

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies (Fresno)
Record Group A245
Historical Commission. Records, 1970-[ongoing].
1.92 linear feet
122 microfilm reels

Historical note

The Historical Commission of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches was established at the 1969 General Conference as a subcommittee of the Board of Christian Literature. The Commission's responsibilities were threefold: 1) to strengthen historical consciousness within the Mennonite Brethren Church; 2) to develop policies and procedures for the preservation of historical records; 3) to establish archival centers for the deposit of these records.

The Historical Commission has taken responsibility for the publication of books and resource materials, produced films and videos and sponsored numerous symposia in the interest of Mennonite Brethren Church historical identity. In the late 1970s it sponsored a project to microfilm records of most North American Mennonite Brethren congregations, copies of which were placed in the various Mennonite Brethren archival centers.

Three archival centers were established with the encouragement of the Historical Commission and assigned responsibility for the preservation of conference records. The Hillsboro, Kansas, Center was given responsibility for United States, Central District and Southern District records, the Winnipeg, Manitoba, Centre was given responsibility for Canadian and provincial conference records, and the Fresno, California, Center was given responsibility for the General Conference and Pacific District records. Of the three centers, the Fresno Center has been the most directly linked to the Historical Commission, both because it is the General Conference archives and because the Executive Secretary of the Historical Commission has been its Director.

At the 1984 General Conference administrative oversight of the Historical Commission was transferred from the Board of Christian Literature to the Board of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. At this time the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Fresno was made directly responsible to the Commission. Prior to this time the Fresno Center was incorporated independently and had its own board of directors. Despite this direct linkage, the records of the Fresno Center are maintained as a separate record group.

Scope and content note

This record group includes minutes of the Historical Commission, 1970-[ongoing]; files of Executive Secretary J. B. Toews, 1972-1983; files of J. B. Toews relating to the Cloud of Witnesses endowment project and other items after his retirement as Executive Secretary, 1984-1990; Essays submitted to the P. M. Friesen History Essay Contest, 1993-[ongoing]; preservation copies of congregational records microfilm reels, ca. 1978.

Organization and arrangement

This record group is organized into five series: I. Minutes, 1970-[ongoing]. II. files of Executive Secretary J. B. Toews, 1973-1990. III. P.M. Friesen History Essay Contest, 1993-[ongoing]; IV. Preservation microfilm copies of Mennonite Brethren congregational records.; V. other material. Series I is arranged chronologically; series II and III are arranged chronologically by topic or format; Series IV is arranged by reel number.

Restrictions on access

The microfilm reels in Series IV are preservation copies and are not to be used, except as needed to make new reference copies. Reference copies are stored in the reading room microfilm cabinet and are cataloged by individual congregation. Many of the congregational records on these reels contain restricted material; these restrictions are outlined in the relevant congregational registers.

(A245: Historical Commission)

Citation guidelines

Cite as: General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Historical Commission Records, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno, Calif.

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- Center for MB Studies, tensions and concerns, 1978-1981

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- Ecuador mission records correspondence, 1981-1984
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Biographical information
Baerg, Frank J. & Elizabeth
Balzer, Margaret Willems
Bestvater, William J.
Block, Isaac H.
Braun, B. J. & Linda
Dick, A. N. & Tena
Dirks, Alexander
Dyck, David
Franz, George & Mary
Froese, Frank F.
Goertzen, John D.
Goertzen, William & Martha
Harder, John A.
Hooge, David & Mary
Huebert, George B. & Marie
Lepp, Jakob & Kathrina
Martens, Henry & Lydia
Martens, Jacob A.
Neufeld, Heinrich A.
Peters, Henry K. & Elizabeth
Redekop, Benjamin F.
Reimer, Otto B.
Rempel, Henry S.
Sawatzky, Aron G.
Seibel, Robert C.
Swartz, Katharina
Thiessen, J. J.
Tiessen, Isaac
Voth, Heinrich
Wall, Cornelius & Agnes
Wiebe, Bill & Renate
Willems, H. A. & Augusta

Box 3

Series III: P. M. Friesen Essay contest
Posters, undated
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Series V: Other material
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Box 4

A245-0-4: Preservation microfilm of Mennonite Brethren congregational records (reels 1-50)

Box 5

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A245-0-4: Preservation microfilm of Mennonite Brethren congregational records (reels 51-100)

Box 6

A245-0-4: Preservation microfilm of Mennonite Brethren congregational records (reels 101-132)