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### Brown-Orne family papers, 1855-1954

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**Brown-Orne family papers**  
**MSNE.0090**

**Finding aid prepared by Fatme Myuhtar-May**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

May 07, 2021

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives  
September 2, 2020  
11 Seventh Street  
Powhatan, Arkansas, 72458

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives
<b>Title</b>	Brown-Orne family papers
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1855-1954
<b>Extent</b>	5.5 Cubic feet 14 boxes
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Language of Materials</b>	Materials entirely in English.

### Preferred Citation

Brown-Orne family papers, Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives, Arkansas State Archives, Powhatan, Arkansas.

## Biographical/Historical Note

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Elizabeth “Betty” Bolling Dandridge wrote a diary in 1855. It covered one year of her life as young, unmarried woman in Pontotoc, Mississippi, where she lived at the time with her mother, four sisters, and brother. Approaching her 21st birthday, Betty established her diary in confidence, recording her activities, observations, and opinions. Her astute observations continue in the letters to her daughters, many of which are part of this collection. Whereas Betty’s diary resides in a museum in Pontotoc, Mississippi, a scanned copy of it forms an integral part of the collection. The diary was an important precursor to the 475 letters subsequently exchanged between several generations of Brown-Orne family members, mostly women, starting with Betty.

Betty wrote to her daughters from Pontotoc, and they wrote back from school and later from places they moved to as they got married. For example, one of the daughters, Zelia Dandridge Orne described life in nineteenth-century New Orleans delightfully, while Annie Maud Orne offered glimpses of her life on a plantation, and Cara Coffin maintained contact with her cousins as they established their homes away from Pontotoc. Among those who wrote and helped preserve these letters are Lizzie Cleveland Orne Brown (one of Betty’s daughters); Mary Annie Brown Zulauf (Lizzie’s daughter) and her husband Jacob Zulauf; and Zelia Orne Bell (Mary and Jacob’s daughter) and her husband Howard Bell. Zelia and Howard drove from Kansas City, Missouri, to Powhatan to deliver the collection to NEARA in the summer of 2019. Zelia is Betty’s great-grand daughter.

Zelia O. Bell grew up in Tipton, Missouri – a German-Swiss community – in an intergenerational family that included her parents, her mother’s two nephews, and her maternal grandparents, the Browns. On a farm in the same community lived the Zulaufs, her paternal side of the family, including grandparents (both Swiss immigrant to the United States), two aunts, and an uncle. Zelia’s mother, Mary Annie Brown Zulauf, came from Arkansas. Zelia and her husband Howard live in Kansas City, Missouri.

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## Scope and Contents

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The Brown-Orne family papers contains over 400 original family letters written between 1855 to 1954 among several generations of Brown-Orne family members, mainly women. The collection also includes postcards dated from 1880 to 1936 (some undated), three family bibles (all different sizes), business records, genealogical information, a scanned copy of Betty’s 1855 diary, and Zelia O. Bell’s book, “My Dearest Child,” which contains transcriptions of the letters and the diary, accompanied by explanatory notes. The collection is organized according to series and then chronologically within the series, boxes, and folders.

## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives September 2, 2020

### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research use.

### Conditions Governing Use

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17-U.S. Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. The person using this material is liable for any infringement.

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Zelia O. Bell, Kansas City, Missouri, 2019.

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## Collection Description

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The bulk of the Brown-Orne family papers comprises over 400 original letters written between 1855 to 1954 among several generations of Brown-Orne family members, mainly women, out of Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Missouri. The collection also includes postcards dated from 1880 to 1936, although many are undated. There are three family bibles, all different sizes, that are in fragile condition. The collection also includes a copy of Zelia O. Bell's book, "My Dearest Child," which is a transcription of the letters, accompanied by context-explaining notes, as well as a scanned copy of Elizabeth "Betty" Bolling Dandridge's 1855 diary (the original is in the "Town Square Post Office and Museum" in Pontotoc, Mississippi, where it was written). There are also a box of business papers (land records, receipts, balance sheets, promissory notes, savings booklets, bonds, power of attorney, etc.), a box of genealogical information (genealogy notes, correspondence, family trees and charts, etc.), and a box of miscellaneous musings, poetry, and letters. The collection is organized according to series and then chronologically within series, boxes, and folders. Undated items or folders are placed at the end of the folder or box. Folders are numbered consecutively within series, rather than within boxes, except for the "Family Letters" series that takes up six boxes.

Brown-Orne family papers, Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives, Arkansas State Archives, Powhatan, Arkansas.

Donated by: Zelia O. Bell, Kansas City, Missouri, 2019.

## Collection Inventory

<b>1855: Betty's Diary</b>	<b>Box</b> 1
<b>Family Letters</b>	
<b>1855 - Sisters' courtship letters</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1857 - Betty &amp; William's reacquaintance</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1860 - Courtship continues</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1864 - War comes to Pontotoc, MS</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1866 - Greeting to Lizzie</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1871 - Mittie writes to the children</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1873 - Lizzie in New Orleans</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1876 - William's business matters</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1878 - Ballad – P.H. Fontaine</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1879-1880 - Yellow fever in Memphis, TN</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1881 - Death of Harriet Orne, business inquiries</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1883 - Annie in New Orleans</b>	<b>Box</b> 2



## 1884 - Trowbridge correspondence

<b>1884 - Trowbridge correspondence</b>	<b>Box</b> 2
<b>1885 - Lizzie governess for Fogleman family</b>	<b>Box</b> 3
<b>1886 - Annie marries</b>	<b>Box</b> 3
<b>1887 - First grandchild, Walter Orne Gibbs</b>	<b>Box</b> 3
<b>1888 - Betty's concern for family in Arkansas</b>	<b>Box</b> 3
<b>1889 - Death of Betty – Zelia to New Orleans</b>	<b>Box</b> 3
<b>1890 - Family struggles without their anchor Betty</b>	<b>Box</b> 4
<b>1891 - Elvin's unemployment, Lizzie in Lowndes County</b>	<b>Box</b> 4
<b>1892 - Annie, Lizzie, &amp; Elvin marry, Charles Orne born</b>	<b>Box</b> 5
<b>1893 - Elvin &amp; Mattie to California</b>	<b>Box</b> 5
<b>1894 - Edward Allen Brown</b>	<b>Box</b> 5
<b>1895 - Charles Francis Brown, Jr., Harriet Galbreath Orne</b>	<b>Box</b> 6
<b>1896 – What's Doin' in New Orleans</b>	<b>Box</b> 6
<b>1897 - "3 Bs," Betty Bolling Brown</b>	<b>Box</b> 6
<b>1898 - Twice the fun, Mary Brown, Ben Cook, Jr.</b>	<b>Box</b> 6
<b>1901 - Lawson, Sam, R.E., Jr., Oklahoma adventure</b>	<b>Box</b> 6

## 1902 - Zelia makes Annie a promise

<b>1902 - Zelia makes Annie a promise</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	6	
<b>1903 - A very difficult time</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	6	
<b>1904 - Browns moving to Pontotoc, MS</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1905 - "Nims Holm" &amp; cousin car</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1910-1917 - Return to Crittenden County</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1918-1920 - Surprise meeting away from home</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1921-1924 - Swimming accident</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1925-1935 - Quieter times, more family additions</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1936 - Loss of Bettie Willis</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1937 - Water, water, and more water</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1944 - Family continues to expand</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1945 - Military correspondence</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1946-1949 - Continuing life cycles</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>1950-1954 - The close of the family century</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	7	
<b>Genealogical Information</b>	<b>Box</b>	
	8	
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>

## Postcards

A Pontotoc tribute to R.E. Orne	8	1
Descendants of William & Betty Orne	8	2
Heritage of William & Betty Orne	8	3
Pontotoc families, 1830-1860	8	4
Genealogical chart for Elizabeth Bolling Dandridge	8	5
Charles F. Fontaine genealogical information	8	6
Genealogy correspondence (multiple copies of two letters)	8	7
Modern map of Memphis, TN	8	8
<b>Postcards</b>		<b>Box</b>
		9
<b>1880</b>		<b>Box</b>
		9
<b>1882</b>		<b>Box</b>
		9
<b>1884</b>		<b>Box</b>
		9
<b>1887</b>		<b>Box</b>
		9
<b>1888</b>		<b>Box</b>
		9
<b>1889</b>		<b>Box</b>
		9

1890

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<b>1890</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1903</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1904</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1907</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1908</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1909</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1910</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1911</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1912</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1913</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1914</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1915</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1916</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1922</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1925</b>	<b>Box</b> 9
<b>1926</b>	<b>Box</b> 9

1928

<b>1928</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>1935</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>1936</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Undated - Advertising cards</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Undated - Christmas &amp; New Year</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Undated - Cityscapes</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Undated - Easter cards</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Undated - Humorous cards</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Undated - Landscapes</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Undated - Name tags</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Undated - Valentine cards</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Undated - "Wishing you happiness"</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Undated - Women &amp; girls</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		9	
<b>Misc. – Musings, Poetry, &amp; Random Letters</b>		<b>Box</b>	
		10	
<b>Misc. dated: 1853-1936</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	
	10	1-16	
<b>Misc. undated</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	
	10	17-18	

## Business Papers

<b>Business Papers</b>	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
	11	
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Land records, 1846-1919	11	1
Real estate records, 1866-1925	11	2
Tax receipts, 1866-1897	11	3
Receipts, 1867-1905	11	4
Promissory notes, 1848-1898	11	5
Guardianship records, not dated	11	6
Balance sheets, 1872-1874	11	7
Power of attorney, 1918	11	8
Life-insurance policy: W.P. Orne, 1869	11	9
Confederate States of America bonds	11	10
Two savings booklets, c. 1920	11	11
Missionary business-program booklet, 1919	11	12
<b>“My Dearest Child,” transcribed letters</b>		<b>Box</b>
		12

**Three Family Bibles**

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**Three Family Bibles**

**Box**  
13 & 14