

University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections

Finding Aid - Charles E. Spring fonds (RBSC- ARC-1705)

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Charles E. Spring fonds

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Summary information

Repository:	University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections
Title:	Charles E. Spring fonds
ID:	RBSC-ARC-1705
Date:	1888-1937 (date of creation)
Physical description:	60.5 cm of textual records. 5 photographs : b&w, some sepia toned
Language:	English
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Charles E. Spring (1859-1938) was born in New Westminster, British Columbia, and moved with his family to Victoria in 1867. He was the oldest son of William Spring, a pioneering sealer and trader in British Columbia. Spring attended the Collegiate and James Bay schools in Victoria, as well as St. Louis College. Spring worked for the Hudson's Bay Company from the age of 17, until 1884, when he joined his father in the sealing industry. Following the death of his father that same year, he took over the sealing business at the age of 24. Spring's fleet at that time included the schooners "Kate," "Onward," "Alfred Adams," and "Favourite." In addition to his sealing interests, Spring owned several small steamers at Victoria. His business partners included Captain Alexander McLean and Peter Frances.

Spring married Agnes Loretta Dowdall in 1890. Despite the fact that Spring was active in the Presbyterian Church of Canada, he left the church and converted to Catholicism, his wife's religion, upon their marriage. Although they built a house on Kingston Street in Victoria, they spent their early married life in Kyuquot, B.C., where Spring had a trading post.

In 1885, United States cutters began seizing vessels caught sealing in the North Pacific in order to protect their sealing interests in Alaska. In 1886, Spring's vessel "Onward" was seized, resulting in a loss of \$12,000 of assets. In order to ease tensions between the United States and Great Britain over the Bering Sea controversy, a temporary agreement (the "Modus Vivendi") prohibiting pelagic sealing in the Bering Sea for the 1891 season was put in place. The "Modus Vivendi" was then renewed for the 1892-1893 sealing season. The resulting loss of revenue financially ruined Spring, who was sued for nonpayment of bills and wages, and lost the vessels "Favourite" and "Kate," as well as his Kingston Street residence, among other assets.

In 1898, as a result of the 1896-1897 Bering Sea Claims Commission, Spring received a settlement of \$33,906 from the United States for financial losses caused by the seizure of the "Onward" and the initial "Modus Vivendi" in 1891. However, settlements were not awarded for losses suffered due to the extension of the "Modus Vivendi" during the 1892-1893 sealing season. Spring continued to pursue

his claims for these losses and became an active spokesman for other sealers in their claims. Among his many attempts at receiving settlement, he submitted his claims to a royal commission set by the Dominion Government in 1913 to investigate claims by sealers for compensation for loss of their trade resulting from sealing treaties of 1893 and 1911. The commissioner, Louis Arthur Audette, determined that Spring's claims were invalid, his losses having occurred prior to 1894.

Following the collapse of his sealing business, Spring became a trader out of Kyuquot for five years before moving back to Victoria and taking up farming. He later moved to Seattle, but returned to Victoria in 1911 to go into the motor-boat business, before moving to Vancouver in 1920 where he lived until his death. Spring died from bronchial pneumonia in Vancouver on February 11, 1938 at the age of 78. He was survived by his wife, one son, four daughters, and three sisters.

Custodial history

The fonds is comprised of two different accessions. The first accession was purchased by Rare Books and Special Collections from Stephen Lunsford Books in 2009. The second accession was donated to Rare Books and Special Collections in 2011 by Dr. Wallace B. Chung, after having purchased it from Stephen Lunsford Books. Both accessions were acquired by Stephen Lunsford directly from the decedents of Charles Spring.

Scope and content

Fonds consists of records spanning the period 1888-1937 relating to Charles Spring's claims for financial losses as a result of the renewal of the "Modus Vivendi" banning pelagic sealing in the Bering Sea for the 1892-1893 season, and supporting documentation both prepared by and compiled by Spring. Records relating to Spring's pursuit of his claims include draft and final statements of claim; draft and final petitions, memorials, statements, memoranda, and declarations; incoming and outgoing correspondence; notebooks; accountings and lists of expenses; Pelagic Sealing Commission oaths; reports; newspaper clippings, receipts, and other ephemera; and related notes and documents. Supporting documentation compiled by Spring was generated by the sealing industry, his own sealing enterprise, and as a result of the collapse of his business. These records include ledgers and journals; log books; certificates and licenses; sales, ownership, and insurance documents; receipts and financial documents; reports; court papers and police charges; correspondence and notices; and related notes and documents. The fonds also consists of personal papers not directly related to Spring's sealing claims, including correspondence, copies and originals of photographs, and other documents.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on the provenance of the fonds.

Arrangement

The material in the fonds was accumulated and may have been subsequently arranged and rearranged multiple times over the period between 1892 and 1937 during the creator's many attempts at claims settlement.

Related material

"The Vagabond Fleet: A Chronicle of the North Pacific Sealing Schooner Trade" by Peter Murray (Victoria, B.C. : Sono Nis Press, 1988) was part of Dr. Chung's donation. The book has been added to the holdings of Rare Books and Special Collections.

Accruals

Further accruals are possible.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** published

Access points

- Donald Urquhart (subject)
- Cereno Jones Kelley (subject)

Series descriptions

Charles Spring claims and supporting documentation

Date: 1888-1922, predominant 1891-1913 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series contains material relating to claims for financial losses as a result of the "Modus Vivendi" and supporting documentation prepared and compiled by Charles Spring. Material relates to claims submitted to the 1896-1897 Bering Sea Claims Commission, the 1913-1915 Pelagic Sealing Commission headed by Louis Arthur Audette, and later efforts at settlement. Material includes instructions for submission of claims, drafts of claims and declarations by Charles Spring, statements from vessel captains, crew, and other involved parties, and accountings of losses and damages. Supporting documentation includes material originally used in the course of business during the 1888-1892 sealing seasons, compiled by Spring as evidence. Supporting documentation includes ledgers and journals for sealing business accounts; receipts for expenses, including goods and services, duties and fees, repairs and improvements; vessel registries, licenses, insurance policies, and bills of sale; official vessel log books; transcript of court proceedings against the schooner "Winifred," and other documents. The series also contains court papers, police charges, and related documents

resulting from Charles Spring's debts, as well as a list of court judgements against him and receipts for payment of monies owed following the receipt of the Bering Sea Claims Commission award in 1898. The series is primarily arranged into files by vessel.

Physical description: 26 cm of textual records.

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-01	File - Sealing commission memorandum	[1913?]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-02	File - Charles Spring declaration	[between 1906 and 1913]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-03	File - Property loss declaration drafts	[1913?]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-04	File - Accounting of 1892 season losses	[1913?]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-05	File - S.S. "Mist" documents	1898-1899		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-06	File - Schooner "Winifred" documents	[1891-1913?], predominant 1891-1892		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-07	File - Schooner "Winifred" journal	1891-1892		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-08	File - Schooner "Winifred" ledger	1891-1892		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-09	File - Papers and vouchers belonging to the schooner "Favourite"...	1891-1922		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-10	File - "Favourite" 1892 official log book	1892		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-11	File - Papers and vouchers belonging to the schooner "Kate"...	1891-1922		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-12	File - Schooner "Kate" log for 1890-1-2	1890-1892		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-13	File - Schooner "Kate" log for 1892	1892		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-14	File - "Kate" official log for 1892	1892		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-15	File - Schooner "Lilly" notes of credit and receipts	1889-1890		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-16	File - Schooner "Henrietta" documents	1892-[before 1920]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-17	File - Sealing commission oaths	[1913?]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-18	File - Court papers, police charges, and related documents	1892-1922		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-19	File - Orders and receipts for payment of debts	1898		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-20	File - 1888-1898 journal	1888-1898		

Correspondence

Date: 1895-1937, predominant 1906-1934 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series consists of correspondence related to Spring's attempts to reengage the Canadian government on the issue of monetary settlement for losses sustained due to the renewal of the "Modus Vivendi." The series includes incoming letters from various government officials to Charles Spring, as well as copies of incoming letters to other parties acting in collaboration with or on behalf of Spring. Incoming

correspondence is frequently annotated by Spring with notes or drafts of replies. In addition, the series contains drafts and fair copies of Spring's outgoing letters and related petitions, memorials, and other documents. The first file of the series contains an index created by Spring of select letters from 1892 to 1928 entitled, "List of letters, referring to correspondence on Modus Vivendi Claims for Season 1892." The letters included in this index are scattered throughout the series files. The correspondence is arranged in chronological order.

Physical description: 10.5 cm of textual records.

Arrangement:

The letters in this series were received by the archivist in chronological order. It is unknown whether this was done by the creator or another party.

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-21	File - Correspondence 1895, 1906-1912	1895, 1906-1912		
RBSC-ARC-1705-1-22	File - Correspondence 1913-1914	January 10, 1913-April 7, 1914		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-01	File - Correspondence 1917-1926	October 25, 1917-January 2, 1926		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-02	File - Correspondence 1927	March 22, 1927- November 28, 1927		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-03	File - Correspondence 1928	January 17, 1928-December 28, 1928		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-04	File - Correspondence 1929-1930	April 1929- December 1930		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-05	File - Correspondence 1931-1934, 1937	1931-1934, 1937		

Drafts and working papers

Date: 1892-1937 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series consists of drafts, working papers, and support material relating to Charles Spring's efforts to recoup financial losses as a result of the "Modus Vivendi." The series includes drafts of letters and documents; notes; newspaper clippings and other ephemera; accountings of losses; declarations, petitions, and memorials; incoming correspondence; a daily log book; a Commissioner of Fisheries Report; and receipts. The series is arranged into subseries based on the creator's arrangement of material into three separate groupings.

Physical description: 19 cm of textual records.

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Papers and documents concerning the "modus vivendi" sealing claims...

Date: 1892-1937 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Subseries consists of drafts of letters and documents, notes, and supporting material, as well as final declarations, petitions, and memorials regarding sealing claims. Draft documents include petitions and memorials to various Canadian and British government officials and representatives. The draft letters are addressed to many of the same Canadian government officials, representatives, and others found in the Correspondence series. Supporting material includes incoming correspondence, newspaper clippings, and other related documents. There is no discernible order to the material.

Physical description: 8.5 cm of textual records.

Physical condition:

Drafts and notes are written on a variety of low-quality paper, including ephemera, and much of them are in poor condition.

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-06	File - Letter and document drafts	1906-1932		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-07	File - Drafts and supporting material	1908-1936		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-08	File - Letter and document drafts	1902-1933		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-09	File - Drafts and correspondence	1913-1937		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-10	File - Receipts for typing services	1913-1916, 1928		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-11	File - Declaration of John Clark	1892-1893		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-12	File - Memorial of the owners of sealing schooners...	1898		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-13	File - Memorial of Canadian sealers respecting their interests...	1898		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-14	File - Re: memorial respecting the seizure of S.S. "Coquitlam"...	1898		
RBSC-ARC-1705-2-15	File - In the matter of the seizure by the United States government...	1898		

RBSC-ARC-1705-2-16	File - Petition to Canadian House of Commons	1914
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Notes pertaining to modus vivendi sealing claims...

Date: 1913, 1935-1936 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Subseries consists of drafts of letters and documents and notes regarding sealing claims, as well as newspaper clippings. Documents include drafts of multiple letters to Gordon M. Grant, barrister and solicitor. Drafts and notes appear to be in rough chronological order. The subseries also consists of a daily log book for the sloop "Nymphé" and a Commissioner of Fisheries Report for 1913.

Physical description: 4.5 cm of textual records.

Physical condition:

Drafts and notes are written on a variety of low-quality paper, including ephemera, and much of them are in poor condition.

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-01	File - Letter and document drafts	1935		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-02	File - Drafts and clippings	1935-1936		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-03	File - Letter and document drafts	1935-1936		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-04	File - C. Spring with the compliments of WA Newcombe	1913		

Drafts and notebooks

Date: 1928-1937 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Subseries consists of drafts of letters and documents, notes, and supporting material regarding sealing claims. Most of the series is made up of lined notebooks. Draft documents include memorials to various Canadian government officials, a draft resolution, relevant data, descriptions, etc. The draft letters are addressed to many of the same Canadian government officials, representatives, and others found in the Correspondence series. Loose notes, drafts, newspaper clippings, and other ephemera are interleaved throughout the notebooks. In addition to newspaper clippings and ephemera, supporting materials include some incoming correspondence. Though the drafts in the notebooks are roughly in chronological order, some gaps occur. The contents of the subseries were received by the archivist in a leather briefcase.

Physical description: 6 cm of textual records.

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-05	File - Letter drafts and notes	1937		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-06	File - Letter drafts notebook	February 27, 1928-November 17, 1928		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-07	File - Letter and document drafts notebook	April 27, 1929- December 20, 1930		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-08	File - Letter and document drafts notebook	1932-1937		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-09	File - Letter and document drafts notebook	January 3, 1934- September 29, 1934		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-10	File - Draft notebook and correspondence	1936-1937		

Cereno J. Kelley and Donald Urquhart documents

Date: 1892-1905, 1927-1928 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

The series consists of documents relating to Captain Cereno J. Kelley and Captain Donald Urquhart (later the estate of Donald Urquhart), and their involvement in the sealing industry during the period of the "Modus Vivendi" and later. The series also documents the later involvement of Kelley and the estate of Donald Urquhart in pursuing claims for losses as a result of the "Modus Vivendi" and vessel seizures. Documents include correspondence, notes and drafts, proof of vessel ownership papers, agreements and accounts of crew for Urquhart's schooners, and an account journal for the Urquhart estate.

Physical description: 3.5 cm of textual records.

Related material:

Kelley and the estate of Donald Urquhart are claimants in the declarations and memorials found in the subseries "Papers and documents concerning the "modus vivendi" sealing claims..."

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-11	File - Cereno J. Kelley correspondence	[between 1892 and 1905]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-12	File - Donald Urquhart documents	1892, 1927-1928		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-13	File - Agreement and account of crew for schooner "Venture"	1893-1895		

RBSC-ARC-1705-3-14	File - Agreement and account of crew for schooner "Penelope"	1893-1895
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-15	File - Journal for estate of Donald Urquhart	1894-1905

Personal papers and photographs

Date: [ca. 1895]-1927, predominant 1921, 1923 (date of creation)

Scope and content:

Series consists of personal correspondence and documents, as well as photographs (copies and originals) of Spring and his wife. The series includes correspondence with Spring's son-in-law and an English language correspondence course, correspondence course booklet, a manual on preparing manuscripts, and other documents and ephemera.

Physical description: 1.5 cm of textual records.
5 photographs : b&w, some sepia toned

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-16	File - Personal correspondence	November 15, 1923		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-17	File - English correspondence course material	[between 1914 and 1927]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-18	File - Charles Spring photographs	[ca. 1895-1918]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-18-BC2157-01	Item - Charles Spring ca. 1895	[ca. 1895]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-18-BC2157-02	Item - Charles and Agnes Spring ca. 1890	[ca. 1890]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-18-BC2157-03	Item - Charles Spring ca. 1887	[ca. 1887]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-18-BC2157-04	Item - Charles Spring ca. 1884	[ca. 1884]		
RBSC-ARC-1705-3-18-BC2157-05	Item - Charles Spring ca. 1916-1918	[ca. 1916-1918]		