Biographical Note

Lumberman, financier, politician, and Washington state representative.

Mark Reed, president of the Simpson Logging Company and speaker of the state House of Representatives, stood at the center of Washington politics throughout the 1920s. Many contemporary observers agreed that Reed could have been elected governor if he had so desired, but business came before politics for Reed: he repeatedly decided that his company would suffer too much if he had to devote most of his time to a governor’s duties.

Born in Olympia in 1866, Reed did not find financial success until 1897 when Sol Simpson hired him to manage the Simpson Logging Company’s store in the town of Shelton. After several promotions, he married the boss’s daughter, Irene, in 1901. Reed took over the management of the company upon Sol Simpson death in 1906. Simpson Logging was already the biggest company in Shelton, and as Reed expanded the firm, Shelton grew with it. Reed strove to build a firm that could weather the storms of the notoriously turbulent timber industry. While he resisted the unionization of his labor force, he sought to reduce turnover by continually improving living conditions in his logging camps.

Reed also built two mills in Shelton which brought a degree of vertical integration and allowed the firm to make pulp and other products out of wood that had previously been wasted. These strategies, coupled with Reed’s refusal to take on large amounts of debt, allowed Simpson Logging to grow during the 1920s and to survive the Great Depression. Reed also sought to promote cooperation among timber companies and to create stability in lumber markets. As a member of the Spruce Production Board during the First World War, Reed tried to persuade fellow lumbermen to adopt the eight-hour day to undercut the appeal of the Industrial Workers of the World. Reed was later influential in convincing
Colonel Bryce Disque, head of the Army’s Spruce Production Division, to compel recalcitrant firms to accept the eight-hour day. In the mid- to late-1920s Reed was a key player in the West Coast Lumbermen’s Association’s failed attempts to get logging companies to drive up prices by limiting their output. Reed directed the unsuccessful fight to raise the tariff on Canadian logs and lumber in 1929. He also participated in the negotiations of the National Recovery Administration’s lumber code shortly before his death in 1933.

Reed brought the same pragmatism and bargaining skills to his political career. After serving as mayor of Shelton for four years, Reed won a seat in the state House of Representatives as a Republican in 1914. Although he strongly favored reducing taxes and opposed most Progressive era reforms, Reed was willing to compromise with reformers and organized labor. His ability to negotiate legislative deals led to his rapid promotion to positions of leadership. He was elected Speaker of the House every legislative session between 1923 and 1929. The biggest fight of Reed’s career came when fellow Republican Roland Hartley was inaugurated governor in 1925. Hartley tried to increase the governor’s control over administrative agencies and to slash spending on education, roads, and reclamation. When Reed killed the governor’s bills, Washington Republicans split into Reed and Hartley factions. Although he narrowly mustered the votes necessary to pass several bills over Hartley’s vetoes in 1925, Reed did not want to perpetuate the split in the party. In 1927 and 1929 Reed helped craft compromises between pro- and anti-Hartley forces, most of which enhanced Hartley’s power. With his business hit by the Depression and with Hartley clearly replacing him as the dominant player in the Washington Republican Party, Reed decided not to seek re-election in 1930. He did not, however, drop out of politics altogether. Reed agreed to manage President Hoover’s re-election campaign in Washington state in 1932, just as he had managed Calvin Coolidge’s campaign in 1924 and Hoover’s in 1928.

Content Description
Correspondence and records of the Simpson Logging Company.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use
Creator’s literary rights retained. Contact repository for details.

Administrative Information

Arrangement
Organized into 2 accessions.

Accession No. 0035-001, Mark E Reed papers, 1918-1942
Accession No. 0035-002, Mark E Reed papers, 1932-1933

Related Materials
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv16998
1990) is an authorized history of the Simpson Logging/Timber Company (the firm changed its name in 1960.) Spector utilized interviews and Simpson records at the company’s archives.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Accesion No. 0035-001: Mark E. Reed papers, 1918-1942

4.68 cubic feet (12 boxes)
Scope and Content: This accession consists of Reed’s incoming and outgoing correspondence regarding his business, political, and personal affairs. The letters were written between 1918 and 1933, but the bulk are from 1923 to 1933. Letters regarding Reed’s political career before 1923 are particularly scarce. However, the correspondence does cover his tenure as Speaker of the House and his work as presidential campaign manager. The records of the Simpson Logging Company from 1918 to 1941 (bulk 1918-1927) make up the largest subgroup in the accession. The Simpson subgroup includes letters to and from Reed and other company executives as well as inter-office memoranda. The correspondence of Arthur B. Govey, Vice-President of Simpson Logging, is a separate subgroup. Govey’s letters span 1933 to 1941 but are not as extensive as the company records for the earlier years. This accession also holds the records of Shelton’s American Legion post from 1919 to 1922, a group in which Reed’s son William was active. Other subgroups contain the records of other companies which Reed owned or managed.

Restrictions on Access: Access restricted: For terms of access, contact Special Collections

Restrictions on Use: Creator’s literary rights retained. Contact repository for details.

Acquisition Info: Donated by Gift of Simpson Lumber Company via Mr. Runacres, Corporation Secretary, 4/13/1950

Mark E. Reed papers

Accesion No. 0035-002: Mark E Reed papers, 1932-1933

2.1 cubic feet (5 boxes)
Scope and Content: Contains a large amount of Mark Reed’s correspondence from 1931-1934 (bulk 1932-1933). It thus covers his activities in Hoover’s re-election bid and in negotiating the National Recovery Administration lumber code. The only large subgroup is a collection of Simpson Company inter-office memoranda from 1932 and 1933. Other subgroups relate to other Reed-owned businesses.

Restrictions on Access: Access restricted: For terms of access, contact Special Collections

Open only to scholarly researchers.

Restrictions on Use: Creator’s literary rights retained. Contact repository for details.

Acquisition Info: Donated by William Reed, 6/2/1975

Mark E. Reed papers, 1918-1942
http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv16998
Names and Subjects

Subject Terms:
Lumber trade--History--Washington (State)
Personal Papers/Corporate Records (University of Washington)

Personal Names:
Reed, Mark E. (Mark Edward), 1866-1933--Archives

Other Creators:

Personal Names:
Bayley, Alden C
Butler, William C
Clarke, F. R., Dr
Clise, Charles F
Davis, Ed, Deacon
Donovan, James J
Drake, George Lincoln, 1889-
Govey, Arthur B
Hillier, A. E
Ingham, Gordon W
Lewis, Charles R
Polson, Alexander
Reed, William G. (William Garrard), 1908-1989
Sims, Edgar A
Stevens, Carl M
Weinel, Louis
Wohleb, Joseph Henry, 1887-1958

Corporate Names:
American Legion. Post 31 (Shelton, Wash.)
Anderson Estate Company

Calvin Coolidge Campaign Headquarters (Seattle, Wash.)

Capitol National Bank (Olympia, Wash.)

Columbia Basin Irrigation League

Dexter Horton National Bank (Seattle, Wash.)

General Hospital Association (Shelton, Wash.)

Hofius Steel and Equipment Company (Seattle, Wash.)

Lidgerwood Manufacturing Company (Seattle, Wash.)

Lovsted and Company (Seattle, Wash.)

Lumbermen's Mercantile Company

Lumbermen's Protective League

Metropolitan Building Company (Seattle, Wash.)

Mud Bay Logging Company

National Bank of Olympia (Wash.)

National Committee on Prisons and Prison Labor

Olympia Oyster Investment Company

Oregon Bank and Trust Company

Pacific Car and Foundry Company (Portland, Or.)

Pacific Car and Foundry Company (Seattle, Wash.)

Phoenix Logging Company

Puget Mill Company

Puget Sound Lumber Company (Tacoma, Wash.)

Rainier Pulp & Paper Company

Rayonier, Inc

Reed Ingham Investment Co
Reed Mill Company
(creator)
Republican Party (Wash.)
(creator)
Schwager-Nettleton Mills (Seattle, Wash.)
(creator)
Seattle-First National Bank
(creator)
Shelton Hotel Company
(creator)
Sicks' Seattle Brewing & Malting Co
(creator)
Simpson Investment Company
(creator)
Simpson Logging Company
(creator)
Simpson Logging Company. Purchasing Agent
(creator)
St. Peter's Hospital (Olympia, Wash.)
(creator)
State Bank (Shelton, Wash.)
(creator)
Weyerhaeuser Timber Company
(creator)

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