

BC Archives Research Guide

CHARLES EUGÈNE BEDAUX EXPEDITION



BC Archives, [E-03667](#)
(cropped)

Born in France in 1886, Charles Bedaux moved to the United States and became a naturalized American citizen. He was a highly successful businessman in the field of management consulting. According to Jim Christy's 1984 biography, prior to his most famous expedition in 1934 across northeastern British Columbia, he had made hunting and exploratory trips to northwestern BC in 1926 and 1929, the central interior in 1931 and to northeastern BC in 1932 and 1933.

Bedaux announced his intention to cross northeastern BC with Citroën half-track trucks on May 25, 1934, in New York City. The Canadian Sub-Arctic Expedition launched from Edmonton, Alberta on July 6, 1934, and contained a formidable array of talent and beauty, including Floyd Crosby, a Hollywood cinematographer, two land surveyors, Frank Swannell and Ernest Lamarque, mining engineer Jack Bocock, a Citroën mechanic, many cowboys, as well as Bedaux's mistress, his wife and her maid.



BC Archives, [B-07387](#) (cropped)

Due to a combination of weather, terrain and poor planning, the expedition failed, and the Citroën vehicles were abandoned. Although Bedaux returned to northern BC in 1936 with plans to build a road, he did not follow through. In 1937 he hosted the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor at his French chateau. Collaborationist activities with Nazi-occupied France led to his 1942 arrest in North Africa. Returned to the U.S., he died by suicide in a Florida prison in 1944.

RESOURCES AT THE BC ARCHIVES

Textual Records

- [GR-1668.2.14](#) - Bedaux Sub-Arctic [Cassiar] Expedition, 1934
- E/D/F87.1 - Freer, Willard M., *Bedaux Sub-Arctic Expedition*, 1934 [diary]
- G/B/L16 - Lamarque, E.C.W., *Travels and explorations in northern British Columbia*, 1934. Includes copies of a 1935 newspaper clipping, a map, 1937 correspondence and a BC government reconnaissance report.
- [MS-0676](#) - Louis LeBourdais papers

- [MS-0392](#) - Frank Swannell papers

Visual Records

- Use the search term **bedaux** and select 'graphic material' as the General material designation within [Advanced Search](#) to find all catalogued photographs.

Cartographic Records

- CM/E62 - Plan of the Region about the 58th Parallel from Longitude 124° 30' to Longitude 130° West Northern British Columbia, Canada. [1937?]
- CM/D112 - Topographical Sketch Map Shewing Route Traversed by the Bedaux Sub-Arctic Expedition, 1934

Sound Recordings

- [AAAB5712](#) - Oliver Travers interview, 1984. A digital copy is available within the reference room.

Archives Library

- [NW 971.1185 W54 2009](#) *Bannock and beans: a cowboy's account of the Bedaux Expedition*, 2009. Bob White. Edited by Jay Sherwood.
- [NWp 971M B399M](#) *The great White Cruise, or, How Charles Bedaux tried to conquer the Canadian Rockies with a Citroen half-track and almost invented off-road racing*, 1978. Bruce McCall.
- [NW 620.8 B399C](#) *The Price of Power: A Biography of Charles Eugene Bedaux*, 1984. Jim Christy.

Selected External Resources

- [Glenbow Library and Archives](#) (Glenbow Museum), Bedaux Expedition fonds.
- [Library and Archives Canada](#):
 - Charles Eugène Bedaux fonds
 - Ernest C.W. Lamarque collection
 - Frank Cyril Swannell fonds
- [Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies](#), Ernest C. W. Lamarque fonds.