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The Museum of Northern Arizona
Harold S. Colton Memorial Library
3101 N. Fort Valley Road
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
(928)774-5213 ext. 256

Title

Charles Spencer collection

Dates

1910-1920

Extent

11.3 cm textual records, 5 blueprints

Biographical History

Charles Spencer grew up in along the San Juan River in Utah Territory and near Mancos, Colorado. He received just three months of formal education in Durango, Colorado. Instead, Spencer opted to pursue mining and engineering. He served as Managing Director at the Lee's Ferry, Arizona field office at the American Placer Company. Independently, he selected several sites for the harvest of resources such as gold or water, and solicited investors to fund the ventures.

In 1911, Spencer and his investors commissioned the construction of a steamship in San Francisco. It was shipped in pieces to Salt Lake City, Utah, and reconstructed to be used to transport newly mined coal up the Colorado River. In 1912, a clogged amalgamator rendered the steamboat unusable, and it was docked near Lee's Ferry. The boat was submerged in a 1921 flood, and was later placed on the National Register of Historic Places and can still be viewed along the Colorado River.

In 1913, Spencer visited Flagstaff and began work on a project to acquire water rights from the San Francisco Peaks for distribution to towns and cattle ranches in the vicinity. He formally incorporated the Coconino Water Development and Stock Company in 1915, with attorneys C.B. Wilson and Gerard T. Wall of Flagstaff as his incorporators. This Company held water rights to a good portion of the resources in the region. In 1917, he incorporated the Great Western Cattle and Sheep Company in California and the Arizona Cattle and Sheep Company in Arizona. Jointly, these companies held stock in the Coconino Water Development and Stock Company, which enabled Spencer to avoid the need to create a public utility company. When the companies were unable to generate the promised resources and revenue by 1920, investors withdrew from the project, and Spencer was forced to end his projects relating to the San Francisco Peaks in Flagstaff. He continued to be involved in mining ventures in the area until the 1960s in the area, though he was never overly successful.

Scope and Content

Records consist of large amounts of correspondences sent and received by Charles Spencer in the course of his activities as founder of the Coconino Water Development and Stock Company, the

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Arizona Cattle and Sheep Company, and the Great Western Cattle and Sheep Company. It contains several agreements, permits, notices, reports, legal papers, blueprints, and notes related to plans for water development in the San Francisco Mountains. Among the hand-drawn plans are two sets of drawings for the Linger-Longer Rest Camp, a lodge planned for the Great Western Cattle and Sheep Company for which there is no evidence of ever being constructed. Additionally, the collection contains plans for the Charles H. Spencer Steamship, which was used for his coal mining operations previous to his water development projects in Flagstaff.

System of Arrangement

This collection is arranged in the following series and sub-series:

Series 1: Water Development, 1910-1920

Sub-series 1: Charles Spencer Research Materials, 1910-1916

Series 2: Charles H. Spencer Steamship Blueprint

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

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Languages and Scripts of the Materials

All materials are in English.

Finding Aids

An earlier index of this material was created by Harold S. Colton in 1956. A more detailed inventory listing is available upon request.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This accession was received from C.B. Wilson in 1956. It was assigned accession #MS-23 by the MNA Library.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Related Archival Material

The following sources provide additional information related to the activities of Charles H. Spencer and/or his activities associated with the Coconino Water Development Project:

Museum of Northern Arizona Harold S. Colton Memorial Library, #MS-209, P.T. Reilly collection. (Blueprints and measurements of the Charles H. Spencer submerged steamship, 1962-1964).

Northern Arizona University Cline Library: Babbitt Brothers Trading Company, NAU.MS.83, NAU.PH.421: Box-folder numbers 5-124

University of California at Los Angeles Young Research Library: Cory Family Papers, Series 1 (Reports), Box 3, Item 269

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Publication Note

Materials in this collection were used for the following publications, which are found in the MNA Library:

Avery, Valeen Tippetts. *Free Running: Charlie Spencer and His Most Remarkable Water Project*. Flagstaff: Flagstaff Corral of Westerners International, 1981.

Billingsley, George H., Earle E. Spamer, and Dove Menkes. *Quest for the Pillar of Gold: The Mines & Miners of the Grand Canyon*. Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon Association, 1997.

Colton, Harold S. "Early Failure to Solve the Water Shortage." *Plateau* 29:1 (Oct. 1956): 36-40.

Description Control

Finding aid written by Libby Coyner using *DACS*, 4 February 2009

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Title

Series 1: Water Development

Dates

1915-1920

Extent

10.8 cm textual records, 4 blueprints

Scope and Content

Series consists of Charles Spencer's correspondences, articles of incorporation, agreements, board meeting minutes, blueprints, and various legal documents resulting from his activities in water development in the San Francisco Peaks.

Series 1: Water Development				
Series #	Folder Description	Date(s)	Extent	Box/File
MS-23-1-1	Water Development, 1914	1914	0.4 cm textual	1.1
MS-23-1-2	Water Development, 1915	1915	0.2 cm textual	1.2
MS-23-1-3	Water Development, 1916	1916	0.1 cm textual	1.3
MS-23-1-4	Water Development, 1917	1917	2.5 cm textual	1.4
MS-23-1-5	Water Development, 1918	1918	2.5 cm textual	1.5
MS-23-1-6	Water Development, 1919	1919	2.5 cm textual	1.6
MS-23-1-7	Water Development, 1920	1920	2.5 cm textual	1.7
MS-23-1-8	Water Development Blueprints	1917-1919	4 blueprints	MF 1.2
MS-23-1-9	Linger-Longer Rest House Plans	1915-1920	0.1 cm textual	1.8

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Sub-series 1.1: Charles Spencer Research Materials

Dates

1910-1916

Extent

.5 cm textual records

Scope and Content

Sub-series consists of presidential proclamations regarding National Forest land in Arizona, as well as Department of Interior topographical maps.

Sub-series 1.1				
Sub-series #	Folder Description	Date(s)	Extent	Box/File
MS-23-1.1-1	Charles Spencer Research Materials	1910-1915	.5 cm textual	1.9

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Series 2: Charles H. Spencer Steamboat Blueprint

Dates

1911

Extent

1 blueprint

Scope and Content

Series consists of one blueprint of the Charles H. Spencer Steamboat.

Series 2: Charles H. Spencer Steamboat Blueprint				
Series #	Folder Description	Date(s)	Extent	Box/File
MS-23-2-1	Charles H. Spencer Steamboat Blueprint	1911	1 blueprint	MF 1.2

LCSH Access Points

Charles H. Spencer (Steamboat)
Coconino County (Ariz.) – History
Flagstaff (Ariz.) – History – 20th century
Flagstaff (Ariz.) – Maps, Topographic
San Francisco Peaks (Ariz.)
Water rights – Arizona

Additional Access Points

Dr. Herbert A. Parkyn
A.H. Jones
American Placer Corporation
Gerard T. Wall
C.B. Wilson
R.N. Burgess
H.T. Cory
Coconino Water Development and Stock Company
Great Western Cattle and Sheep Company
Arizona Cattle and Sheep Company
Charles H. Spencer Steamboat