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**Fonds/collection title:** Phoebe Reynolds fonds

**Accession number:** 87/3

**Location codes:** MSS 257 (87/3)

PHO 501 (87/3)

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## Finding Aid

**Reynolds, Phoebe Elizabeth**

Phoebe E. Reynolds (nee Burns) was born, ca 1886 in England. She trained as a nurse, and was stationed at the 3rd Southern General Hospital and Town Hall Hospital in Oxford, England during the First World War. From 1914 to 1927 she worked as a nurse in Britain and travelled to Ireland and the continent. In 1927, Phoebe Burns boarded a ship for Canada. While aboard the ship, Phoebe met a young couple from Mayo, Yukon and this sparked her interest in applying for a nursing position in the Yukon. After spending some time in New York City, she was wired about a position available as matron of the Mayo Hospital, and assumed her new position on June 16, 1928. Phoebe was at the Hospital for two years, but quit her position to marry George Reynolds, a prospector who lived and mined on Ledge Creek, on Mayo Lake. The Reynolds were married on October 8, 1930 and lived the 'outdoors' life for many years, making their living through prospecting, hunting and fishing. During these years, Mrs. Reynolds did the odd stint of relief nursing at the Mayo Hospital and was consulted often for medical advice during the war years as Mayo was without a doctor.

When the mine opened at Elsa, George Reynolds was hired as the night watchman and the Reynolds lived in Elsa until they moved to Oliver, B.C. to retire.

The records in this collection were uncovered in the basement of the Christ Church Cathedral in Whitehorse in the spring of 1986. The records were stored in a metal chest, and are in very poor physical condition, being dirty, mouldy, and fragile. Basic conservation care will be applied to the records.

It is believed that all of the records in the chest had belonged to Phoebe Reynolds. When the Reynolds moved to Elsa after World War II, Hilda Hellaby house-sat their cabin in Mayo. She probably took Phoebe's chest to Whitehorse with her and this would explain how the records ended up in Christ Church Cathedral in Whitehorse.

This collection consists of two parts: manuscripts and photographs, as described below.

Part 1 Manuscripts

An assortment of papers were kept in the original metal chest, and appear to roughly divide into papers Mrs. Reynolds wrote, and papers she collected. They will be described according to these two basic categories, with a chronological order maintained within each category.

i Collected Papers

The collected papers consist primarily of a series of scientific and religious treatises that were written towards the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Many of the papers were presented at meetings of the "Mens Mutual" which appears to have been a sort of philosophy class for men where topics of a scientific and religious theme were discussed.

The Men's Mutual may have had a connection with the Church of England, and the papers in this collection were all presented in Britain. Their connection with Phoebe Burns, besides being presented in Britain and associated with the Church of England, is not known. They do provide, however, a fascinating reflection of late 19th century thought revolving around the issues and debates surrounding scientific and religious themes.

Also contained within the collected papers are some newspaper clippings and a paper written on the Yukon.

A file listing follows:

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|---------------|---------|
| <u>Folder</u> | MSS 257 |
|---------------|---------|
1. A handwritten sermon on the theme of Cain and Abel. 27 pages n.d.
  2. Various handwritten chapters on a religious philosophical theme. 01 m. n.d.
  3. Handwritten scientific treatise (Geology). .01 m n.d.
  4. Handwritten essay entitled "The Physical Constitution of the Sun". An essay read before the Mutual Improvement Class - Hallwhistle. 16 pages April 15, 1874 or (1894).
  5. A handwritten essay entitled "Lecture on the Seasons" delivered before Holy Trinity Men's Mutual, Diocese of Carlisle. 12 pages March 9, 1897.
  6. Handwritten lecture (Part of a series) entitled: "Unity in the Scheme of Creation II". Considers the question of the origin of life on earth, and creation versus evolution. 38 pages. November 23, 1897.
  7. "Unity in the Scheme of Creation IV - Man to Spirit". A continuation of the discussion on Evolution and God's position; some discussion of the occult. 40 pages. 1897.
  8. Two handwritten papers, entitled: "Diary of a Journey Across Tibet" by Captain Hamilton and "On the Condition of the Interior of the Earth." .01 m July, 1903.
  9. Handwritten notes to accompany lantern slides presented by a man named 'McBurns', describing his trip by boat from England to New York, a train trip across the U.S. to California and then by train to Mexico. Includes many comments on the people (and their lifestyles) of America and Mexico. .01 m May 28, 1907 & January, 1908.
  10. A handwritten lecture entitled "Lecture on Norway"" and delivered before the Men's Mutual. It describes a trip the writer took to Norway. .01 m December 7, 1909.
  11. A handwritten lecture entitled. "How we know what the Stars are made of", delivered before the Men's Mutual. (Includes references at end of paper). 27 pages March 5, 1912.

12. A notebook that was kept in the 3rd Southern General Hospital and the Town Hall Hospital in Oxford, England. Phoebe Burns nursed at these hospitals, and the notebook was passed around to the Patients (wounded W.W. I. soldiers) who recounted how they had come to be wounded, where they were fighting, etc. Some soldiers drew sketches to accompany their hand-written accounts, and included is some French text as well.  
(see also the photograph album described in Pt. 2) .01 m 1914-1916.
13. A three page, typewritten paper entitled: "The Yukon by Aurthur Cherry Hinton with Phillip and Godsell". Consists of facts about the Yukon during the Gold Rush-era, and includes many typographical and spelling errors.  
n.d.
14. Two newspaper clippings: one an article from the January 3rd, 1957 issue of the Whitehorse Star entitled "Changes In Modes of Travel I've seen" by A. Baird, and the other from the May 25, 1964 issue of the Whitehorse Star showing a picture of Phoebe Reynolds and Bud Fisher together. 1937, 1964.

ii Papers Written by Phoebe Reynolds

15. A handwritten notebook/diary kept by Phoebe Burns (Reynolds) from 1914 to 1927. In it, she records world events, daily hospital activities, and her experiences in Oxford, England; Ireland; holidays on the continent; and her departure for Canada. .01 m 1914-1927.
- 16-20 In folders 16 through 20 is the final typed draft of an autobiography Phoebe Reynolds wrote. The manuscript is entitled: "Pills For The Sourdough" and was written using the pen name 'Beth Sheeba'. The manuscript appears to have been intended for publication, as Mrs. Reynolds' full mailing address is written on the manuscript, and a word count for each chapter has been done.

The manuscript begins in chapter one with a description of how Phoebe Burns (Beth Sheeba in the story) comes to Canada, and eventually ends up as matron of a small hospital in Mayo, Yukon. It would seem that the manuscript, although written using disguised names and the third person tense, is probably an account based on actual events Mrs. Reynolds experienced. Mrs. Reynolds recounts several anecdotes about nursing at the Mayo Hospital, and her eventual meeting with George Reynolds (George Sheeba in the story). The remaining chapters describe her life with George, living in a cabin outside of Mayo. There are many stories about life in the wilderness; the animals they encounter; the hunting and prospecting they do; and their friends and acquaintances who often shared a similar wilderness lifestyle.

Most names in the manuscript have been altered, although there is often a resemblance to the individual's actual name. For example, Miss Paget in the manuscript is, according to Mayo Hospital Records, Miss Page, and the Hospital orderly Porter in the story was in actuality named Palmer.

16. "Pils for the Sourdough" Chapters 1-4
17. "Pills for the Sourdough" Chapters 5-8
18. "Pills for the Sourdough" Chapters 9-12
19. ""Pills for the Sourdough" Chapters 13-16
20. "Pills for the Sourdough" Chapters 17-20
21. Phoebe Reynolds' notebook/diary, including handwritten and typed entries written from 1946 to 1956. A record of daily activities.  
.01 m 1946-1956.
22. Phoebe Reynolds diary. It appears that Mrs. Reynolds travelled to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, New York in order to receive medical care for psoriasis. She travelled by bus through the States to get home, stopping off for some bath treatments along the way. Her trip home takes her to Calgary, Prince Rupert, Juneau, Skagway, Whitehorse and finally Mayo. The remainder of the diary is a record of daily activities in the Mayo area.  
.01 m 1947-1949.
23. Numerous versions and revisions of the chapter on "Dogs" from Phoebe Reynold's manuscript "Pills for the Sourdough". 01 m n.d.
24. Typed anecdotes that were included in the manuscript "Pills for the Sourdough". 2 pages n.d.
25. Typed notes recounting Mrs. Reynold's involvement with a First Aid program during W.W. II. It may have been written for inclusion in Mrs. Reynolds autobiography "Pills for the Sourdough", but was not included in the final draft.

Much of the paper Mrs. Reynolds used to write or type her stories on was the reverse side of letters, fliers, campaign literature, etc. that would have been received at her house.  
.01 m. ca. 1951.

26. Typed and handwritten notes, that were not included in "Pills for the Sourdough". 11 pages n.d.

Again, the reverse side of the pages in this folder provides a further glimpse into the Reynolds' life.

27. Further typed autobiographical notes and anecdotes that do not form part of the manuscript "Pills for the Sourdough". 6 pages n.d.
28. A typed description of someone named Ruth's trip. 9 pages 1954-1955.

29. Typed notes about Phoebe Reynold's experience with appearing at a court inquest and working, apparently, as a sort of matron for female prisoners. 5 pages ca 1954.

PART 2: PHOTOGRAPHS

1. An album containing 76 black and white original photographs. The photographs depict Nurse Burns and her fellow-nurses caring for wounded W.W. I. soldiers in Oxford, England. There are interior views of the hospital, as well as photographs of patients and nurses taken out-of-doors, and some views of military contingents on parade. .03 m. 1914-1915.
2. A black and white original photograph of two cabins among trees and inscribed on the back "Carribou (sic) on 60 mile River. VC had a road house further up. Charlie mined near there".  
(Badly faded and torn). n.d.