

BASIL THOMPSON PAPERS

2.1 Linear Feet, 5 boxes

**Special Collections & Archives
J. Edgar & Louise S. Monroe Library
Loyola University New Orleans**

Collection #7

Reference Code

Collection 7

Name and Location of Repository

Special Collections and Archives, J. Edgar & Louise S. Monroe Library, Loyola University New Orleans

Title

Basil Thompson Papers

Date

1861-1924, bulk 1913-1924

Extent

2.1 Linear Feet, 5 boxes

Name of Creator

Thompson, Basil, 1892-1924

Thompson, T. P. 1860-1924

Zorn, Ida Marie

Thompson, Dorothy

Elder, Susan B., 1835-1923

Administrative/Biographical History

These papers contain material by and about Basil Thompson and certain members of his family. Thompson was born in New Orleans on 21 June 1892, the son of T. P. and Ida Marie Thompson. In 1910 he graduated from Loyola College in New Orleans with a bachelor of arts degree. He then studied law at Tulane University in 1910-1911 and at Washington and Lee in 1911-1912. Beginning in 1913 he worked as an agent for the Equitable Life Assurance Society. On 28 July 1914 he married Rebekah Brown of Chicago.

Thompson was a poet and a prominent figure in the literary circles that flourished in postwar New Orleans. His work was published in such magazines as *The Smart Set*, *The Bookman*, *Current Opinion*, *Pearson's Magazine*, and *The Nation* and in two slim volumes, *Estrays* and *Auguries*. In 1920 he was a founder and subsequently was an editor of *The Double Dealer*, a small but influential literary magazine based in New Orleans that published from 1921 to 1926.

Thompson died of pneumonia in New Orleans on 7 April 1924. The April 1924 issue of

The Double Dealer printed a bibliography of his poetry and prose and reprinted some of his writings.

These papers also contain material by and about the following members of Basil Thompson's family. T. P. Thompson was Basil's father. He was the general agent for Louisiana and Mississippi for the Equitable Life Assurance Society, the same firm with which Basil was associated. He was also a New Orleans civic and cultural leader and a history enthusiast who owned an impressive collection of Americana relating to Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley. He was born in 1860 and died in 1924. Ida Marie Zorn was the maiden name of T. P. Thompson's second wife and Basil's mother; she was the daughter of Antoine Urban Zorn. Dorothy Thompson was Basil's sister. Susan B. Elder was the mother of T. P. Thompson's first wife and a writer of some note. Her writings, which often reflected her devotion to the South and to the Catholic Church, included history, biography, fiction, and, poetry. She was born in 1835 and died in 1923.

Scope and Content

These papers preserve fragments from the short life of a New Orleans poet who was involved with The Double Dealer; they also preserve fragments of his family's history. Much of the material in these papers is dated between 1913 and 1924, the years of Basil Thompson's literary activity. Thompson's childhood in the early 1900s also provided considerable material. Several items are dated from the nineteenth century, the earliest being the 1861 diary of Basil Thompson's grandfather.

These five boxes of papers, which total 2.1 linear feet, are arranged into seven series based on types of material: Correspondence; Literary Manuscripts; Publications; Diary and Journal; Scrapbooks and Albums; Photographs; Miscellaneous Material. By far the largest series is Publications, which contains published material by or about Basil Thompson or about The Double Dealer.

System of Arrangement

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Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

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Language and Scripts of the Material

Collection is in English.

Processing Information

Finding aid written by Art Carpenter, 2014. Updated and made DACS-compliant by Kure Croker, 2015.

Series Description

Series I

Correspondence

Box 1, Folder 1.

Mainly family correspondence. Over half are letters or postcards from Susan B. Elder to Dorothy Thompson or to Ida Thompson. Several pieces concern Basil Thompson's poetry or *The Double Dealer*, including letters from Maxwell Anderson of *The Measure*, Morris Gilbert of *The Smart Set*, and John McClure of *The Double Dealer*.

Series II

Literary Manuscripts

Box 1, Folders 2-12.

Drafts of literary works by Basil Thompson. Primarily poetry, though also prose. Several notebooks.

Series III

Publications

Box 1, Folders 13-15; Box 2; Box 3, Folders 1-15.

Published material by or about Basil Thompson or about *The Double Dealer*. Copies of two volumes of poetry: *Auguries* by Thompson; *Estrays*, to which Thompson contributed. Poems by Thompson published in journals. Flyers, advertisements, and other material about *The Double Dealer*. Newspaper clippings about Thompson or *The Double Dealer*. Final folder in this series contains two small volumes published by the Bookfellows of Chicago: *A Little Book of Bookly Verse* (1919); and *The Judging of Jurgen* by James Branch Cabell (1920).

Series IV

Diary and Journal

Box 3, Folder 16; Box 4, Folder 1.

Two items. 1861 diary of Antoine Urban Zorn, father of Ida Marie Zorn and grandfather of Basil Thompson; mainly written in French, an account of expenses and daily events. And Basil Thompson's journal, ca. 1913, which contains poems by others and notes about his July 1913 voyage to

Europe.

Series V

Scrapbooks and Albums

Box 4, Folders 2-7.

Varied sources and subjects. Ida Zorn's autograph books--two volumes, late 1870s, 1880s. Child's scrapbook, probably Basil Thompson's. Clippings of Basil Thompson poems. Poems of James J. O'Brien, S.J., presented to T. P. Thompson. T. P. Thompson scrapbook, ca. 1919--mainly material about or writings by T. P. Thompson.

Series VI

Photographs

Box 4, Folders 8-10.

Most of these photographs are neither dated nor identified. Some are of Basil Thompson. Many are of interior of a house--apparently of T. P. Thompson's home at 1812 Calhoun St. in New Orleans, ca. 1900.

Series VII

Miscellaneous Material

Box 5.

Varied material. Items from T. P. Thompson such as promotional buttons and ribbons. Scorecard for 1901 Southern League baseball game between New Orleans and Nashville. Holy cards, many given to Basil Thompson for his first Communion. Religious relics.

Box 6.

Sacrament certificate for Basil Thompson at St. Michael's Church dated July 4, 1892 (Baptism) and May 4th, 1903 (First Communion). Certificate adhered to crumbling cardboard backing.