basic Stewardship course, and in April 1980 his appointment was confirmed as Regional Coordinator of the Labour Education and Studies Centre (LESC) of the CLC. For three hectic years he coordinated the Winter School program, and numerous conferences, weekend schools and seminars. Many of the latter were run in conjunction with local labour councils and Simon Fraser University, and he acted as advisor to developers of Labour Studies programs in various schools, colleges, and labour organizations.

In late 1982 Brown returned to Eburne and, though he continued to teach at Winter Schools, he resumed his active role in union activities, particularly on the Plant Committee and the Industrial Health and Safety Committee.

Brown died suddenly in a canoeing accident on October 18, 1987, aged only 44: a detailed obituary article appeared in the Democrat 27, no. 9 (Nov. 87): 11. His papers were left in great disorder, but have here been arranged to reflect his three key interests, the NDP, labour education, and trade unionism. Brown prided himself on his dedication, efficiency and pragmatism, and the records he produced and collected form useful supplements to more extensive collections in each area of interest.

NDP materials (Boxes 1-2): Brown's own minutes and memoranda of his work in the Labour Policy Committee are the chief highlights of the NDP materials, along with his correspondence, minutes and other materials relative to several Vancouver-Little Mountain campaigns. He also preserved notes of early Executive Meetings, 1966-68. In civic politics, as well as being an important TEAM supporter, he attended, and commented critically on, early meetings of the NDP Vancouver Area Council.

Labour Education (Boxes 2-13): Brown's subject files, which form the bulk of the collection, reflect the preoccupations of labour education in the 1970s and 1980s, providing a range of background materials on a wide variety of topics, materials which he would use in course development. In subject matter, courses covered basic shop stewardship, grievance handling, and contract negotiation, as well as more ambitious and theoretical topics such as equal opportunity, technological change, labour law, economic policy, and so on. The collection includes many instructor's manuals and teaching guides. In addition, Brown's papers reflecting the activities of the CLC LESC between about 1979 and 1984 supplement our holdings of this body's records, which had reached down only to the mid-70s. The expansion in the scope and number of programs offered is remarkable.

Trade Unionism (Boxes 13-16): Brown's Eburne and IWA papers reflect in some detail the activities of the Plant Committee and the Safety Committee, together with various subcommittees, through the 1970s and 1980s. These years saw many crises in both areas--strikes, major arbitration cases, and a serious chemical spill. The general trend in both these joint committees, however, is a growing atmosphere of

productive cooperation, especially in the Safety Committee, which becomes distinctly less confrontational and more systematic in its approach to problems and procedures for dealing with them.

A good deal of overlap exists of course among these three areas of interest, and an Index is provided to supplement the classified arrangement and to help overcome problems of subject scatter among the subject and corporate series.

Records which directly document the personal life of Garth Brown are also necessarily scattered among all series. A brief Personal series concludes the archive, and other useful data may be found especially under LESC General Correspondence (11-22ff), and in his essays, under Labour & Politics (10-21)

Finally, Brown's papers include a large number of published pamphlets, which have been included in the Special Collections Pamphlet Collection (SPAM).

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3-16	--CLC Instructor's Manual, 1979	1
3-17	--CLC Weekend Institute	2
3-18	--CLC (Prairie Region) Course	1
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3-20	--HREU Weekend Course, 1981	7
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3-22	--IWA Materials	2
3-23	--TWA	1
3-24	--Union of National Defence Employees	1
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7-24	--OFL Bargaining Simulation	3
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