

Union Steamship Company Collection

Arrangement and Description by May Chan

Fonds Level Description

Union Steamship Company. – 1898-2003 and [n.d.].

76.7 cm of textual records.

3 maps.

368 photographs.

1 negative.

1 audio cassette.

2 8mm film reels.

The Union Steamship Company of British Columbia was originally formed in Vancouver on July 1, 1899 by Captain William Webster and John Darling, a former director and General Superintendent of the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand. After raising enough capital, the Union company was officially incorporated on November 16, 1899, when it absorbed the Burrard Inlet Towing Company of Vancouver. Initially, the company's primary function was to deliver cargo to remote communities along the British Columbia's coastline. In 1911, the J.H. Welsford and Company, a cargo line based out of Liverpool, England, purchased controlling interests in the Union company. Under this new management, the Union company entered the day excursion and resort business by offering passenger services and then building and operating several company-owned resorts on Bowen Island, the Sechelt Peninsula and at Whytecliff. For the next quarter of a century, the Union Steamship Co. continued to remain in British hands until 1937 when a group of Vancouver businessmen, represented by M. J. K. Allen and E. E. Buckerfield, eventually purchased back the British shares. Over the next 20 years, the company continued to expand its operations by acquiring the Frank Waterhouse Company of Canada in 1939 and the Sannie Ferry Company in 1944. Between 1946 to 1950, the Union company also operated a ferry service across Howe Sound under the name of the Howe Sound Ferry Co. Ltd. before the company eventually dissolved the service and merged the vessels with the Sannie operation at Horseshoe Bay. Despite its acquisition of the Tidewater Shipping Company in 1956, the Union company faced a number of economic setbacks that were brought on by declining business in long-haul passenger traffic and increased competition on main cargo routes throughout the 1950s. To recoup its losses, the company was eventually forced to sell its entire sailing fleet to its competitor, the Northland Navigation Company, in 1959.

The various cargo and passenger ships that were owned and operated by the Union Steamship Company over the past 70 years include:

Camosun I (1905-1936)

Capilano I (1891-1915)

Capilano II (1920-1949)

Cardena (1923-1959)

Cassiar I (1901-1923)
Catala (1925-1959)
Chasina (1917-1923)
Cheakamus (1913-1942)
Cheam (1920-1923)
Chehalis (1897-1906)
Chelohsin (1911-1949)
Cheslakee (1910-1913)
Chilco & Lady Pam (1917-1935 as the *Chilco* before it was rebuilt with passenger accommodation and renamed as the *Lady Pam*, continuing in service from 1935-1946)
Chilliwack I (1919-1926)
Chilliwack II (1927-1954)
Chilkoot I (1920-1934)
Clutch (1890-1900)
Comox I (1891-1919)
Comox II (in service periodically between 1924-1943)
Coutli (1904-1909)
Coquitlam I (1892-1923)
Cowichan (1908-1925)
Eastholm (1939-1957)
Lady Alexandra (1924-1953)
Lady Cecilia (1925-1951)
Lady Cynthia (1925-1957)
Lady Evelyn (1923-1936)
Lady Rose (1937-1951)
Leonora (1889-1904)
Melmore (1914-1916, but only operated in 1914)
Northholm (1939-1943)
Senator (1889-1904)
Skidegate (1889-1897)
Southholm (1939-1950)
Vadso (1911-1914)
Venture (1911-1946)
Washington (1918 only)

The collection consists of a combination of materials relating to the Union Steamship Company of British Columbia that has been collected over the years by the Vancouver Maritime Museum as well as documents that have been donated to the museum by Gerald Rushton, author of two books on the company titled *Whistle Up the Inlet* and *Echoes of the Whistle*; Arthur Twigg, author of the book *Union Steamship Remembered*; Harold Cecil Biles, former employee; and James Richard Southworth, former Marine Constable. The collection includes financial reports, maps, schedule notes, special operating circulars, company memos, sailing guides, menus, brochures, research notes, correspondence, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, manuscripts, assorted ephemera, photographs and audio cassettes. The collection is arranged in 9 series: Administrative, General Files, Articles and Clippings, Scrapbooks, *Echoes of the Whistle* Book, *Whistle*

Up the Inlet Book, *Union Steamships Remembered* Book, Photographs and Audio Cassettes.

File list available.

Further accruals are expected.

Related records may be found in the *Shipping Files Collection* under the name of the individual ships and the *Captain Edward Crawford Swank Fonds*.

Series Level Description

Administrative Series.-1898-1966.

8.7 cm of textual records.

3 maps: 21.7 x 32.2 cm or smaller.

The series contains financial reports, notes about the company's history, a 1901 fire insurance map of Coal Harbour showing the site of Union Steamship, a 1924 map depicting the company's lease of Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) property in Vancouver, a 1952 map of the company's cargo and passenger routes, a copy of the company's lease agreement to rent warehouse space from the C.P.R., specification reports regarding ship and machinery construction, miscellaneous schedule notes, booklets containing information about freight and passenger tariffs, special operating circulars, newsletters, and memos including one that discussed the proposed evacuation of Japanese from B.C. Coast Ports and Points on Vancouver Island.

General Files Series.-1903-1996 and [n.d.].

20 cm of textual records.

The series consists of research notes, newspaper clippings, articles, correspondence, certificates, private documents, publicity materials, menus, sailing guides, and ephemeral items such as unused company administrative forms, stationery and napkins. The files in the series are organized according to general research topics about the company's operations and its specific employees. Two of the employee files contain the personal papers of Harold Cecil Biles and James Richard Southwark that have been donated to the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

The records pertaining to Union Steamship Captain Edward Crawford Swank have been removed from the Union Steamship Company Collection and have been processed as part of the Edward C. Swank Fonds. A complete description and finding aid has been prepared and is available for these records. Please consult the librarian and archivist for more information.

Articles, Clippings and Scrapbooks Series.-1917-2002, predominately 1920-1958.
33 cm of textual records.
4 photographs: 3 b&w and 1 color: 8.8 x 14.4 cm.

The series consists of magazine articles, newspaper clippings, promotional brochures, sailing schedules, invitations, Christmas cards and 4 photographs of the damage done to the T.S.S. Cardena when the vessel collided with a tug boat. The newspaper clippings reveal information about the company's operations, marine accidents that the company was involved in, and the purchase and selling of various Union vessels.

Echoes of the Whistle Book Series.-1974-1980.
0.5 cm of textual records.

The series consists of a typewritten manuscript of Gerald Rushton's book *Echoes of the Whistle*, notes, drafts of the book's forward written by Leonard McCann, former curator and director of the Vancouver Maritime Museum and correspondence addressed to and written by both Rushton and McCann regarding the book's publication and promotion.

Whistle Up the Inlet Book Series.-1939-1998 and [n.d.].
13.5 cm of textual records

The series consists of handwritten manuscripts of Gerald Rushton's book *Whistle Up the Inlet*, research notes, publicity materials, correspondence addressed to and written by Rushton and McCann regarding the book's publication and administrative notes regarding the *Whistle Up the Inlet* exhibition at the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

Union Steamships Remembered Book Series.-1995-1997 and 2003.
1 cm of textual records.

The series consists of correspondence addressed to and written by Arthur Twigg, author of *Union Steamships Remembered*, and Fred Rogers, a friend of Twigg. The correspondence not only relates to the research and publication of Twigg's book, but it also refers to an incident where a publisher gave Twigg's earlier manuscript to another writer for editing only to have the author claim credit for Twigg's work.

Photographs Series.- [1897]-1995 and [n.d.], predominant 1922-[194-].
363 photographs: 356 b&w and 7 color; 25.4 x 20.5 cm or smaller.
1 negative.

Series consists of photographs and a negative depicting the company's various sailing vessels, office buildings and dock facilities, ports of call along the British Columbian coast, directors' group, office staff, captains, officers, individual company employees, resort properties, company and recreational excursions, and rival ferry companies. The series is divided into five sub-series: Operational, Personnel, Resorts, Other Ferries Companies and Miscellaneous.

Audio-Visual Series.-1976 and [n.d.].

1 audio cassette.

2 8mm film reels.

The series consists of an audio cassette of blow sounds from the S.S. Catala and S.S. Coquitlam. The 8mm film reels depict the vessel Texada Q. entering Quathiaski Cover on March 1976 and an unidentified docked ship.

File List

Box 1

Administrative Series

- 1-1 Administrative History & Operations (1924-1955)
- 1-2 Financial Reports (1942-1949 and 1966)
- 1-3 Freight & Passenger Tariffs (1928-1938 and 1958)
- 1-4 Ship and Engine Construction (1898-1899, 1946 and 1949)
- 1-5 Miscellaneous Schedule Notes (1910-1939)
- 1-6 Miscellaneous Schedule Notes (1940-1954)
- 1-7 Special Operating Circulars & Notes [1944-1952]
- 1-8 Company Memos & Newsletters (1898 and 1930-1958)

General Files Series

- 1-9 Unused Administrative Forms, Stationery & Napkins [n.d.]
- 1-10 "All-Red Line" from Powell River [n.d.]
- 1-11 Bowen Island Estates (1930-1931, 1952 and 1996)
- 1-12 Companies – Buscovitz Steamship Co. (1943 and [n.d.]

Box 2

- 2-1 Companies – Frank Waterhouse & Co. (1943 and [n.d.]
- 2-2 Companies – Gulf Lines Ltd. (1947-1953)
- 2-3 Companies – Sannie Transportation (1928-1953, 1984 and 1998)
- 2-4 Companies – Terminal Steam Navigation Co. (1943 and [n.d.]
- 2-5 Companies – Tidewater Shipping Co. (1953-1954)
- 2-6 Employees – General Information (1936, 1942, 1956 and [n.d.]
- 2-7 Employees – Marine Constables (1932-1945)
- 2-8 Employees – Harold Cecil Biles (1903-1966)
- 2-9 Employees – Captain John A. Boden (1959 and 1986)
- 2-10 Employees – Captain Frederick Leslie Coe (1973)
- 2-11 Employees – (Baron) Frances L. Carter-Cotton [n.d.]
- 2-12 Employees – Captain Ernest Alfred Dickson (1926)
- 2-13 Employees – Captain James Findlay (1944)

- 2-14 Employees – Captain George F. Gaisford (1933 and 1996)
- 2-15 Employees – Captain Andy Johnstone (1966)
- 2-16 Employees – Captain John L. Malcolmson (1944)
- 2-17 Employees – Captain Charles Moody [n.d.]
- 2-18 Employees – Captain Samuel Nelson [n.d.]
- 2-19 Employees – Alfred W. Newman [n.d.]
- 2-20 Employees – James Richard Southworth (1913-1941 and 1974)
- 2-21 Employees – Roderick Paul Thomas [n.d.]
- 2-22 Employees – Captain W. L. Yates (1964-1966)
- 2-23 Menus (1942 and 1952-1953)
- 2-24 Miscellaneous Certificates, Correspondence, Notes & Reports (1953, 1969 and 1981-1986)
- 2-25 Miscellaneous Museum Correspondence (1975-1989 and [n.d.]
- 2-26 Proposed Service Between West Vancouver and Gibsons Landing (1944, 1947 and 1971)
- 2-27 Publicity Material (1952-1958)

Box 3

- 3-1 Sailing Guides (1911-1958)
- 3-2 Selma Park (Sechelt) (1990 and 1994)

Articles, Clippings and Scrapbooks Series

- 3-3 Assorted Articles (1954-1993)
- 3-4 Correspondence Regarding Marine Digest's story on the Union Steamship Co. (1958)
- 3-5 Norman Hacking's Clippings (1951-1953)
- 3-6 Assorted Clippings (1954-2002)
- 3-7 Scrapbook of Clippings, Brochures and Invitations (1917-1925)

Box 4

- 4-1 Scrapbook of Clippings (1926-1939)
- 4-2 Scrapbook of Clippings and Photographs (1942-1944)
- 4-3 Scrapbook of Clippings (1944-1946)

Box 5

- 5-1 Scrapbook of Promotional Brochures & Schedules (1949-1958)

Echoes of the Whistle Book Series

- 5-2 Manuscript of Gerald Rushton's *Echoes of the Whistle* (1979)
- 5-3 Correspondence & Notes Regarding *Echoes of the Whistle* (1974-1980)

Whistle Up the Inlet Book Series

- 5-4 Gerald Rushton's Manuscript and Notes for *Whistle Up the Inlet* Regarding the Company's History (1963, 1972 and [n.d.]
- 5-5 Chapters 1-2 of Gerald Rushton's Manuscript of *Whistle Up the Inlet* (197-)
- 5-6 Chapters 3-5 of Gerald Rushton's Manuscript of *Whistle Up the Inlet* (197-)

Box 6

- 6-1 Chapters 6-8 of Gerald Rushton's Manuscript of *Whistle Up the Inlet* (1925 and 197-)
- 6-2 Chapters 9-10 of Gerald Rushton's Manuscript of *Whistle Up the Inlet* (1947 and 197-)
- 6-3 Chapters 11-12 of Gerald Rushton's Manuscript of *Whistle Up the Inlet* (1955, 197- and 1974)
- 6-4 Research Notes for *Whistle Up the Inlet* (1939-1980, 1998 and [n.d.])
- 6-5 Book Promotion (1974-1975)
- 6-6 *Whistle Up the Inlet* Exhibition at the Vancouver Maritime Museum (1989, 1991 and 1997)
- 6-7 Incoming Correspondence for Gerald Rushton Regarding *Whistle Up the Inlet* (1946-1998 and [n.d.])
- 6-8 Correspondence and Notes for Leonard McCann Regarding *Whistle Up the Inlet* Book (1972, 1979 and [n.d.])

Union Steamships Remembered Series

- 6-9 Arthur Twigg's Correspondence Relating to his book *Union Steamships Remembered* (1990-1997)
- 6-10 Fred Rogers' Correspondence Relating to Arthur Twigg's book *Union Steamships Remembered* (1995, 1997 and 2003)

Box 7

Photographs Series

Union Steamship Company Operations Sub-Series

Fleet – 1919-1939 and [n.d.].

20 photographs: 19 b&w and 1 color; 25.4 x 20.5 cm or smaller.

Office Buildings and Docks – 1920-1958.

19 photographs: 18 b&w and 1 color; 20.7 x 25.4 cm or smaller.

1 negative: 10 x 12.5 cm.

Ports of Calls – 1914, 1922, 1942-1943 and [n.d.].
41 photographs: b&w; 13.9 x 18.6 cm or smaller.

Union Steamship Company Personnel Sub-Series

Captains and Officers – 1942 and [n.d.].
8 photographs: b&w; 11.5 x 8.2 cm or smaller.

Construction, Dock and Ship Employees – [n.d.].
7 photographs: b& w; 12.6 x 10.1 cm or smaller.

Directors' Group – [1925].
3 photographs: b&w; 25.3 x 20.2 cm and 8.5 x 14.5 cm.

Office Groups – 1906, 1922-1925 and 1937.
12 photographs: b&w; 17.1 x 26.6 cm or smaller.

Ernest Beazley – 1920.
7 photographs: b&w; 25.3 x 20.3 cm or smaller.

Captain Jack Boden – 1920-1953.
6 photographs: b&w; 25.1 x 20.1 cm or smaller.

Harold Brown – 1920-[193-].
3 photographs: b&w; 24.7 x 19.7 cm or smaller.

Francis Lovet Carter-Cotton – [n.d.].
1 photograph: b&w; 18.1 x 12.7 cm.

Charles Colwell – 1922.
1 photograph: b&w; 14.8 x 8.6 cm.

Harold Compton – [n.d.].
1 photograph: b&w; 25.4 x 20.7 cm.

Philip Cooke – [1954].
1 photograph: b&w; 19.4 x 23.6 cm.

James Crookall – [n.d.].
1 photograph: b&w; 14.7 x 8.6 cm.

Henry Darling – 1899, 1902 and [n.d.].
3 photographs: b&w; 16.3 x 10.4 cm and 12.8 x 10.2 cm.

John Darling – [19-].
1 photograph: b&w; 25.4 x 19.2 cm.

A. DeGruchy – 1922.

1 photograph: b&w; 14.4 x 8.5 cm.

Captain Ernest Alfred Dickson – 1922.

1 photograph: b&w; 14.5 x 8.5 cm.

Paddy Farina – [1938].

1 photograph: b&w; 11.5 x 7 cm.

Gordon Farrell – [n.d.].

1 photograph: b&w; 6.4 x 5.1 cm.

Captain George Gaisford – [n.d.].

1 photograph: b&w; 18.7 x 11.3 cm.

Captain E. Georgeson – [n.d.].

1 photograph: b&w; 8.8 x 11.4 cm.

Lorne Godfrey – [n.d.].

1 photograph: b&w; 11.5 x 7 cm.

Captain John Halcrow – 1929 and 1939.

2 photographs: b&w; 13 x 8.9 cm and 11.4 x 7.1 cm.

Colonel Alfred St. George Hammersley – [n.d.].

2 photographs: b&w; 19.8 x 14.9 cm.

Stan Hunter – [1928-1935].

1 photograph: b&w; 14.4 x 8.9 cm.

Harry Ives and Gerry Foote – 1937.

1 photograph: b&w; 14.4 x 8.9 cm.

Kollegians (Band) – [193-].

1 photograph: b&w; 8.8 x 14.8 cm.

J. M. Larnie – 1922.

1 photograph: b&w; 14.4 x 8.9 cm.

H. B. Lennard and Gerald Rushton – 1922.

1 photograph: b&w; 14.4 x 8.9 cm.

Gerald McBean – 1949 and 1953.

2 photographs: b&w; 25.5 x 20.6 cm and 12.7 x 18.2 cm.

Captain William McCombe – [n.d.].

4 photographs: b&w; 8.9 x 8.9 cm and 10 x 12.7 cm.

Captain Alec McLennan – [n.d.].

1 photograph: b&w; 25.5 x 20.6 cm.

Tom Melton – 1922.

1 photograph: b&w; 14.4 x 8.9 cm.

Captain John Muir – 1931.

2 photographs: b&w; 19.4 x 11.5 cm and 13 x 8.8 cm.

Captain R. R. Naughty – [n.d.].

3 photographs: b&w; 17.8 x 12.7 cm and 12.6 x 8.9 cm.

Captain John Park – [1910]-1980.

10 photographs: 9 b&w and 1 color; 17.8 x 12.7 cm or smaller.

Pat Pattison – [1920].

1 photograph: b&w; 11.5 x 7 cm.

Captain Ernest Powys – [1897].

1 photograph: b&w; 10.5 x 7.9 cm.

Gilbert Rennie – [1927-1934].

1 photograph: b&w; 13 x 8.9 cm.

Captain Harry Roach – [n.d.].

1 photograph: b&w; 13.9 x 8.7 cm.

Sir Arthur Rushton – [n.d.].

1 photograph: b&w; 19.4 x 14.2 cm.

Gerald Rushton – 1928, 1958 and 1974.

3 photographs: b&w; 24.7 x 18.9 cm or smaller.

Denis H. Shaw – [n.d.].

1 photograph: b&w; 13.8 x 7.9 cm.

Captain Ernest Sheppard – [n.d.].

1 photograph: b&w; 10.2 x 13 cm.

Fred Smith – [n.d.].

1 photograph: b&w; 13.9 x 8.8 cm.

James Richard Southworth - 1913-[194-].
7 photographs: b&w; 17.3 x 12.3 cm or smaller.

Captain Fred Talbot – [n.d.].
1 photograph: b&w; 11.1 x 6.8 cm.

Captain Robert (Bob) Wilson – [n.d.].
4 photographs: b&w; 7.9 x 12.2 cm or smaller.

Teddy Turff – [n.d.].
1 photograph: b&w; 9 x 6.4 cm.

Captain Alexander Walker – 1922.
2 photographs: b&w; 14.5 x 8.7 cm.

James Hugh Welsford – [n.d.].
1 photograph: b&w; 30.1 x 22.7 cm.

Captain Robert (Bob) Wilson – [1947].
4 photographs: b&w; 7.9 x 12.1 cm or smaller.

Union Steamship Company Resorts Sub-Series

Excursions (General) – 1924, 1949 and [n.d.].
19 photographs: b&w; 25.4 x 20.7 cm or smaller.

Bowen Island Resort (Snug Cove) – 1913-[194-] and 1995.
56 photographs: 54 b&w and 2 color; 20.3 x 25.2 cm or smaller.

Sechelt Resort – 1926 and 1943.
4 photographs: b&w; 15.3 x 25.4 cm or smaller.

Selma Park Resort – [1926]-1942.
10 photographs: b&w; 20.4 x 25.4 cm.

Whytecliffe Resort – 1931.
9 photographs: b&w; 20.3 x 25.3 cm or smaller.

Other Ferry Companies Sub-Series

Howe Sound Ferries – [1940]-1971.
18 photographs: 16 b&w and 2 color; 20.8 x 25.6 cm or smaller.

Sannie Ferries – 1922 and 1941-1957.
22 photographs: b&w; 20.4 x 25.5 cm or smaller.

Miscellaneous Sub-Series

Miscellaneous – [n.d.].

20 photographs: b&w; 16.5 x 12.3 or smaller.