

OISE Library

Finding Aid - Canadian Farm Radio Forum collection (3)

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Canadian Farm Radio Forum collection

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Summary information

Repository: OISE Library
Title: Canadian Farm Radio Forum collection
ID: 3
Date: 1938-1969, 1986 (date of creation)

Physical description: 0.75 m of textual records
3 scrapbooks
2 photographic negatives
1 cassette tape

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

Note [generalNote]: Evidence contained within the records suggests that the majority of the records in this collection were compiled and/or created by Rodger Schwass, who worked for the National Farm Radio Forum and later did graduate research on the subject of the Farm Radio Forum.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

From 1941-1964, the Canadian Farm Radio Forum operated as a mechanism for rural adult education, using the radio to reach large numbers of Canadians simultaneously despite Canada's wide geographic distances. Advertised as a discussion group for Canadian farm families, the Farm Radio Forum was equally established to empower rural Canadians, who were particularly hard-hit by the Great Depression: the goal was to help them develop solutions to the economic challenges they faced.

Sponsored by the Canadian Association for Adult Education, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Farm Radio Forum launched in Ontario, the Maritime provinces, and English-speaking Quebec in January 1941. In the fall of 1941, the Farm Radio Forum expanded into western Canada. Farm Forum groups were organized in communities across the country, with provincial committees established to coordinate with the national office. At its peak in 1949, approximately 1600 groups were registered with the Farm Radio Forum, with over 21,000 individuals tuning into the weekly broadcast. The average size of a Farm Forum group was about 15-17 members, although some were small as 5-6 or as large as 35-40.

Farm Forum groups gathered at a neighbour's home to listen to the broadcast. The Farm Radio Forum broadcast aired every Monday night from November to March. Each broadcast was 25 minutes long, followed by a 5 minute provincial newscast with a summary of local activities. The broadcasts themselves used a variety of formats, from speeches and interviews to discussion panels to dramatizations set on the fictional "Sunnybridge Farm." The broadcasts addressed a wide range of topics, such as "Should Farmers

Grow More?," "Can We Pay Off Our Mortgages?," and "The Farmer's Image." A Farm Forum Guide with information and articles about each topic was distributed to Farm Forum members a week in advance, allowing members to study the topic before the broadcast aired. These Farm Forum Guides also provided groups with sets of questions to facilitate discussion following the broadcast. This discussion could last anywhere from 30 minutes to two or three hours. Following the discussion, each group would report back to the Provincial Farm Forum Secretary with their conclusions, and every fourth week the radio broadcast would feature a summary of Farm Forum groups' opinions from across the country.

According to the 1949 Farm Radio Forum Handbook, in addition to fostering educational discussion, the Farm Radio Forum increased neighbourliness, broadened members' horizons, and even influenced public opinion. Furthermore, the problem solving ethos of the Farm Radio Forum resulted in concrete community action projects. These projects varied according to local needs, and included building recreation facilities such as skating rinks and swimming pools, livestock vaccinations and disease control, road improvement, rural mail delivery, purchasing school equipment, providing school bus services, building community halls, and extending electrical and telephone service to rural homes, as well as giving donations to existing charities.

The Radio Forum model of adult education was adopted in other parts of the world in the 1950s, including India, France, and Ghana. Founded in 1979, Farm Radio International continued to carry out this type of programming and today supports farmers and rural communities in over 30 African countries.

Scope and content

The collection contains materials related to the Canadian Farm Radio Forum, which ran from 1941-1964. Records in this collection relate to the operation of the Canadian Farm Radio Forum, as well as to international initiatives and research. The materials in this collection include meeting minutes, correspondence, memoranda, surveys and questionnaires, reports, broadcast programming and transcripts, pamphlets and promotional materials, research notes, articles, newspaper clippings, and scrapbooks. The collection has been arranged into 6 series.

Notes

Title notes

Physical condition

Some of the paper in this collection has become extremely brittle. Additionally, some of the records produced on facsimile paper have faded. Both photographic negatives exhibit signs of vinegar syndrome.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published

Series descriptions

Series 3-1: Program Administration

Date: 1941-1966 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series contains documents related to the operation of the National Farm Radio Forum. These documents include meeting minutes, correspondence, reports, surveys, broadcast programming, and copies of Farm Forum Guides.

Physical description: 26 cm of textual records

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
3-1-1	File - Minutes of National Committee	1942-1953		
3-1-2	File - Early Programming and Planning	1941-1947		
3-1-3	File - Questionnaires	1941, 1958-1964		
3-1-4	File - Action Projects	1941-1954, 1963		
3-1-5	File - Ephemera	1941-1964		
3-1-6	File - National Farm Radio Forum - CAAE Library	1941-1948, 1956-1966		

Series 3-2: Program Development

Date: 1960-1966 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series contains records related to program development from the 1960s. This program development included the Agriculture Rehabilitation and Development Administration as well as a committee exploring the future of the Farm Radio Forum.

Physical description: 5 cm of textual records

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
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3-2-1	File - ARDA [Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Administration]	1963-1966
3-2-2	File - Project Committee [Farm Forum Development Project]	1960-1961

Series 3-3: International Farm Radio Forum Projects

Date: 1961-1964 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series contains records related to Farm Radio Forum work in other countries, including India, Nigeria, and Ghana.

Physical description: 5.5 cm of textual records

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
3-3-1	File - Farm Forum Correspondence and Materials Re: Overseas Aid	1961-1963		
3-3-2	File - Farm Radio Forums - Ghana	1962-1964		

Series 3-4: Farm Radio Forum Research

Date: 1938-1969, 1986 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series consists of records produced or collected through doing research into the Canadian Farm Radio Forum.

Physical description: 28.6 cm of textual records

2 photographic negatives

1 cassette tape

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Subseries 3-4-1: Farm Radio Forum Books

Date: 1938-1969 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Subseries consists of Farm Radio Forum records that had been compiled for research purposes, as well as additional handwritten research notes. These records and notes had been stored in binders and arranged by the creator into five "books" according to year.

Physical description: 19 cm of textual records

Physical condition:

Some of the documents produced on facsimile paper are very faded.

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
3-4-1-1	File - Farm Radio Forum Book 1	1938-1945, 1966-1969		
3-4-1-2	File - Farm Radio Forum Book 2	1946-1949		
3-4-1-3	File - Farm Radio Forum Book 3	1950-1959		
3-4-1-4	File - Farm Radio Forum Book 4	1960-1964		
3-4-1-5	File - Farm Radio Forum Book 5	1942-1967		
3-4-1	File - Graduate Research - Farm Radio Forum and Adult Education	1954-1968		
3-4-2	File - Alex Simm - History of Farm Radio Forum	1986		
3-4-3	File - National Farm Radio Forum - Short History	196-		

Series 3-5: Rural Sociology

Date: 1956-1967 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series contains records on the subject of rural sociology. These records include reports, conference transcripts, articles, studies, correspondence, surveys, pamphlets, newsletters, and a bibliography.

Physical description: 10 cm of textual records

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Series 3-6: Scrapbooks

Date: 1941-1965 (date of creation)

Physical description: 2 cm of textual records

3 scrapbooks

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
3-6-1	File - 1961-1962 Season	1944-1945, 1960-1965		
3-6-2	File - Ten Years of Farm Radio Forum	1941-1951		
3-6-3	File - Canada's Farm Radio Forum	1950-1958		