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BASIL PRIOR (1871-1957)

PAPERS, 1894-1956, 1979-1980
5 linear feet

ACQUISITION: The papers were donated by Faith Schutt in 1989.

ACCESS: The papers are open for research.

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PHOTOGRAPHS: In box 5.

PROCESSED BY: Shea Taylor, 1999.

Biography

Basil Prior was born on August 8, 1871, in England. In late December of 1893, Prior, accompanied by his younger brother, Leonard, left England and arrived in Lindsay, California. Prior used his inheritance to start the Las Palmas Ranch, a citrus farm. He was one of the first to grow orange and lemon trees in the San Joaquin Valley. For thirty-three years Basil Prior recorded the weather as a local weather observer and was later recognized for the detailed reports he kept. Outside of ranch activities, Prior was one of the founders of the first Boy Scout troop and Kiwanis Club in Lindsay. He was also president of the Lindsay Fish and Game Preserve for a short time. In 1908 Prior married Georgina Ehrhorn and later had two children, Susan and Eric. Basil Prior died on February 2, 1957.

Scope and Content Note

The Basil Prior papers measure 5 linear feet and date from 1894 to 1956 and 1979 to 1980.

The account books record the monetary transactions of Prior's farm. They span from January 1898 to October 1947. The account books also include other transactions such as living expenses.

The diaries of Basil Prior comprise the bulk of the collection and span the period from January 1, 1894 to November 1, 1956. The diaries include descriptions of daily activities on the ranch, the early development of Lindsay, excursions made by the family, personal memoirs, local and world events, weather reports, and newspaper clippings. The newspaper clippings have been photocopied onto acid-free paper but left in their original places within the diaries. In the front of the diary starting November 22, 1938, there is a photograph of Prior taken in 1934 posing in his Boy Scout uniform.

There are also loose materials relating to Prior. They include excerpts from Prior's diaries, interview notes made by Harold Schutt, and Basil Prior's obituaries. The excerpts from Prior's diaries were edited by Harold Schutt and published in the *Lindsay Gazette* from 1979 to 1980. Included in the excerpts are a biographical sketch, also written by Schutt, and two other newspaper articles containing biographical information. The obituaries are newspaper clippings and include one card from Basil Prior's memorial service, as well as Georgina Prior's obituary. The sketches, drawn by Prior and his mother, are of landscapes and animals.

The photographs include many single images of Prior and various family members as well as a number of photograph albums. Each photograph and album are described in the box list.

Box no. Description

Box 1

Account books

Las Palmas Ranch

January 1, 1898 – October 20, 1900
November 1, 1900 – February 15, 1905
February 15, 1905 – January 17, 1908
July 1, 1910 – March 31, 1915
April 1, 1915 – June 25, 1921
January 1916 – December 1920
January 1921 – December 1934
July 1, 1921 – December 31, 1928
January 1, 1929 – November 19, 1936
November 1, 1936 – October 26, 1947

Box 2

Diaries

January 1, 1894 – December 31, 1894
January 1, 1895 – June 21, 1896
June 22, 1896 – December 20, 1897
January 1898 – August 21, 1899
August 22, 1899 – June 13, 1901
June 14, 1901 – May 10, 1902
May 11, 1902 – January 15, 1903
January 16, 1905 – July 3, 1905
July 4, 1905 – July 7, 1908
July 8, 1908 – January 17, 1912
January 18, 1912 – September 28, 1914
September 29, 1914 – November 29, 1917
December 2, 1917 – June 25, 1925
June 26, 1925 – July 24, 1930
July 26, 1930 – February 13, 1934

Box 3

February 14, 1934 – June 2, 1935
June 3, 1935 – January 8, 1937
January 9, 1937 – November 21, 1938
November 22, 1938 – February 17, 1941 [photograph of Prior infant]
February 18, 1941 – March 8, 1943
March 9, 1943 – December 2, 1944
December 3, 1944 – August 4, 1946

Box no. Description

Box 3 (cont.)

Diaries (cont.)

August 4, 1946 – March 23, 1949

March 24, 1949 – November 21, 1949

Box 4

November 21, 1949 – September 17, 1951

September 17, 1951 – December 30, 1953

December 31, 1953 – September 16, 1955

September 16, 1955 – November 1, 1956

Excerpts from diaries, 1926, 1956, 1979-1980

Obituaries, 1955, 1957

Prior, Eric, 1916, 1917, 1979

Prior family

Correspondence, 1953, 1975-1984 and undated

Interview notes 1951, 1972 and undated

Sketches, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1892, 1894 and undated

Box 5

Loose photographs (photographer's name and location in parentheses)

Cottage

Cottage, ca.1870s (2 views) (J. Bateman, Canterbury, Eng.)

Fielding, Henry

Henry Fielding, Canterbury, Eng. (H.B. Collis, Canterbury)

Henry Fielding, Canterbury, Eng., ca. late 1920s (R.? W. Fisk-Moore,

Canterbury)

Hopebourn House (Georgian manor)

Hopebourn House, ca.1890 (3 views) (O. W. Allen, Canterbury)

Jefferson School, Lindsay

Students and faculty, ca.1918 (French Photo, Visalia)

A class picture, ca.192- (H. & N., Lindsay)

Palmer Ranch, Lindsay

Palmer Ranch, 1896

Picking oranges, Lindsay area (Porter)

Box no. Description

Box 5 (cont.)

Loose photographs (cont.)

Prior, Basil

Basil Prior's first home, Lindsay
Home of Basil Prior and his sister, Dorothea, on old Palmer Ranch, 1896
Basil Prior, ca.1908
Basil and Georgina Prior, 1908
Jury in Howe Brooks murder trial, Visalia, March 1918 (French Photo, Visalia)
Kiwanis Club, Lindsay, May 31, 1934 (photo not original)
Basil and Georgina Prior, 194-

Prior, Dorothea

Dorothea Prior, 1896 (Hy. J. Bliss, Grantham & Newark, Eng.)
Dorothea Prior and baby, ca.190- (Joe Partain, Suisun, CA)

Prior, Eric

Students of Grade L-7, Washington School, Lindsay, 1922
(E.P. Co., Los Angeles)
Eric Prior in his 20s, ca.1930? (Old Master Studio, Sacramento)
Eric Prior and wife, Harriet

Prior, Georgina (Ehrhorn)

Georgina Ehrhorn, age 18 (Boyé & Habenicht, San Francisco)
Georgina Ehrhorn and her brother Adolpho
Georgina Ehrhorn Prior on wedding day, April 8, 1908 (2 views)
Georgina Prior with children, Eric (b.1909) and Susan (b.1915)
Dorothea and Georgina Prior, with Eric, Susan and baby brother, Basil,
1919 or 1920
Georgina Ehrhorn Prior and Winifred Carnegie Prior, ca.1925 (Hammond's
Studio, Porterville, CA)
Mountain View home of Georgina before her marriage to Basil Prior

Prior, Margaret

Margaret Prior (aunt of Basil Prior?), Tauranga, New Zealand (Constance Lloyd,
Epsom, New Zealand)

Prior, Robert

Robert Prior, uncle of Basil Prior, May 16, 1903
Robert Prior, Christmas 1913

Box no. Description

Box 5 (cont.)

Loose photographs (cont.)

Prior, Susan

Susan Prior, daughter of Basil Prior, 1934 (Hammond, Porterville, CA)

Standen, Edward

Edward J. Standen, ca.1907? (Lafayette, London)

Edward J. Standen, 18th Lancs. Fusiliers, August 1919 (Lafayette, London)

Sworder, Muriel (Prior)

Muriel Prior Sworder, sister of Basil Prior, 1894 (J. Löwy, Vienna)

Muriel Prior Sworder (Bauer, Fresno)

Miscellaneous

Kathryn J. Beasley (1893-1929), December 1912

Mr. & Mrs. Hagermann, Heidelberg, Germany ("The Newlyweds")

Ethel M. Hamilton, October 1927 (Rice, Montreal)

Aunt Emily Prior's ranch at Blocksburg, Humboldt County, CA, ca.188-?
(Martin & Wilder, Riverside, CA)

Gilbert Prior, cousin of Basil Prior, 189- (Barrauds, London)

Unidentified

Unidentified woman standing on porch steps

Unidentified people posed on fallen tree trunk

Photograph albums (Basil Prior and various family members are in many of the photographs)

Album bound in tapa cloth, 1927-1928

Yosemite

Downtown Mariposa

Speedboat race

Harbor views (Catalina Island?)

Matson steamer entering dock, California

Prior home?

Football game (Lindsay?)

Lindsay High School girls

Model T "Eloise"

Scenes in the Sierras

Track meet (Lindsay?)

Box no. Description

Box 5 (cont.)

Photograph albums (Basil Prior and various family members are in many of the photographs) (cont.)

Album (blue)

Camping trips to Sierra National Forest, Tulare County, 1906, 1910

Album (black with tie)

Scenes in the Sierras, 1924-1926

Lindsay

Southern California views (Lake Arrowhead, San Francisco,
San Diego, Big Bear Lake and Dam)

Harbor views (Pacific?)

Farm scenes (Lindsay?)

Matson steamer entering dock, California (same ship as in tapa cloth album)

Suede album

Handprinted on inside front cover:

Marie Ehrhorn from Dorothea and Basil Prior

Reminiscences of a trip to Kings River Cañon, 1907

Las Palmas Ranch, Lindsay

Giant Forest, Sequoia National Park

Wooden album

Grandmother of Basil Prior, London, 187-? (Elliott & Fry, London)

Grandfather of Basil Prior, London, 187-? (Elliott & Fry, London)

Great-grandmother of Basil Prior, ca 187- (Priestley & Son, Egremont,
Cheshire, Eng.)

Joseph Prior (uncle of Basil Prior?) (Barraud, London)

Grey snap-cover album (Bijou folder), ca.1907

Various people and views of city (not San Diego)

Black snap-cover album (Bijou folder), ca.1907

Variants of the people and areas in the grey album (no city views)

Framed photos

Susan Elizabeth Prior, mother of Basil Prior, ca.187-

Richard Prior, father of Basil Prior, ca.187-