

**Basil Beebe Elmer
Letters, 1917-1919****SC23224**

QUANTITY: 1 box (0.25 cubic ft.)
ACCESS: Open to research
ACQUISITION: Gift of Belle Lincoln Elmer (Mrs. Stephen B. Elmer) June 2011
PROCESSED BY: Michael Maloney, Student Intern, SUNY Albany, October 2011

Biographical Note:

Basil Beebe Elmer, banker and World War I soldier, was born in Ithaca (Tompkins County), New York, May 29 1892, the eldest son of Herbert Charles and Bertha Edson Beebe Elmer. He was raised in Ithaca, and was a graduate of Cornell University, where his father was a professor of Greek and Latin and dean of the classical department.

During World War I, Elmer served in the Company A, Intelligence Section of the United States Army 165th Infantry Regiment. He mustered in with the rank of first lieutenant and attained the rank of captain before mustering out.

After the war, Elmer pursued a career in banking and finance in New York City. He was married to Alice Haight of New York City in April 1920, and they had two children: Alice Hoyt Elmer, and Basil Beebe Elmer, Jr. The family eventually settled in Bronxville (Westchester County), New York. He died February 23, 1962.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection consists of approximately 170 letters written by Basil Beebe Elmer to his parents between 1917 and 1919 regarding his experiences of military service during World War I. The letters begin with his departure from the United States in October 1917 aboard a steamship that was transporting American troops to France. The letters written on board the ship reveal the initial excitement and enthusiasm he and his fellow soldiers had about the war and fighting for freedom and democracy.

By mid-November, his letters indicate the boat has landed on the coast of France, but state that he could not reveal the exact location. His letters also mention that the American troops were welcomed by the French enthusiastically and he very much enjoyed the hospitality of the French people. Thereafter, the letters detail his responsibility for examining the letters written by men in his company, and having to censor some of the content. This experience was said to have given him a better understanding of the men of his regiment. After a while, he found the task to be quite tedious, and the process delayed posting of letters by several weeks

The letter of January 31, 1918, indicates Basil was transferred to the 165th Regimental Headquarters Company from Company A. By February 1918, he had been promoted to regimental intelligence officer. By March 12, 1918, he was on the front line where he lived in a

trench. In April 1918 Elmer was put on detached service which appears to have involved gathering intelligence behind the enemy line. Some of the letters indicate he had been engaged in dangerous missions. The nature of his work required a high degree of secrecy so his exact location was not stated other than the fact he was somewhere in France.

The letters break in August 1918 and do not resume until February 1919 by which time he was stationed in Ahrweiler, Germany, where his regiment was part of the American Army of Occupation. The letters conclude March 12, 1919 when he informs his parent that he is about to return to the United States to be mustered out.

Provenance / Processing note:

The letters were apparently stored in letter boxes for a number of years and organized in at least two series in which each item was consecutively numbered. A few gaps in the numerical sequence were discovered when the collection was accessioned and processed. Nevertheless, the overall arrangement is chronological.

A number of letters were not dated, stating only the day of the week on which it was written. However, there was enough evidence available to make it possible to supply the date with certainty. Also, the author would frequently write more than one letter on a given date, all of which are listed separately on the inventory list. Lastly, the place where these letters were written was rarely stated, so it was supplied based on information from the content of the letter.

Box and Folder list:

Box	Folder	Description
1	1	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe Elmer to Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents), October-November 1917</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To Parents [aboard steamship], October 27, 1917; attached letter of October 14, 1917 b. To Parents [aboard steamship], October 26, 1917 c. To Parents [aboard steamship], October 28, 1917 d. To Parents [aboard steamship], November 1, 1917 e. To Parents [aboard steamship], November 3, 1917 f. To Parents [aboard steamship], November [4], 1917 g. To Parents [aboard steamship], location unknown, November 5, 1917 h. To Parents [aboard steamship], November 6, 1917 i. To Parents [aboard steamship], November 6, 1917 j. To Parents [aboard steamship], November 8, 1917 k. To Parents [aboard steamship], November 8, 1917 l. To Parents [aboard steamship], November 8, 1917 m. To parents, [France, November 13, 1917] n. To parents, [France, November 14, 1917] o. To parents, [France, November 15, 1917] p. Cablegram to Basil Elmer from Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer. Location unknown, sent November 13, 1917; received November 1917.

Box	Folder	Description
		q. Note to parents, n.d.
1	2	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe Elmer to Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents), November-December 1917</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To parents, [France, November 16, 1917] b. To parents, [France, November 17, 1917] c. To parents, [France, November 18, 1917] d. To parents, [France, November 20, 1917] e. To parents, [France, November 21, 1917] (Received December 17, 1917) f. To parents, [France, November 21, 1917] (Received December 17, 1917) g. To parents, [France, November 22, 1917] (Received December 17, 1917) h. To parents, [France, November 23, 1917] (Received December 17, 1917) i. To parents, [France, November 25, 1917] (Received December 17, 1917) j. To parents, [France, November 29, 1917]
1	3	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe to Elmer Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents), December 1917</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To parents, [France, December 1, 1917] b. To parents, [France], December 1, 1917 c. To parents, [France], December 3, 1917 d. To parents, [France], December 4, 1917 e. To parents, [France], December 7, 1917 f. To parents, [France], December 5, 1917 g. To parents, [France], December 7, 1917 h. To parents, [France], December 7, 1917 i. Mike [?] to Basil Beebe Elmer, n.p., [ca. December 7, 1917] j. To parents, [France], December 11, 1917 k. To parents, [France], December 16, 1917; included is a note from Mr. & Mme. Bertilleville l. To parents, [France], December 17, 1917 m. To parents, [France], December 23, 1917 n. To parents, [France], December 23, 1917 o. To parents, and family [France], [December 24, 1917] p. To parents, [France], December 24, 1917 q. To parents, [France], December 25, 1917 r. To parents, [France], December 25, 1917 s. To parents, Paris, [France], December 30, 1917; with letter to parents, Paris, [France], December 29, 1917 t. To parents, [France], December 30, 1917 u. To parents, [France], December 31, 1917 v. To parents, [France], December 31, 1917
1	4	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe Elmer to Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents),: January 1918</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To parents, [France], January 1, 1918 (telegram) b. To parents, [France], January 1, 1918 c. To parents, [France], January 3, 1918 d. To parents, [France], January 4, 1917 [sic – should be 1918]

Box	Folder	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. To parents, [France], January 5, 1917 [sic – should be 1918] f. To parents, [France], January 5, 1917 [sic – should be 1918] g. To parents, [France], January 9, 1917 [sic – should be 1918] h. To parents, [France], January 9, 1917 [sic – should be 1918] i. To parents, [France], January 14, 1918 j. To parents, [France], January 17, 1917 [sic – should be 1918] k. To parents, [France], January 24, 1918 l. To parents, [France], January 28, 1918 [probably written on Sunday, January 27, 1918] m. To parents, [France], January 29, 1918 [probably written on Sunday, January 27, 1918] n. To parents, [France], January 28, 1918 o. To parents, [France], January 29, 1918 p. To parents, [France], January 30, 1918 q. To parents, [France], January 30, 1918 r. To parents, [France], January 30, 1918 s. To parents, [France], January 31, 1918 t. To parents, [France], January 31, 1918
1	5	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe Elmer to Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents): February 1918</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To parents, [France], February 2, 1918 b. To parents, [France], February 7, 1918 [possibly written February 6, 1918] c. To parents, [France], February 7, 1918 [possibly written February 8, 1918] d. To parents, [France], February 10, 1918 e. To parents, [France], February 12, 1918 f. To parents, [France], February 13, 1918 g. To parents, [France], February 12, 1918 h. To parents, [France], February 13, 1918 i. To parents, [France], February 13, 1918; with newspaper clipping, date unknown. j. To parents, [France], February 13, 1918 k. To parents, [France], February 14, 1918 l. To parents, [France], February 14, 1918 m. To parents, [France], February 15, 1918 n. To parents, [France], February 20, 1918 o. To parents, [France], February 20, 1918 p. To parents, [France], February 22, 1918 q. To parents, [France], February 23, 1918; contains a newspaper clipping. r. To parents, [France], February 24, 1918
1	6	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe Elmer to Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents), March, 1918</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To parents, [France], March 4, 1918 b. To parents, [France], March 5, 1918

Box	Folder	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. To parents, [France], March 5, 1918 d. To parents, [France], March 6, 1918 e. To parents, [France], March 6, 1918 f. To parents, [France], March 7, 1918 g. To parents, [France], March 7, 1918 h. To parents, [France], March 7, 1918 i. To parents, [France], March 11, 1918 j. To parents, [France], March 12, 1918 k. To parents, [France], March 12, 1918 l. To parents, [France], March 13, 1918 m. To parents, [France], March 13, 1918 n. To parents, [France], March 15, 1918 o. To parents, [France], March 17, 1918 p. To parents, [France], March 17, 1918 q. To parents, [France], March 19, 1918 r. To parents, [France], March 27, 1918 s. To parents, [France], March 27, 1918
1	7	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe Elmer to Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents), April 1918</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To parents, [France], April 2, 1918 b. To parents, [France], April 4, 1918 c. To parents, [France], April 4, 1918; continued April 5, 1918 d. To parents, [France], April 5, 1918 e. To parents, [France], April 10, 1918; with letters of April 7 and April 8 enclosed f. To parents, [France], April 12, 1918 g. To parents, [France], April 16, 1918 h. To parents, [France], April 16, 1918 i. To parents, [France], April 17, 1918 j. To parents, [France], April 18, 1918 k. To parents, [France], April 22, 1918 l. To parents, [France], April 22, 1918 m. To parents, [France], April 22, 1918; with envelope addressed to Clarence Elmer from Basil Elmer n. To parents, [France], April 23, 1918 and April 26, 1918 (written on same stationery) o. To parents, [France], April 30, 1918
1	8	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe Elmer to Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents), May-June, 1918</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To parents, [France], May 3, 1918 b. To parents, [France], May 7, 1918, includes newspaper clipping from the <i>Paris Herald</i>. c. To parents, [France], May 7, 1918 d. To parents, [France], May 15, 1918 e. To parents, [France], May 17, 1918

Box	Folder	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. To parents, [France], May 20, 1918 g. To parents, [France], May 21, 1918 h. To parents, [France], May 21, 1918 i. To parents, [France], May 24, 1918 j. To parents, [France], May 25, 1918 k. To parents, [France], May 25, 1918 l. To parents, [France], May 26, 1918 m. To parents, [France], May 27, 1918 n. To parents, [France], May 29, 1918 o. To parents, [France], May 29, 1918 p. Empty envelope addressed to Mrs. H.C. Elmer from Basil Elmer, received May 31, 1918
1	9	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe Elmer to Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents), June 1918</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To parents, [France], June 7, 1918 b. To parents, [France], June 7, 1918; includes a note from a Mme. Marcelline, a nun who took care of Elmer while he had the flu c. To parents, [France], June 7, 1918. Dated June 8. Elmer corrected the date to June 7 in the following letter. d. To parents, [France], June 8, 1918 e. To parents, [France], June 8, 1918 f. To parents, [France], June 8, 1918 g. To parents, [France], June 9, 1918 h. To parents, [France], June 9, 1918 i. To parents, [France], June 9, 1918 j. To parents, [France], letters of June 11, 1918, and June 12, 1918, written on same stationery k. To parents, [France], June 12, 1918 l. To parents, [France], June 13, 1918 m. To parents, [France], June 14, 1918 n. To parents, [France], June 17, 1918 o. To parents, [France], June 19, 1918 p. To parents, [France], June 20, 1918 q. To parents, [France], June 21, 1918 r. To parents, [France], June 22, 1918 s. To parents, [France], June 27, 1918 t. To parents, [France], June 28, 1918 u. To parents, [France], June 29, 1918
1	10	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe Elmer to Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents), July-August 1918</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To parents, [France], July 8, 1918 b. To parents, [France], July 11, 1918 c. To parents, [France], correspondence from July 12, 1918, and July 13, 1918, written on same letter. d. To parents, [France], July 13, 1918

Box	Folder	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. To parents, [France], July 14, 1918 f. To parents, [France], July 14, 1918 g. Series of typewritten letters that include two letters from August 5, 1918, August 6, 1918, August 8, 1918, August 10, 1918, August 11, 1918, and two from August 18, 1918. h. Western Union cablegram to Herbert Elmer, August 16, [1918?]
1	11	<p>Letters of Basil Beebe Elmer to Herbert and Bertha Beebe Elmer (parents), February-March 1919</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Newspaper clipping showing a picture of a British newspaper showing the headline of Britain's declaration of war upon Germany on August 4, 1914; from newspaper of August 1918 b. Letter addressed to Tot's (Basil Elmer's brother Charles Jefferson Elmer): February 10, 1919 c. To parents, Ahrweiler, Germany, February 10, 1919 d. To parents, Ahrweiler, [Germany], February 11, 1919 e. To parents, [Ahrweiler, Germany], February 12, 1919 f. To parents, Ahrweiler, Germany, February 13, 1919 g. To parents, [Ahrweiler, Germany], February 19, 1919 h. To parents, [Ahrweiler, Germany], February 22, 1919 i. To parents, [Ahrweiler, Germany], February 22, 1919 j. To father, [Ahrweiler, Germany], February 25, 1919 k. To parents, Ahrweiler, Germany, February 25, 1919 l. To parents, Ahrweiler, Germany, February 27, 1919 m. To parents, Ahrweiler, Germany, March 6, 1919 n. To parents, Ahrweiler, Germany, March 11, 1919 o. To parents, Ahrweiler, [Germany], March 12, 1919 p. To parents, Ahrweiler, [Germany], March 14, 1919 q. To parents, Ahrweiler, [Germany], March 15, 1919 r. To parents, Ahrweiler, Germany, March 24, 1919 s. To parents, [Ahrweiler, Germany], March 26, 1919

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