

S00503 - African development records

Series Number: S00503

Series Title: African development records

Dates: 1960-2011

Extent: 2.18 m of textual material
129 photographs
3 posters
2 DVDs

**Biographical Sketch/
Administrative History:** Simpson's involvement with Africa began in 1961 when he established the African Students Federation, an organization that had originated when a group of his high school students asked him to find them a worthwhile philanthropic project. The ASF brought 300 African students to study at Canadian universities in the 1960s. Simpson was also a co-founder and Executive Secretary of the Canadian Committee of Crossroads Africa, run by the Board of Men of The United Church of Canada, from 1960 to 1965, continuing as a Board member until 1970. Crossroads, a work-camp rural development program that fostered international awareness and friendship, took him to work-camp placements in Nigeria in 1960 and Ethiopia in 1963. The Sibley Foundation is another African development organization with which Simpson was involved over the course of his life. It was a non-profit organization established in 1983 by Simpson and others in memory of their friend, Dr. Jack Sibley, who had inspired them with his twenty years of work on African projects. Simpson notes: "Jack Sibley was one of the original founders of Crossroads Africa and a great mentor to Don Simpson. He was also one of the founders of the Hamilton Goodwill Africa Foundation [which counted among its members a Hamilton lawyer and future Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, Lincoln Alexander]. When Jack died in a boat explosion in 1981, the charter of the HGA Foundation was turned into the Sibley Foundation, which Don and others in Crossroads helped to run. One of its early projects was a bursary for Sierra Leone in memory of the late Akin Akinsulure, whose wife Millie continues to support schools in Sierra Leone from this start. The Akinsulures were both African Students Foundation students." Thanks to Simpson's international work experience and extensive network of contacts, he was approached by a number of Kenyan businessmen in the early 1980s for help developing closer ties with Canadian companies. Eventually this cooperation led to the Canada-Africa Business Advisory Group (CABAG), which operated out of the business school at the University of Western Ontario (UWO). CABAG's work was financially supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the UWO business school and businessmen in Africa and Canada. For this organization, Simpson travelled three or four times a year to Kenya and did some work in Zimbabwe, Uganda and Nigeria. He also established Kanchar International Inc. in 1982, a consulting firm that promoted international development and trade by bringing together capital, technology and cross-cultural management skills on various projects. Kanchar got its name from partners Jimmy Kanja, a successful Kenyan businessman and Simpson's best friend who was one of the first students the African Students Foundation brought to Canada in the 1960s; and Chardonnay, the business of Simpson's brother-in-law, Brian Hawkins. Rosemary McCarney joined the firm in 1984 as Vice President. Among other contracts, Kanchar undertook projects for CIDA and Simpson's former employer, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

Scope and Content: Series consists of records collected by Simpson under the heading "building relations between Africa and Canada." The records span the 1960s to the 1980s and include financial records and shipment receipts of the Hamilton Goodwill Africa Foundation; documentation of the formation, meetings and projects of The Sibley Foundation; reports, correspondence, memoranda and "trip envelopes" of the Canada Africa Business Advisory Group (CABAG); records related to Simpson's consulting company, Kanchar International Ltd.; records of his consultancy with the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF); correspondence from Canibex, a short-lived brokering subsidiary of Kanchar; and correspondence, memoranda, scripts, budgets and other records of Eden International Productions Inc., a film production company of which Simpson was a

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co-founder. There are a few files on Canadian Crossroads International and the African Students Foundation (ASF). As well, there is general material on Canada-Kenya activities, in particular the Canada-Kenya Forum for businessmen organized by Kanchar and CABAG. Other record sub-groups created by Simpson include "educating Canadians about African and international development," and "internationalizing the curriculum." The latter subset of records includes approximately 75 catalogue cards summarizing the films held by the Cross-cultural learning centre at the University of Western Ontario. "Trip envelopes" were packages that often included a mixture of records for projects of Kanchar, CABAG and Simpson's other consulting firm, Salasan. They contain letters, notes, and a set of photographs of pre-fabricated housing under construction in Kenya. Other types of records in the series include correspondence, memoranda, reports, clippings, articles, newsletters, studies, resumes, promotional and profile material on Kanchar, speeches, legal documents, meeting notes, surveys, financial statements, conference materials, seminars, and an oral history transcript of an interview with Simpson at UWO as an example of a model international business/cultural leader.

Restrictions on Access and Use: Files containing resumes are closed to researchers as they contain personal information of third parties. Individual item restrictions will be lifted in years between 2056 and 2096. Researchers wishing to consult this material must apply to the archivist to enter into a researcher agreement.

Arrangement: The series is arranged in the following blocks of related records, each in chronological order: Hamilton Goodwill Africa Foundation; the Sibley Foundation; Canada-Africa Business Advisory Group; general files; Canada-Kenya activities; educating Canadians about Africa and international development; internationalizing the curriculum; Kanchar International; Kanchar's AMREF contract; and Eden International Productions. Files on cross-cultural education, though they would have originated with Simpson's UWO teaching files (S00501), have been kept with this series as received from the donor. Some files were added on in later boxes, and so do not appear in the appropriate place in the file list.

Language of Material Note: Series contains one AMREF booklet in Dutch.

Other Notes: 1. For additional records on Canadian Crossroads Africa and the African Students Foundation, researchers can consult series S00514, which contains resource material used by Simpson in writing *A Canadian Odyssey*. More extensive material on international development is in series S00504. Other files on cross-cultural education can be found in series S00501 and S00502. The correspondence series, S00515, contains some of the correspondence and trip reports for Kanchar as well as other miscellaneous material on Africa. Series S00508 contains a theme file on the Canada-Kenya Executive Management Programme. Series S00507 also contains records relating to the Canada-Kenya Executive Management Program.