

# *The Canadian Spiritualist Movement and Sources for its Study*

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Spiritualism is a universal religion which draws from the teachings of Christianity and other world religions and philosophies, rather than relying on any one tradition or particular book, ancient or modern. Personal responsibility for the way one lives one's life is the cornerstone of Spiritualist philosophy, and most Spiritualists "affirm the essential goodness of humanity (as opposed to the idea of original sin and human depravity), deny any need for salvation, and do not believe in hell."<sup>1</sup> Although Spiritualists differ on the context in which the survival hypothesis and the afterlife should be interpreted, studied, and propagated, they remain loosely united through a common belief in two basic tenets:

Survival beyond bodily death of some, as-yet-undetermined, part of the personal human mind, intelligence, consciousness, or soul which is referred to as "spirit"; and

The possibility under certain circumstances of communication between spirit which has survived death and spirit still in its earthly body.

Personal survival of death as demonstrated through mediumship distinguishes Spiritualism from the many other psychic research groups which exist today. Its basic tenets are substantiated through survival evidence brought to members of the church's congregation by trained mediums or mediums in training. Mental mediumship, which includes clairvoyance and clairaudience,<sup>2</sup> is the most common and evidential form of mediumship known today. Spiritualists believe that the Bible provides the most famous example of Spiritualism. It documents the mediumship of Jesus of Nazareth who taught the continuity of life after death and demonstrated it through his own resurrection.<sup>3</sup>

Despite Spiritualism's ancient roots, the modern Spiritualist movement dates from 31 March 1848 when alleged spirit communications were first produced by the Fox sisters in Hydesville, New York. The events of 1848 and subsequent years marked the beginning of a popular movement which brought the issue of survival and spirit communication to the forefront of public attention in the United States, Canada, England, and elsewhere. Demonstrators of spirit communication, known as mediums, travelled across North America amidst flamboyant press coverage of Spiritualist meetings, experiments, and investigations, including acrimonious debates about the

legitimacy and propriety of the phenomena cited as evidence of personal survival of bodily death.<sup>4</sup>

Although Spiritualist activities date from the 1850s<sup>5</sup> in Eastern Canada and apparently from at least 1870 in British Columbia,<sup>6</sup> academic study of the history of Spiritualism in Canada is virtually non-existent.<sup>7</sup> The first Canadian Spiritualist groups organized themselves as local investigative associations and societies rather than churches and were headed by elected officers, boards of trustees, and lay persons. For example, in British Columbia, Victoria's Spiritualists organized in March 1886 "a society for the purpose of more thoroughly disseminating their doctrines."<sup>8</sup> About the same time,<sup>9</sup> a group in Nanaimo organized as the Nanaimo Association for the Investigation of Spiritualism, abbreviated to the Nanaimo Association of Spiritualists.<sup>10</sup> On 5 March 1891, British Columbia's Spiritualists organized themselves as a corporate body<sup>11</sup> to be known as the First British Columbia Society of Spiritualists and located at Victoria.<sup>12</sup>

During the First World War, the influence of British Spiritualism and the desire of Canadian Spiritualists to have their belief system recognized as a legitimate religious denomination resulted in the establishment of Spiritualist churches. Many of the original investigative associations and psychic societies were replaced by Spiritualist churches. For instance, in Victoria, the First Spiritual Church of Psychic Research replaced the Psychic Research Society in 1916.<sup>13</sup> Some societies simply changed their names to incorporate the word "church."<sup>14</sup> For example, the existing Spiritualist societies in Vancouver and Nanaimo changed their names to churches in 1918 and 1926 respectively, following the establishment in those cities of other Spiritualist groups calling themselves churches. In addition, Spiritualist churches were apparently first incorporated under provincial charters during this period.<sup>15</sup> For instance, the Government of Ontario incorporated the East Hamilton Spiritual Church on 25 September 1918 and the Riverdale Spiritualist Church on 18 November 1919,<sup>16</sup> and the Government of Alberta incorporated the Calgary First Spiritualist Church on 18 November 1920 after "mediums from overseas" had brought Spiritualism to Calgary during the First World War.<sup>17</sup>

Most Spiritualist churches affiliated themselves with parent organizations in Canada, Great Britain, or the United States in order to align with the organization which best reflected the philosophy of the individual church. For instance, the Spiritualists' National Union of Canada presented an official charter to the Calgary First Spiritualist Church in 1929, recognizing it "as one of the bodies under its jurisdiction."<sup>18</sup> The Church of Spiritual Guidance in Toronto, founded in 1928, was associated with the National Spiritualist Association of Canada, Inc., and in November 1951 also affiliated itself with the British Greater World Christian Spiritualist League.<sup>19</sup> In 1933 both Victoria churches, the First Spiritualist Church and the Spiritual Science Temple, were branches of the British Columbia Spiritualist Association. The Spiritual Science Temple was also a member of the United States Spiritualist Association and had the distinction of being the only Canadian Spiritualist church affiliated with that organization.<sup>20</sup>

The history of the interrelationships between Canadian national and provincial parent associations, their British and American counterparts, and affiliated churches has not yet been studied. Today the two major Canadian parent organizations are the Spiritualist Church of Canada and the International Spiritualist Alliance. An outline of

the history of those two organizations follows. On 5 July 1928, the Government of Canada incorporated the National Spiritualist Association (NSA) of Canada, Inc., as a body corporate and politic under the federal Companies Act.<sup>21</sup> The purposes and objects of the NSA were:

- a) To teach the laws of the Universe in accordance with the Master's teaching;
- b) To prove the truth of Spiritual doctrine;
- c) To organize and conduct classes for religious and spiritualistic instruction;
- d) To carry on charitable work;
- e) To acquire and build churches and cemeteries for the purposes of the Association;
- f) To effect an organization of the Spiritualists of Canada into one general Association, by the federation of existing local societies, as well as organizing new ones and Branches of this Association throughout the Dominion of Canada for the advancement of these undertakings and enterprises germane to the study of the phenomena, the promotion of the science, and the promulgation of the philosophy and religion of Spiritualism;
- g) To acquire by purchase, lease or otherwise, lands and buildings necessary to carry out the objects of the Association;
- h) To provide for the education and license of proper persons as authorized lecturers or preachers of the religion of Spiritualism and for the ordination of pastors.<sup>22</sup>

The operations of the corporation were to be carried on throughout the Dominion of Canada and elsewhere without gain to its members and the head office was to be located in Toronto. At the twenty-third annual convention of the NSA held in Victoria in October 1951, reports revealed 308 members in 18 branch churches across Canada. The total membership included 28 ordained ministers.<sup>23</sup> Subordinate to the NSA were provincial councils which sent delegates to the national conventions. For example, the British Columbia Council appears to have been established about 1937.<sup>24</sup> Although newspaper accounts of annual conventions indicate that British Columbia's Spiritualists had strong representation in the NSA during the 1940s and 1950s, a number of the British Columbia churches joined the International Spiritualist Alliance after its establishment by several prominent NSA members in 1959.<sup>25</sup> Most of the remaining NSA churches<sup>26</sup> amalgamated with the Spiritualists' National Union of Canada in 1974,<sup>27</sup> and the NSA was formally dissolved on 16 December 1980 under the Canada Business Corporations Act.<sup>28</sup>

The Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) of Canada was incorporated under federal law on 27 April 1929, enabling it to operate as a corporate body in each Canadian province and territory. Originally the SNU's headquarters were at Toronto's Britten Memorial Church of Canada<sup>29</sup> which is named after Spiritualist medium, lecturer, and traveller Emma Hardinge Britten (1823-1899), founder of the Spiritualists' National Union (SNU) in Great Britain.<sup>30</sup> On 23 August 1978 the SNU of Canada succeeded, after several attempts over a period of many years, in changing its name to the Spiritualist Church of Canada (SCC).<sup>31</sup> Today the philosophy and purposes of the SCC remain similar to those of the SNU in Great Britain, from which it receives educational

correspondence courses which assist in the spiritual teaching work of its churches. The SCC has seven affiliated churches: three in Toronto and one each in Orillia, Hamilton, Montreal, and Dartmouth.<sup>32</sup>

The International Spiritualist Alliance (ISA), headquartered in New Westminster, was incorporated under the British Columbia Societies Act on 25 September 1959,<sup>33</sup> apparently to assume the role within British Columbia of the flagging NSA. Although in the past the ISA has had churches in British Columbia, Quebec, Ontario, the United States, and Great Britain, today all seven affiliated churches are Canadian: six in British Columbia (four in the Vancouver/Lower Mainland area, one in Victoria, and one in Nanaimo) and one in Quebec (at Côte St. Paul, near Montreal).

In addition to churches affiliated with the SCC and ISA, independent churches exist in Victoria, Burnaby, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto, and a few other churches probably exist in other cities. In total, it is estimated that about twenty-five Spiritualist churches exist in Canada. Spiritualist churches typically sponsor the following activities and services: Sunday church services; lectures; development classes; workshops; public demonstrations of clairvoyance; spiritual healing; counselling; a lyceum for children; marriages; infant dedication or naming services; funeral and memorial services. The Spiritualist church is not well-established in Canada, and although some Spiritualist congregations own their church premises, most use rented accommodation and the problem of meeting high monthly rental costs is a constant source of concern. At the 1947 convention of the British Columbia Council of the NSA, it was reported that "the first Spiritualist church in British Columbia, now under construction in Victoria [the Open Door Spiritualist Church], will be opened in September."<sup>34</sup> Today church buildings owned by Spiritualist congregations exist in Victoria, Burnaby, Edmonton, Calgary, Hamilton, and Toronto.

In Canada there is no Spiritualist theological college and most candidates for the ministry receive their training through working with an ordained Spiritualist minister.<sup>35</sup> The SCC requires its ministerial candidates to complete a correspondence course through the SNU of Great Britain, in addition to study and practice in SCC churches which undertake their own teaching work. Similarly, the ISA's programme of study is based upon the requirements for ministerial training set by the British SNU and includes required reading, completion of a practicum, elocution and public speaking classes, and instruction on conducting services and marriage ceremonies. British immigrants, including a number of British-trained Spiritualist ministers and mediums, have significantly influenced the Canadian Spiritualist movement. Many of the British Spiritualists who emigrated to Canada in the 1920s and 1930s had attended Spiritualist lyceums as children and brought with them the background and training which helped establish the Spiritualist church in Canada.<sup>36</sup> In addition, many Canadian-trained Spiritualist ministers and mediums have been first generation Canadians from Great Britain. As few, if any, ordained or lay ministers receive the equivalent of full-time remuneration, many ministers work at a full-time vocation or profession during the day and perform their ministerial duties on weekday evenings and weekends.

The date that the first Spiritualist minister was ordained in Canada is not known. The church columns in the Victoria and Nanaimo newspapers indicate, however, that ordained ministers were conducting Spiritualist church services in those cities by 1915<sup>37</sup> and 1926<sup>38</sup> respectively. In many instances, ministers ordained by orthodox Christian

denominations converted to Spiritualism later in life. Today the ISA and the SCC ordain the ministers who serve in their churches.<sup>39</sup> In addition, Spiritualist churches which have provincial charters often grant themselves, in their constitution or bylaws, the right to ordain their own ministers.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, churches affiliated with a parent organization usually elect to have their ministers ordained by the parent body because of the greater recognition which results from the more exacting standards required for ordination.<sup>41</sup>

In Canada the registration of marriages is regulated by provincial and territorial legislation which differs from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Consequently, the religious bodies recognized to perform marriages within each jurisdiction differ. For example, British Columbia's Marriage Act and subordinate policy requires a religious body to have continuously existed within the province for a five-year period and to have "recognized rites and usages respecting the solemnization of marriage, to warrant, in the opinion of the Registrar [of Births, Deaths, and Marriages], the registration of its ministers and clergymen as authorized to solemnize marriage."<sup>42</sup> In Ontario, a religious body must be in continuous existence for twenty-five years before its ministers may be registered to perform marriages.

In Canada the first Spiritualist marriage apparently took place in 1940 in Victoria, British Columbia. A newspaper wedding announcement dated 15 February reported that "the first wedding ever performed in a Spiritualist Church in Canada was solemnized at the Open Door Spiritualist Church" the previous evening.<sup>43</sup> Although a newspaper report cannot be accepted as the authoritative source on this matter, it is corroborated by another article dated 30 October 1954 in which Reverend Ada Garrad of Vancouver, a past president of the NSA, reported that "British Columbia is the only province where Spiritualist ministers are authorized to perform marriage ceremonies."<sup>44</sup> Today neither the ISA nor the SCC holds marriage rights in more than one province. The ISA has marriage rights within British Columbia; the SCC has marriage rights within Ontario.<sup>45</sup>

Unlike marriages, naming<sup>46</sup> and funeral services are ceremonies which can be performed by any person authorized by a given religious denomination. Given the difference between orthodox and Spiritualist beliefs about the nature of the afterlife, there can be little doubt that Spiritualists were having lay persons conduct their funeral services well before the turn of the century,<sup>47</sup> with ministers filling the same role after the first ordinations took place. In addition, Spiritualists often recognize new churches, sanctuaries and homes, or personal endeavours, with a dedication service. Most churches maintain some record of the naming, funeral, and dedication services performed under their auspices. Whereas the law does not regulate naming or funeral services, it does regulate the act of burying or cremating the body of a deceased individual. The Spiritualist denomination differs from some other religious denominations in that no Spiritualist churchyards or burial grounds are known to exist. Consequently records relating to the burial or cremation of Spiritualists must be sought among the burial records of public or private cemeteries and other religious denominations.

Since its peak about 1930, the influence of Spiritualism in Canada has been declining. The number of Spiritualist churches, ministers, and members is small. As a result of Spiritualism's dependence upon mediumship to provide evidence in support of its basic

tenets, Spiritualists have organized themselves “as gatherings around an initiated, charismatic leader.”<sup>48</sup> When the mediumship provides good evidence of survival, the congregations swell; when it does not, they dwindle. These fluctuations are reflected in the very limited record which survives for most Spiritualist churches. Whereas a continuous church record exists for most well-established religious denominations, that is not the case for Spiritualist churches. When a church has closed, the records have most often been lost, presumably remaining with the church members who last had responsibility for the secretarial and treasurer’s duties.

No survey of Spiritualist records has been conducted, and little is known about the state of the church’s recordkeeping or archives. Nevertheless, the current parent organizations<sup>49</sup> are known to maintain records relating to their incorporation, such as constitutions, bylaws, and minutes, as well as records relating to membership, financial matters, charitable organization status, advertising, newsletters and other publications, and documented evidence of survival given through mediumship, including sound recordings and transcripts. They also maintain information on proposed and ordained ministers, and members of their boards of directors. When, as in the case of the ISA, the parent organization operates a church, it also maintains records relating to church services, lectures, naming, marriage, and funeral services, and public demonstrations of mediumship. Many individual churches are incorporated as corporate bodies or societies under provincial legislation and maintain records similar to the parent organizations.<sup>50</sup>

Given that few of the records produced in the past by individual Spiritualist churches or their parent organizations appear to have survived, how might the history of Spiritualism in Canada be studied? What other sources exist? To begin, the administrative history of Spiritualist groups incorporated under federal, provincial, or territorial legislation can often be partially reconstructed from government records. In British Columbia, the Corporate, Central and Mobile Home Registry’s files relating to societies incorporated under the Society Act are open to the public. For example, the file relating to Victoria’s Open Door Spiritualist Church (ODSC), incorporated as a society on 8 June 1955, contains its constitution, bylaws, annual reports, and financial statements.<sup>51</sup> That file documents amendments and additions to the society’s constitution and bylaws since incorporation, the names, addresses, and occupations of its directors and ministers, the dates of its annual general meetings, the number of voting and non-voting members, and its financial position. Files relating to dissolved societies are transferred to the archival custody of the British Columbia Archives and Records Service ten years after dissolution.<sup>52</sup> For example, the file relating to the First British Columbia Society of Spiritualists, incorporated in early 1891 and struck from the register of societies in 1925,<sup>53</sup> is preserved on microfilm.<sup>54</sup>

The decennial census of Canada is an important source of statistical information about Spiritualism. Given the number of individuals from other religious denominations who attend a Spiritualist church service from time to time, census information does not reflect actual weekly attendance at Spiritualist services.<sup>55</sup> Although not an accurate measure of Spiritualist activity, the published census reports do offer a record of the number of Canadians who professed to be Spiritualists at some of the decennial enumerations.<sup>56</sup> Before 1901 the published census reports do not specifically identify Spiritualists. There can be little doubt, however, that individuals professing to be Spiritualists were recorded on the 1881 and 1891 nominal census

returns, but were aggregated in the total of individuals categorized as other religious denominations.<sup>57</sup> The 1901 census enumerated 616 Spiritualists.<sup>58</sup> The 1911, 1921, and 1931 censuses showed a steady increase in Spiritualist numbers to 674,<sup>59</sup> 1,558,<sup>60</sup> and 2,263<sup>61</sup> respectively, followed in 1941 by a sharp decrease to 1,214.<sup>62</sup> The published census reports for 1951, 1961, and 1971 do not identify Spiritualists as a separate religious denomination. Finally, the 1981 census, based upon twenty percent sample data, reported 1,940 Spiritualists.<sup>63</sup>

In comparing Spiritualist numbers to the total Canadian population, we find that there were eleven Spiritualists for each 100,000 of population in 1901. That figure dropped to nine in 1911, increased to seventeen in 1921 and to twenty-two in 1931, plummeted to ten in 1941, and stood at eight in 1981. Each of the published census reports contains breakdowns by province,<sup>64</sup> which show that Spiritualists have been most numerous in Ontario, followed by British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Quebec. The influence of Spiritualism has been negligible in Saskatchewan,<sup>65</sup> the Maritime provinces, and in Canada's northern territories.<sup>66</sup> The published reports also document very clearly the predominance of women in the Spiritualist movement, steadily increasing from 100 female Spiritualists for every 93 male Spiritualists in 1921 to 100 women for every 67 men in 1981. For the years 1911 through 1941, the census reports contain tabulations of the numbers of each religious denomination living in Canadian cities and towns. Although the size of the cities included in those tables varies from census to census, the statistics clearly demonstrate that the Spiritualist movement was urban rather than rural in nature. For instance, in 1941 only fifteen percent of Canadian Spiritualists lived in rural areas, as compared to forty-five percent of the total population.<sup>67</sup> These tables could also be used to locate the majority of Canada's Spiritualist population and churches and to trace the ebb and flow of Spiritualist congregations in specific cities between 1911 and 1941. Through comparison of these statistics and various qualitative sources, such as newspapers, oral history interviews, and personal diaries, study of the importance to the Spiritualist movement of strong and charismatic leaders having the ability to provide good, evidential mediumship could also be undertaken.

Nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century newspapers probably provide the richest surviving record of Spiritualist activities in Canada, since Spiritualist meetings, lectures, and demonstrations of clairvoyance were sometimes reported in detail. Furthermore, the church columns are most useful in establishing what Spiritualist churches existed in the area covered by a local newspaper. Given the controversial nature of spiritualistic phenomena, Victoria's *British Colonist* occasionally published letters to the editor from the movement's proponents who praised it for its understanding and insights and its opponents who denounced it for its alleged dangers. Among the insults hurled, Spiritualists were often charged with insanity.

The personal papers of Spiritualists and other interested parties often document their experiences and opinions regarding Spiritualism and the question of survival. Given the national scope of its acquisition policy, the National Archives of Canada probably holds more records relevant to the study of Spiritualism than any other single Canadian archival repository. Although researchers must wait yet another decade to find out for sure, the William Lyon Mackenzie King papers may be the single most significant source of information on Canadian Spiritualism during the first half of the twentieth century. Prime Minister King (1874-1950)<sup>68</sup> was "a strong believer in Spiritualism"<sup>69</sup> and is

purported to have received frequent communications from his mother and grandfather. Among his personal papers is a subseries on Spiritualism, consisting of 1.4 metres of original correspondence, publications, and memoranda, arranged in subject files and dating from 1919 to 1950. Those records will be opened to researchers on 1 January 2001.<sup>70</sup> In addition, other subseries, such as Mackenzie King's diaries and private correspondence, contain references to Spiritualism. Also deposited at the National Archives of Canada are transcripts of the personal papers of merchant and land agent Marcus Gunn (fl. 1822-1878) who brought his family from Scotland to New Brunswick in 1828. They document, among other personal matters, his thoughts on Spiritualism and theology, including theological writings and a procedure book relating to Spiritualism dating from 1862.<sup>71</sup> Records dealing with Spiritualism also exist among the papers of politician Walter Gilbert Dinsdale (1916-1982)<sup>72</sup> and those of Toronto author and publisher Henry Lovat Dickson (1902-1986).<sup>73</sup>

Provincial, university, and other archival repositories also hold personal papers which are pertinent to the study of Spiritualism. The Richard and Hannah Maynard Collection at the British Columbia Archives and Records Service contains four photographs of the Spiritualists' picnic at Cordova Bay, Victoria, about 1886-1887,<sup>74</sup> and a small notebook which belonged to British Columbia painter and author Emily Carr (1871-1945) contains an eight-page account of her visit in February 1905 to a Victoria medium named "Neshaw."<sup>75</sup> The University of Manitoba Library in Winnipeg holds the papers of Winnipeg medical doctor Thomas Glendenning Hamilton (1873-1935), MD, FACS,<sup>76</sup> who between 1920 and 1935 conducted scientific experiments related to parapsychology, focusing primarily on the survival hypothesis through study of several Winnipeg mediums. The collection includes correspondence, notes, photographs, newspaper clippings, and affidavits documenting Dr. Hamilton's research and experiments.<sup>77</sup> Although the Hamiltons were not themselves Spiritualists,<sup>78</sup> they had contact with many prominent Spiritualists, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge, and William Lyon Mackenzie King. The Metropolitan Toronto Library holds an unpublished manuscript attributed to author Ernest John Craigie (fl. 1890-1899) which apparently relates to Spiritualist philosophy.<sup>79</sup>

Occasionally, obscure, yet important, references to Spiritualism may be found in the records of local government. For instance, the Corporation of the City of Nanaimo's municipal council minutes contain references to the rental of a portion of the Nanaimo city hall by the local Spiritualist association for lectures which it sponsored in 1889.<sup>80</sup> Later, in response to the taxation of clairvoyants which was to be continued under the City of Nanaimo's draft "Trades License By-Law, 1897," the Secretary of the Nanaimo Spiritualists Association successfully petitioned the Municipal Council, requesting that it not compel Spiritualist mediums to pay a license fee and "to give the religion of Spiritualism the same privileges as are accorded to other religious bodies of the City."<sup>81</sup>

The purpose of this article has been to suggest ways that the history of Spiritualism in Canada might be studied. Although no survey of Spiritualist records or archives has been conducted, it may be assumed, given the fragmented history of the Canadian Spiritualist movement, that few of the records created in the past by individual associations and churches have survived. Consequently, government records relating to the incorporation of religious associations, the published decennial census reports, local newspapers, and personal papers located in archival repositories and private collections become important sources of information about the history of Spiritualism and its adherents.



Unfortunately, the extent to which Spiritualist activities in Canada are coordinated at the provincial and national levels is limited, and consolidation of Spiritualist archives would appear unlikely and difficult. For small decentralized religious bodies such as the Spiritualist denomination, there are, of course, no formal archival programmes and no archivists. Consequently, no strategy has been developed actively to preserve the archival records already accumulated or now being created. Although some record of Spiritualist activities is being preserved by public archives as part of collections acquired from individuals who were interested in Spiritualism, there is nothing systematic about what is preserved. The records produced by small religious denominations such as Spiritualism are an important part of Canadian heritage and document how Canadians of religious persuasions outside the mainstream have dealt with questions central to understanding the nature of human existence. Until some strategy is developed to preserve such records, valuable records will be lost.

### Notes

- \* The authors would like to thank the Reverend Ruth A. Dyke, Pastor and President of Springdale Church, Toronto (head office of the Spiritualist Church of Canada), for her time in providing information and for her comments regarding draft copies of this article. The contributions of other individuals in supplying information about the records and archives of the Spiritualist churches with which they are affiliated are acknowledged in the notes which follow.

Abbreviations used throughout the notes are as follows:

BCARS	British Columbia Archives and Records Service
BSLU	British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union
CCN	Corporation of the City of Nanaimo
CNA	City of Nanaimo Archives
GR	Government Records
ISA	International Spiritualist Alliance
MG	Manuscript Group
NA	National Archives of Canada
NSA	National Spiritualist Association of Canada, Inc.
ODSC	Open Door Spiritualist Church, Victoria, B.C.
PAC	Public Archives of Canada
SBC	Statutes of British Columbia
SCC	Spiritualist Church of Canada
SNU	Spiritualists' National Union

- 1 J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America*, Garland Reference Library of Social Science, Vol. 213 (New York, 1986), p. 82.
- 2 Clairvoyance can be either objective or intuitive. With objective clairvoyance, the medium sees a spirit person "in just the same way as he sees a dimensional ordinary person." With intuitive clairvoyance, the medium receives, while in an attuned state, a thought-picture of a person in spirit. Clairaudience is the hearing of spirit voices. See Harry Edwards, *A Guide for the Development of Mediumship* (London, after 1976), pp. 26-27 and 33.
- 3 See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., Micropaedia, Part 1, s.v. "Spiritualist Groups," which states: Spiritualists believe that throughout human existence spirits have communicated with mortals. The Bible, they claim, is an outstanding record of Spiritualist phenomena. Well-known examples from the Bible are King Saul's clandestine visit to the woman at Endor, through whose mediumship Samuel, in the spirit, spoke to Saul, and Paul's vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus. Spiritualism, it is believed, furnishes the key that unlocks the biblical mysteries. The Transfiguration and the Resurrection are examples of materialization; Jesus walking on the water is an example of levitation; Pentecost was "the greatest séance in history."
- 4 For further background on the history and philosophy of Spiritualism and the survival hypothesis, see Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The History of Spiritualism*, 2 vols. (1926; reprint (2 vols. in 1), New York, 1975), and Arthur Findlay, *On the Edge of the Etheric or Survival after Death Scientifically Explained* (1931; reprint, London, 1977).

- 5 In *Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record of the Communion between Earth and the World of Spirits* (New York, 1870), pp. 459-64, Mrs. Emma Hardinge, who became, by a second marriage, Mrs. Hardinge Britten, describes her travels in Eastern Canada during the 1850s and the extent of the Spiritualist movement in Toronto, London, Ottawa, St. Catharines, Laprairie, Montreal, and Prince Edward Island. Mrs. Britten founded *The Two Worlds* Spiritualist newspaper in Manchester, England, in 1887. In 1890, she founded the National Federation of Spiritualists, which was in 1901 incorporated as the Spiritualists' National Union Limited.
- 6 The earliest known reference to Spiritualism in what is now British Columbia is the diatribe against Spiritualism delivered by, Dean Edward Cridge (1817-1913) of Victoria's Christ Church, to his congregations on the Sundays before and after Trinity Sunday 1870 and subsequently printed "by request" as a pamphlet. See Edward Cridge, "*Spiritualism: or Modern Necromancy, A Sermon, With Preface and Notes* (Victoria, 1870). Original copy held by BCARS (NWp 283 C928s).
- 7 One exception is an article by Ramsay Cook, "Spiritualism, Science of the Earthly Paradise," *Canadian Historical Review* 65 (March 1984), pp. 4-27. See also Cook's *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto, 1985) on Spiritualism.
- 8 "The Spiritualists of this city . . .," *Daily British Colonist* (Victoria), 18 March 1886, p. 3.
- 9 "Nanaimo Spiritualist Society," *Nanaimo Free Press*, 15 April 1924, p. 51.
- 10 CNA, CCN, Council Minutes, 13 May 1889, pp. 321-2.
- 11 The group was incorporated under the Charitable Associations Act (SBC 1888, Volume 1, Consolidated Acts, c. 17) as amended by the Charitable Associations Amendment Act, 1889 (SBC 1889, c. 3).
- 12 *Bylaws of the First British Columbia Society of Spiritualists of Victoria, B.C.* (Victoria, 1891). Original in the private collection of military historian R.H. Roy, Victoria, B.C.; photocopy located in University of Victoria Library, Special Collections (BF1228 F5).  
The title page of the bylaws is annotated as follows: "Approved and Filed, 5th March 1891, C.J. Leggatt, Regr. Genl." Charles James Leggatt was the Registrar General of Titles for British Columbia. This annotation is explained by the Charitable Associations Act (SBC 1888, Volume 1, Consolidated Acts, c. 17, s. 9) which required that "if the Registrar-General shall approve of such by-laws, rules, and regulations, one transcript shall be filed in the office of the Registrar-General and the other transcript shall be certified by the Registrar-General as having been approved by him, and returned to the Secretary or other officer of the Association having charge of the documents belonging to the Association."  
The bylaws were apparently missing from British Columbia society file S654, "First British Columbia Society of Spiritualists," when it was microfilmed in 1956. The microfilm copy consists of six pages and is available at BCARS as GR1438, microfilm reel B4406.
- 13 "At the City Churches," *Daily Colonist* (Victoria), 11 June 1916, p. 22.
- 14 This change apparently followed a trend in the British Spiritualist movement away from use of the word "society" and towards "church." For example, in note 36 below, compare the subtitles of the eighth children's edition and the fourth officers' edition of *The Lyceum Manual* compiled by Britten, Kitson, and Kersey and published by the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union. The subtitle of the former, published in 1905, refers to "British Spiritualists' Societies," whereas the latter, published in 1921, refers to "British Spiritualists' Churches and Kindred Bodies."
- 15 According to the *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 1972 ed., s.v. "Spiritualism," the "earliest provincial charters were issued to Spiritualist churches in Toronto and Hamilton shortly after the turn of the century." That statement has yet to be verified.
- 16 These incorporation dates are from a 1978 listing of Spiritualist Churches which the federal Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs produced for the SNU. Reverend Ruth Dyke provided the authors with a copy.
- 17 H.L. Collett, *First Spiritualist Church: A Short Account of Spiritualism in Calgary*, vol. 4, no. 8 of *The Century Calgary Historical Series* (Calgary, 1975), p. 3.
- 18 Collett, *First Spiritualist Church*, pp. 3-4.
- 19 "Active Workers in Toronto, Canada," *The Greater World Christian Spiritualist Weekly*, No. 1235, 9 February 1952, p. 43.
- 20 J.K. Unsworth, "Spiritualism Had Organized Group in City in 1888 [sic]," *Daily Colonist* (Victoria), 15 January 1933, p. 6.
- 21 Revised Statutes of Canada, 1927, c. 27.
- 22 "Copy of Charter [Letters Patent] of National Spiritualist Association of Canada." This document is taped inside the front cover of the 1945-1950 minute book of the Open Door Spiritualist Church, 1600 Cook Street, Victoria, B.C.

- 23 Ron Baird, "Small Groups Here Do Quiet Psychic Research," *Victoria Daily Times*, 22 December 1951, p. 13.
- 24 The British Columbia Council held its thirteenth annual convention in 1950. See "Spiritualists Pick Officers At Convention," *Vancouver Sun*, 19 June 1950, p. 6.
- 25 In December 1958, the Reverend Dr. John Horning and his wife Doris, who were instrumental in the formation of the International Spiritualist Alliance the following year, were the editors of the *News Review* which had been the NSA's official organ since 1956.
- 26 Some NSA churches may have become independent churches at that time.
- 27 In notes dated 1 February 1990, Reverend Ruth Dyke wrote that upon its amalgamation with the SNU of Canada the NSA comprised only small groups and churches located in Eastern Canada, the only sizable church being in Montreal (p. 2). There was a lack of funds, as well as workers in the NSA and one by one the churches let their SNU membership lapse. The Montreal Church carried on for quite a while, until some of their main workers joined together and started a "Fellowship" of their own, which offers a popular mix of philosophies. None of the NSA churches remain operative in the SCC (p. 3).
- 28 Statutes of Canada, 1974-75-76, c. 33, s. 261(3). Date of dissolution obtained from Government of Canada, Corporations Branch, corporate access no. 053142-1.
- 29 *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 1972 ed., s.v. "Spiritualism." In the mid-1970s the SNU's head office moved to Springdale Church, 30 Merritt Road, Toronto, where it remains today.
- 30 Mrs. Britten made several trips to Canada and, according to *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 1972 ed., s.v. "Spiritualism," held Spiritualist meetings in a hall in downtown Toronto in 1896.
- 31 According to Reverend Ruth Dyke, the Canadian public had not considered the SNU of Canada to be a spiritual organization and even associated it with the labour movement. Moreover, the SNU had experienced difficulties in convincing business representatives that the SNU was chartered as a church and was entitled to the usual tax-free privileges. Following the name change, the SCC enjoyed improved recognition.
- 32 Each of the Toronto, Hamilton, and Montreal churches has a provincial charter in addition to its affiliation with the SCC, while the Orillia and Dartmouth churches operate on SCC charters only.
- 33 The principals involved in founding the ISA were Mrs. Beatrice Gaulton-Bishop and Doctor John Horning and his wife Doris.
- 34 "Spiritualists Select Officers," *Vancouver Sun*, 30 June 1947, p. 8.
- 35 Some ministerial candidates also receive their general religious training through non-denominational seminaries.
- 36 The organizational structure upon which Canadian Spiritualist churches are based originated in New York State, travelled to Great Britain, and was subsequently established in Canada by British immigrants. On 26 January 1863, American spirit seer Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910) introduced a group of New York Spiritualists to his plan for a Spiritualist Sunday school system. The New York group wanted to ground Spiritualist phenomena in the context of a complete church organization with Sunday school and ministerial training, and Davis' plan was adopted in what became known as the Children's Progressive Lyceum.

From New York, Davis' original lyceum manual and system travelled to England where the first lyceum was opened in Nottingham in 1866. Alfred Kitson (1855-1934) of Gawthorpe, West Yorkshire, England, became co-conductor of the Gawthorpe Lyceum in 1871 and later worked with Emma Hardinge Britten (1823-1899) and Harry A. Kersey (fl. 1886-1901) to compile the British Spiritualists' *Lyceum Manual* which was first published in 1887. The educational scheme of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union (BSLU), which was formed in 1890, covered Sunday services, naming, marriage, and interment ceremonies, Sunday school for children, and a programme for ministerial study, training, and ordination. Through his devotion to its cause, Alfred Kitson became known as father of the British Lyceum movement. By 1924, there were 273 children's lyceums in Great Britain with a membership of over 16,000. After several attempts at amalgamation, the BSLU became the Lyceum Department of the SNU on 1 January 1948.

The foregoing synopsis has been extracted from manuals published by the BSLU and one newspaper article. See: Emma Hardinge Britten, Alfred Kitson, and H.A. Kersey, comps., *The Lyceum Manual: A Compendium of Physical, Moral, and Spiritual Exercises for use in Progressive Lyceums connected with British Spiritualists' Societies*, 8th children's ed. (England, 1905); Britten, Kitson, and Kersey, comps., *The Lyceum Manual: A Compendium of Physical, Moral, and Spiritual Exercises for use in Progressive Lyceums connected with British Spiritualists' Churches and Kindred Bodies*, 4th officers' ed. (1921; reprint, Manchester, England, 1935); *The Oral Grade Primer and Junior Groups Manual* (England, 1932); and "Lyceum Union is Alive if Not Well," *Psychic News*, 13 July 1974, p. 3.

- 37 On 7 November 1915, the Reverend L. Reese, BD, gave her first lecture at Victoria's Divine Psychic Society as an ordained minister (*Daily Colonist* (Victoria), 7 November 1915, p. 15). The local church columns indicate that Mrs. L. Reese received her Bachelor of Divinity before 7 December 1913, that she was Pastor of the Divine Psychic Society from at least 9 May 1915, and that she was ordained before 7 November 1915.
- 38 On 31 January 1926, the Reverend Jean Finbow, late of Vancouver, conducted the Independent Spiritualist Association's church service in the Crescent Hotel, Nanaimo (*Daily Herald* (Nanaimo), 31 January 1926, p. 3).
- 39 The ISA has fourteen ordained ministers: twelve reside in British Columbia and two reside in Quebec. The SCC has fifteen ordained ministers who reside primarily in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia.
- 40 For example, in 1960, Victoria's ODSC granted itself responsibility for the ordination of ministers by adding to its bylaws the following clause:  
That any Pastor of the Open Door Spiritualist Church, 1600 Cook Street, Victoria, B.C., shall have power to ordain such persons as deemed suitable by the Board and Membership of the church.  
Government of British Columbia, Corporate, Central and Mobile Home Registry, Society File S4748, 1955 bylaws, section 6a.  
The ODSC had been a member of the NSA, but apparently became an independent church after the majority of the British Columbia churches affiliated themselves with the ISA. Without a parent body to ordain its ministers, the ODSC granted itself that right.
- 41 Reverend Ruth Dyke, notes dated 1 February 1990.
- 42 Revised Statutes of British Columbia, 1979, c. 251, s. 3(d). This provision was first enacted by the Marriage Act (SBC 1930, c. 41, s. 4(d)).  
In British Columbia the International Spiritualist Alliance, Victoria's Open Door Spiritualist Church, and the now defunct Spiritualist Association of Canada (National) [sic] are recognized to perform marriages.
- 43 "First Spiritualist Wedding Held in Canada," *Victoria Daily Times*, 15 February 1940, p. 6. The Reverend Walter L. Holder, Pastor, solemnized the marriage between Pearl Irene White and Bertram Ronald Mayell. The *British Columbia Gazette* (25 January 1940, p. 159) indicates that Reverend Holder, a minister ordained by the NSA, was first registered under the British Columbia Marriage Act to solemnize marriages within the Province about January 1940 (certificate number 2171).
- 44 "Practicing Medium States Spiritualism Is Religion," *Daily Colonist* (Victoria), 12 January 1954, p. 13.
- 45 In notes dated 1 February 1990, Reverend Ruth Dyke indicated that the Calgary First Spiritualist Church has had marriage rights in Alberta for some years and that the SCC finally received marriage rights in Ontario on 23 July 1981. She does not know of any Spiritualist churches in the Maritime provinces, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, or the territories which hold marriage rights (p. 5).
- 46 The Spiritualist naming service, also referred to as the infant dedication service, is the counterpart of the baptism or christening service in other denominations.
- 47 George Campbell, a prominent Nanaimo Spiritualist, conducted the funeral service of Mrs. Catherine Thomas in 1899. See "Funeral of the Late Mrs. Thomas," *Nanaimo Free Press*, 21 July 1899, p. 3.
- 48 Robert S. Ellwood and Harry B. Partin, *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1988), p. 116.
- 49 Reverend Gloria Brough, a past president of the ISA, indicated that the ISA maintains in its office a fairly complete record of its activities dating back to its incorporation. Telephone conversation, 15 January 1990. The SCC's head office is Springdale Church in Toronto. As a result of the distance between Toronto and Cambridge, Reverend June Struthers, General Secretary of the SCC, maintains the SCC's current and semi-current records in her home in Cambridge. Telephone conversation, 21 January 1990.
- 50 Confirmed with Doris Prentis, Minister, Community Spiritualist Church Society, Vancouver (affiliated with the ISA), and with Brian Robertson, President, Open Door Spiritualist Church, Victoria (an independent church).
- 51 Government of British Columbia, Corporate, Central and Mobile Home Registry, society file S4748.  
Although not formally incorporated until 1955, the ODSC was established on 16 September 1939 at an organizational meeting at which the Reverend Walter L. Holder was asked to be the pastor of the new church and the church's name was adopted. See the 1939-1945 minute book of the ODSC, 1600 Cook Street, Victoria, B.C.
- 52 Presumably, the practice relating to access to current society files and their archival retention is similar across provincial and territorial jurisdictions.
- 53 The society was formally dissolved in 1925, although it had ceased operation sometime before that.

- 54 BCARS, GR1438, microfilm reel B4406, society file S654.
- 55 In 1951, Reverend Harold Moore of Victoria's ODSC stated that his greatest regret was "that of the hundreds who have taken both an active and passive interest in Spiritualism, few have actually become members of a church whose work is directly aligned with the belief" (Ron Baird, "Small Groups Here Do Quiet Psychic Research," *Victoria Daily Times*, 22 December 1951, p. 13).
- 56 In notes dated 1 February 1990, Reverend Ruth Dyke wrote: "I am inclined to believe that the census totals for Spiritualists could be low on all years listed. Spiritualists have suffered from religious persecution for so long, they have become fearful of acknowledging their religious beliefs—even to family members. Right now, in this enlightened age, we have both men and women in my church who will not discuss the subject at home—and some even hide it from their spouses. Others also attend the orthodox services favored by their mate, in order to keep peace in the family" (p. 5).
- 57 *Census of Canada, 1890-91*, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1893), table 4.
- 58 *Fourth Census of Canada, 1901*, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1901), table 8, pp. 144-45.
- 59 *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911*, vol. 2 (Ottawa, 1913), table 1, pp. 2-3.
- 60 *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1924), table 34, pp. 572-73.
- 61 Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931*, vol. 2 (Ottawa, 1933), table 38, pp. 508-9.
- The significant increase in Spiritualist numbers during the 1920s has been attributed to the large number of war deaths resulting from World War I and the attempts of surviving family to contact their deceased loved ones through Spiritualist mediums. However, there can be little doubt that the Canadian lecture tours of two eminent British Spiritualists, who spoke to large audiences about Spiritualism and their personal conviction about the truth of life after death and the possibility of spirit communication, contributed to that increase.
- Sir Oliver Joseph Lodge (1851-1940), F.R.S., D.C.L., D.Sc., a professor of physics and applied mathematics at University College in Liverpool and London who became prominent in psychic research after 1910, lectured in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Victoria and presumably Eastern Canada in 1920. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930), M.D., LL.D., a medical doctor interested in psychic research, is best known as the novelist who wrote the Sherlock Holmes detective stories. In June and July 1923, Conan Doyle lectured to audiences in Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary, Jasper, Winnipeg, Port Arthur, and Montreal (two lectures).
- 62 Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Eighth Census of Canada, 1941*, vol. 2 (Ottawa, 1944), table 36, pp. 519-521.
- 63 Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1981*, catalogue no. 92-912 (Ottawa, 1983), table 1, pp. 7-8.
- 64 The 1921 census also provides a complete breakdown of religious denominations by Dominion electoral districts within each province. See *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1924), table 37, pp. 578-603.
- 65 The 1911, 1921, and 1931 census reports reveal a small group of Spiritualists in Saskatchewan, averaging about twenty-five persons. On 5 February 1932, the Government of Saskatchewan incorporated the First Spiritualist Church of Saskatoon. By the time of the 1941 census, the number of Spiritualists in Saskatchewan had dropped to six.
- 66 There was a small presence in the Yukon Territory in 1901 following the Klondike Gold Rush.
- 67 Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Eighth Census of Canada, 1941*, vol. 2 (Ottawa, 1944), table 36, pp. 519-521.
- 68 Mackenzie King was Prime Minister from 1921-1925, 1926-1930, and 1935-1948.
- 69 Ron Baird, "Spiritualists' Faith Still Flourishes Here," *Victoria Daily Times*, 18 December 1951, p. 1. This article refers to a "recent" story in a national magazine regarding Mackenzie King's belief in Spiritualism.
- 70 PAC, Manuscript Division, *General Inventory: Manuscripts*, vol. 5 (MG26-MG27) (Ottawa, 1972). MG26, J9 series, Spiritualism.
- 71 PAC, Manuscript Division, *General Inventory: Manuscripts*, vol. 4 (MG22-MG25) (Ottawa, 1972). MG24, I42 series, Marcus Gunn.
- 72 NA, MG32, B35. Volumes 138-141 contain files dealing with Spiritualism. At one point during his career Dinsdale was Minister of the federal Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources.
- 73 NA, MG30, D237. Volume 5 deals with psychic research and contains two letters concerning Spiritualism.
- 74 BCARS, Maynard Collection, photographs HP66075, HP66076, HP66077, and HP66078. Richard and Hannah Maynard were pioneer photographers in British Columbia.
- 75 BCARS, Edna Parnall Collection, Add. MSS 2763, box 1, file 4. Carr's recording of the sitting is not in itself of interest, as it would appear that little survival evidence was produced. According to the church columns in the Victoria newspaper, the medium was in fact named R. [Robert] H. Kneeshaw, who was a pastor with Victoria's Society of Psychic Research which later changed its name to the First Spiritual

Church. Kneeshaw "established the first lyceum under the name of 'Golden Rule Lyceum' for children." See J.K. Unsworth, "Spiritualism Had Organized Group in City in 1888 [sic]," *Daily Colonist* (Victoria), 15 January 1933, p. 6.

- 76 Dr. Hamilton was named a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons in October 1920.
- 77 University of Manitoba Library, MSS 14, Thomas Glendenning Hamilton Collection, ten boxes. According to *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 1972 ed., s.v. "Spiritualism," Dr. Hamilton was "a member of the Manitoba legislature, a prominent physician, medical lecturer and United Church layman." Dr. Hamilton's investigating group was "probably the most important of its kind in Canada." First published in 1942, T. Glen Hamilton's *Intention and Survival: Psychological Research Studies and the Bearing of Intentional Actions by Trance Personalities on the Problem of Human Survival* (1st edition edited by James D. Hamilton (Toronto, 1942), 2nd edition edited by Margaret Lillian Hamilton (London, 1977)) recorded posthumously the results of the investigations of Dr. Hamilton's group. *Encyclopedia Canadiana* states that: "This book was quite significant for its scientific exactness, for its reasoned arguments in support of a spiritistic hypothesis and for the highly respected status of its author."  
In 1969, Margaret Lillian (Hamilton) Bach published, under her maiden name, a sequel to her father's book, entitled *Is Survival A Fact?: Studies of Deep-Trance Automatic Scripts and the Bearing of Intentional Actions by Trance Personalities on the Question of Human Survival* (London, 1969) which documented the continuation of the group's research after Dr. Hamilton's death, including the information which the Hamiltons received through mediumship and accepted as conclusive evidence that Thomas Glendenning Hamilton had survived death.
- 78 Hamilton, *Intention and Survival*, p. xxix.
- 79 Metropolitan Toronto Library, Baldwin Room, unpublished carbon copy of a typescript entitled "A murderer's fate in the spirit world, by Nemesis, through the mediumship of Annie Florence Smith, Medium of *Brighter Spheres*," 1899, 52 pages. *Brighter Spheres* (Montreal, 1890) is attributed to author Ernest John Craigie who is almost certainly also the author of this typescript.
- 80 CNA, CCN, Council Minutes, 13 May 1889, pp. 321-22.
- 81 CNA, CCN, Council Minutes, 5 July 1897, pp. 116-17.