

Charles M. Defieux Collection

Dates of Creation: 1946-1972, [predominant 1966-1971].

Physical Extent: 12.5 cm of textual records and 6 photographs (b&w; colour)

Biographical History:

Charles M. Defieux was born in Liverpool, England on April 9, 1901. In 1911 his family immigrated to Canada and settled in Edmonton, where in 1917, he began his newspaper career as a copy boy and later junior reporter on the *Edmonton Journal*.

Although under age in the First World War, Mr. Defieux joined the Royal Air Force for the last two months of the war in 1918. The next year he joined the U.S. Army, staying for two years, including service in Siberia. Returning to Edmonton from the U.S. in 1921, Mr. Defieux combined newspaper work with radio. He was the first Canadian broadcaster to announce basketball games when the Edmonton Grads women's team was the world champion.

He continued to combine newspaper and radio work during the 1920s and 1930s in Vancouver, where he was a news and sports announcer for CJOR and CKWX, as well as a writer, actor, dancer-singer in radio and national radio revues. Mr. Defieux also worked briefly at KOMO in Seattle in 1928. While in Edmonton and San Francisco he also acted in stage productions. In 1923 he came to *The Sun* where he stayed for most of the next 17 years. In 1924, he coached the first Canadian football championship team, the Ex-King George men's team from Vancouver, and during the 1920s and 1930s was an emcee at hockey, wrestling and bicycle racing events in Vancouver.

In 1940 Mr. Defieux entered the RCAF, serving as an officer working in public relations and operations intelligence. In 1945 he was discharged as a flight lieutenant. That same year he returned briefly to *The Sun* as head of *The Sun's* Veteran Bureau, a service helping vets adjust to civilian life through counselling and help in dealing with government departments. Later in 1945, he joined the federal department of veterans affairs, a two-year job that included service as a personal assistant to the then-minister, Ian McKenzie. During later writing trips abroad, Mr. Defieux wrote reports on business and finance for the then-prime minister Lester Pearson, and handled China and Poland relief contributions for the federal government. Returning from Ottawa in 1947, he started a public relations business in Vancouver, becoming actively involved in publicity for and management of the Pacific National Exhibition for the next 12 years.

He also ran the weekly *Richmond-Marpole Times* for two years before selling it in 1951, and continued work on the massive volume *Years of Man*, begun in 1943 and completed in 1961. The work began as a history of medicine but later branched out to include all other major historical events with some 17,000 cross-referenced entries. Though it was never published, Mr. Defieux did get a royalty advance on the book and took a world tour writing newspaper stories. In 1958 he had made a four-month study of the economic system of the United Kingdom.

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With a lifelong interest in the sea, inherited from his father who was a master mariner on sailing ships, Mr. Defieux was best known in for his column on shipping news and local marine history. He began the column in 1964 – 40 years after he was named marine editor in an earlier stint with *The Sun*. Prior to his death on October 9, 1972 at the age of 70, he was still active as a freelance journalist, lecturer in marine affairs, and writing *The Sun* column, “Of Ships and Men”.

Scope and Content:

Collection consists of textual records comprised of research notes, correspondence, and working papers related to the maritime research undertaken by Charles M. Defieux. Collection also contains newspaper clippings from *The Vancouver Sun* and excerpts of journal articles from publications including *Sea Breezes*.

Notes:

Source of Title: Title based on contents of the records.

Immediate Source of Acquisition: Papers in this collection were given to Leonard McCann by Charles Defieux before his death. Accession number LM 001.003.

Arrangement: Records arranged by Archivist.

Language: Records are in English.

Restrictions on access: None.

Terms governing publication: None.

Finding Aid: A box/file list is available for these records.

Accruals: No further accruals are expected.

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Box / File List

Box 1

File 1 Biographical details and photographs (1965-1972)

File 2 Coast history [research and correspondence] (1946-1970)

File 3 Marine history – B.C. Coast (1946-1971)

File 4 Marine history – Steam Ships (1967-1969)

File 5 Pioneers (1967-1970)

File 6 VR history (no date)

File 7 To interview (no date)

File 8 Research and correspondence, vol. 1 (1946-1971)

File 9 Research and correspondence, vol. 2 (1946-1971)

File 10 Research and correspondence, vol. 3 (1946-1971)

File 11 Speeches (1969-1972)

File 12 “Birth of a Province” (1966-1967)