

P219- James McNiece Austin fonds

1892-2010

30cm of textual records, 80 photographs and 7 cartographic records.

Biographical sketch: James McNiece (Jim) Austin (1924-2012), the eldest of four (4) sons of Allan McNiece and Rita (Dickinson) Austin, was born in Chapleau, Ontario and was married to Rosamond Mills (1924-1948) who died shortly after giving birth to their twin daughters Rosamond (1947-1997) and Elisabeth (1947-).

In 1939, he went to Sudbury to learn to fly with the help of his uncles Chuck and Jack [Austin] who had started Austin Airways. In 1942 he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and served during WWII as Flight Engineer, RCAF Bomber Command, Squadron 429 (Bison). After his father's sudden passing in 1946, he joined the family's business, Austin Nicholson Lumber Company, and worked in the lumber industry until his retirement in 1988.

Founded by Jim Austin's grandfather (James McNiece Austin (1866-1922)) in 1901, the Austin Nicholson Lumber Company of Chapleau, ON became a major 'actor' in the forest industry and was, in the late 1910s, the largest supplier of ties in the British Commonwealth. The company had contracts with Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) and in 1916, as an example, it signed a three-year contract to provide the CPR with 200,000 ties per year.

From 1946 until the sale of the family firm in 1956, Austin was in charge of many of the bush operations. After the sale of the firm to 'W.B. Plaunt and Sons of Sudbury' Jim Austin stayed with the company until joining Eddy Forest Products in Espanola. He was Assistant Woodyard Superintendent, and after managing Eddy's Pineland operation in Nairn Centre, in 1976 he moved to Timmins for work and four years later, in 1980, returned to Nairn. When he retired in 1988 he was 'Special Assistant to the Manager of the Woods Operations Supervising Research and Development in Lumber Operations and Production and Control of Waste Products'. After his retirement Jim Austin moved to Sudbury and resided there until his death in November 2012.

Scope and content: James McNiece Austin fonds consists of records documenting the founding and subsequent history of Austin Nicholson Lumber Company and the various communities where it operated as well as Austin's own professional career. It also contains records of individuals that worked for the Company.

Legal documents regarding land titles, contracts and correspondence with the CPR and financial records provide insights on the company and many photographs illustrate the facilities and equipment of the company at its different locations. A 2010 research paper on the presence of the company in Alberta sheds light on Austin's western operations.

There are also newspaper clippings, articles, photographs and publications regarding the different communities where the Austin Nicholson Lumber company had mills. As well, documentation on Sultan, Dalton Mill, Chapleau and the first settlers' families and on the history of Austin Nicholson logging company can be found in the fonds.

Some documents and articles relating to Eddy Forest products and its history are also included in the fonds. Personal documents and correspondence of George Natsuik, former employee, are also in the fonds.

Note: This fonds is not processed.

Immediate source of acquisition: Fonds was donated by Ms Elizabeth Austin, daughter of James Austin, in June 2018

Restrictions on access: Some documents are under restriction of access.

Terms governing use and reproduction/publication: Copyright regulations apply to the records. Some documents may not be reproduced due to the fragile state of preservation.

Accruals: Records were received in 1 accrual in June 2018. No more accruals expected.

Archivist Notes: This is a preliminary description until processing of the records.

For more information on James McNiece Austin :

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/facts-and-arguments/lives-lived-james-mcniece-austin-88/article7036452/>

<http://www.thememoryproject.com/stories/2113:james-mcniece-austin/>

Austin Nicholson Lumber Company

[:http://www.chapleauexpress.ca/January_19_2013.pdf](http://www.chapleauexpress.ca/January_19_2013.pdf)

<http://www.trainweb.org/oldtimetrains/photos/logging/austin.htm>

<http://www.chapleaulibrary.com/wakami/wakami.htm>