

# Concordia University Library, Special Collections

## Finding Aid - Negro Community Centre/Charles H. Este Cultural Centre fonds (F013)

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Concordia University Library, Special Collections

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Concordia University

7141 Sherbrooke Street West

Montreal

Quebec

Canada

H4B 1R6

Telephone: 514-848-2424 x 7762

[Email: spec-coll@concordia.ca](mailto:spec-coll@concordia.ca)

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# Negro Community Centre/Charles H. Este Cultural Centre fonds

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## Summary information

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| <b>Repository:</b>                                   | Concordia University Library, Special Collections  |
| <b>Title:</b>  | Negro Community Centre/Charles H. Este Cultural Centre fonds   |
| <b>ID:</b>   | F013   |
| <b>Legacy identifier<br/>[alternative]:</b>          | P133   |
| <b>Date:</b>   | [1929-1997] (date of creation)   |
| <b>Physical description:</b>                         | ca. 30 meters of textual records<br>2016 photographs<br>20 objects<br>10 audio cassettes<br>6 video reels<br>6 architectural drawings<br>2 audio reels |
| <b>Language:</b>                                     | English  |
| <b>Language:</b>                                     | French   |
| <b>Dates of creation,<br/>revision and deletion:</b> | Published 2017-05-05 Administrative history added 2017-05-07   |

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## Administrative history / Biographical sketch

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### Note

The Negro Community Centre was established in 1927 under the leadership of Charles H. Este, pastor of the Union United Church in Montreal. Reverend Charles H. Este, along with members of the Union United Church, set out to create an organization to help alleviate distress among Montreal's Black community.

The Centre, which first came into being in the living room of Reverend Charles H. Este, was located in a series of rented room in the St. Antoine Street district, also known as Little Burgundy, during its early years of operation. In 1930, the Centre moved into the basement of the Union United Church, located at 3007 Delisle Street. Due to a lack of space at the Union United Church, some of the Centre's early activities took place at Royal Arthur School. Originally supported by the Canadian National Railway, the Negro Community Centre obtained financial support from the Financial Federation of Montreal beginning in 1929. The Centre was accredited by the Council of Social Agencies in 1928. It was incorporated in 1949.

The Negro Community Centre remained at the Union United Church until 1955, at which time it moved into the Iverley Community Centre, located at 2035 Coursol Street. This move was a consequence of the merger of the Negro Community Centre and the Iverley Community Centre, which occurred as a result

of the social welfare planning of the United Red Feather Service (now Centraide). By mutual agreement of the Boards of Directors, the Negro Community Centre moved into the building owned by the Iverley Community Centre on Coursol. The building, which was expanded over the years, included offices, a gymnasium, a sewing room, a kitchen, a library, and a credit union office (Walker Credit Union). The deed to the building was transferred from the Iverley Centre to the Negro Community Centre during the Annual General Meeting held in 1965.

The first programs offered at the Negro Community Centre were oriented towards the educational and recreational needs of children and teenagers. In 1949 under the guidance of Stanley A. Clyke, the Negro Community Centre began to develop age-specific activities for all members, and integrated health and welfare services into its programming. A variety of activities and services were offered over the years, including a daycare, summer camps, dance and music lessons, after-school programs, a seniors program, and language courses, among many others.

### **Custodial history**

This fonds was donated to the Concordia University Library in 2013 by Shirley Gyles, then President of the Negro Community Centre/Charles H. Este Cultural Centre. Subsequent deposits were made to the fonds in 2014 and 2015.

The initial donation was stored by the Concordia University Archives from 1998 until the materials were transferred to the Library's Special Collections in 2014. The documents, which were left at the Negro Community Centre when the building was vacated in 1997, were salvaged by members of the Concordia University Archive by arrangement with the trustees of the Centre.

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### **Scope and content**

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The Negro Community Centre/Charles H. Este Cultural Centre fonds contains records relating to the operation of the Negro Community Centre/Charles H. Este Cultural Centre. It contains textual records and other materials documenting the mission; structure; administration; building and facilities; and programs and services offered at the Centre, dating from its founding in the late 1920s until it ceased its operations. The fonds also contains materials dating to after the closure of the Centre.

The fonds documents the history of the Negro Community Centre/Charles H. Este Cultural Centre, its role in Little Burgundy and the greater Montreal area, and its relationships to other organizations, including but not limited to the Coloured Women's Club of Montreal; Union United Church; Red Feather Services; Federated Appeal of Greater Montreal; and Centraide. The fonds also includes documentation related to the Walker Credit Union and Afro-Can. The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters is also mentioned in the documentation.

The Negro Community Centre/Charles H. Este Cultural Centre fonds includes a wide variety of textual records, including but not limited to administrative records; ledgers and other financial records; correspondence; board and committee meeting minutes and related records; reports; calendars, flyers, posters, descriptions and other documentation relating to programs, services, and events taking place at the Centre; photographic materials, including prints and negatives; architectural drawings and plans; clothing; and ephemera.

## Notes

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### Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the content of the fonds.

### Physical condition

Some materials in this fonds were damaged by water in the late 1990s, prior to their removal from the building on Coursol Street.

### Arrangement

Unless otherwise indicated, material has been arranged in the order of receipt.

### Restrictions on access

Some materials are restricted. Audio cassettes, video reels, and audio reels are restricted until further notice.

### Conditions governing use

Reproductions are allowed for the purpose of research and private study in most cases. Use of material in a publication may only be done with written consent of the copyright owner(s).

### Finding aids

Box listings available.

### Accruals

Future accruals may be expected.

### Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Level of detail:** Partial
- **Status description:** Draft
- **Rights:** Copyright belongs to the creator(s).

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## Access points

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- Multiple media (documentary form)