

Seattle City Light Superintendent James D. Ross Reference Material, 1911-1996

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Seattle City Light
Title	Seattle City Light Superintendent James D. Ross Reference Material
Dates	1911-1996 (inclusive) 1911 1996
Quantity	.2 cubic foot, (1 box)
Collection Number	1200-14
Summary	Writings and publications regarding J. D. Ross
Repository	Seattle Municipal Archives Seattle Municipal Archives Office of the City Clerk City of Seattle PO Box 94728 98124-4728 Seattle, WA Telephone: 206-233-7807 Fax: 206-386-9025 archives@seattle.gov
Access Restrictions	Records are open to the public.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for processing this record series was provided through a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Biographical Note

James Delmage (J. D.) Ross, known as the Father of Seattle City Light, was Born in Chatham, Ontario in 1872. Ross left for the Northwest in 1898, became an assistant city engineer for the City of Seattle in 1902 and designed the City's first hydroelectric dam on the Cedar River. In 1911 Ross was appointed Superintendent of the newly-created City Light department, a post he held for the rest of his life. Although he was fired by Mayor Edwards in 1931, Ross was rehired the same year following Edwards' recall. A tireless advocate of municipal ownership of public utilities, Ross won the rights to develop hydroelectric projects on the Skagit River. Under his leadership, the Gorge Dam and powerhouse were completed, as well as the Diablo Dam project. In 1937 President Roosevelt appointed Ross a commissioner on the Securities and Exchange Commission and shortly thereafter named him as the first administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration. Ross continued to serve as Superintendent of City Light during this time and initiated a third power project on the Skagit, Ruby Dam, before his death in 1939.

Content Description

Miscellaneous writings and publications related to the career of James D. Ross, former superintendent of Seattle City Light. Items include biographical materials compiled by third parties, writings by Ross related to public ownership of utilities, transcripts of radio talks by Ross, and an obituary for Ross published in the Bonneville Spark. Also included are four photographs. This small body of material was created as a reference collection in the City Light Superintendent's office.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

[Item and date], Seattle City Light Superintendent James D. Ross Reference Material , Record Series 1200-14. Box [number], Folder [number]. Seattle Municipal Archives.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Arranged into three series: J. D. Ross Writings, Writings about J. D. Ross and Photographs

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

J. D. Ross Writings, 1928-1996

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/1	City Light: The Municipal Light and Power System of Seattle, Washington. By J.D. Ross. Public Ownership (vol. X, no. 10)	1928
1/2	Educational Radio Talks. By J.D. Ross.	1936
1/3	Public Power: Its Financing and Its Advantages, From "Investment Banking"	1936
1/4	Law of Simplicity (With Cover Letter)	1937-1996
1/5	History of Lamps	1938-1975

Writings About J. D. Ross, 1923-1982

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/6	J.D. Ross (Entry in Seattle Leaders by E.M. Desmond)	1923
1/7	A Far-Seeing Battler for Plentiful Power, Historical Vignettes	Undated
1/8	The Romance of City Light. By Gilbert Brown.	1937
1/9	J.D. Ross. Digest of Article in Encyclopedia of American Biography	1937
1/10	In Memoriam. James Delmage Ross. The Bonneville Spark (vol. 1, no. 3)	1939
1/11	J.D. Ross, Public Power Magnate. By Carl Dreher. Harper's Magazine	1940
1/12	Greatness of J.D. Ross is Recalled. By P.C. Spowart. The Pacific Northwest Power Bulletin	1958
1/13	J.D. Ross' Vision. The New Yorker	1982
1/14	Correspondence from President Franklin D. Roosevelt (copies)	1937-1938

Photographs of Ross and Others, 1911-1937

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Electric utilities--Washington--Seattle

Public utilities--Washington--Seattle

Personal Names :

Ross, J. D. (James Delmage), 1872-1939

Corporate Names :

Seattle City Light

Seattle (Wash.). Lighting Dept.

Geographical Names :

Seattle (Wash.)

Form or Genre Terms :

Photographic prints

Finding aid prepared by Janet Ness

2010

