

LEVEL OF DESCRIPTION:

Fonds

No.:

AU001

TITLE:

Roberts family fonds

CREATOR:

Roberts, Orlando

Roberts, Edith

Roberts, Frederick W.

Roberts, Edith

Roberts, Alexander

Roberts, Constance

Roberts, Malcolm

DATE RANGE:

1796–2005; predominant 1890–1940

EXTENT:

865 photographs and other material

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Orlando J. Roberts was born in Scotland on July 16, 1859. His wife, Edith, was born June 6, 1868 in Northhamptonshire, England and they married in 1887. Together they had five children, Fredrick (Fred) William James, Edith, Alexander (Alex), Constance (Connie), and Malcolm. Orlando J. Roberts and his family emigrated from Sydenham, England in 1899 along with Orlando's brother Fred Roberts and his family, and they arrived in Edmonton, Alberta at the beginning of September of that year.

The two families acquired homesteads in the vicinity of Millet, Alberta with the Orlando J. Roberts family homesteading at NW 10-47-25-W5. They remained there until 1905 when they travelled north by wagon and scow to Fort Chipewyan, Alberta.

In 1906, O.J. Roberts was admitted into the Order of Deacons at St. Paul's Church, Fort Chipewyan and in 1909 he was admitted into the Order of Priests at St. Paul's Church. Later that year Edith Roberts married Richard Field, a Royal North West Mounted Police (R.N.W.M.P.) corporal, who had been placed in charge at Fort Chipewyan. Richard Field's family had moved from Cork, Ireland to land east of Gibbons, Alberta.

Between 1911 and 1912, the Roberts family, with the exception of Edith and Richard Field, departed Fort Chipewyan due to the Reverend (Rev.) O.J. Roberts' ill health. They settled east of Gibbons at what was then known as Battenburg, Alberta. In 1912, Rev.

O.J. Roberts was granted the office of priest in charge of the Battenburg mission and he ministered at the Emmanuel Anglican Church in Battenburg, which was moved to Gibbons, Alberta in 1935. The Rev. Roberts served the Gibbons, Bon Accord and Redwater, Alberta districts for roughly 25 years.

Fred Roberts worked as the first school teacher for Heathfield School District No. 3154 ca.1916 and then enlisted to serve in WWI where he died overseas in 1918. Alexander also served overseas during WWI, returning home safely, and Malcolm enlisted during WWII and served overseas, returning to Alberta after the Armistice was signed.

Rev. O.J. Roberts died in 1938. His wife Edith, along with their son and daughter, Connie and Alex, remained on the family farm until Edith died in 1956. At that time Connie and Alex moved to Gibbons where they lived together until Constance died in 1977. Alexander moved to Edmonton, eventually ending up in the Norwood Extended Care Centre. Malcolm married a woman named Francis and moved to Creston, British Columbia where he died sometime after 1985.

CUSTODIAL HISTORY:

This accession was donated by Bernard Wiese of Westlock, Alberta in 2007. He received the material from Malcolm and Francis Roberts. The glass negative was received from the Athabasca Town Archives in 2008.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

Fonds includes of photographs, negatives, a glass negative, and postcards depicting scenes from northern Alberta, such as Fort Chipewyan, from the North West Territories such as Fort Smith and Fort McPherson, from central Alberta such as Edmonton and Gibbons, and from British Columbia, such as Dawson.

Many photographs depict men tracking scows up river through river rapids, often the Athabasca and the Peace River, as well as various agricultural scenes. There are also photographs of Native Americans, dog sledding teams, and friends and family members, as well as wedding photographs from the marriage of Richard and Edith Field and photographs of the Lost Patrol and their memorial service.

Textual records consist of letters and cards to and from family members, calendars, books, including Bibles translated into Cree, newspaper clippings, paintings, picture albums, and letters of ordainment for Rev. O.J. Roberts.

Artifacts include Native American artifacts such as leather gloves, moccasins, pouches, and beadwork. Also included are tools such as nails, scissors, knives, axe heads, metal buckets, baskets, and scrapers. The fonds include a medicine chest containing bottles of medicine, as well as jewelry and R.N.W.M.P. uniform buttons.

SOURCE OF TITLE:

Title taken from the contents of the fonds.

DATE NOTE:

Fonds includes duplicate enlargements of some photographs, made by Bernard Weise circa 2005.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Fonds also contains 445 negatives. – 225 artifact items. – 160 postcards. – 142 duplicates of photographs. – 0.84 m of textual records

PHYSICAL CONDITION:

Some negatives have damage to the emulsion; paint is cracking on item number 1959; two small cut-out photographs are attached to a large photograph (item 2130) and these small cut-outs are loose.

CONSERVATION:

Photographs have been removed from photograph albums (items 957 and 1263). Prior to removal, the pages were photocopied to record the original layout of the photographs.

ARRANGEMENT NOTE:

Items were not received in any discernible order.

LANGUAGE NOTE:

The material is in English and Cree (Bibles).

ACCESS CONDITIONS:

None.

USE CONDITIONS:

Permission for use required. Subject to *The Copyright Act*.

FINDING AIDS:

File list and scanned images available.

INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING ACCESSIONS:

2007.006, 2008.002

Further accruals are not expected.

ASSOCIATED MATERIAL:

Other material related to the Rev. O.J. Robertson fonds can be found accession 85.222/222 at the Alice B. Donahue Library and Archives in Athabasca, Alberta and in accessions 70.201/15 (item 5/1), 70.0387, and 70.387 (item A210/36) at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta.

RELATED RECORDS:

See fonds number AU0002 for other items donated by Bernard Weise.

GENERAL NOTE:

Information about the Roberts family was obtained from the records, from an interview with the donor, and from the following books: *A Register of Service* by Elizabeth McCrum, Athabasca Archives, 85.244/32, 1976, Valley Printers, Peace River, Alberta; *Our Treasured Roots: A History of Gibbons & Surrounding Areas*, Gibbons History Committee, Gibbons, Alberta 1982; *Tales and Trails of Millet*, Vol. 2, Millet and District Historical Society, Millet, Alberta, 1978.

The fonds level description and finding aids were created by Clara Richardson (summer student) in 2007.

SUBJECT HEADINGS:

Alberta, Northern
Anglican Church of Canada - - Missions
Transportation - - Athabasca River
Transportation - - Peace River
Boats and boating
Indians - - Fort Chipewyan
Royal Canadian Mounted Police