

Missouri State Archives

Finding Aid 5.41

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

CHARLES U. BECKER, 1921-1933

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

Extent: 7.5 cubic feet (23 Hollinger boxes, 1 oversize box)

Physical Description: Paper

Location: Missouri State Archives stacks

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Access Restrictions: No special restrictions.

Publication Restrictions: Copyright is in the public domain

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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 of Secretary Becker are broken down into the below series which for ease of use, are listed in this document in alphabetical order:

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

LOCATION	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

LOCATION	BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	Date
	1	10	Correspondence	1928
	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 c.f.

Arrangement: Chronologically by election year

Scope and Content

This series contains materials relating to Becker campaigns for Secretary of State from 1920 through 1928 and his futile 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

LOCATION	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

LOCATION	BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
	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)

LOCATION	BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
	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)

LOCATION	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)

LOCATION	BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
	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

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

LOCATION	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

MISCELLANEOUS, 1915-1934

Extent: 1 c.f.

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

LOCATION	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 th 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

LOCATION	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; 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

LOCATION	BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
	25	2	Newspaper Clippings and Handwritten Notes
	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	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

SUBJECT FILES, OFFICE AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY, 1919-1934

Extent: 2 c.f.

Arrangement: Alphabetical by subject

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

LOCATION	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

LOCATION	BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
	11	5B	Banks: Defunct, 1926
	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

LOCATION	BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
	12	10	Motor Traffic Regulations
	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

LOCATION	BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
	13	9	Speeches, 1924 – 1933
	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

LOCATION	BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
	16	2	Young Brothers, St. Louis: Miscellaneous
	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 c.f.

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

LOCATION	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

LOCATION	BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
	17	3-4	Death: Newspaper Clippings
	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
			<i>A House in Disorder</i> (autographed copy to wife)
	26	2	Magazines in which Becker published articles