

# Missouri State Archives

## Finding Aid 5.41

### Office of Secretary of State

### Charles U. Becker, 1921-1933

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*Abstract:* Records (1893-1934) of Secretary of State Charles U. Becker (1868-1934).

*Extent:* 7.5 cubic ft. (23 Hollinger boxes, 1 oversize box).

*Record Description:* Paper.

*Alternative Formats:* None.

*Location:* Missouri State Archives.

### Administrative Information

*Access Restrictions:* No special restrictions.

*Publication Restrictions:* Copyright is in the public domain. Items reproduced for online or physical publication should carry the credit line: Courtesy of the Missouri State Archives.

*Preferred Citation:* [Item description], [Date]; [Box and Folder] OR [Volume and Page]; [Series]; Charles U. Becker, 1921-1933, Office of the Secretary of State, Record Group 5.41; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

*Acquisition Information:* Agency transfer. Accession 98-127.

*Processing Information:* Processing completed by Unknown. Finding aid converted by MKS. Updated by EW on 11/17/2020. Updated again by Hunter Staskevich on 8/05/2024.

### Historical and Biographical Notes

Charles U. Becker was born on October 21, 1868 near New Haven, Franklin County, Missouri. He attended the Cape Girardeau Normal School and taught school for several years. He then worked as a newspaper editor for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and the

Kansas City Star. He also farmed in Polk County and wrote articles and stories for magazines.

Charles U. Becker was elected Republican state representative from Polk County in 1914, 1916 and 1918. In 1920 he was elected Secretary of State. He was re-elected in 1924 and 1928. In 1932 Charles U. Becker failed to win the Republican nomination for governor, losing to Edward Henry Winter. He was succeeded as Secretary of State by Dwight H. Brown.

Charles U. Becker married Mary B. Tolson on May 13, 1920. They had one surviving child Mary Jane Becker. Charles U. Becker died on May 21, 1934 and is buried in Riverview Cemetery, Jefferson City.

## **Additional Descriptive Information**

### **Bibliography**

*Official Manual of the State of Missouri* (Jefferson City, MO: Office of Secretary of State, legislative years, 1931-1932), pp. 19.

### **Related Material**

RG3.34 Frederick Dozier Gardner, 1917-1921  
RG3.36 Samuel Aaron Baker, 1925-1929  
RG3.37 Henry Stewart Caulfield, 1929-1933

### **Series**

The records are organized into the following series:

Correspondence, Political, 1918-1934  
Election Material, 1920-1932  
General Assembly, 1914-1918  
Miscellaneous, 1915-1934  
Personal Papers and Manuscripts, 1893-1934  
Subject Files, 1921-1933

## Correspondence, Political, 1918-1934

*Extent:* 19 folders

*Arrangement:* Chronological

### Scope and Content

This series contains incoming and outgoing correspondence of Charles U. Becker dating from the end of his term as Polk County State Representative, 1918, through his death in 1934. The correspondence largely relates to his activities as Secretary of State, his political maneuverings, and the patronage his office offered (particularly in the automobile department); many letters request assistance in securing political appointments or state employment. The correspondence touches on many aspects of his position as Secretary of State, including mention of the various departments he oversaw. Becker corresponded with many important Missouri political figures, including Dewey Short, Bennett Champ Clark, Governors Sam Baker, Frederick Gardner, Henry Caulfield, and Guy D. Park, as well as Kansas City "Boss" Thomas J. Pendergast; those letters are included in this series.

Additional correspondence relating directly to Becker's various campaigns for Secretary of State and his aborted attempt at the Republican nomination for governor in 1932 can be located in the Elections series.

### Container List

Box	Folder	Contents	Date
1	1	Correspondence	1918
1	2	Correspondence	1919
1	3	Correspondence	1920
1	4	Correspondence	1921
1	5	Correspondence	1922
1	6	Correspondence	1923
1	7	Correspondence	1924
1	8	Correspondence	1926
1	9	Correspondence	1927
1	10	Correspondence	1928

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	11	Correspondence	1929
1	12	Correspondence	1930
1	13	Correspondence	1931
1	14	Correspondence	1932 (January – February)
1	15	Correspondence	1932 (March – May)
2	1	Correspondence	1932 (June – December)
2	2	Correspondence	1933
2	3	Correspondence	1934
2	4	Correspondence	Undated Correspondence

## Election Material, 1920-1932

*Extent:* 2.4 cubic ft. (6 Hollinger boxes)

*Arrangement:* Chronological

### Scope and Content

This series contains materials relating to Becker campaigns for Secretary of State from 1920 through 1928 and his unsuccessful bid for the Republican nomination for governor in 1932. Included among the materials are voluminous correspondence files (incoming and outgoing), newspaper clippings (including oversize, full-page advertisements), campaign materials/memorabilia, campaign advertisements (full newspaper pages), and various subject categories, including Republican committee information, speeches, and handwritten county campaign notes.

Also included in this series are election materials relating to other national and state elections.

This series is arranged chronologically by election year (materials within each election year designation may include years before and after the election). Correspondence is arranged chronologically by year, then by month/day. Newspaper clippings are arranged chronologically where publication date was known. There is an index to this series.

### Container List

Box	Folder	Contents
3	1	1920 – Campaign Managers
3	2	1920 – Campaign Materials
3	3	1920 – Correspondence
3	4	1920 – Newspaper Clippings
3	5	1922
3	6	1924 – Certification of Election
3	7	1924 – Newspaper Clippings
3	8	1924 – <i>Republican Campaign Textbook; Facts and Figures for Use in the Republican Campaign</i>
3	9	1928 – Campaign Materials
3	10	1928 – Correspondence

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
3	11-12	1928 – Newspaper Clippings
3	13	1928 – Governor Nomination
3	14	1928 – United States President Nomination
3	15	c1928 – Ku Klux Klan Poster
3	16	1928 – Miscellaneous Elections
3	17	Undated – Campaign Poster
4	1	1932 – Becker Campaign Notes (By County)
4	2	1932 – Becker Campaign Notes (By County, Handwritten)
4	3-4	1932 – Becker Campaign Notes (Misc.)
4	5	1932 – Becker for Governor Clubs
4	6	1932 – Campaign Materials
4	7	1932 – Campaign Materials (Photographs)
4	8	1932 – Campaign Materials (Misc.)
4	9	1932 – Campaign Platform
5	1	1932 – Correspondence (1929- Nov. 1931)
5	2	1932 – Correspondence (Dec. 1931)
5	3	1932 – Correspondence (Jan. – Feb. 1932)
5	4	1932 – Correspondence (March 1932)
5	5	1932 – Correspondence (April 1 – 23, 1932)
6	1	1932 – Correspondence (April 25 – 30, 1932)
6	2	1932 – Correspondence (May 2 – 16, 1932)
6	3	1932 – Correspondence (May 17 – 31, 1932)
6	4	1932 – Correspondence (June 1932)
6	5	1932 – Correspondence (July 1932)

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
6	6	1932 – Correspondence (August 3 – 15, 1932)
7	1	1932 – Correspondence (August 16 – 31, 1932)
7	2	1932 – Correspondence (September 1932)
7	3	1932 – Correspondence (October 1932)
7	4	1932 – Correspondence (Nov. 1932 – Jan. 1933)
7	5	1932 – Correspondence (Executives Club of St. Louis)
7	6	1932 – Correspondence (Undated)
7	7	1932 – Democratic Party, Miscellaneous
7	8	1932 – Irwin, William C.
7	9	1932 – Miscellaneous
7	10	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (1929 – 1930)
7	11	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (1931)
8	1	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (January 1932)
8	2	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (February 1932)
8	3	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (March 1932)
8	4	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (April 1932)
8	5	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (May 1932)
8	6	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (June 1932)
8	7	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (July 1932)
8	8	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (August 1932)
8	9	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (September 1932)
8	10	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (October 1932)
8	11	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (November 1932)
8	12	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (1933)

Box	Folder	Contents
8	13	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (1934)
8	14	1932 – Newspaper Clippings (Undated)
9	1	1932 – Periodicals (with campaign ads)
9	2	1932 – Political Cartoons
9	3	1932 – Republican City Central Committee
9	4	1932 – Republican Clubs
9	5	1932 – Republican County Committees
9	6	1932 – Republican Editorial Association
9	7	1932 – Speaking Schedule
9	8	1932 – Speeches
9	9	1932 – Speeches (Radio)
9	10	1932 – Speeches & Notes (undated)
26	1	<i>Everybody's Score Card</i> (Campaign Ad)
26	1	Campaign Rally Poster (Sept. 6, 1932)
26	2	<i>Capital</i> (July 31, 1932)
26	2	<i>Carthage Evening Press</i> (July 30, 1932)
26	2	<i>Farm Club News</i> (July 21, 1932)
26	2	<i>Joplin-Springfield Uplift</i> (April 2, 1932)
26	2	<i>Knob Knoster Gem</i> (cJuly 1932)
26	2	<i>Linn County Budget-Gazette</i>
26	2	(March 16, 1932; Excerpts from Oct. – Nov., 1932)
26	2	<i>Manufacturers', Jobbers' and Dealers' Bulletin</i>
26	2	(January 1932)
26	2	<i>Missouri Democrat</i> (September 11, 1931)



<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
26	2	<i>Missouri State Banner</i> (June 23, 1932)
26	2	<i>Nevada Herald</i> (June 2, 1932)
26	2	<i>St. Louis Globe-Democrat</i> (January 31, 1932)
26	2	<i>St. Louis Globe-Democrat</i> (March 6, 1932)
26	2	<i>St. Louis Star</i> (December 31, 1931)
26	2	<i>St. Louis Star</i> (March 8, 1932)
26	2	<i>St. Louis Times</i> (February 12, 1932)
26	2	<i>Stanberry Headlight</i> (July 28, 1932)
26	2	<i>Webb City Sentinel</i> (July 1, 1932)
26	2	<i>Webb City Sentinel</i> (July 30, 1932)
26	2	<i>Westliche Post</i> (January 1, 1932)
26	2	Various St. Louis foreign-language newspapers
26	3	Campaign Poster: Governor 1932
29	2	Various Political Speeches and Campaign Material

## General Assembly, 1914-1918

*Extent:* 6 folders

*Arrangement:* Chronological

### Scope and Content

This series contains papers relating to Charles Becker's terms in the Missouri General Assembly. The series pertains primarily to his last year in the legislature, 1917, and contains constituent correspondence, newspaper clippings, miscellaneous bills, and a roster of committees.

### Container List

Box	Folder	Contents
10	1	Correspondence, 1916-1917
10	2	Newspaper Clippings
10	3	House Committee Roster, 1917
10	4	House Bills
10	5	Resolutions
10	6	Miscellaneous Notes

## Readings and Writings, 1915-1934

*Extent:* 1 cubic ft. (2 Hollinger boxes and 1 partial)

*Arrangement:* Alphabetical

### Scope and Content

This series contains materials that do not appear to belong with the other series in the Becker Papers. These items are primarily brochures, pamphlets, journals, and books; some appear to have been saved by Charles Becker, others did not belong to Becker personally, but were saved within his collection of papers.

### Container List

Box	Folder	Contents
23	1	<i>The Editor</i> , 1918
23	2	<i>Child Welfare</i> , 1932 – 1933
23	3	<i>The Missouri Parent-Teacher</i> , 1932
23	4	<i>Plain Talk</i> , 1929
23	5	Emmerson, Louis (Illinois), 1929
23	6	“The Ozarks: Land of a Million Smiles” 1926 brochure
23	7	“The Lure of the Arcadia Valley” brochure
23	8	<i>Missouri’s New State Capitol Guidebook</i> , 1924
23	9	“Some Present-Day Problems” (Address), 1915
23	10	Missouri Library Commission 26 <sup>th</sup> Annual Report, 1932
23	11	Homer B. Mann Address, Kansas City, 1932
23	12	Small, Len (Illinois): Biennial Message, 1929
23	13	<i>Missouri Historical Review</i> , October 1926
23	14	Appropriation Laws, 1931
23	15	Bank and Public Holidays throughout the world, 1926

Box	Folder	Contents
23	16	<i>Izaak Walton League Monthly</i> , May 1923
23	17	<i>Verbum Sap</i> , 1931
23	18	<i>So the People May Know</i> (public utilities), 1931
24	1	<i>Elephant's Trumpet</i> , 1936
24	2	<i>The Lance</i> , 1933
24	3	Program: "The Bride of Bagdad" (1932)
24	4	<i>The Dearborn Independent</i> , 1924
24	5	Better Business Bureau newsletters: St. Louis, 1931; Kansas City, 1931
24	6	<i>The Censor</i> , 1933
24	7	<i>The Republican News Bulletin</i> , July 1928
24	8	Photographs
24	9	Expense Report Receipts (blank)
24	10	"How to Write for Boys"
24	11	Blank Checkbook, Commerce Trust Company, Kansas City
24	12	"Potiphar's Wife" (1896)
24	13	Farris, Frank: Memorial Addresses
24	14	Maps: Missouri, Illinois
24	15	<i>Game and Fish Laws of Missouri</i> ; <i>When to Fish</i> , 1930
24	16	Congressional Directory, 1921
24	17	New Testament, 1902
24	18	Miscellaneous
24	19	Genealogy
25	1	Newspaper Clippings
25	2	Newspaper Clippings and Handwritten Notes

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
25	3	League of Peace, 1919
25	4	<i>Weekly Unity</i> , 1933
25	5	Hearings before the Committee on Banking and Currency (U.S.) H.R. 8403, 1934
25	6	Education: Kansas City, 1930-1931
25	7	Signature book / souvenir book of delegates and officers of the 1922-1923 Convention. Book originally owned by Becker. [See also RG5.26 Box 22 F. 2 for Ernest Wray's copy of this book.]
25	8	Lake of the Ozarks Country Club Certificate. April 1931
26	4	Governor's Mansion Print: original etching by H.S. Hewlett
26	5	Great Seal of the State of California and history, 1927
26	6	Clippings of Will Rogers and Wiley Post: Death
27	1-3	Various Articles
28	1-4	Various Articles
29	1	Various Articles

## Subject Files, Office and Political Activity, 1919-1934

*Extent:* 2 cubic ft. (5 Hollinger boxes)

*Arrangement:* Alphabetical

### Scope and Content

This series of various subject files contains papers and documents collected and saved by Charles U. Becker during the course of his terms as Secretary of State. Many of the documents relate to various departments under the administration of the Secretary of State, including corporations, securities ("Blue Sky"), automobile license registration, and the publication of the *Official Manual of the State of Missouri*. Most of these files are comprised of newspaper clippings. Included among these are files of particular persons, companies, and state agencies, boards, and commissions. Many of the documents in these files are undated.

### Container List

Box	Folder	Contents
10	7	Agriculture
10	8	American Covenant Life Insurance
10	9	Appointments (miscellaneous)
10	10	Armstrong, O.K.: Correspondence, 1933
10	11-15	Associated Industries of Missouri
10	16	Associated Industries of Missouri: Correspondence
11	1	Association of American Secretaries of State, 1928 – 1931
11	2	Automobile Certificates (samples), 1922-24
11	3	Automobile License Fund Collection, 1927
11	4	Automobile License Plate Contract, 1931
11	5	Automobile License Reciprocity, 1929
11	5A	Baker, Sam
11	5B	Banks: Defunct, 1926

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
11	6	Barber Examiners, State Board of
11	7	Becker, William Dee: St. Louis Court of Appeals
11	8	Biographical Information
11	9	Brunk, Larry: State Treasurer
11	10	Business Cards: Miscellaneous
11	11	Caulfield, Henry S.
11	12	Central Purchasing Department Legislation, 1929 – 1930
11	13	Citizens Security Bank of Englewood, 1926
11	14	Compton Company, St. Louis, 1931
11	15	Congressional Redistricting, 1932
11	16	Constitutional Convention, 1922
11	17	Corporations Department
11	18	County Textbook Commission, 1931-1932
11	19	Court Cases, 1921 – 1932
12	1	Federal Trust Company of Kansas City
12	2	Field Notes: Missouri Surveys
12	3	Flood Control Committee: U.S. Land Department, 1927
12	4	Griesedieck Brewery (Prohibition), 1925
12	5	Hyde, Arthur M.
12	6	Labor Unions/Activities
12	7	Lobbyists
12	8	Missouri Brochure (souvenir)
12	9	Missouri Press Publishing Company, 1926
12	10	Motor Traffic Regulations

Box	Folder	Contents
12	11	Motor Vehicle Safety Legislation, 1928
12	12	National Finance Corporation, 1924 – 1934
12	12A	Newspaper Contracts: Constitutional Amendment Printing
12	13	Newspapers: Missouri
12	14	Newspapers: Missouri – Kansas City
12	15	Newspapers: Missouri – St. Louis
12	16	<i>Official Manual of the State of Missouri, 1927-1928</i>
12	17	Old Age Pension Legislation
12	18	Page Bank of St. Louis
12	19	Park, Guy B., 1933
12	20	Penal Institutions: Missouri
12	21	Political Cartoons
12	22	Prohibition Amendment, 1932
12	23	Public Service Commission: Appointment, 1933-1934
12	24	Radio Set Survey, 1925
13	1	Republican Editorial Association
13	2	Republican State Committee: Miscellaneous
13	3	Republican State News Service, 1925 – 1930
13	4	Republican State News Service, 1931 – 1934
13	5	Republican State News Service, Undated
13	6	Road Legislation
13	7	St. Louis Police Force, 1931
13	8	Secretary of State: Miscellaneous, 1921 – 1930
13	9	Speeches, 1924 – 1933



<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
13	10	Speeches: Correspondence
14	1-4	Speeches: Miscellaneous/Undated
14	5	Speeches: Newspaper Clippings
14	6	Speeches: Radio
14	7	Speeches: Radio (Requests for Copies)
15	1	Short, Dewey, 1934
15	2	State Board of Equalization
15	3	State Highway Board: Minutes, 1919
15	4	State Highway Commission, 1928 – 1930
15	5	State Highway Department
15	6	State Park System
15	7	State Printing Commission, 1929
15	8	State Survey Commission: Correspondence, 1929-1930
15	9	State Survey Commission: Miscellaneous
15	10	State Survey Commission: Newspaper Clippings
15	11	State Survey Commission: Report
15	12	State Tax Commission
15	13	State Warehouse System
15	14	Tobacco Law
15	15	United States Housing Company, 1922
15	16	Workmen's Compensation
15	17	World War I: Wheat Price Fixing
16	1	Young Brothers, St. Louis: Correspondence
16	2	Young Brothers, St. Louis: Miscellaneous

Box	Folder	Contents
16	3	Young Brothers, St. Louis: Newspaper Clippings
16	4	Young Brothers, St. Louis: Report, 1930

## Personal Papers and Manuscripts, 1893-1934

*Extent:* 2.25 cubic ft. (5 Hollinger boxes and 1 partial)

*Arrangement:* Alphabetical

### Scope and Content

Charles Becker, born in 1868, had a variety of occupations before he entered the political arena. He taught school, served in editorial positions with newspapers in Kansas City and St. Louis, then moved to Polk County, where he farmed and wrote dime novels and stories for various magazines. During the latter years of his life, he turned again to writing, producing the novel *A House in Disorder*, published shortly before his death; an autographed copy with an inscription to his wife is included in the collection. Nearly two cubic feet of Becker's typewritten manuscripts are included in the Becker Papers.

Also included are handwritten journals, notations of magazine submissions and payments, and editors' acceptance and rejection letters. Becker died May 21, 1934; several files include newspaper clippings of his obituary and sympathy cards and letters from friends and fellow politicians.

### Container List

Box	Folder	Contents
16	5	Correspondence: 1893 – 1929
16	6	Correspondence: 1930 – 1932
16	7	Correspondence: 1933
16	8	Correspondence: 1934
16	9	Correspondence: Undated
16	10	Death: Illness Sympathy Notes, 1934
16	11	Death: Illness Newspaper Clippings, 1934
16	12	Death: Cards and Letters (Sympathy), 1934
17	1	Death: Expenses, Burial, 1934
17	2	Death: Memorial Record, 1934
17	3-4	Death: Newspaper Clippings

Box	Folder	Contents
17	5	Death: Republican Editorial Association Eulogy
17	6	Death-Family: Miscellaneous, 1929
17	7	Income Tax Returns, 1925 – 1927
17	8	Insurance/Stocks, 1928
17	9	Miscellaneous Family
17	10	Newspaper Clippings
17	11	Receipts: Miscellaneous
17	12	Writings: Journal
18	1-6	Writings: Manuscripts
19	1-6	Writings: Manuscripts
20	1-6	Writings: Manuscripts
21	1-2	Writings: Manuscripts
21	3	Writings: <i>A House in Disorder</i>
21	4	Writings: Correspondence
21	5-7	Writings: Correspondence – Rejection Slips
22	1-2	Writings: Correspondence – Rejection Slips
22	3-5	Writings: Story Ideas Journals
22	6	Writings: Scientific Study, 1904
22	7	Writings: Western Pulp Magazine Covers
22	8	Writings: Miscellaneous Cartoons (“Judge”)
22A		Writings: Journals
22A		<i>A House in Disorder</i> (autographed copy to wife)
OB1	2	Magazines in which Becker published articles