

MARY SEFTON THOMAS PAPERS

Mss. 3490

Inventory

Compiled by
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Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University

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SUMMARY

Size	0.4 linear feet, 2 vols.
Geographic Locations	New Orleans, LA; New York, NY; Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico
Inclusive Dates	1924-circa 1982, undated
Bulk Dates	1932-1945
Languages	English and Spanish
Summary	The Mary Sefton Thomas Papers consist of correspondence, manuscript volumes, photographs, newspaper clippings, and writings collected or created by cosmetics heiress Mary Sefton Thomas and her husband Frans Blom, a noted Danish archaeologist and founder of the Middle American Research Institute at Tulane University.
Access Restrictions	None.
Reproduction Note	May be reproduced
Copyright	For those materials not in the public domain, copyright is retained by the descendants of the creators in accordance with U.S. Copyright law.
Related Collections	Frans Blom Papers, Mss. 2817, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La. Frans Blom Letter, Mss. 965, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La. Hispanic American Collection, Mss. 1350, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La.
Citation	Mary Sefton Thomas, Mss. 3490, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries Special Collections, Baton Rouge, La.
Stack Location(s)	B:138, OS: T

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

Mary Sefton Thomas was born in New York, NY to Lillian Sefton and Vincent B. Thomas on April 29, 1913. She had a twin brother who died in infancy; therefore, she grew up as an only child. Early in their marriage, Lillian Sefton Thomas had convinced her husband Vincent to purchase Harriet Hubbard Ayer, Inc., a prominent cosmetics manufacturing company owned by a family friend. When her husband died in 1918, Lillian ran the company herself until she sold it in 1947. Mary was five years old when her father died, and twelve when her mother married Robert Leftwich Dodge in 1924. She and her mother and stepfather lived in a manor house in Mill Neck, Nassau County, NY. The house and grounds were known as the Lillian Sefton Dodge Estate, the Sefton Manor, or the Mill Neck Manor. When she was young, Mary followed her mother on her many travels related to the cosmetics company. She did not regularly attend school but was taught by private tutors in many disciplines. She loved opera, painting, horseback riding and astronomy.

Mary Sefton Thomas married Frans Ferdinand Blom on June 15, 1932, a marriage that would only last about six years. Blom was a noted Danish Archeologist who studied Mayan culture and taught at Tulane University in New Orleans from 1925 to 1941, where he founded the Middle American Research Institute. During her time living in New Orleans, Mary developed friendships with writers and artists who lived and worked in the city. Her inner circle included writers Patrick O'Donnell and Lyle Saxon and artist/sculptors Enrique Alferez and Xavier Gonzales. Mary Sefton Thomas died October 12, 1992, in Charlottesville Virginia.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The bulk of this collection consists of personal letters between Mary Sefton Thomas and her family members and friends. Writings by Frans Blom and E. Patrick O'Donnell, newspaper clippings, photographs of Frans Blom and others, and oversize portraits of two New Orleans writers are also present. Most of the publications included in the collection are from Blom's time as head of the Middle American Research Institute at Tulane University and focus on his studies in the Yucatan.

LIST OF SERIES

Series I. Correspondence, 1932-circa 1960, undated

Series II. Printed and Graphic Materials, 1924-circa 1982, undated

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series I. Correspondence, 1932-circa 1960, undated

Series I contains the personal correspondence of Mary Thomas. The bulk of the correspondence was written by her husband, Frans Blom, but letters between Mary and various Blom family members are also present. Subjects covered in the correspondence include Frans, his research, and the status of various family members in Denmark during World War II.

Correspondence with friends is also present in this series and includes two folders of letters from the writer E.P. (Pat) O'Donnell and his wife Mary, one folder of letters from New Orleans-based Mexican artist Enrique Alferez, and two letters from Xavier Gonzales and Lyle Saxon. The series is arranged chronologically.

Series II. Printed and Graphic Materials, 1924-circa 1982, undated

Series II mostly consists of writings by Frans Blom, including research articles and publications written by Blom for Tulane University's Middle American Research Institute, which he founded. Also included are writings by E.P. (Pat) O'Donnell, a native New Orleans writer who was a friend of Mary Thomas. Newspaper clippings are also present as well as photographs of Frans Blom and others. Two large portraits of Lyle Saxon and Pat O'Donnell are housed in an oversize folder. The series is arranged chronologically.

INDEX TERMS

Blom, Frans Ferdinand, 1893-1963.	I-II
Saxon, Lyle, 1891-1946.	I-II
Thomas, Mary Sefton, 1913-1992.	I
O'Donnell, E. P. (Edwin P.), 1895-1943.	I-II
Excavations (Archaeology)--Yucatán Peninsula.	II
Latin America—Civilization.	II
Central America—Antiquities.	II
Photographic prints.	II
Tulane University. Department of Middle American Research.	II
Archaeologists--Louisiana.	I-II
Yucatán Peninsula--Antiquities.	II
New Orleans (La.)	II
Maya architecture--Yucatán Peninsula.	II
Letters (correspondence)	I
Manuscripts for publication.	II

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Stack Location</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents (with dates)</u>
Series I. Correspondence, 1932-circa 1960, undated			
B:138	1	1-5	Correspondence, Frans Blom, 1933-1949, undated
		6	Correspondence, Blom family members, 1932-1945, undated
		7-8	Correspondence, Pat and Mary O'Donnell, 1934-1944
		9	Correspondence, Enrique Alferez, 1934-circa 1960
		10	Correspondence, Xavier Gonzales and Lyle Saxon, December 1934
Series II. Printed and Graphic Materials, 1924-circa 1982, undated			
		11-12	Frans Blom publications, 1924-1935
		13	Frans Blom publications and reports, Middle American Research Institute at Tulane University, 1925-1932
		14	Frans Blom presentations and writings, 1931-1935, undated
		15	Newspaper clippings, 1926-circa 1982, undated
		16	"Marsh Trapper" poem by E. P. [Pat] O'Donnell, 1928
	--	Vol. 1	"Potent Delta," original manuscript by E. P. [Pat] O'Donnell, 1932
	--	Vol. 2	"Jesus Knew," original manuscript by Patrick O'Donnell, 1935
	1	17	Untitled short story by Pat O'Donnell, undated
		18	Photographs of Frans Blom and others, circa 1934-1960
OS:T	--	OS 1	Oversize photographs, portraits of Lyle Saxon and E.P. [Pat] O'Donnell, undated