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**Survival Research Institute of Canada, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 Canada**

Email: [sric@islandnet.com](mailto:sric@islandnet.com)

Website: [www.islandnet.com/sric](http://www.islandnet.com/sric)

**First prepared in October 2006 by the Survival Research Institute of Canada (Debra Barr and Walter Meyer zu Erpen).** Capitalization of any name or subject in the text below indicates that you will find an entry on that topic in the forthcoming third edition of Rosemary Ellen Guiley's *Encyclopedia of Ghosts and Spirits* (October 2007).

## **Spiritualist Church of Canada**

A parent body for Canadian Spiritualist organizations, with a dozen affiliated congregations located in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba. Originally named the Spiritualists' National Union of Canada (SNU), the organization succeeded finally on 23 August 1978, after several attempts, in changing its name to the Spiritualist Church of Canada (SCC). Membership consists of both churches and individuals. In October 2006, the SCC had 103 individual members, including 19 SCC-ordained or recognized ministers.

The SCC has an educational and accreditation program through which it prepares candidates for ministry within the religion of SPIRITUALISM. It ordains the ministers who serve in affiliated churches, and SCC ministers are recognized to perform marriages within Ontario and British Columbia. The SCC is a registered charitable organization within Canada.

The Spiritualists' National Union of Canada was incorporated under Canadian federal law on 27 April 1929, enabling it to operate as a corporate body in each province and territory. Originally, it was affiliated with the SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION of Great Britain. Prominent Canadian Spiritualist ministers Henry Thomas Batten (1870-1931), Walter Thomas Marriott (died 1954), and James Porter Skelton (died 1954-55) were among the charter members.

Initially, the SNU headquarters were at Toronto's Britten Memorial Church of Canada, named after Spiritualist medium, lecturer, and traveller Emma Hardinge Britten (1823-1899) who was founder of the organization that later became the SNU of Great Britain. Both Springdale Church and East Hamilton Spiritual Church have a photograph of the SNU's first annual general meeting which was held in Hamilton in 1929. Today, the SCC headquarters are located at East Hamilton Spiritual Church, Hamilton, Ontario.

In 1974, most of the remaining churches of the NATIONAL SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION OF CANADA, which had been founded in 1928 at Toronto, with similar objects, amalgamated with the SNU. Apparently, the organizations' founders had not been aware of each others' desire to form a national Spiritualist organization.

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Much of the history of Canada's national Spiritualist organizations has revolved around the struggle to obtain for affiliated churches and ministers the same privileges as enjoyed by other religions, including the right to perform marriages and to be recognized as charitable organizations.

During the 1970s and 1980s, members of Toronto's Springdale Church, under the leadership of Reverend WILLIAM CHARLES PARTRIDGE (1893-1984) and Reverend Ruth Ann Dyke (ca. 1917-1993), played an influential role in the SNU / SCC. For much of that time, the organization's headquarters were at Springdale Church.

During the years that Mrs. Dyke was President (ca. 1976-1981), Mr. Partridge's three main objectives were realized: a course of education and accreditation for Spiritualist workers in all aspects of the religion was implemented; the long-desired change of name was effected; and in July 1981, the SCC received marriage rights for its ministers within Ontario.

### **Further Reading:**

Spiritualist Church of Canada. Available on-line:  
[www.spiritualistchurchofcanada.com](http://www.spiritualistchurchofcanada.com)

Joy Lowe and Walter Meyer zu Erpen, "The Canadian Spiritualist Movement and Sources for its Study," *Archivaria* 30, edited by Debra Barr (Summer 1990): 71-84.

Current SCC membership numbers provided by SCC President James Kinnear by voice message, 24 October 2006.