

A0105

Bellairs, Kenneth G. (1871-1942) Papers, 1892-1942

9 folders (0.5 linear feet)

REPOSITORY

Missouri Historical Society Archives

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kenneth G. "Jock" Bellairs was born in India in 1871, the son of Captain Clement W. Bellairs of the Royal Horse Artillery, British Army. The family emigrated to the United States and eventually settled in St. Louis, where Clement Bellairs became the superintendent of Fairgrounds Park.

In 1891, Jock Bellairs found a job as a reporter for the *St. Louis Globe*. He left the *Globe* for the *St. Louis Chronicle* and then joined the staff of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Later he returned to the *Chronicle*, which had become the *St. Louis Star-Times*. Bellairs gained a wide reputation in St. Louis as a police reporter and an outdoors sporting columnist. Bellairs was married to Ollie Evens. When he died in 1942 he had worked in the newspaper business for forty-nine years.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Kenneth G. Bellairs Papers consist of nine folders arranged by subject. The items within the subject folders are arranged chronologically. The collection is partially indexed in the Archives Card Catalog.

The biographical folder (folder 1) contains clippings of obituaries, news articles about members of the Bellairs family, Masonic membership certificates, and Kenneth G. Bellairs' naturalization record dated 1892.

The correspondence is divided into three folders: letters from Kenneth G. Bellairs to his wife, Ollie, 1902-1933 (folder 2); miscellaneous correspondence, 1904-1937 (folder 3); and letters of condolences received by Mrs. Bellairs, 1941-1942 (folder 4). The majority of the letters that Kenneth sent to Ollie during the course of their marriage are simply expressions of his affection for her, but some letters mention subjects such as David R. Francis, Forest Park, and Joseph Folk (folder 2). The miscellaneous correspondence includes letters sent by Bellairs' friends and associates on such topics as politics, criminal cases, Bellairs' writing, and St. Louis Police Department history (folder 3).

Among the miscellaneous correspondence is a series of letters dated 1918 dealing with the court martial of John M. Bayless, U.S. Navy, who was tried for leaving the *U.S.S. Arizona* without permission (folder 3). Bellairs assisted Bayless in his efforts to get an

acquittal. The correspondents include U.S. Representatives J.J. Cochran, Jacob E. Meeker, and L.C. Dyer and Secretary of the Navy Joseph McDainel.

In 1922, Charles Bieger wrote to Bellairs offering him a story regarding the discovery of the trunk containing the remains of Charles Arthur Preller who had been murdered by Walter H. Lennox-Maxwell at the Southern Hotel. Bieger was a trunk maker and responsible for opening the locked trunk after the remains were discovered. Further details of the murder can be found in the Maxwell-Preller Murder Collection (collection number A0998).

The miscellaneous correspondence (folder 3) also includes four letters that tell of old St. Louis crimes. A letter from attorney George A. Davis of St. Louis, dated 1923, discusses the 1894 "Fire Gangsters" affair in which a team of arsonists was caught in conjunction with an insurance fraud case. A later letter from Davis contains details of a case in 1899 of a St. Louis merchant named Miller who attempted to fake his own death to collect death benefits. Leo Scherrer wrote to Bellairs in October 1923 about the Joseph Glenn murder in 1883. Another letter by T.J. McCormack, dated December 15, 1923, describes the several violent crimes in St. Louis and the police officers associated with the cases.

The St. Louis police folder (folder 5) contains a memorandum providing details of the activities of the police department in the aftermath of the tornado of September 1927 that badly damaged a portion of the city; a booklet written by St. Louis Chief of Detectives Samuel Allen on how to successfully obtain a confession from criminals; and two police reports and a transcript of the interview conducted by officers on a witness associated with a hit-and-run incident in August 1934.

There is a folder containing newspaper clippings, biographical information, and other material relating to the life of Missouri's Progressive-era governor Joseph W. Folk. Bellairs wrote a number of articles about Folk. The two men were close friends for many years and Governor Folk appointed Bellairs to the position of state factory inspector.

Articles written by Kenneth Bellairs (folder 7) include: "The Legal Side of Joseph W. Folk" published by the legal journal *The Green Bag* (published copy and proof, 1905), a typed draft of an outdoor sports newspaper column that Bellairs wrote under the pen name Verdino, and fragments of miscellaneous articles.

The miscellaneous articles (folder 8), not written by Bellairs, cover topics such as crimes in Missouri; an article by Theodore Dreiser, a former St. Louis newspaper protégé of Bellairs, concerning an incident that occurred while he was working as a reporter in St. Louis in 1893; an article in *Time* magazine about Kenneth Bellairs; and various other subjects.

The ephemera folder (folder 9) contains three passes to witness executions at the St. Louis City Jail; calling cards of Capt. Clement Bellairs, Royal Horse Artillery; a menu from a meeting of the St. Louis Press Club, April 7, 1903; a program from the dedication

ceremony of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair; and a program for a memorial held in St. Louis to mourn the death of King Edward VII of Great Britain, May 15, 1910.

INVENTORY

Box 1

- folder 1 Biographical, 1892-1942
- folder 2 Correspondence, K.G. Bellairs to Ollie Bellairs, 1902-1933
- folder 3 Correspondence, miscellaneous, 1904-1937; n.d.
- folder 4 Correspondence, letters of condolences, 1940-1941
- folder 5 St. Louis police, 1927-1936; n.d.
- folder 6 Joseph W. Folk, 1906-1923; n.d.
- folder 7 Articles by Bellairs, 1905; n.d.
- folder 8 Articles: miscellaneous, 1922-1939
- folder 9 Ephemera, 1902-1910