

Concordia University Libraries Special Collections

Finding Aid - Walton Hannah fonds (P015)

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Language of description: English

Concordia University Libraries Special Collections

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Walton Hannah fonds

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Summary information

Repository:	Concordia University Libraries Special Collections
Title:	Walton Hannah fonds
ID:	P015
Date:	[189-]-1966, predominant [1930]-1966 (date of creation)
Physical description:	52 cm of textual records ca. 30 photographs 5 postcards 15 objects
Language:	English
Language:	French
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Walton Hannah was born in England in 1912. His father, Ian Campbell Hannah, was a teacher of theology, a writer, and a Member of the British House of Commons 1935-1944. His mother, Edith Brand, was an American and developed an international reputation as a painter. They married in 1905. They collaborated on a number of books (1912-1914, possibly other dates), including *The Story of Scotland in Stone*, which he wrote and she illustrated.

In the 1930s Walton Hannah became an Anglican priest. He collected documentary and other materials on Freemasonry, with the aim of exposing it as an anti-Christian movement. Although in correspondence he claims never to have been a Freemason, he received correspondence from Freemasons who addressed him as Brother; he also appears to have used pseudonyms to hide his identity as a priest. His interest extended to other secret organizations and the occult in general, and he continued to collect materials on these subjects all his life.

In 1952 his book *Darkness Visible: A Revelation and Interpretation of Freemasonry* was published by Augustine Press. A second book, *Christian by Degrees: Masonic Religion Revealed in the Light of Faith*, was published by Augustine Press in 1954. He published a number of articles. In the mid-1950s he converted to Roman Catholicism. In 1956 he attended the Pontifical Collegio Beda, a seminary in Rome intended for converted Anglican clergymen wishing to become Catholic priests. (Beda is a branch of the English College, a seminary for English candidates for Roman Catholic priesthood.) Immediately following ordination as a Catholic priest, Hannah moved to Montreal at the invitation of the archbishop, Paul-Émile Cardinal Léger. He served as parish priest at several parishes, including Church of the Ascension in Westmount and St. Willibrord's in Verdun. He was involved with the Catholic Inquiry Forum. He continued corresponding with Freemasons (some of them aware of his status as a Catholic

priest) and others, and assembling related materials. He died in Montreal in February 1966 , and at his request his collection and his papers were donated to Concordia University founding institution Loyola College.

Custodial history

The documents left to Loyola College by Walton Hannah in 1966 were donated to the Concordia University Library in 1969. In January 1974 (CU Archives Accession No. 218), the library transferred the archival documents and objects to the Concordia University Archives. In May 2000 , the Archives returned the periodicals to the library where they form part of the Masonic Collection. The fonds was transferred from Concordia University's Records Management and Archives Department to Concordia University Libraries' Special Collections March 16-17, 2016, April 19, 2016, and May 25, 2016.

Scope and content

The fonds provides information on the history, structure, aims, and activities of Freemasonry and other secret organizations, with a particular focus on anglophone and francophone Freemasonry in Quebec. The fonds includes correspondence, articles, transcripts of lectures, programs for ceremonies, minutes, membership lists, photographs, and other materials. Among the correspondence are original letters and manuscript notes dated 1913-1931 in which francophone Catholics report to the church hierarchy the names of suspected Freemasons. There are an original letter and a certificate of resignation from Freemasonry. The fonds includes a collection of objects. Their significance is explained in various works in the Masonic Collection; see below, Associated Materials.

The fonds is organized according to the following series:

P015/A Early life; Hannah family

P015/B Research on Freemasonry and other secret societies

Notes

Title notes

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

Physical condition

Some of the items were water-damaged in a fire in 1982.

Arrangement

There was no classification plan for the documents, with the exception of a file of orders-of-service for Masonic church services and two albums that contain research notes and reproductions of handwritten Masonic documents.

Finding aids

Box listings available.

Related material

Concordia University Libraries Special Collections holds the collection of monographs, encyclopedias, periodicals, and other published documents assembled by Walton Hannah, under the title Masonic Collection.

Accruals

No further accruals expected.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Level of detail:** Full
- **Status description:** Final

Access points

- Textual record (documentary form)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Object (documentary form)
- Freemasonry (belief system) (subject)

Series descriptions
