

University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections

Finding Aid - Rex Pendril Brown fonds (RBSC- ARC-1769)

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Language of description: English

University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections
Irving K. Barber Learning Centre
1961 East Mall
Vancouver
British Columbia
V6T 1Z1
Telephone: 604-822-2521
Fax: 604-822-9587
[Email: rare.books@ubc.ca](mailto:rare.books@ubc.ca)
<http://rbsc.library.ubc.ca/>
<https://rbscarchives.library.ubc.ca/rex-pendril-brown-fonds>

Rex Pendril Brown fonds

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Summary information

Repository:	University of British Columbia Library Rare Books and Special Collections
Title:	Rex Pendril Brown fonds
Reference code:	RBSC-ARC-1769
Date:	1940-1946 (date of creation)
Physical description:	ca. 750 b&w photographs and other materials
Language:	English
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	Fonds arranged and described by Kristina McGuirk in November 2017. Accrual arranged and fonds description revised by Claire Williams in June 2018. Accrual arranged and description revised by Matthew White in August 2023.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Rex Pendril “Pen” Brown was born in Vancouver in 1923 to Emma Bentall Brown and Philip Pigott Brown, both from Essex. Brown attended UBC at age 16. At age 19, Brown was called to serve the army in WWII, but received conscientious objector status. Brown objected the war on philosophical grounds, having read pacifist writings by Bernard Shaw and others. His mother, a member of the Society of Friends and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, supported his conscientious objection. Brown served his time in alternative service work camps at Kootenay National Park and Blubber Bay. He also served 30 days in Oakalla prison for refusing to complete work during his service. After the work camps, Brown worked as a bank teller in Vancouver. He was released from service in 1946. He married Elizabeth Dorothy Kovalcik in 1957, and the couple had two children, Rex and Marian. Brown was the lighthouse keeper at Pine Island, off the coast of British Columbia, from 1957 until a major storm damaged the station in 1967. The family then moved to Victoria, where Brown worked for the Coast Guard until retiring in 1989. He passed away on April 11 2018.

Scope and content

Fonds illustrates Brown’s time as a conscientious objector in British Columbia during WWII as well as various travels around BC prior to his time in the work camps. Brown had weekends free and received some leave; a fellow Objector lent him a camera, which he used to document his work areas and living quarters, as well as recreational travels and off-camp activities. He sent the film back to Vancouver for processing.

The fonds includes three photo albums produced by Brown, and three files of textual records. These are comprised of personal and government correspondence and a diary.

Notes

Title notes

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

Physical condition

Some negatives show damage, fading, or discolouration. Some handwritten captions are smudged and/or transferring onto facing pages.

Immediate source of acquisition

The fonds was acquired by the University of British Columbia Rare Books and Special Collections from the Brown family on July 17, 2017.

An accrual was donated in October 2021 from the Museum of North Vancouver and Marian Kovalcik Brown.

Arrangement

The fonds contains six files, three of which are photo albums: Photo Album 1, Photo Album 2, and Photo Album 3. The archivist retained loose photographs, negatives, and enclosures with the album they were discovered in. An additional envelope of negatives was acquired and arranged with the corresponding photographs in album, and some negatives were removed from their original album to pair with photographs in the other album--these departures from the original order are noted in the file arrangement notes.

An accrual to the fonds was made in April 2018 in the form of 1 diary and 3 letters. An accrual to the fonds was made in October 2021 in the form of 1 photo album. The finding aid has been updated to reflect these accruals.

Restrictions on access

There are no restrictions on access.

Finding aids

Finding aid available; file level description.

Related material

Letters and photos belonging to Emma Bentall Brown, Rex Pendril Brown's mother, were donated to the City of Vancouver Archives. It includes her letters to her son while in camp, as well as family photos.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** published
- **Physical description:** Includes 391 negatives, ca. 20 postcards, 19 pages of textual records, 1 pocket diary, and 3 albums

Access points

- Textual record (documentary form)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Exploration, discovery and travel (subject)
- Forestry (subject)
- Law and justice (subject)
- Military (subject)
- Forests (subject)
- Sports, recreation and leisure (subject)

Series descriptions

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
RBSC-ARC-1769-1-01	File - Photo Album 1	1942-1944		
RBSC-ARC-1769-1-02	File - Photo Album 2	1942-1944		
RBSC-ARC-1769-1-03	File - Correspondence and Records	1942-1946		
RBSC-ARC-1769-1-04	File - [Letters from John Langstaff]	1994-2005		
RBSC-ARC-1769-1-05	File - Diary	1943-1944		
RBSC-ARC-1769-2-01	File - Photo Album 3	1940-1942		