

# Frank Read fonds

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# Fonds Description

**Frank Read fonds.** – 1932-1986..

32.5 cm. of textual records.

145 photographs.

## Biographical Sketch

Frank Read was born on March 1, 1911. In the early 1930s, he became an accomplished oarsman with the Vancouver Rowing Club. Following a back injury, suffered while playing football, that ended his rowing career, he went into the hotel industry. In late 1949, Read agreed to coach the University of British Columbia rowing team which, at the same time, began a formal co-operation with the Vancouver Rowing Club. In recognition of both institutions, it was decided to call these new members "VRC/UBC" oarsmen.

Despite very limited resources for UBC's fledging rowing program, Read focussed on the importance of training and conditioning and instilling in his athletes dedication to the sport. His intensive training program soon produced results. Competing against other top Canadian teams to represent the country at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, the UBC team was beaten by the Toronto Argonaut club.

Two years later, Read's eight-oared crew represented Canada at the 1954 British Empire Games in Vancouver. There the team won Canada's first ever gold medal for the eights. The following year, invited by the Duke of Edinburgh to compete against the world's best at the Henley Regatta in England, the students scored an upset victory over the world champion Russians in the semi-finals, and finished second to the U.S. team in the finals. In 1956 Read lead his rowing teams to the Melbourne Olympics where the coxless four won a gold medal and the eights came a very close second to capture a silver medal – these were the first Olympic medals won by Canada in rowing.

After a brief retirement (1957-60) Read returned to coach the rowing team at the 1960 Rome Olympics. That year, his eights finished second, earning Canada's only medal at the games. Following the Olympics, Read once again retired, bringing to a close an important era in this country's rowing history.

Read was also a mentor to those who followed him as rowing coaches. During his first retirement, John Warren coached the UBC team which represented Canada at the 1958 Empire Games in Cardiff, Wales, winning a gold and two silver medals (in the eights, fours, and coxless fours, respectively). Two others, Wayne Pretty and Glen Mervyn, were on the coaching staff for Canada's rowing teams at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo

(resulting in one gold medal in the pairs) and the 1967 Pan American Games in Winnipeg.

John Carver in "The Vancouver Rowing Club: A History, 1886-1980" offered the following assessment of Frank Read's accomplishments.

Starting with almost nothing, operating on the most meagre budgets. he took his crews to the top international competition and, incidentally put himself among the top rowing coaches in the world. He had the drive, and the patience to stand the rugged twice daily grind in all kinds of weather; he demanded discipline and condition, and got them, and he had the knowledge and knew how to impart it to his crews. He will say to himself that it is the horses in the boats that win races and of course he is right. But no sport demands more coaching than crew rowing and Read supplied it beyond measure.

Frank Read died in Vancouver in 1994.

### **Scope and Content**

The fonds consists of scrapbooks, clippings, photographs, correspondence, speeches, publications and awards that chronicle Reads career as a rower and, more particularly as a rowing coach.

### **Notes**

File list available.

Some biographical information supplied by Dr. Don Arnold.

## Series Descriptions

**Scrapbooks, Miscellaneous Clippings and Photographs.** – 1932-1981.

20 cm of textual records.

145 photographs.

Series consists of seven scrapbooks of clippings, correspondence, printed material and photographs created by Read (1932-1962) and seven individual photographs, most of rowing teams and rowing team reunions (1956-1981).

**Correspondence.** – 1956-1984.

1.5 cm of textual records.

Series consists of incoming and outgoing correspondence (1956-1984).

**Speeches/Lectures/Publications.** – 1954-1962.

4 cm of textual records.

Series consists of copies of speeches (1957-1962), lectures (1960) and publications (1954, 1957).

**Awards.** - 1966-1980.

4 items.

Series consists of four awards given to Frank Read.

**Diary.** – 1955.

0.5 cm of textual records.

Series consists of single diary created during the trip to the Henley Regatta (1955).

**Miscellaneous.** – 1956-1986.

6.5 cm of textual records.

2 drawings.

Series consists of miscellaneous material created or collected by Frank Read.

## File List

### Scrapbooks, Miscellaneous Clippings and Photographs

- OS Scrapbook #1 - Newspaper clippings, programs, printed material and 137 photographs, 36 pp. (1932-1956)  
[Oversize: stored in University Archives storage area in Rare Books and Special Collections vault]
- OS Scrapbook #2 - Newspaper clippings and cablegrams from Melbourne Olympics, 50 pp. (1956)  
[Oversize: stored in University Archives storage area in Rare Books and Special Collections vault]
- BOX 1
- 1-1 Scrapbook #3 - Cablegrams from Melbourne Olympics, 22 pp. (1956)
- 1-2 Scrapbook #4 - Newspaper clippings, programs and printed material, 17 pp. (1956-1959)
- 1-3 Scrapbook #5 - Newspaper clippings and printed material, 12 pp. (1959/60)
- 1-4 Scrapbook #6 - Newspaper clippings from Rome Olympics, 33 pp. (1960)
- 1-5 Scrapbook #7 - Newspaper clippings and cablegrams, 38 pp. (1960-1962)
- 1-6 Miscellaneous newspaper clippings
- 1-7 Miscellaneous Photographs:  
Canadian Olympic Rowing Team (1956)  
Canadian Olympic Rowing Team (1956) 25th Anniversary Reunion (1981)  
UBC - VRC Rowing Team Reunion - Group shot (1965)  
UBC - VRC Rowing Team Reunion - Group shot (1969)  
UBC Rowing Team (n.d.)
- 1-8 Two unidentified photographs

## BOX 2

### Correspondence

2-1 Correspondence (1956-1984)

### Speeches, Lectures and Publications

2-2 Speech - Recruiting Drive (January 30, 1957)

2-3 Speech - Vancouver Olympic Club (March 14, 1957)

2-4 Speech - Sports Celebrity Dinner - Toronto (1957)

2-5 Speech - Unidentified Event (October 26, 1960)

2-6 Speech - UBC Alumni Association Panel "Athletics as Education" (October 29, 1960)

2-7 Speech - Address to the Canadian Sports Advisory Council - Ottawa (January 19, 1962)

2-8 Speeches/ Lectures - Miscellaneous

2-9 Lecture (December 5, 1960)

2-10 Lecture (n.d.)

2-11 Publication - "Facts about Rowing" (1954)

2-12 Publication - "Frank Read's Teaching" (May 1957)

### Awards

OS BC Sports Hall of Fame Scroll of Honour (1966)  
[Oversize Box 19-1: stored in University Archives storage area in Rare Books and Special Collections vault]

OS Canadian Confederation Committee of BC - Certificate of Merit (1967)  
[Oversize Box 19-1: stored in University Archives storage area in Rare Books and Special Collections vault]

2-13 Canadian Amateur Association - Centennial Award (1980)

2-14 Olympic Club Canada - Certificate (n.d.)

#### Diary

2-15 Diary (June 8 - 25, 1955)

#### Miscellaneous

##### Drawings

OS Sixteen Oared Coaching Barge - Designed by G Pocock (December 12, 1925)  
Redrawn: February 1957  
[Oversize Box 19-2: stored in University Archives storage area in Rare Books and Special Collections vault]

OS Crate for Pocock Eight (n.d.)  
[Oversize Box 19-2: stored in University Archives storage area in Rare Books and Special Collections vault]

OS Miscellaneous Coaching Notes (n.d.)  
[Oversize Box 19-3: stored in University Archives storage area in Rare Books and Special Collections vault]

2-16 Miscellaneous Coaching Notes (n.d.)

2-17 Published/Printed Material re: UBC Rowing (1956/57, 1981)

2-18 "My Memories" by Glen Smith [1955 Royal Henley Memories] – Typescript (n.d.)

2-19 Crew Roster (Spring 1956)

- 2-20 "The Boys from Nowhere" by Danica d'Hondt - Script and correspondence (1983-1986)
- 2-21 Published/Printed Material re: Rowing - General
- 2-22 Miscellaneous material  
Book - "The Vancouver Rowing Club" by John Arthur Carver (1980)