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## Inventory of the Ned C. Bell Library

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### Recommended Citation

Scrivani, Lawrence SM, "Inventory of the Ned C. Bell Library" (2023). *Finding Aids*. 18.  
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# Inventory of the Ned C. Bell Library

Collection Number SC 3  
Blume Library Special Collections

StMU

Saint Mary's University of San Antonio  
One Camino Santa Maria  
San Antonio TX 78228-8530 USA  
Phone: 210-436-3441  
www.lib.stmarytx.edu

## Descriptive Summary

<b>Repository</b>	Blume Library, Saint Mary's University of San Antonio, Texas
<b>Donors</b>	Ned C. Bell Donor number 1900.1
<b>Creator</b>	Ned C. Bell (born August 15, 1891 – died March 17, 1969)
<b>Title</b>	Ned C. Bell Library
<b>Inclusive Dates</b>	1788-1964
<b>Bulk Dates</b>	1981-1945
<b>Reference Code</b>	SC 3
<b>Languages</b>	English predominately with occasional German or Latin
<b>Extent</b>	171 books at Blume Library plus 40 in the Law Library
<b>Abstract</b>	Ned C. Bell was a graduate of St. Louis College in 1908 and from a family that had been in Texas since before the 1860s. He liked to correspond with the authors of the books he read and received many autographed copies in response, some with lengthy comments about their writing.

## Administrative Information

<b>Restrictions to Access:</b>	None
<b>Usage Restrictions:</b>	Non-circulating
<b>Alternative Form of Material:</b>	None
<b>Custodial History:</b>	Received from the donor for Special Collections
<b>Acquisitions Information:</b>	The materials in the Ned C. Bell Library were donated by the creator to the St. Mary's University, Mr. Bell's alma mater.
<b>Processing Information:</b>	The books are shelved by the Dewey Decimal Classification on the open shelving of the Special Collections department. The classes used are 900, 800, 500, 300, 200. Card Catalog drawer 18 entitled "Special Collections" has a list of titles for "N. Bell."
<b>Preferred Citation:</b>	Saint Mary's University of San Antonio, Texas
<b>Copyright Notice:</b>	There is no determination as to which items are in the public domain.

## Catalog Headings

American biography,  
American literature – Texas  
Texas history and literature,  
United States -- History  
San Antonio history,  
European history and biography,  
English Common Law,  
Catholic Church

## Related Collections

Haley Memorial Library of Midland, Texas; The Hervey E. Chesley Collection:  
“From the Letters of Ned C. Bell of San Antonio annotated by Hervey Chesley of  
Hamilton, Texas. 1953 to 1956.”

The collection consists of typescript transcriptions of Bell’s letters with comments appended or interpolated by Chesley. The reader must be alert to the interpolations which are not always clearly marked and there are typographical errors afflicting dates to add to the confusion. However, the letters are full of biographical information about Bell and other Texas old-timers including David Donoghue, Martin L. Crimmins, Jack Clem, and Dan Sullivan.

## Biographical Note

Ned Carr Bell was an alumnus of St. Louis College, 1908, Commercial Class, (10<sup>th</sup> grade equivalent). He was the son of Jessup Madison Bell, an early settler and jeweler in San Antonio. His half-brother was Mayor Sam C. Bell of San Antonio. From his job as private secretary to J. W. West, he was drafted for service in World War I. The *San Antonio Evening News* (August 12, 1938) described him as “Ned C. Bell, the South American oil man with the collection of shrunken, mummified Indian heads.” He attained the rank of captain in 1943. Other biographical details are supplied by his correspondence with Harvey E. Chesley of Houston. Ned Bell and Hervey Chesley were attorneys for the Veterans’ Administration after World War II. Later Bell worked for Standard Oil Company and was posted to the Netherlands West Indies (Caribbean islands). About himself, Bell wrote to Chesley:

“I was never much of a ‘joiner’ myself and though I spent four and a half years in the army in two wars, I was always sort of a lone wolf, absorbed in reading during most of my spare time. It’s always been difficult for me to make friends and even more difficult to hold on to the few I have” (Letter of November 27, 1953). To this statement Chesley interpolates his comment: “Anyhow he had an extraordinary lot of acquaintances.”

Bell’s family were Texas pioneers from before the ‘War Between the States.’ That might account for his social connections. For example, Bell wrote to Chesley:

“I worked for Mr. West [J. M. West] prior to the First War and would probably still be with the West interest had it not been that I went ahead and volunteered against the old man’s wishes. He wanted to use his influence and have me exempted from the draft.” To this statement Chesley interpolates this comment: “Told me he never regretted it, though those who stayed with the old man, some became millionaires. Said he just put his hat on, walked down and signed up for the Army” (Letter of October 25, 1953).

Again Bell:

“My only effort to write was long years ago when living in South America. A friend of mine on the editorial staff of *National Geographic* insisted I write an article descriptive

of the country...I slaved over it, assembled a lot of good pictures and sent it in. He was good enough to write me a long letter with return of the manuscript, suggesting various and sundry changes. But I took the attitude of 'To Hell with It' and never fooled with it anymore" (Letter of November 27, 1953).

"No, I was never in India, or Asia or Africa or Europe for that matter. My rather limited travels have been confined to this Western Hemisphere – to the States, Canada, Mexico and South America and a few of the islands of the Caribbean" (Letter of November 27, 1953).

"I put in a year and a half in the first war plus around two and a half years in the second at such matter-of-fact places as Dayton, Ohio; Atlanta, Washington, Chicago, Pine Bluff, Arkansas; etc. My last station was at historic old Fort Ringold, Rio Grande City, Texas, one of the oldest stations on the border. For a while I slept in a little stone house that rumor has it was once the shelter for U. S. Grant and Robert E. Lee – but not at the same time however" (February 8, 1954).

Regarding Bell's posting in Dayton, Ohio, Chesley comments in a later letter: "Ned was well acquainted with Orville Wright when in the war at Dayton, Ohio." (Letter of May 25, 1954) To all of the above we might add this observation by Chesley: "Ned was the youngest of a rather large family I think. His sister, Miss Lillie Carr Bell, was a retired teacher, and she and Ned occupied the old home" (Letter of January 4, 1954).

Bell's connection to St. Mary's University is attested to by this comment:

"I'm working on identification of pictures of school groups for St. Mary's University, dating way back there and surprised myself by recognizing so many" (Letter of February 4, 1954).

In addition, Bell comments intimately about three other donors to Special Collections: David Donoghue (SC 8), Colonel Martin Crimmins (SC 5) and the Sullivans (S 21).

David Donoghue (SC 08):

Ned Bell describes Donoghue as "a Fort Worth oil man" (Letter of October 20, 1953). "Speaking of the *Seven Cities of Cibola* -- I have a good friend and old schoolmate now living in Fort Worth who wrote a long article printed in pamphlet form, endeavoring to explode the myth connected with this search. He is Dave Donoghue, a petroleum engineer and good friend of Evetts Haley. I believe Dave it was who gave Haley my address which led to the publication of my uncle's diary. I was then living in the Netherlands West Indies." (Letter to Chesley of May 5, 1954)

Comment interpolated by Chesley: "As I recall, Ned and Donoghue were in St. Mary's together." (Letter of May 5, 1954)

Colonel Martin Crimmins (SC 05):

"A bigger grandstander never lived than old Martin Crimmins, forever breaking into the headlines on slightest provocation." Bell continues by recounting three events in Crimmins' career (see letter of October 20, 1953).

Dan Sullivan (SC 21):

"I wrote Haley that the most interesting of all would be an authentic biography covering the life of old Dan Sullivan of San Antonio. His descendants, however, would not only offer no cooperation whatever, but would prove intensely hostile." (Letter of October 16, 1955)

"Jack Clem is a good friend of mine and used to be in the VA office here and entertained with fascinating stories. He was retired as a Colonel himself. His father was in the Civil

War when just a kid, and achieved fame as ‘the Drummer Boy of Shiloh.’ After the death of Jack’s mother, the old man married the oldest of Dan Sullivan’s daughters and made San Antonio his home up to the time of his death, many years ago. Incidentally, Jack hates the Sullivans’ guts.” (Letter of November 27, 1953)

## Collection Overview

In his letters to Hervey Chesley, Bell wrote about the only words of description of his personal papers that we have:

“I spent all of New Year’s Day in going through a lot of my old papers, correspondence, etc. running back about 40 years. There were letters from Wm. Howard Taft and FDR and Andrew Mellon and his son and lots more. Maybe I shouldn’t have done it, but I destroyed the entire lot. It will save someone a lot of trouble after I die.” (Letter of January 4, 1954)

One wishes he had not been so thoughtful. The quoted text above is found among Bell’s correspondence with Hervey Chesley. Facsimiles of this correspondence appear in the first series of this collection.

In describing his library Bell wrote:

“I have a number of autographed books in my small library – Colonel E. M. House, Jimmie Byrnes, Wendell Wilkie, Cardinal Gibbons, Ike’s *Crusade in Europe*, etc. Also an autographed autobiography of the privately printed life of Robert Dollar, the West Coast shipping magnate of years ago” (Letter of January 4, 1954).

According to Bro. Robert Wood, the predominating subject areas of Bell’s collection include in order of frequency: American biography, Texas history and literature, San Antonio history, European history and biography, English Common Law, Catholic Church. For a list of titles see Card Catalog Drawer 18: “Special Collections: N. Bell.”

## Summary of Series

Series 1: Personal Documents

Series 2: Books

Series 3: Collection about World War II

### Series 1: Personal Documents

**Descriptive Note:** Unfortunately, there are no real personal papers from Ned Bell’s diverse life because he destroyed them all “to save someone a lot of trouble after he died.” Fortunately, an old friend and correspondent of his, Hervey Chesley transcribed portions of his letters that told about Texas figures Bell had met during his life.

#### SC 3 Box 1

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Folder 1 | Certificate of Promotion from 1 <sup>st</sup> Commercial to Graduating Class 1907<br><b>Explanatory Note:</b> The certificate is issued by St. Louis College, (San Antonio, Texas) which was the boarding department for St. Mary’s College at that time located downtown on College Street. The so-called commercial program was a two-year program following Grade 8. It was not college preparatory but intended to suit one for employment in an office upon graduation. Along with this certificate of promotion Ned Bell received a “premium” that is an award for achievement in Composition (see series two below). |
| Folder 2 | Miss Lilly Bell (sister of Ned Bell)  |

Folder 3	Chesley-Bell Correspondence, Part I	1947-1955
Folder 4	Chesley-Bell Correspondence, Part II	1953-1955
Folder 5	Chesley-Bell Correspondence, Part III	1955 & 1956

## Series 2: Books

**Descriptive Note:** There follows a list of the books in the Ned C. Bell Library having an inscription that provides a clue to Bell's activities or to an association with the authors.

262.3/S539	“Mrs. J. . . . . M. Bell, from her husband, Nov 8, 1888 The “Mrs. J M Bell” mentioned is likely Ned Bell’s mother, not his wife.
369.11/P976	“Ned C. Bell, 3-18-[19]49” includes typed-page with related information
811.4/L853	no inscription
811.52/S491	“Ned C. Bell, Tampico 12-20-[19]21”
811.52/S491	“To Ned C. Bell with kindest regards, Robert W. Service, France, July 1934”
Bulwer-Lytton/FIC	<i>The Last Days of Pompey</i> Attached to the inside front cover is a certificate reading: “St. Louis College, San Antonio, Tex., June 19, 1907. Annual Distribution of Premiums; Premium for Composition in the First Commercial class awarded to N. Bell. Teacher: Bro. William.” <b>About This Book</b> -- “Sir Edward B. Lytton, Bart,” more fully titled Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, 1 <sup>st</sup> Baron Lytton (1803-1873) was an English writer and politician. He was Secretary of State for the Colonies from June 1858 to June 1859. His writings sold and paid him well. He coined famous phrases such as “the great unwashed,” “pursuit of the almighty dollar,” “the pen is mightier than the sword,” and the opening phrase “It was a dark and stormy night.” Over time his literary standing declined and he is little read today. There is a contest held annually since 1982 to find the “opening sentence of the worst of all possible novels.” Bulwer-Lytton reached the height of his popularity in 1833. <i>The Last Days of Pompeii</i> followed in 1834. It was inspired by a painting of the same title by Karl Briullov which Bulwer-Lytton viewed in Milan. The writers of <i>theosophy</i> were among those influenced by Bulwer-Lytton’s work; especially Helena Blavatsky incorporated in her own writing his ideas from <i>The Last Days of Pompeii</i> and others of his works. (Excerpted from Wikipedia, “Edward Bulwer-Lytton.”)
Cather/FIC	<i>Death Comes for the Archbishop</i> / by Willa Cather; New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1927 Not a first edition and has no inscription or signature. Association established by a book plate.
Kipling/FIC	<i>Captains Courageous: A Story of the Grand Banks</i> / by Rudyard Kipling; London: Macmillan and Co., 1899 [not a first edition] On the title page the printed name is crossed out with ink and then signed by Rudyard Kipling. Accompanying the book is a typewritten note: “Sent at the request of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, 1 <sup>st</sup> May 1922”
Von Tempski/FIC	“Dear Ned Bell: [there follows a lengthy message from the author about the book] 1930
821/M824c	No inscription
916/S788	Ned C. Bell, 1890
917.2/F585	Ned C. Bell, “From Lil, Xmas 1926”
920/M461	“Best wishes to Ned C. Bell from Georgia Maverick Harris – her is hoping you’ll like this picture of early S. A. [San Antonio] as seen thru the eyes of a pioneer woman.”
920/S838	“To my old time [illegible] friend Ned C. Bell, with every good wish.” WW Sterling

921/B618	Ned C. Bell
921/D256	“To Mr. Ned C. Bell with best wishes and regards of Joseph E. Davies,” 1941
921/E36	“Ned C. Bell”
921/G763	Ned C. Bell
921/H842	“To Ned C. Bell with the warm regard of his friend, EM House, August 5, 1926” “Colonel House” [Edward Mandell House]. Edward Mandell House was an American diplomat, and an advisor to President Woodrow Wilson. He was known by the nickname “Colonel House,” although he had performed no military service. He was a colonel of the Texas National Guard owing to his political connections. He was a highly influential back-stage politician in Texas before becoming a key supporter of the presidential bid of Wilson in 1912.
921/K35	“Ned C. Bell, 5-28-62”
921/M163	“For Ned C. Bell with best regards from Evalyn Walsh McLean, April 3, 1936”
921/P361	[Long comment by author ending with autograph and “Xmas 1938”
921/R662	“Ned C. Bell, Cumanbo, Venezuela, November 28, 1936”
954/M473	Adhesion: typed letter inside front cover
954/M954	Ned C. Bell
970.1/B169	“For Ned C. Bell, [etc.] signed by author, “Christmas 1957”
972/N865	“Ned C. Bell, 8-8-60”
973.6/S745	“To Ned C. Bell [etc.] signed by author, “September 21, 1958
991.15/P346	“Ned C. Bell of Silver Plume [etc.] signed by author, 1960

The following books have no book plates indicating that they are part of Bell’s collection; however, Wood mentions them as “notable titles” of the Bell collection:

Parisot and Smith, *History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of San Antonio, Texas 1685-1897* (San Antonio: Francis J. Bowen, 1897);

Beckwith and Gunnison, *Explorations for a Railroad Route from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean near the 38<sup>th</sup> & 39<sup>th</sup> Parallels of North Latitude* (War Department, 1854);

*McGuffey’s Rhetorical Guide or Fifth Reader* (New York: Clark, Austin & Smith, 1844)

### Series 3: Collection about World War II

#### Scrapbook Collection

**Arrangement Note:** These scrapbooks consist of news clippings from the commercial press but with no references cited beyond the dates in the title of each album. There are five to six fascicles for each SCRAP number. The Decimal Classification call numbers were assigned by Special Collections staff at some past date.

V6-5 SCRAP 37	Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1936	973.917
V6-5 SCRAP 38	Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1937	“
V6-6 SCRAP 39	Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1938	“
V6-6 SCRAP 40	World War II, 1939-1942, Pacific	952.033
V6-7 SCRAP 41	World War II, 1943-1944, Pacific	“
V6-8 SCRAP 42	World War II, 1943-1944, Europe	952.03

V6-8 SCRAP 43	World War II, 1943, Europe	“
V6-9 SCRAP 44	World War II, 1943-1944, Europe	“
V6-9 SCRAP 45	World War II, 1944, Europe	“

Maps

V30 Box 1            Unprocessed

Personages

V10-4 Box 20B      Bust of F. D. Roosevelt [SC 3 Ned Bell Collection?]  
11 inches tall, 6 inches wide, 6 inches deep, gold painted plaster; hollow interior;  
Caption: “Our President, Schon Brewing Company, Highland, Illinois”

SC3 Box 1 Folder 6    *This Is Ike: The Picture Story of the Man* / edited by  
Wilson Hicks, formerly Executive Editor, LIFE; Text by Gardner Soule;  
Picture Research by Helen Faye; New York: Henry Holt and Company,  
1952. Tabloid format