

John W. Fisher Fonds
1937, 1944-1961, 1964-1989, 1993, n.d.

RG 75-19
Brock University Archives

Creator: Ontario Editorial Bureau

Extent: 76 cm of textual material (2 boxes)
55 photographs
1 slide
3 col. Mats
1 cassette
6 pins

Abstract: This archive contains materials relating mainly to the radio work of John Fisher. The archive also contains materials on the John Fisher Society which was created after his death in 1981.

Materials: Typed and handwritten correspondence, media releases, clippings, photographs.

Repository: Brock University Archives

Processed by: Jen Goul

Last updated: June 2007

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Preferred Citation: RG 75-19 John Fisher Fonds, 1937, 1944-1961, 1964-1989, n.d., Brock University Archives.

Acquisition Info.: This archive is part of the Ontario Editorial Bureau fonds, donated by Lou Cahill in November 1997.

History:

Norah and Fred Fisher welcomed John Fisher into the world on November 29, 1912, not knowing what an influential role he would play in shaping Canada's history.

John Fisher grew up as the middle child of five brothers and sisters in Frosty Hollow, New Brunswick, close to today's town of Sackville. Sackville's main industry was the Enterprise Foundry which the Fisher family owned and operated; however, Fisher had no plans of going into the family business. He was more inspired by his maternal grandfather, Dr. Cecil Wiggins, who lived with the family after retiring from the Anglican ministry. Wiggins encouraged all his grandchildren to be well read and to take part in discussions on current events. There were often visitors in the Fisher household taking part in discussions about politics, religion, and daily life. Fisher forced himself to take part in these conversations to help overcome his shyness in social settings. These conversations did help with his shyness and also in forming many opinions and observations about Canada. It put Fisher on the road to becoming Mr. Canada and delivering the many eloquent speeches for which he was known.

Fisher did not venture far from home to complete his first degree. In 1934 he graduated from Mount Allison University in Sackville, NB with an Arts degree. The same year Fisher enrolled in Dalhousie's law school. During his time at Dalhousie, Fisher discovered radio through Hugh Mills. Mills or "Uncle Mel" was on CHNS, Halifax's only radio station at the time. Fisher began by making appearances on the radio drama show. By 1941 he had begun writing and broadcasting his own works and joined the staff as an announcer and continuity writer.

In 1936 the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was formed, the first National radio station. Fisher joined the CBC shortly after its beginning and remained with them, as well as the Halifax Herald newspaper, even after his law school graduation in 1937. By 1943 Fisher's talks became a part of the CBC's programming for a group of maritime radio stations. Fisher once described his talks as follows "my talks weren't meant to be objective. . . they were meant to be favourable. They were 'pride builders'"¹ He began his famed *John Fisher Reports* at CBC Toronto when he transferred there shortly after the war. This program brought immense pride to the fellow Canadians he spoke about leading to approximately 3500 requests per year to speak at banquets and meetings throughout Canada and the United States.

Fisher was a well travelled individual who would draw on personal experiences to connect with his audience. His stories were told in simple, straight forward language for anyone to enjoy. He became a smooth, dynamic and passionate speaker who sold Canada to Canadians. He became a renowned journalist, folk historian, writer and broadcaster. Fisher was able to reach a vast array of people through his radio work and build Canadian pride, but he did not stop there.

Other ways Fisher has contributed to Canada and the Canadian people include:

Honoured by five Canadian Universities.

1956, became the Director of the Canadian Tourist Association.

1961, was appointed Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Canada.

1963, Commissioner of the Centennial Commission (the Federal Agency Responsible for Canada's 100th birthday)

1968, received the Service Medal , a coveted Order of Canada.

President of John Fisher Enterprises Ltd., private consultant work, specializing in Centennial planning, broadcasts, lectures and promotion.

John Fisher continued recording radio broadcasts even after his diagnosis with cancer. He would record 3 or 4 at a time so he was free to travel across Canada, the U.S., Europe and Mexico in search of treatments. Fisher passed away from the disease on February 15, 1981 and he is buried at Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Toronto.

John Fisher: The Canadians Bill McNeil box 2 folder 24

² John Fisher: The Canadians p.25

Scope and Content: The fonds contain materials relating to the life and work of John Fisher. The materials included are media releases, clippings, correspondence, radio scripts, two embossing stamps, publications and photographs. Some duplicates remain within the collection, such as press packages and event programs. The collection is divided into three series, correspondence, media and publications. The materials were placed in alphabetical order within a series and chronological order within designated titles. Original folder titles were retained and appear after the "includes" on the folders and finding aid. Media releases were removed from the correspondence and placed in their own series.

Organization: The records were arranged into three series:

Series I. Correspondence, 1949-1961, 1964-1976, 1978-1989

Series II. Media, 1937, 1944-1957, 1959, 1968, 1970-1974, 1976-1980, 1981, 1983-1985, 1993, n.d.

Series III. Publications, 1949, 1978, 1981

Inventory:

Series I. Correspondence, 1949-1950, 1952-1961, 1964-1976, 1978-1989

- 1.1-2.6 Correspondence, 1949-1961, 1964-1976, 1978-1989; includes direct mail, radio, bulk sales, John Fisher radio and public appearances, itinerary, 3rd Annual Northern Manitoba Trappers Festival Program, clippings, biography, requests for John Fisher transcripts (sampling), "The People's Paper", "Up the Gatineau" (publication of the historical society of the Gatineau), list of contributors, meeting minutes of the John Fisher Society, letters to the John Fisher Society (sampling of 198 letters), "John Fisher Tribute" cassette February 13, 1983, Canada from Sea unto Sea promotional materials, Ontario Heritage Foundation.
- 2.7-2.9 The John Fisher Society, 1981-1984; includes patrons, directors, board of directors, meeting minutes, directors listing, incorporation and letters patent. RESTRICTED: addresses

Series II. Media, 1937, 1944-1957, 1959, 1968, 1970-1974, 1976-1980, 1981, 1983-1985, 1993, n.d.

- 2.10 Media Releases, 1949-1950, 1955, 1957, 1959, 1970-1974, 1976-1980, 1983-1985, 1993,n.d. [3 photographs, 3 reproductions]
- 2.11 Media Releases, 1981; includes "A Memorial Tribute: John Wiggins Fisher" 1912-1981
- 2.12 John Fisher Reporting, 1968; includes radio promotion.
- 2.13 John Fisher Reports, 1944-1956; includes Broadcast index
- 2.14-2.17 John Fisher Reports Scripts, 1937, 1944, 1948-1949, 1952, 1955, n.d.
- 2.18 Photographs, 1983, n.d. [52 photographs, 1 slide, 3 coloured mats]
- 2.19 Two embossing stamps, 6 Canadian Maple leaf pins, n.d.

Series III. Publications, 1949, 1978, 1981

- 2.20 John Fisher reports: an anthology of radio scripts by: John Fisher, 1949
- 2.21 The Complete Cross-Canada Quiz and Game Book by: John Fisher, 1978
- 2.22-2.23 A Memorial Tribute to John Wiggins Fisher: 1921-1981
- 2.24 John Fisher: The Canadians by: Bill McNeil

Subject Access:

600 Fisher, John, 1912-1981
600 Cahill, Lou.
610 Ontario Editorial Bureau.
610 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.
650 Radio broadcasters -- Canada -- Sources.
650 Radio programs -- Canada.
651 Canada.
