ALVA SMITH VANDERBILT BELMONT
1965 – 1998

Collection Number: MSS 593
Size: 9 items

Special Collections and University Archives
Jean and Alexander Heard Library
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee
ALVA SMITH VANDERBILT BELMONT

1965 - 1998

Biography/History

Alva Smith was born in Mobile, Alabama, in 1853 and died in Paris, France, in 1933. She was educated in France. In 1875, she married William Kissam Vanderbilt (grandson of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt), and had three children: Consuelo, William K. Jr., and Harold Stirling. They divorced in 1895.

In 1896, she married Oliver H. P. Belmont, who died in 1908. After his death, Alva Belmont threw herself into the cause of woman’s suffrage. She founded the “Political Equality Association”, sponsored lectures, dances and concerts, and wrote and produced a suffrage operetta. In 1914, she joined the Congressional Union (later the National Woman’s Party). She was referred to as the “Bengal Tiger”.

In 1998, Erik Per Overbey donated these items to Special Collections.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains 9 items in 9 file folders that reveal the life of Alva Smith Vanderbilt Belmont, snippets regarding the Smith family, and the Vanderbilt family during the later part of the 19th century, and the first part of the 20th century.

Brochures

Lecture Presentations by Margaret Hayden Rector – 1992

Biltmore Estate - 1995

Interment Records

Magnolia Cemetery, Mobile, Alabama
[Smith Family]

Journal Articles

The Tangible Past
by John Sledge, Alabama Heritage, No. 34, Fall 1994
Alabama’s “Bengal Tiger”: Alva Smith Vanderbilt Belmont
by John Sledge, Alabama Heritage, No. 44, Spring 1997

Alva Vanderbilt’s Ball
by Scott C. Steward, Social Register Observer, Summer 1997

Newspaper Clippings

February 15, 1965 – President Johnson and His Family Tree
February 4, 1979 – Lord Charles Spencer Churchill
March 2, 1998 – Obituary of Countess Anthony Szapary – 3 clippings