Simpson family papers

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Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue
Sleepy Hollow 10591
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Summary Information

Repository:	Rockefeller Archive Center
Creator:	Simpson
Title:	Simpson family papers
ID:	FA1566
Date [inclusive]:	1919-1989, bulk: 1929-1939
Date [bulk]:	1929-1939
Physical Description:	2.2 Cubic Feet
Language of the Material:	English .

Preferred Citation

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Biographical / Historical

Charles P. Simpson was born in Sullivan, Maine, near Mount Desert Island, on September 19, 1848. At the age of twenty he headed West, learning the science of engineering in California. He later settled in Nebraska where he became a land surveyor and part owner in a sawmill and lumberyard. Simpson married Mary Walworth, of Zanesville, Ohio, in 1874. In 1880 they and their three children returned to Sullivan, and Simpson established an engineering and surveying office. He began working for John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in 1913, continuing as Rockefeller's chief engineer for the Seal Harbor carriage roads until he became ill in 1922. Charles P. Simpson died in 1928.

Paul Dyer Simpson, Charles P. Simpson's son, took over as Rockefeller's chief engineer at the time of his father's illness. Born March 10, 1876, in St. Paul, Nebraska, Paul Simpson began his engineering training while working in his father's surveying office in Sullivan. After serving in the Army during the Spanish-American War he graduated from the University of Maine in 1903 with a degree in civil engineering. He then worked in the West for eight years for the U.S. Reclamation Service. Upon his return to Maine in 1912 he again joined his father in the surveying business. After succeeding his father as Rockefeller's chief engineer in 1922 he continued in that role until 1940, when the roads were incorporated in Acadia

National Park. He then served as a consulting engineer for the Rockefeller family until he retired in 1954. Paul D. Simpson died at Seal Harbor in 1963.

The Seal Harbor carriage road system was begun in 1915 when John D. Rockefeller, Jr., already building roads on his private summer estate, received permission from the Hancock County Trustees of Public Reservations to continue the roads across land which they maintained. The system eventually embraced a 57-mile network of carriage roads laced with sixteen bridges. The chief architects for the roads were Rockefeller, who laid out the initial line for each road, the two Simpsons, and Walters G. Hill, also a local engineer. The first ten bridges were designed by Welles Bosworth, the remaining six by Charles Stoughton, both New York City architects. The roadside landscaping was planned by Beatrix Farrand, who also designed Abby Aldrich Rockefeller's garden at the Eyrie in Seal Harbor.

Most of the roads were completed by 1930, at which time Rockefeller began the gradual transfer of his property to Acadia National Park. The transfer was concluded in the early 1940s. Rockefeller ultimately presented Acadia National Park with 10,700 acres, one-third of the park's size.

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Scope and Contents

The bulk of the Simpson family papers consists of correspondence and photographs.

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Arrangement

Arranged in 2 collections by record type:

Simpson Family papers (FA073) Simpson Family photographs, Series 1069 (FA464)

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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