

**Title:** John Rankin fonds.  
**Dates of creation:** 1759, 1797, 1811, 1821, 1837, [1843], [c. 1845], 1850-1880.  
**Extent:** 39 cm of textual records.

**Biographical sketch:**

John Rankin was born on January 30, 1834 near Glasgow, Scotland. In 1849 he became an apprentice with W. and G. Miller, Dry Goods in Glasgow. He sailed for New York in 1855 and settled first in London, then in Dundas in 1856. He eventually became the manager of the Dundas Woollen Mill for G.M. Barton. A job offer in Scotland saw him return there briefly in 1858, but he returned to Dundas via Montreal in 1859. He met his wife Janet Ann Ball in 1862 and they were married in 1864. He borrowed money in 1866 to open his own store, but was nearly bankrupted in 1876. In 1877 Rankin built a home on Sydenham Street and that enterprise proved costly. He sold his store in 1879, clerked in Sarnia in 1880, and became manager of a friend's store in Wyoming, Ontario. John Rankin died there suddenly on March 20, 1881 after a fall on an icy sidewalk, leaving his wife and four surviving children.

**Custodial history:** The material in the John Rankin fonds was donated to the Dundas Historical Society in 1947 by Rankin's daughter, Catherine Rankin. Some material was received under Accession 1947-10.

**Scope and content note:**

The fonds consists mainly of the diaries and letter books of John Rankin, encompassing the years 1850 to 1861 which describe his life and work in Scotland and Canada. The fonds includes detailed personal expense and account books, a Sabbath School roll book, ephemera. The fonds also contains books and booklets, most published before Rankin's birth.

**Physical description note:**

The fonds includes some dried flowers interleaved among pages on which are printed scenic locations in Scotland.

**Restrictions on access:** There are no restrictions on access. Due to the age and condition of some of the material, access may be supervised or limited.

**Accruals:** Accruals are not expected, but may occur.

**Access points:**

Rankin, John, 1834-1881

**John Rankin fonds**  
**Box List**

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**Box 1**

- 1-1 Diary, 1850-1854.
- 1-2 Diary, 1855-1856.
- 1-3 Diary, 1857-1858.
- 1-4 Diary, 1858-1861.
- 1-5 Letter book, 1855.
- 1-6 Letter book, 1855-1856.
- 1-7 Letter book, 1856-1857.
- 1-8 Letter book, 1857-1858.
- 1-9 Letter book, 1858-1860.
- 1-10 Bible. Received with letter in 2-6.

**Box 2**

- 2-1 Expenditure book, 1852-1862.
- 2-2 Roll book, 1853-1859. Lists students in Sabbath School classes. Includes list of students at Knox Church, Dundas, in 1856-1857.
- 2-3 Account book, 1855-1862. Includes record of incidental expenses, expenditures for religious purposes, balance sheet, memorandum of receipts, record of letters posted, record of newspapers posted, record of newspapers received, and washing account.
- 2-4 Clipping, 1855.
- 2-5 Letter to "Uncle" from John Rankin, 1856.
- 2-6 Member's tickets, 1856, 1857, 1863, 1864. Includes tickets for membership in the Mercantile Library Association, the Farmers and Mechanics' Institute in Fergus and the Galt Mechanics' Institute.

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**Box 2 continued**

- 2-7 Tickets, 1852-1853, 1859, n.d. Consists of tickets to the Glasgow Young Men's Christian Association, Lady's Annual ticket and the Annual Pleasure Trip, Greyfriars' Church, Sabbath School Society. Also includes a business card for Niagara Park Place, Niagara Falls.
- 2-8 Envelope addressed to "John Rankin, Manager, Woollen Works", 1857.
- 2-9 Letter presented to John Rankin by his Sabbath School class, 1858. Received with bible in 1-10.
- 2-10 Gateside toll ticket, 1858.
- 2-11 Newspaper: Montreal Herald, 1859.
- 2-12 Newspaper: Glasgow Daily Herald, 1866.
- 2-13 Newspaper: Dumfries Reformer and Weekly Advertiser, Galt, C.W., 1866.
- 2-14 Plan of Rankin house and garden, [187-].
- 2-15 Flyers, 1867, [1870].
- 2-16 Details of house renovations, 1875-1877.
- 2-17 Description of house (includes typed transcript), [187-].
- 2-18 Postcard to James Hopkins, 1880.
- 2-19 Booklet: "A Copy of Two Letters to the Rev Mr Alexander Moncrieff, Minister at Abernethy; Relating to his new Constitution of Synod, and the pretended censures: containing also some answers unto, or observes upon, his Letter directed unto his friend at Aberdeen, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1758...", 1759.

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**Box 2 continued**

- 2-20 Booklet: "The Principle Difference between the Religious Principles of those commonly called the Anti-Government Party, and of other Presbyterians, especially those of the secession in Scotland; on the Head of Magistracy, briefly stated", 1797.
- 2-21 Chart of the Atlantic Ocean, 1811.
- 2-22 Book: "A History of the Skirmish at Drumclog, and Battle at Bothwell Bridge, in the month of June, 1679..." by William Aiton, Esq, 1821.
- 2-23 Booklet: "The Pilgrim's Progress", 1837.
- 2-24 Booklet: "Bateman's Sacred Melodies for Children", [1843].
- 2-25 Booklet: Hymn book, [c. 1845].
- 2-26 Booklet: "Watts' Divine Songs for the Instruction of Youth", 1852.
- 2-27 Book: "Tweed's Guide to Glasgow and the Clyde", n.d.
- 2-28 Pressed flowers, n.d. Includes printed sheets illustrating scenic locations in Scotland, perhaps where the flowers were picked.