

Finding Aid - Basil H. Johnston fonds (RC0038)

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Language of description: English

Basil H. Johnston fonds

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Summary information

Title:	Basil H. Johnston fonds
Reference code:	RC0038
Date:	[1860]-2012 (creation)
Physical description:	4.96 m of textual records and graphic materials. 201 photographs.
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	R. Barrett, 2013.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Basil H. Johnston, writer, was born in 1929 on Wasauksing First Nation (formerly Parry Island First Nation) located near Parry Sound, Ontario, Canada. He was a member of the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation Band (formerly known as the "Cape Croker Band of Ojibwa"). He attended elementary school at the Cape Croker First Nations Reserve until the age of 10, after which he attended the Spanish Indian Residential School in Spanish, Ontario. He graduated in 1950 and attended Loyola College in Montreal, where he graduated with a B.A in 1954. From 1955 to 1961 Johnston was employed by the Toronto Board of Trade. He received his Secondary School Teaching Certificate from the Ontario College of Education in 1962. From 1962 to 1969 he taught history at Earl Haig Secondary School in North York. In 1969 he took a position as Ethnologist at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto where he lectured to public groups and colleges. He remained at the ROM until 1994 where he worked with a mandate to record and celebrate Ojibway (Anishinaube) heritage, especially language and mythology. Johnston had also lectured at many universities, including the University of Saskatchewan and Trent University.

Johnston was the author of 16 books published in Canada, the United States and Germany. His books included **Indian School Days** (1988) and **Moose Meat and Wild Rice** (1978). In 1978, Johnston wrote **The Ojibway Language Course Outline** and the **Ojibway Language Lexicon** for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Johnston was a fluent speaker and teacher of the Anishinaube language who writes in both English and Anishinaabemowin. His writings appeared in many newspapers, anthologies and journals. In 1978 he was narrator and writer for the script of a film **The Man, the Snake and the Fox** for the National Film Board of Canada. In 1982 he established Winter Spirit Creations, an operation that has supplied Ojibway language print and audio programs to individuals, schools, colleges and universities in Canada and the United States. Johnston received the Order of Ontario in 1989 as well as Honorary Doctorates from the University of Toronto (1994) and Laurentian University (1998). In 2007 Johnston received the Aboriginal Achievement Award for Heritage and Spirituality. Johnston passed away on September 8, 2015.

Scope and content

The fonds contains material in multiple languages: English, French, Ojibway/Chippewa, Cree, Latin.

Notes

Immediate source of acquisition

The fonds (33-2012) was acquired from Basil Johnston in 2012.

Arrangement

The fonds is arranged into 13 series:

1. Writings
2. Correspondence
3. Personal
4. Ojibway Language
5. Literary, Editorial and Publishing
6. Royal Ontario Museum and Teaching
7. Lectures, Workshops and Symposiums
8. Radio, Television and Film
9. Residential Schools
10. Land Claims
11. Photographs
12. Sound recordings and transcriptions
13. Research materials and other

Restrictions on access

There are no access restrictions.

Finding aids

[Online Finding Aid](<https://library.mcmaster.ca/finding-aid/johnston>)

Related material

Researchers can find additional information on Basil Johnston in the following locations: [Historical Perspectives on Canadian Publishing website](<http://hpcanpub.mcmaster.ca>) and in the McClelland & Stewart fonds and Key Porter fonds.

Accruals

Further accruals are expected

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Description identifier:** RC0038

Access points

- Literature and Writing (subject)

- Archives of Indigenous Creators (subject)
- Indigenous Peoples in Canada (subject)
- Residential School System (subject)