

SIDNEY V. ARBOUR, JR., FAMILY PAPERS

Mss. 5075

Inventory

Compiled by
Luana P Henderson

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections
Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library
Louisiana State University Libraries
Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

2011

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SUMMARY

Size	5.75 linear ft.
Geographic Locations	Primarily Baton Rouge, La., and Bay St. Louis, Miss., but also other locations in the United States; North Africa; Japan.
Inclusive Dates	[1855] ca. 1900-2011.
Bulk Dates	1930-1931, 1941-1946.
Languages	English.
Summary	Correspondence, personal papers, business and legal papers, printed material, and photographs reflect the personal activities and business affairs of the Sidney V. Arbour, Jr. family and the related Bahlinger, Kornmeyer, and Wilbert families of Louisiana.
Access Restrictions	None.
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Copyright	Physical rights and copyright are retained by the LSU Libraries.
Citation	Sidney V. Arbour Family Papers, Mss. 5075, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Locations	X:27-32, OS:A

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Sidney Vincent Arbour, Jr., a prominent resident of Baton Rouge, La., was born Jan. 7, 1914, to Sidney Vincent Arbour, Sr. (1887-1971) and Julia Mary Bahlinger Arbour (1893-1983), the daughter of Julius Andrew Bahlinger and Mathilda Catherine Kornmeyer. His siblings included Julia May, Gertie Lee, Mary Katherine, Jane Louise, Julius Bahlinger and Robert Fredrick.

Sidney Jr. attended Catholic High School in Baton Rouge, and graduated from St. Stanislaus College in Bay St. Louis, Miss. He was also a graduate of LSU, where he participated in the ROTC program. In the fall of 1941, he enrolled in the officer-training program of the U.S. Naval Reserve Midshipman's School in Chicago, Ill. During World War II, he served as U.S. Navy gunnery officer with both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets. His first assignment in 1942 was aboard the oil tanker, USS *Housatonic*, to transport fuel oil and aviation gas, and to fuel destroyers of allied campaigns in North Africa, Sicily and southern Italy. He later was assigned to the Pacific Fleet in 1944, aboard the USS *Sibley*. The ship transported provisions and military personnel in the South Pacific. The *Sibley* participated in the invasion of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. After the war ended, he spent seven weeks in Japan. Arbour separated from active duty at the end of 1945.

After the war, Sidney worked in the research lab at the Standard Oil Co. Baton Rouge refinery for 20 years, followed by a career as the head of the inspection and appraisal department of Union Federal Savings & Loan Association until he retired. He was involved in the sale of local real estate and served on the boards of Bahlinger Inc. and the Kornmeyer Furniture Co. He also served as president of the Florida Plaza Corp., which expanded and managed Bon Marche Mall, Baton Rouge, La.

As a lifelong resident of Baton Rouge, Sidney was active in the Catholic Church and the Baton Rouge community. He worked closely with Our Lady of the Lake Hospital and the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady, serving on the board of directors for the hospital and the Ollie Steele Burden Manor Nursing Home. He also served on the hospital's planning and construction committee. He was instrumental in the acquisition of a large tract of land needed for the construction of a new facility on Hennessey Blvd. In addition, he was the appraiser of record for the sale of the old hospital building to the State of Louisiana.

Sidney was a registered member of both St. Aloysius Parish and St. Joseph Cathedral. He was appointed to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem by Bishop Stanley Ott, held the rank of Knight Grand Cross, and was awarded the Order's Pilgrim's Jerusalem Shell by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. He was a lifelong supporter of St. Stanislaus, Catholic High School and St. Joseph's Academy and, together with his wife, Ann, was honored by the St. Joseph's Academy Foundation for outstanding community service. He also served as president of the Lakeshore Lions Club and commander of the

General Troy Middleton chapter of the Military Order of the World Wars. Sidney died at the age of 97 on Feb. 12, 2011.

Sidney married Ann Bryant Wilbert, daughter of Peter M. Wilbert and Mary Lilla Grace of Plaquemine, La., on Feb. 1, 1947. They had six children together. Ann attended College of the Sacred Heart, Grand Coteau, and was a graduate of LSU. She was active in the Catholic Church and the Baton Rouge community throughout her life. She participated in a number of organizations and served on several boards and committees. She served as president of the Junior League of Baton Rouge, Catholic Diocesan Council of Home and School Associations, and she was a founding member of the Baton Rouge Eye Bank Auxiliary. She is credited with coming up with the title *River Road Recipes* for the Junior League's best-selling cookbook. Moreover, she served on the board of directors of Good Fellows-Good Samaritans, Baton Rouge Arts and Science Center, SJA Foundation of St. Joseph's Academy, and she was a founding member of the Baton Rouge Speech and Hearing Foundation. During World War II, the U.S. Department of Defense presented her with the Civilian Defense Medal. She was a founding member of the Baton Rouge Diocesan Latin-American Commission under Bishop Robert E. Tracy. She was a founder of the first Camp Fire Day Camp in the Baton Rouge area and was the recipient of a National Camp Fire Award for her volunteer work in that organization. She was also a life member of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center Auxiliary. Ann died in Baton Rouge on Jan. 7, 2007 at the age of 86.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Personal papers, business and legal documents, printed material, and photographs relate to the activities and business affairs of the Sidney V. Arbour, Jr. family and the related Bahlinger, Kornmeyer, and Wilbert families of Louisiana.

Personal papers consist of correspondence, World War II material, genealogy and general personal papers. Correspondence reflects student life at St. Stanislaus College, Bay St. Louis, Miss., (1930-1931), World War II experiences of Sidney Arbour, Jr. and his family friends (1941-1946), and Ann Arbour's involvement in the community. World War II material contains Sidney's officer service record (1941-1954), a confidential memorandum to the officers of the USS *Housatonic* (July 7, 1942), and a history of the USS *Sibley* and its crew, The USS *Sibley* APA 206 (ca. 1945). Genealogy relates to the Grace-Laughlin-Riggs-Crenan family and the allied Bahlinger, Kornmeyer and Wilbert families ([1855]-1977). General personal papers reflect family and personal activities, and community involvement. They contain scrapbooks (ca. 1919-1937, 1951-1966), datebooks (1946-1975), student reports (1930-1931), and notebooks and files (1961-1984).

Business and legal papers pertain to family business ventures in real estate, and oil and gas leases. Business correspondence relates to the real estate market in Baton Rouge, leases at Bayou Des Glaise oil field and the Bayou Choctaw salt dome. Legal documents include photocopies of oil leases, contracts and court documents. Real estate papers reflect the expansion of Bon Marche Mall on Florida Blvd and Sidney Arbour, Jr.'s involvement in the residential real estate market of Baton Rouge. They include office files, appraisal notebooks (1951-1962) for residential property (1954-1962), and U.S. Dept. of Veterans Administration appraisals and inspections (1951-1953).

Printed items include clippings, articles, bulletins, and booklets illustrating involvement in religious, charitable and business affairs of the community. Photographs contain portraits, snapshots and a photograph album depicting family and friends during social events and travel, particularly at LSU, Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and Catholic High, and World War II.

LIST OF SERIES AND SUBSERIES

- Series I. Personal Papers, [1855] 1927-1984, undated.**
Subseries 1. Correspondence, 1930-1931, 1941-1984, undated.
Subseries 2. World War II Papers, 1941-1954, 2001, undated.
Subseries 3. Genealogy Papers, [1855] 1930-1981, undated.
Subseries 4. General Personal Papers, 1946-1984, undated.
- Series II. Business and Legal Papers, 1947-1991, undated.**
Subseries 1. Business Correspondence, 1947-1979.
Subseries 2. Oil and Gas Legal Documents, 1951-1991.
Subseries 3. Real Estate Papers, 1950-1979, undated.
- Series III. Printed items, 1906-2011, undated.**
- Series IV. Photographs, ca. 1900-1967, undated.**

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**Series I. Personal Papers, [1855] 1927-1984, undated.****Subseries 1. Correspondence, 1930-1931, 1941-1984, undated.**

Correspondence is comprised of letters exchanged between Sidney Arbour, Jr. and his family and friends. A large part reflects his experiences as a student at St. Stanislaus College, Bay St. Louis, Miss., (1930-1931) and his military service as a World War II naval officer (1941-1946). They discuss student life, studies, health, personal activities, social events and military life, as well as share news on family matters and of family members and mutual friends. Correspondence also illustrates the family's involvement in the Catholic Church, with comments on church activities and mass attendance. Sister Jane Louise Arbour, sister of Sidney and an Ursuline nun, recounts a Christmas celebration at the convent in New Orleans (Dec. 28, 1944).

World War II letters begin in the fall of 1941. Sidney Jr. describes his military training, duties and personal activities at the U.S. Naval Reserve Midshipman's School in Chicago, while his brother, J. B. writes similar letters from the U.S. Naval Air Station at Ottumwa, Iowa. After his commission, his letters describe his military duties, war news, and ocean travel on a naval war transport ship. He also relates his experiences and observations in Japan and the Pacific islands, as well as local inhabitants he encounters. Due to military censorship, he does not reveal specific locations or the ship's military purpose; however, his letters give considerable insight into his war events after the surrender of Japan in August 1945. In an early letter, Sidney tells of a torpedo attack on the *USS Salinas* off the coast of Iceland (ca. 1941).

He writes about sea travel and naval life on the *USS Housatonic*, which was assigned to the Atlantic (1942-1944), and comments on the difficult living conditions aboard the *Housatonic* while in dry-dock (April 1, 1943). In mid-1944, Sidney was assigned to the *USS Sibley*, a military transport ship sent to the Pacific. The ship sailed from Pearl Harbor on Jan. 27, 1945 for the assault on Iwo Jima and stayed in war service until the occupation of Japan. He writes that he sent a crewmember to the brig, with only bread and water, for operating a still on board ship (Feb. 7, 1945).

Sidney discusses his activities in Hawaii and various sites of Oahu (March 1, 1945). He describes how he passed the time in Guam the previous month and discusses a shortage of water on board (April 13, 1945). He recounts the invasion of Iwo Jima (March 22, 1945), the fact that African American troops were used to search for Japanese snipers (April 26, 1945) and the capture of Japanese soldiers at Iwo Jima (June 4, 1945). While at the Mariana Islands, he describes a U.S. military cemetery as well as the Chamorro natives (May 29, 1945). He gives a lengthy account of his encounter with natives and what he describes as their primitive culture (June 15, 1945). Sidney writes about the destruction inflicted by the U.S. upon Japanese military installations and the port, along with details on the unloading of ammunition from the ship (Sept. 26, Oct. 26, 1945). He

gives a brief description of Okinawa and of a priest who had buried sailors ashore (May 13, 1945). He anticipates the war's end after hearing about the dropping of the atomic bomb (Aug. 7, 9, 1945), and writes how the end of the war affects him, his work and the work of the crew (Sept. 10, 13, 18, 1945).

During the war, family members and friends share news about relatives, mutual friends, health, the war, local events and personal activities. Julia Bahlinger Arbour distributes a family newsletter, *Arbour Harbor Gossip*, updating her children on family matters (1944-1945). Correspondence contains comments made on the public reaction to the news of President Roosevelt's death (April 1945) and the end of the war in Europe (May 9, 1945). In a letter to Sidney, Katy Hannaman comments on the atomic bomb and Japanese suicide planes (Aug. 1945), and remarks that 500 veterans attend LSU (Sept 28, 1945). Eloise describes the Mississippi River at flood stage and she reports that the Germans captured Marion Bahlinger and were holding him as a prisoner of war (April 7, 1945). A letter from Sidney, Sr. reports that Marion Bahlinger is missing in action in Germany, and he gives an account on the execution of American prisoners of war by the Germans (Jan. 19, 1945). Mathilda Bahlinger informs Sidney that Marion is recovering in France after his release by the Germans (May 10, 1945). A letter from the president of Standard Oil Co. to Sidney Arbour, Jr. guarantees him a job and discusses available options for returning service members (June 4, 1945). Also during this period, a fellow officer describes a visit to Rome accompanied by other military personnel (Jan. 18, 1945). A large part of his communications with his father relates his own personal finances and family business affairs. Sidney, Sr. reports on the value of Kornmeyer's stock (Nov. 16, 1941) and the purchase of 149 acres on Florida St. by Bahlinger Inc. (June 28, 1945), which later was developed into the Bon Marché Mall. Sidney also responds to his father's question on the origin of the *USS Housatonic* (Sunday night-ca. 1942). The ship was originally named the *SS Esso Albany*, an oil tanker built for Standard Oil of New Jersey in 1941 and acquired by the Navy in 1942.

Later correspondence reflects involvement in charitable works and community organizations (Feb. 2, 1961, May 17, 1969), Peter Arbour's duties and leisure activities as an Army private at Fort Campbell, N.Y. (May 21, 1970), and Katy Hannaman's thoughts on a Catholic girls' school in Japan and the custom of arranged marriages (Nov. 5, 1977).

Subseries 2. World War II Papers, 1941-1954, 2001, undated.

World War II material consists of Sidney Arbour, Jr.'s officer service record (1941-1954), a "confidential memorandum" to the officers of the *USS Housatonic* (July 7, 1942), and a history of the *USS Sibley* and its crew, *The USS Sibley APA 206* (ca. 1945). The *Housatonic* memorandum outlines operations with Task Force 22 of the Atlantic Fleet, including procedures for communications, signaling, and cruising speed and ship maneuvers (July 7, 1942). The history of the *USS Sibley* provides detailed accounts of war activities in the South Pacific. It includes descriptions of military operations in Japan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, the Solomon Islands, and the Philippines. A roster lists officers and crewmembers, and a log chronicles all stops made by the ship beginning in Oct. 2, 1944 through Nov. 19, 1945 (ca. 1945). Casualty statistics record the number of wounded taken on board for transfer to the Naval Base, Guam (March 3, 1945). Another

list notes the ports of call for the *USS Housatonic* from April 1942 to Jan. 1943 (Nov. 13, 2001).

Subseries 3. Genealogy Papers, [1855] 1930-1981, undated.

Papers relate to the genealogy of the Grace-Laughlin-Riggs-Crenan family and the allied Bahlinger, Kornmeyer and Wilbert families ([1855]-1977). They include biographical sketches, pedigree charts, and family histories. Court judgments in the succession of Peter Wilbert (June 8, 1949), Julius A. Bahlinger (Nov. 4, 1943) are also found, as well as a statement of distribution in the succession of Mattie Kornmeyer (July 2, 1946).

Note: Genealogy papers are arranged by family name.

Subseries 4. General Personal Papers, 1946-1984, undated.

This subseries pertains to educational and personal activities, and involvement in religious and civic organizations. They consist of scrapbooks (ca. 1919-1937, 1951-1966), datebooks kept by Sidney (1946-1975), student reports from St. Stanislaus College (1930-1931), a certificate of appreciation to Sidney, Sr. from Esso Standard Oil Co. (April 13, 1949), and a certificate from the Acadian Club of Baton Rouge (June 1, 1962). Datebook entries relate to weather, social engagements, appointments, gardening and daily chores. In addition, files (1961-1984), a note book (1962-1963), and calendar (1978-1979) record Ann Arbour's involvement in religious and community organizations. The notebook contains notes on the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church, which began in 1962, and other items related to her work coordinating religious instruction at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in the early 1960s. Papers relevant to the Junior League of Baton Rouge, Inc. consist of reports and talks prepared by Ann Arbour (1961-1962). Items related to the Baton Rouge Eye Bank contain committee member lists, minutes, fund raising material and information on board meetings (1978-1981, 1984). Additional material includes member lists and agenda notes for the Baton Rouge Council of Home and School Associations (1962-1963), an organization for parents with children who attended Catholic schools in the diocese that was similar to the P.T.A. Miscellaneous receipts for merchandise (1953-1977) and recipes (undated) are also present.

A scrapbook apparently kept by Sidney's mother contains newspaper clippings and ephemera pasted into volume entitled "Excelsior Stove and Mfg. Company" (1919-1934). Items relate to the life events and activities of her children, from birth to their college years at LSU. A second scrapbook contains material relating to the allied Arbour, Kornmeyer and Bahlinger families (1951-1966). Comprised of family photographs, clippings, ephemera, and newspaper advertisements and histories for Kornmeyer's Furniture Store, it reflects the social events, business accomplishments and personal activities of family members.

Series II. Business and Legal Papers, 1947-1991, undated.**Subseries 1. Business Correspondence, 1947-1979.**

Correspondence relates to the real estate market in Baton Rouge, oil and gas leases and the Bayou Choctaw salt dome. Real estate correspondence reflects land development, conveyance of property, and private and commercial rental properties handled by Sidney

Arbour, Jr., Florida Plaza Corp. and Bahlinger, Inc. Letters discuss commercial leases at Bon Marché Mall on Florida Blvd., which was owned by the Florida Plaza Corp. The Bahlinger, Inc. letters also discuss charitable contributions of land and funds to the Diocese of Baton Rouge (1974). A letter from the Commissioner of Internal Revenue details the business relationship between Bahlinger, Inc. and Kornmeyer's Furniture Company, Inc. and the Florida Plaza Corp. (July 16, 1973).

Correspondence notifies stockholders about oil and gas dividends (1954-1963) and the business affairs of the Wilbert Mineral Corp. Letters sent by the Wilbert Mineral Corp. reflect business transactions, stocks value, and the dissolution and liquidation of the company, as well as the transfer of assets (1950-1951). Letters also discuss the acquisition of land jointly held by several family members for the U.S. Strategic Oil Program, specifically at the Bayou Choctaw salt dome. Correspondence discusses the federal government's claim to the land and subsequent litigation concerning this claim (1977-1978).

Subseries 2. Oil and Gas Legal Documents, 1951-1991.

These documents consist of photocopies of oil leases, contracts, and court documents. Court documents pertain to oil leases on family owned land, including the Bayou Des Glaise oil field (March 23, 1965, June 26, 1972, April 7, 1977), and the Bayou Choctaw salt dome. Among the papers is a contract for the employment of attorneys, landowners' litigation expenses, court documents (1977), and a lease amendment and restatement (1991). In addition, there is an account book of dividends from oil stocks (1951-1952) and an operating expense statement for the Esso Research Lab at Baton Rouge (Feb. 1958). Blueprints and blueline prints illustrate the Bayou Bouillon oil field (July 19, 1976) and the Bayou Choctaw Facility in Iberville Parish (ca. 1977).

Subseries 3. Real Estate Papers, 1950-1979, undated.

This group relates to commercial and residential real estate and land development in Baton Rouge, La. Papers reflect the expansion of Bon Marche Mall on Florida Blvd. by Florida Plaza Corp. These items include lease agreements (1976, 1978) and plot plan for Bon Marche (Feb. 15, 1973). Other drawings include blueprints, blueline prints, and construction specifications for commercial property on Florida Blvd (Mar. 4, 1977). Papers also show the real estate assets of Bahlinger, Inc., another family corporation (Dec. 3, 1972). Additionally, papers contain a profits analysis (Aug. 27, 1974) and a floor plan (Feb. 23, 1977) for the Kornmeyer's Furniture Store.

Real estate records kept by Sidney Arbour, Jr. consist of office files, appraisal notebooks (1951-1962) for residential property in the Baton Rouge area (1954-1962), and U.S. Dept. of Veterans Administration appraisals and inspections (1951-1953). Files pertain to Belmont Ave., Cedardale Ave, Choctaw Rd., Dougherty Place, Eastland and North Broadmoor, Capital Heights (ca. 1975), and subdivisions in the town of Baker and along Choctaw Dr. in Baton Rouge (1957-1958). Some of these properties were rental properties that Arbour owned. Papers pertaining to the construction of the Arbour home on Belmont Ave. consist of an expense account book (1950), floor plans and blueprint (July 26, 1950), and papers regarding the sale of the property (1964-1965).

Series III. Printed items, 1906-2011, undated.

This series is comprised of clippings, articles, bulletins, and booklets. They illustrate the family's involvement in religious, charitable and business affairs in the community. The earliest item is Sidney Arbour, Sr.'s prayer book inscribed by his mother (1906). Religious booklets include the nuptial mass of Ann Wilbert and Sidney (Feb. 1947), novena devotions (1934), and the consecration mass for Bishop Robert Tracy (1959). There is also a program for the installation of Bishop Tracy as the first bishop of the Diocese of Baton Rouge (1961), a Sunday bulletin from St. Agnes Catholic Church (Sept. 11, 1955), and membership roster for *Fred Williamson Bible Class, First Presbyterian Church*, Baton Rouge (1973). The yearbook, *Philistoria*, published for the Philistoria Club, a women's civic association is also present.

Additionally, material contains the by-laws of *Chapter E*, a Baton Rouge charitable organization (1933) and the by-laws of the Baton Rouge Eye Bank Auxiliary (Aug. 18, 1988). Material relating to the Junior League of Baton Rouge, Inc., includes *League Lites* (Oct. 1960, Nov. 1961, Feb. 1963) and the *Yearbook 1966-1967, Annual Report 1965-1966* (1967). Clippings also concern East Baton Rouge Parish residential zoning ordinances (1958, undated). Newspaper sections taken from the Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate* reflect the family business ventures. The first relates to Kornmeyer's Furniture, and its owners and employees (Jan. 30, 1955). The other is devoted to the grand opening of Bon Marché Mall in Baton Rouge (Dec. 10, 1960). Ephemera consist of invitations to graduations and weddings and a program to the groundbreaking of the Medical Plaza III (May 5, 2004). The program includes a testimonial to the services and counsel that Sidney Arbour, Jr. provided to Our Lady of the Lake Hospital, its board and to the order of the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady.

Present in this series is a copy of *Louisiana Real Estate Manual* (1975), *The Strategic Petroleum Reserve Plan in Brief* (Dec. 1976), and *Title 7. Planning and Zoning* for the subdivision of land in East Baton Rouge Parish (April 27, 1955). Also included is an Esso Laboratories, Louisiana Division personnel directory containing group pictures of employees (Nov. 1953), the 1960 annual report for the Esso federal credit union (1961). A copy of the *Program Resource Book* for the Camp Fire Girls of Baton Rouge (1962), advertisements, and brochures for home construction products (ca. 1948) are also present, as is a program for the funeral mass of Sidney Arbour, Jr. (2011).

Series IV. Photographs, ca. 1900-1967, undated.

This group consists of portraits, snapshots and a photograph album. Photographs depict family members and friends, social events, and travel. The earliest photograph is a cabinet card of an unidentified infant (ca. 1900-1910). Other portraits include the Sidney Arbour, Sr., family (1919), Sidney Arbour, Jr. (1933) and Ann Bryant with her bridal attendants (1947). Group photographs include R.O.T.C. cadets at St. Charles College, Grand Coteau, La. (1919), and a family photograph of Christmas Day at the Bahlinger home (1939). A diagram that identifies family members accompanies the photograph.

Also present is a photograph of Sidney Arbour, Sr.'s retirement party from Esso Oil Refinery (Oct. 8, 1948). World War II photographs include shots of naval officers, street scenes in North Africa (ca. 1942-ca.1943), the *USS Sibley* (ca. 1944-ca.1945), and Hawaii (1944). Others show Sidney Arbour, Jr. and Ann Bryant Wilbert in their youth attending formal dances (ca. 1946), their children (ca. 1950s-1960s) and their family home on Ramsey Ave., Baton Rouge. A photograph album contains pictures of LSU, Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Catholic High in Baton Rouge, sailboats, and streets, public structures and buildings in Washington, D.C., and New York (1913-1935). In addition, there is a photographic postcard of the Old State Capital in Baton Rouge (prior to 1920).

INDEX TERMS

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CONTAINER LIST

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