

Genealogical Resources at the Maritime Conference Archives

About Us:

The Maritime Conference Archives is mandated to collect, preserve, and provide access to the records of the Maritime Conference of the United Church of Canada. We also hold pre-1925 records of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational congregations in the Maritimes which joined The United Church of Canada in 1925.

Our holdings include records from:

- The pastoral charges of the Maritime Conference. A pastoral charge is a grouping of churches termed “preaching points”—each with separate names and governing boards or sessions. These churches are served by one minister. The pastoral charge title usually reflects the breadth of the geographic area encompassing the charge such as Amherst: Trinity-St. Stephen’s Pastoral Charge or Sackville Pastoral Charge)
- The Maritime Conference office
- The Presbyteries within the Maritime Conference (regional groupings of pastoral charges, for example, Halifax Presbytery)
- Pine Hall Divinity Hall (now part of Atlantic School of Theology)
- Church camps
- Individuals who have ministered within the churches or held leadership positions in the Conference

Contact Information:

Location: 21 Wright Street, Sackville, NB Canada E4L 4P8

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Email: archives@marconf.ca

Website: <http://marconf.ca/archives/>

Hours: Tuesdays-Thursdays, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. It is recommended that researchers make appointments.

Visiting the Archives:

The Archives is located at the Maritime Conference Office. When planning a visit to the Archives, it is strongly recommended that an appointment be made in advance.

Wi-Fi and electrical outlets are available in the research room. There is one microfilm reader for use but this reader does not have printing capabilities.

The fee for photocopying is 25 cents per page. There is no charge to do research at the Archives although donations are always welcomed.

Research Requests:

The archivist will do research requests from a distance but the more details that can be provided about the search topic (i.e. dates, locations, full names, etc), the easier the search will be. We do not have an index of names to our baptism, marriage, and burial registers.

Our Holdings:

Church Records:

The Archives holds local church records of the United Church and its uniting denominations (Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian) for New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Although the Maritime Conference also encompasses Bermuda and the Gaspé coast of Quebec, the Archives holds very few records for these areas.

Finding aids and records listings are available for most churches. Some of these finding aids are available online at: <http://marconf.ca/archives/>

Some church records have also been microfilmed. Microfilmed records of Maritime Conference churches can also be found at the Nova Scotia Archives and the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick.

Church Registers:

The Maritime Conference Archives holds baptism/marriage/burial registers for many of the pre-1925 Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches within the Maritimes as well as post-1925 United Church registers.

Before provincial governments began to require the registration of vital statistics, ministers kept records of the baptisms, marriages, and burials they presided over and it is in these registers that genealogists are able to find vital information about their ancestors that may not be recorded elsewhere. Note, however, that early marriage records often did not include the names of the parents of the bride and groom.

Very few of the registers are indexed by name so when looking for a specific baptism, marriage, or burial, the approximate area of residence and a date range is required. For larger towns or cities such as Halifax or Moncton, it is most helpful if the name of the specific church is known.

The registers in most cases cannot be photocopied. The archivist can provide a certified record of baptism when required.

Privacy Restrictions on Registers:

The United Church of Canada takes the protection of privacy very seriously. Registers may be subject to restrictions depending on the dates of the entries within. The Maritime Conference Archives subscribes to the same restrictions on use of vital statistics set by the three Maritime Provinces which are as follows:

For registers from New Brunswick churches:

Baptisms: 95 year restriction after date of event
Marriages: 50 year restriction after date of event
Burials: 50 year restriction after date of event

For registers from Nova Scotia churches:

Baptisms: 100 year restriction after date of event
Marriages: 75 year restriction after date of event
Burials: 50 year restriction after date of event

For registers from Prince Edward Island churches:

Baptisms: Restricted for 120 years after date of event
Marriages: Restricted for 75 years after date of event
Burials: Restricted for 50 years after date of event

Any baptism, marriage, or burial falling within these years can only be viewed by the person listed in the register entry.

Communion Rolls/Membership Rolls

Communion rolls and membership rolls can also be very useful as they provide a listing of members of a church over a large span of time. The community in which a member resides is often included. Sometimes these rolls will list when a person has moved from an area or when they passed away.

Cemetery Records:

The Archives holds very few cemetery records.

Newspapers:

The Archives holds newspapers published by the Presbyterians, Methodists, and the United Church in the Maritimes. This includes the Presbyterian Witness (1841-1925), The Wesleyan, the Methodist publication, (1851-1925), and The United Churchman (1925-1968), which was the Maritime Conference newspaper. In every edition of these newspapers, birth, marriage, and death notices were printed. Sometimes there would also be a longer obituary. These newspapers are also a valuable resource for information about specific churches. The newspapers have been microfilmed and there are name indexes available. We also have printed indexes to the vital statistics found in The Wesleyan and The Presbyterian Witness. The vital statistics are indexed by name and in most entries include the full transcription of the text found in the newspaper.

Photographs:

Photographs take up about 5% of our holdings. Many of the photographs are of various churches, church events, and ministers but we also have a few photographs of individuals and families.

Personal Papers:

The Archives hold some family and individual papers. These papers can provide more detailed information on specific individuals such as ministers.

Some ministers kept personal registers of the baptisms, marriages, and burials they performed at the various pastoral charges they served at. A few of these registers can be found within the private papers of ministers.

Directories and Biographical Information on Ministers:

We have directories of Methodist ministers from 1903-1925, Presbyterian ministers from 1875-1925, Congregational ministers from 1831-1883, and United Church ministers from 1925-2011. These directories list the date when the minister was ordained as well as information on charges served at. We also have biographical files on ministers and other individuals who played a prominent role in the church.

Biographical Files:

The Archives has compiled numerous biographical files on ministers and lay workers within the church. These files include obituaries, newspaper clippings, and other biographical information.

Church History Files:

The Archives holds local church history vertical files on many of the churches within the Maritime Conference.