

Knapp Family Papers (1919-1997)

Collection Summary

Creator: Russell and Louise Northcott Knapp

Dates: 1919-1997 bulk of collection 1928-1989

Collection Number: 2011.1

Quantity: 1 linear foot, 3 boxes

Repository: George T. Henry College Archives, Stewart Memorial Library, Coe College

Copyright: Copyright is retained by the Knapp Family

Restrictions on Access: Unrestricted

Abstract: Russell and Louise Northcott Knapp were very philanthropic and dedicated members of the Cedar Rapids community. Russell was the founder of SCI Financial of Cedar Rapids and used his success to promote civic welfare. Major accomplishments of the Knapp family include the B'nai Brith Award for civic service, being some of the founding members of the local United Nations Association, and Russell Knapp's Coe College Alumni Service Award. Their collection includes: personal correspondence, awards and honors, Russell Knapp's writings and documents while attending Coe College, Louise Knapp's Coe College documents, and financial and publication documents from St. Paul's United Methodist Church. Also included in the collection are numerous newspaper clippings relating to the Knapp family's accomplishments.

Language: English

Administrative Information

Location: George T. Henry College Archives

Preferred Citation: Knapp Family Papers, George T. Henry College Archives, Stewart Memorial Library, Coe College

Acquisition: Carolyn Wellso (daughter of Russell and Louise Knapp)

Processing Information: Steven Heinen (January-February 2011)

Biographic Note

Russell Floyd Knapp was born on September 21, 1908 in Kenwood, Iowa. His education included Cedar Rapids Public Schools, Washington High School, and Coe College. While attending Washington High School and Coe College he was heavily involved in the YMCA, St. Paul's Methodist Church, and Camp Wapsie's World Brotherhood Program. These programs were the start to his life long dedication to philanthropy. In addition to these activities as a young man he was also a successful athlete. At Washington High School he lettered in football, basketball, track and tennis. He was the all-state quarterback on the Washington team during their 1925 National Championship season. While at Coe he became the number one tennis player as a sophomore and would carry his dedication to the sport all through out his life placing 12th in the national Super Seniors tournament at the age of 90.

On December 21, 1930, he married Louise Northcott who also was a Coe College graduate. They began their life together during the Great Depression where Russell started up his securities business with his High School friend, Ernie Kosek. Through this successful business Russell was able to make enough money to pursue his bigger goals of philanthropy. One of his biggest philanthropic ventures was during World War II with his, "Build A Bond" campaign in Cedar Rapids that was commended by many Iowa and National political leaders. After the war had passed Russell and Louise Knapp continued to be extremely community oriented. They cherished their ability to sponsor foreign exchange students from all over the world and traveled to places around the globe to promote international cooperation and understanding.

Their dedication to community also involved their commitment to St. Paul's United Methodist Church where Russell served as president during the late 1940's. St. Paul's Church remained an important organization through out their lives while serving as a base for them to promote their philanthropy. Coe College also remained important to the Knapp family where Russell served the Alumni Association beginning in 1943 and was awarded the Alumni Association Award for Civic Service. Russell and Louise Knapp's life dedicated to civic service culminated in 1984 when they received the B'nai B'rith Award for Civic Service. These are only a few, among many awards and recognitions that the Knapp family received for their multitude of contributions to their community both locally and internationally, and what most defined their lives.

Scope and Content

The Knapp Family Papers is 1 linear foot, consisting of 3 boxes of papers and memorabilia. The collection contains a large amount of material pertaining to Russell Knapp, a small portion of material pertaining to Louise Northcott Knapp, another small portion pertaining to the family in general, and the remaining portion pertaining to the organizations they were involved in.

The main focus of the material included in the collection is concentrated on Russell Knapp's life and accomplishments. Early documents include the plays and pageants Russell participated in as a late adolescent, Coe College undergraduate coursework including a paper written on compulsory service in college R.O.T.C. programs, business exams, and a paper titled, "An Unpleasant Subject" written about the organizations that had formed the person he was becoming. Also included in this collection are approval letters sent to Russell from top level Iowa and National politicians in regards to his "Build A Bond" program during WWII, and real estate correspondence conducted in 1932 during the Great Depression. Lastly the collection contains documents of Russell's relating to his participation in the YMCA, the Camp Wapsie Y, and the Young Men's Bureau of the Chamber of Commerce.

Beyond his early life's accomplishments are many awards and honors that Russell achieved through out his life. Among the awards and honors documentation included in the collection are awards from B'nai B'rith, the American Red Cross War Fund, Smith Side Civic Club, T.M. Sinclair Society, and Coe College Alumni Association. A large part of the collection is made up of correspondence from friends and family and newspaper clippings congratulating Louise and Russell Knapp for their Civic Awards and contributions.

Items in the collection relating to Louise Knapp include her Coe College memorabilia and ephemera, articles saved in relation to her past professors including Dr. Mabel Lee and Ethel Outland, and awards and honors from organizations including the United Nations Association, T.M. Sinclair Society, and B'nai B'rith.

Other items in the collection include Coe College publications, a Coe College Pennant, documents relating to the Knapp family's involvement in St. Paul's United Methodist Church, documents of the Knapp family's involvement in international exchange programs, and photographs taken during a trip to Nigeria where they were received by Oba Adeyinka Oyekan II (Ruler of Lagos, Nigeria) in 1965.

Subject Headings

Alpha Xi Delta
Alumni Association of Coe College
American Red Cross War Fund, Tennis
Awards
Benjamin Franklin High School, (Cedar Rapids, Iowa)
B'nai B'rith
Bower, Roger, 1903-1979
Cedar Rapids (Iowa)
Cedar Rapids Pioneers
Cedar Rapids Symphony Orchestra
Coe College
College Prose, American—Iowa—Coe College.
Comay, Joan
Cone, Marvin, 1891-1965
Gage, Harry Morehouse, 1878-1961
Galli-Curci, Amelita, 1882-1973
Gillette, Guy M. (Guy Mark), 1879-1973
Great Depression
Herring, Clyde L. (Clyde LaVerne), 1879-1945
Horse-Thieves Cave
Hughes, John
Jacobsen, William S., 1887-1955
Knapp Conference Center
Knapp, David N.
Knapp, Floyd H.
Knapp, Hattie
Knapp, Howard
Knapp, John N.
Knapp, Louise Northcott
Knapp, Mary
Knapp, May Boyd
Knapp, Russell, 1908-2007
Lee, Mabel, 1886-1985
Morgenthau, Henry, 1891-1967
Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation
Nussbaum, Leo L.
Okoskwo, Felix
Outland, Ethel R. (Ethel Rose)
Oyekan, Adeyinka, 1911-
Philanthropy
Photographs
Rotary Club, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Securities Corporation of Iowa Financial

Sigma Phi Delta
Smith Side Civic Club
St. Luke's Hospital, (Cedar Rapids, Iowa)
St. Luke's Health Care Foundation
St. Paul's United Methodist Church, (Cedar Rapids, Iowa)
Tennis
T.M. Sinclair Society
Tullman, J.M.
United States. Army. Reserve Officers' Training Corps
United Nations Association, (Linn County Chapter)
War bonds & funds—United States—1940-1950
Washington High School, (Cedar Rapids, Iowa)
Wellso, Carolyn
Western College
Wilson, George A, (George Allison), 1884-1953
World War II, (1939-1945)
YMCA
YMCA Camp Wapsie
Young Men's Bureau of the Chamber of Commerce, (Cedar Rapids, Iowa)
YWCA

| Series: 1 Box | Contents: Folder | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 1 | 1 | Awards and Honors – Introductory Speech, Correspondence, Newspaper Clippings, 1984. |
| | 2 | Awards and Honors – Miscellaneous |
| | 3 | Coe College – Publications by and about 1920's-1940's, 1976, 1977 |
| | 4 | Coe College – Writings, Miscellaneous, 1926-1928. |
| | 5 | Correspondence – Miscellaneous |
| | 6 | Ephemeral, 1928, 1946, 1959. |
| | 7 | Gillette, Guy M. (Guy Mark), 1879-1973 |
| | 8 | Herring, Clyde L. (Clyde LaVerne), 1879-1945 |
| | 9 | Jacobsen, William S., 1887-1955 |
| 2 | 10 | Knapp, Louise Memorabilia, Ethel Outland |
| | 11 | Miscellaneous |
| | 12 | Morgenthau, Henry, 1891-1967 |
| | 13 | Newspaper Clippings – About Family 1 |
| | 14 | Oyekan, Adeyinka, 1911- |
| | 15 | Photographs |
| | 16 | Publications about Family |
| | 17 | Speeches |
| | 18 | St. Paul's Church – Finance and Miscellaneous |
| | 19 | Wilson, George A, (George Allison), 1884-1953 |

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| 3 | 20-21 | Coe College – Ephemeral |
| | 22 | Knapp, Russell Portrait, 1946 |
| | 23 | Newspaper Clippings – about Family 2 |
| | | T.M. Sinclair Society Plaque, Coe Pennant, Patch |