

A 91

Russell Brown Fonds

Original, 1.5 cm, c. 1946-1960

Scope and Content:

The Russell Brown Fonds is a collection of correspondence and miscellaneous papers pertaining to local historian W. Russell Brown, covering the years 1946 to the 1960's. Organized chronologically when possible.

Series A 91/1: correspondence, 0.5 cm, 1946-1949 (original).

6 letters received by Russell Brown between 1946 and 1949. Their contents include replies to inquiries by Mr. Brown regarding the particulars of early ships, and requests for similar information from interested individuals. All, save one, are typed, and in fairly good condition. Organized chronologically.

Series A 91/2: miscellanea, 1 cm, c.1960 (original).

1 file of undated handwritten notes by Russell Brown. Some are descriptions and historical background information for photographs. A large portion of the series pertains to the early council members of the City of Port Arthur, and the first mayor of that city, Thomas Marks. Also, there are typed copies of lists of all council members and mayors of Port Arthur between 1884 and 1960, and a list of reeves of Shuniah Township. Most papers are in fairly good condition. Chronological order is impossible to determine as all are undated.

Biographical Sketch:

W. Russell Brown was born in Collingwood, ON, in 1881, but moved with his family to Port Arthur (then Prince Arthur's Landing) in 1883. His father, George Wesley Brown, owned and operated a butcher's shop on Pearl St, in partnership with his cousin. He went on to establish a passenger and freight shipping business with others in 1891; it operated until 1897.

Russell Brown attended Port Arthur High school, and graduated from that institution before leaving to go to business school in Toronto. He later returned to the Port Arthur area, and married a former classmate from high school, Georgia E. Smith..

In 1908, Brown left his position as a manager with the meat packing firm Gordon, Ironside, and Fares to start his own meat retail business, which operated until 1914. He was employed as an Indian Agent by the Federal Government from 1914 to 1923, helping to recruit natives for the war effort. In 1923 he opened a car dealership, but sold this business in 1934 in the midst of the Depression. His last job was as an inspector aboard the SS Noronic, the ill-fated ship which burst into flames in 1949 while in port in Toronto.

Russell Brown was a member of the Port Arthur City Council from 1938 to

1954. He was also a member of the Kiwanis Club, and a past vice-president of the Thunder Bay Historical Society. A celebrated local historian and authority on early ships and the shipping industry, he wrote several articles for the local papers on related topics.

The City of Port Arthur named him its first honorary citizen in 1967. After the amalgamation of Thunder Bay 3 years later, Brown was again named an honorary citizen. He died in 1995 at the age of 104.

Additional Information:

Custodial History: donated to the Museum by Betty Pattison.

Associated Material: came with 993.24.1 to 993.24.55.

Related Material: see also biography file "Brown, W. R."