

ESTHER CLARK WRIGHT ARCHIVES

ACADIA UNIVERSITY

**Government of Canada
Department of Agriculture
Maritime Marshland Rehabilitation Administration
(MMRA)**

Accession 1998.001



**Compiled by Rhianna H. Edwards
October 2001 ; revised June 2010**

Government of Canada. Department of Agriculture. Maritime Marshland Rehabilitation Administration. – [textual records, cartographic material and photographs]. – 194-1982. – 9 cm of textual records. – 59 maps : blueprints. – 608 photographs : b&w and col. ; 25 x 20.5 cm or smaller

Table of Contents

(click on title to jump to that page)

1. Grand Pre and Wickwire Dyke records. – 1940-1964.	3
2. Grand Pre and Wickwire Dyke records. – 1940 – 1982.	4
Administrative History	9
Custodial History.....	10
Scope and Content.....	10
Notes.....	10
Citation for this electronic finding aid:.....	11
Access Points	11

1. Grand Pre and Wickwire Dyke records. – 1940-1964. – 7 cm of textual records. – 23 photographs: b&w ; 23 x 23 cm or smaller. – 59 maps : blueprints

Series includes correspondence, incorporation and By-Laws of the Grand Pre Marsh Body, historic summaries, engineers' reports, survey data sheets, repair and maintenance accounts, contracts and costs, plans of projects conducted and projects aborted, aerial and ground photographs and many maps depicting dyke features. Records were created and maintained by the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Agriculture and Marketing, Land Protection Branch, Kentville, NS.

Note:

Supplied title based on contents of series

File list included

File List

1/1 Dyke Maps. – 1940; 1956. – 4 maps : blueprints

File contains four maps, as follows:

- A 1940 detailed blueprint of the first dyke ever built with a heavy machine and dragline
- Two maps of the east and west Wickwire dyke area, with plots of remnants of old dykes and of the proposed new 1959 dyke
- A copy of a map done in 1956 which was a copy done in 1912 of the 1760 Planter's map of East Grand Pre.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

1/2 Correspondence. – September 1949 – August 1971. – 3 cm of textual records

File contains incoming and outgoing correspondence related to every aspect of MMRA activities. Attachments include photographs and maps.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

1/3 Aerial Photographs and Maps. – 1945 – 1959. – 16 photographs : b&w ; 23 x 23 cm or smaller. – 8 maps : blueprints

File includes official government air photographs from 1945 (3), 1955 (4) and 1959 (9). Those taken in 1959 are low-level, low-angle photos covering the Wickwire Dyke area from the Grand Pre Division Dyke to Wolfville Harbour. Derelict rows of posts and planks from the 1928 dyke are evident in these photos.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

1/4 Engineers' Survey Data and Maps and Photographs. – 1959 – 1960. – 0.5 cm of textual records. – 7 photographs : b&w ; 5 x 7cm. - 8 maps : blueprints

File contains engineers' survey data sheets for the new 1959 Wickwire Dyke; eight maps; and seven photographs of a severely leaking new aboiteau sluice in the Wickwire Dyke, September 1960. (The sluice was experimentally bedded in slate instead of the usual clay).

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

1/5 Correspondence with the Dominion Atlantic Railway (DAR). – 1950 – 1964. - 1 cm of textual records. – 2 maps : blueprint and pencil

File contains correspondence regarding the new dyke for Little Island, at the Guzzle, and two maps of the area.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

1/6 Repairs and Construction, Wickwire Dyke. – 1950 – 1961. – 0.5 cm of textual records. – 11 maps : blueprints

File contains correspondence regarding construction and repairs to the Wickwire Dyke. Includes cost sheets and contracts and associated maps.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

- 1/7 Repair and Construction Maps, Wickwire Dyke. – 1950 – 1961. – 12 maps : blueprints. – 21 leaves of textual records**
File contains maps, some of which show the drainage flow details for east, central and west blocks of Grand Pre, for the 1950s period. Also includes construction and cost sheets.
Note: Supplied title based on contents of file
- 1/8 Maps and List of Property Owners. – 1949 - 1969. – 21 leaves of textual records. - 13 maps : blueprints**
File contains thirteen maps dating 1951 – 1969. Includes a small format notebook in which is listed all Grand Pre property owners and their individual acreages as of 24 November 1949.
Note: Supplied title based on contents of file
- 1/9 Engineers' Survey Data. – 1949 – 1958. – 1.5 cm of textual records**
File contains approximately 80 pages of survey data.
Note: Supplied title based on contents of file
- 1/10 Map of Grand Pre and Wickwire Dykes. – 1951 – 1964. – 1 map : blueprint**
File contains a very large map created by sticking together many small maps. It shows all of the Grand Pre and Wickwire Dykes area, and uses 1951 – 1964 data.
Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2. Grand Pre and Wickwire Dyke records. – 1940 – 1982. – 585 photographs : b&w and col. ; 25 x 20.5 cm or smaller. – 2 cm of textual records

Series documents the construction of aboiteaux at approximately twenty sites in Nova Scotia, especially during the 1940s and 1950s. The series is arranged by site file and by project code number. Much of the material consists of photographs mounted on album pages, and includes typed annotated legends beneath photos. Many associated photonegatives are enclosed in separate envelopes. Scattered throughout the files are a few text reports and clippings, including Wellington Dyke information and a daily engineer's account of how the 1944-45 Habitant Aboiteau, Canning, NS, was constructed. A series of 1959 low-level aerial photographs of the Kings County dykelands reveal the location of Acadian, Planter and early 20th century dykes, features that have since eroded away.

The records were created and maintained by the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Agriculture and Marketing, Land Protection Branch, Truro, NS.

Note:

Supplied title based on contents of series
File list included

File List

- 2/1 Specific Marshes. – 1944 – 1982. – 556 photographs : b&w and col. ; 25 cm x 20.5 cm or smaller. – 30 leaves of textual records**
Subseries contains photographs of various marshes and dykes in the Digby, Kings, Yarmouth and Annapolis Counties of NS.
- 2/1/1 Comeau Marsh Aboiteau, Digby County. – 1949 – 1953; [198-]. – 22 photographs : b&w and col. ; 13 x 9 cm or smaller**

File contains four album pages of photographs, as well as six loose photographs and some photonegatives. Project code #1.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/2 Dugau Marsh, Digby County. – 1950; 1956. – 7 photographs : b&w ; 12 x 8.5 cm or smaller

File contains three album pages of photographs and photonegatives. Project code #5. The tab on one the album pages indicates that it was included with a 1950/51 annual report.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/3 Saulnierville Marsh, Digby County. – 1950 – 1957. – 26 photographs : b&w ; 13 x 9 cm or smaller

File contains seven album pages of photographs dated 1950 to 1953 and one album page dated 1957. Project code #6. The tab on one of the album pages indicates that it was included with a 1950/51 annual report.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/4 Grand Pre Marsh, Kings County. – 1950 - 1982. – 99 photographs : b&w and col. ; 25 x 20.5 cm or smaller. – 10 leaves of textual records

File contains both aerial and ground photographs; a photograph of a survey sketch of the entire marsh, 1951; and a transcribed copy of an interview conducted by J. W. Byers with Robert Palmeter, former Dyke Commissioner. Project code #8.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/5 Upper Belleisle Marsh, Annapolis County. – 1948 – 1951; [198-]. – 25 photographs : b&w and col.; 25.5 x 20.5 cm or smaller

File contains twelve album pages of photographs and photonegatives, as well as loose photographs of aboiteaux. Includes a reproduction of a painting entitled The Acadians, Repairing a Dyke, Belleisle, NS, circa 1720. Project code #10.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/6 Dentiballis Marsh, Annapolis County. – 1954. - 4 photographs : b&w ; 9 x 9 cm

File contains one album page of photographs and photonegatives. Project code #13.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

Note: A photograph has been cut from the album page

2/1/7 Scott's Bay Marsh, beach and wharf, Kings County. – 1955 – 1957. – 18 photographs : b&w ; 12.5 x 8.5 cm

File contains five album pages of photographs and photonegatives. Project code #28.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/8 Mount Anne Marsh, Annapolis County. – 1953 – 1956. – 19 photographs : b&w ; 12.5 x 9 cm or smaller

File contains five album pages of photographs and photonegatives, as well as loose photographs. Project code #32.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/9 Habitant Marsh, Kings County. – 1944 – 1959; 1978. – 16 photographs : b&w and col. ; 25.5 x 20.5 cm or smaller. – 15 leaves of textual records

File contains photographs of the marsh and aboiteaux. Includes field notes. The tab on one of the album pages indicates that it was included with a 1950/51 annual report.

Project code #41

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/10 Wellington Marsh, Kings County. – 1951 – 1959; 1978. – 23 photographs : b&w and col. ; 18 x 13 cm or smaller. – 16 leaves of textual records

File contains one album page of photographs, and loose photographs of this marsh, as well as a report, handwritten notes, and news clippings that detail the history of the 1945-47 aboiteau replacement. Project code #56.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/11 New Minas Marsh, Kings County. – 1953 – 1959. – 11 photographs : b&w ; 18 x 13 cm or smaller

File contains seven photographs on three album pages that document river bank stabilization efforts with stakes, and four aerial photographs from 1959. Project code #57

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/12 Chegoggin Marsh, Yarmouth County. – 1947 – 1959. – 43 photographs : b&w ; 25.5 x 20.5 cm or smaller

File contains 41 photographs of repair procedures and two loose photographs. Project code #70.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/13 Goose Bay Marsh, Yarmouth County. – 1956. – 191 photographs : b&w ; 31 x 7 cm or smaller

Files contain two identical sets of album pages, each of twenty pages, with facing pages of explanatory text.¹ Also includes sixteen envelopes of negatives and photographs that are duplicates of the photographs on the album pages. Project code #71

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/13/1 Goose Bay Marsh, Yarmouth County. – 1956. – 89 photographs : b&w ; 13 x 9 cm

File contains 26 photographs and 63 photonegatives of the work being carried out on this Marsh. In most cases these photographs are duplicates of the ones in the albums, below.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/13/2 Goose Bay Marsh, Yarmouth County. – 1956. – 51 photographs : b&w ; 31 x 7 or smaller

File contains a photograph album that is introduced by five pages of text. There are fifteen album pages containing 51 photographs and each page is introduced by a textual description. Album is identical to file 2/1/13/3.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/13/3 Goose Bay Marsh, Yarmouth County. – 1956. – 51 photographs : b&w ; 31 x 7 or smaller

File contains a photograph album that is introduced by five pages of text. There are fifteen album pages containing 51 photographs and each page is introduced by a textual description. Album is identical to file 2/1/13/2.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/14 Horton Marsh, Kings County. – 1959. – 1 photograph : b&w ; 17.5 x 12.5 cm

File contains one aerial photograph of the marsh, old bridge and new highway 101 under construction. Project code #72

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/15 Starr's Point Marsh, Kings County. – 1959. – 2 photographs : b&w ; 17.5 x 12.5 cm

File contains two aerial photographs. Project code #80.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/16 Cornwallis River, Kentville Marsh. – 1959. – 1 photograph : b&w ; 17.5 x 12.5 cm of textual records

¹ Originally housed in hard cover albums, the Archivist removed the pages from the albums for preservation purposes.

File contains one aerial photograph depicting the use of car bodies as bank protection. Project code #82.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/17 Various marshes. – 1948 – 1958 ; 1982. – 42 photographs : b&w and col.; 25 x 20.5 cm or smaller

File contains twelve album pages of photographs of the Woodworth Marsh, Annapolis County; Belleisle Marsh; Port Williams Marsh, Kings County; Fox Bow Aboiteau, Annapolis County; Windemere Marsh, Annapolis County; Wellington Marsh; Annapolis Royal; and the Annapolis River Dam Survey Also includes an aerial view of the town of Annapolis Royal. Many of the photographs are accompanied by a photonegative. Project code #103-9.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/18 Argyle. – 1959. – 3 photographs : b&w ; 12 x 9 cm

File contains three out-of-focus photographs of the 'old sluice'. Includes one photonegative. Project code #108

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/1/19 Yarmouth area. – 1947. – 3 photographs : b&w ; 25 x 20.5 cm

File contains two photographs of a Glenwood, Yarmouth County, sluice and one photograph of an Eel Brook, Yarmouth County, sluice. No project codes.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/2 Marsh Flooding. – 1958. – 12 photographs : b&w ; 13 x 10 cm

Series contains photographs of marshes located in both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick that flooded during a storm that occurred on 6 April 1958. The marshes are as follows:

Grand Pre Marsh, Kings County, NS
Habitant Marsh, Kings County, NS
Amherst Point Marsh, Cumberland County, NS
New Minas Marsh, Kings County, NS
Bishop Beckwith Marsh, Kings County, NS
Horton Marsh – Gaspereau River, Kings County, NS
Kentville Marsh, Kings County, NS
Mantua-Poplar Grove Marsh, Hants County, NS
Avonport Marsh, Kings County, NS
Cole's Island Marsh, Westmorland County, NB

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/3 Miscellaneous. – 1940 – 1978. – 1 cm of textual records. – 17 photographs : b&w ; 25 x 20.5 cm or smaller

Series contains correspondence, reports and photographs that document various marshes and dykes.

2/3/1 Report. – [1974]. – 1 v of textual records

File contains a report entitled Large Aboiteau, 1600-1948: Etter, Wellington, Habitant. Most of the report refers to the Habitant 1944-45 aboiteau, in a day-by-day account. Report includes photographs and maps.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

Note: Although without author or date indicated, donor Sherman Bleakney believes that the report was probably compiled by J. W. Byers.

2/3/2 Photograph Code List. – 1940 – 1978. – 2 leaves of textual records

File contains a reference list of photo code numbers primarily from the 1940s and 50s, but also up to 1978. Also includes a reproduction of a painting of Acadians in 1720.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/3/3 Marsh photographs. – 1951. – 4 photographs : b&w ; 13 x 9 cm

File contains one album page of photographs dated August 1951, of the Queen Anne Marsh, Goat Island Marsh and the Woodworth Marsh.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/3/4 Cornwallis River. – 1948. – 1 photograph : b&w ; 25 x 20.5 cm

File contains an album page with one photograph of the Cornwallis River, looking upstream from the Port Williams, NS bridge. It was taken in October 1948.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/3/5 Chegoggin Marsh. – 1947. – 1 photograph : b&w ; 25 x 20.5 cm

File contains an album page with one photograph of a leaky aboiteau on the Chegoggin Marsh, September 1947.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/3/6 Grand Pre area. – 1951. – 5 photographs : b&w ; 13 x 9 cm or smaller

File contains two album pages with three photos of the Grand Pre area. Photographer Albert E. Roland annotated the photos which depict the marsh, old buried plant deposits and ancient tree stumps. Photograph 1.0/17 is of the sloping bank of the Guzzle channel between Long Island and Boot Island, looking NE or NNE showing Sherman Bleakney examining tree stumps of the forest remnants. Also contains one photograph taken at Belliveau Village, NB and one taken at Starr's Point, NS.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/3/7 Aylesford Bog and Chebogue Cemetery. – 1956 – 3 photographs : b&w ; 9 x 9 cm

File contains an album page with one photograph of the Aylesford Bog covered in ice spray in 1956, and two photographs of a Chebogue Cemetery grave monument dated 1864 of a reclining woman in 1830s clothing.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/3/8 Canning Aboiteau and Pereau Aboiteau. – 1944 – 1945. – 3 photographs : b&w ; 14.5 x 9 cm

File contains two photographs of the Canning Aboiteau, dated 3 November 1944 and 21 October 1945, and one photograph of the Pereau Aboiteau under construction, not dated.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/3/9 Two Early churches at Chipman Corner, N.S.. – 1975. – 1 v of textual records

File contains a printed bilingual program dated 7 September 1975. The program relates the history of two churches that stood in Chipman Corner, NS: the Acadian Church of St. Joseph that was in existence from 1689 to 1755, and the Congregational Church of Horton and Cornwallis that existed from 1768 to 1874.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

2/3/10 Correspondence. – 1976. – 1 leaf of textual records

File contains a letter from E. L. Eaton to J. W. Byers regarding 4,000 year old logs and stumps that had been dug up by dyke building dragline machines.

Note: Supplied title based on contents of file

Administrative History²

In the early days and continuing into the 20th century, under the townships' Commissioners of Sewers, each group of proprietors of a dyke organized itself for the day-to-day use of the lands and the maintenance of their condition. At annual meetings, the proprietors set the yearly rate for covering the dykeland expenses. They also appointed, from among themselves, assizers to assess the size and value of dyke holdings; branders to brand and otherwise mark the livestock to be allowed on the dykelands after haying or harvest; field watchers to keep an eye on the condition of the fields and to ensure peace on the dykelands; fence viewers; and drivers to care for the animals feeding on the common fields.

The expense of regular maintenance and repair was borne, often with difficulty, by the proprietors; but the added expense of rebuilding dyke walls damaged by major storms caused great hardship for most. For example, by 1932 the Wickwire Dyke had been severely damaged by storms and, unable to meet the expenses, the proprietors had to abandon it.

By 1943 the federal and provincial governments of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had come to recognize the value of the dykelands and in 1943 set up the Maritime Dykeland Rehabilitation Committee (MDRC). For the first time, the condition of the Maritime dykeland was to be treated as a single and continuing project. Proprietors could apply for help through their local commissioners. The costs of repairs were to be divided evenly among Ottawa, NS and NB. There was so much work to be done that the reclamation project became known as the Emergency Program. In its first four years the MDRC completed 80 projects in Nova Scotia and 50 in New Brunswick. But work was still being done piecemeal, and the Emergency Program could not handle all the work that needed to be completed. In June 1948, the federal parliament passed an act creating the Maritime Marshland Rehabilitation Administration and the three Maritime provinces signed agreements the following April. It then embarked upon major construction projects, reinforcing dyke walls and replacing aboiteaux sluice boxes. By the late 1960s almost all of the major projects had been completed. In 1970 the federal government decided it could safely withdraw from the field, and supervision of dyke maintenance was turned over to the provinces. In Nova Scotia the Department of Agriculture and Marketing became the supervising authority, making annual grants to the marsh bodies for dyke maintenance. These have continued to the present.

² Information for this administrative history has been taken from Whitelaw, Marjory, *The Wellington Dyke*, Nimbus Publishing Limited and The Nova Scotia Museum: Halifax, 1997.

Custodial History

Sherman Bleakney, former professor of Biology at Acadia University, facilitated the donation of these records to the Archives. After his retirement he began to informally research the history of the Grand Pre (NS) dykelands, as well as their drainage patterns and marine fauna. He searched for relevant maps and photos as well as textual records and was fortunate to discover these records. The records in series one were held by the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Agriculture and Marketing, Land Protection branch, Truro, NS and loaned to him by Hank Kolstee of that agency in the 1990s. Records in series two were held by the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Agriculture and Marketing, Land Protection branch, Kentville, NS, and were loaned to him by Lindsay Carter, Aboiteau Superintendent of that agency in the 1990s. Series two once included photographs of the dykes in the Windsor, NS area but, prior to Bleakney's find, they had been removed. They now reside in the museum [East Hants Historical Museum?] at Windsor, NS.

After studying the records in detail and recognizing their historical value, Bleakney convinced the Department to donate the records to the Esther Clark Wright Archives at Acadia University.

In using the records for his own study, Dr. Bleakney organized them and added annotations to some of the records. He also wrote a detailed inventory of them, upon which the Archivist has relied heavily to compile this finding aid.

Scope and Content

The fonds is divided into two series:

The first series relates to the Grand Pre and Wickwire Dykes. The outside dates of the material are 1940 to 1982, but most of the records date from the 1950s, the time during which the MMRA conducted its most extensive repair projects. Each dyke requiring repairs was numbered and the Grand Pre Marsh project was No. 8.

The second series contains hundreds of unique photographs that document construction of aboiteaux at approximately twenty sites in Nova Scotia, especially during the 1940s and 1950s.

Notes

Supplied title based on provenance of records

See also Dykes and Common Fields accession 1900.018

See also Proprietors of the Lower Dyke Common Field accession 1936.001

See also Sherman Bleakney accessions 2004.039-BLE, 2005.036-BLE, 2006.-37-BLE

See also Grand Pre Marsh Body 2007.032-GPM

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For reasons of historic authenticity, all file titles provided by the author and captions provided by the photographer are transcribed unedited. The spelling of both peoples' and places' names has changed with time, so inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the titles are unavoidable. Files and captions may also contain inaccuracies or terms that would now be considered offensive.

Citation for this electronic finding aid:

This finding aid should be cited as a website. Relevant information is as follows:

Title: Government of Canada. Department of Agriculture. Maritime Marshland Rehabilitation Administration fonds

Date: 2001

Author: Esther Clark Wright Archives, Acadia University

Access Points

Canada. Department of Agriculture. Maritime Marshland Rehabilitation Administration

Dikes (Engineering)--Nova Scotia

Grand Pre Dyke (Kings Co., NS)

Wickwire Dyke (Kings Co., NS)

Reclamation of Land--Nova Scotia—History

Salt marshes--Nova Scotia--History