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Finding Aid - A.R.G. (George) and Iris M. Owen fonds (MSS 373, PC 328, EL 38 (A11-61))

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A.R.G. (George) and Iris M. Owen fonds

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Summary information

Repository:	University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections
Title:	A.R.G. (George) and Iris M. Owen fonds
ID:	MSS 373, PC 328, EL 38 (A11-61)
Date:	ca. 1959-2011 (date of creation)
Physical description:	1.33 metres (including 0.70 metres of textual material, 17 books, 6 oversized photos and sketches, 1 VHS tape and 2 DVDs)
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	Created by Jarad Buckwold on 11 February 2013. Quality checked by Mary Grace Golfo-Barcelona on 08 June 2017.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Alan Robert George Owen, known to his friends as George Owen, was a British immigrant to Canada who made significant contributions to the field of psychical research, particularly concerning table tilting and group psychokinesis (PK). Owen was born in Bristol, England in 1919 and was educated in the fields of mathematics, physics and genetics. Dr. Owen obtained a B.A. in mathematics and physics in 1940, an M.A. in 1945 and his doctorate in mathematical genetics in 1948. During the Second World War, Dr. Owen played a large part in the development of Radar technology. Following the war, Dr. Owen became a research fellow and lecturer in mathematics and genetics at Trinity College. He married his wife, Iris May Pepper, in 1952 and had a son, Robin, in 1955. Both George and Iris were interested in researching psychical phenomena, particularly concerning psychokinesis and poltergeists. In 1964, Dr. Owen published "Can we Explain the Poltergeist", which was a collection of his research into poltergeist phenomena that attempted to separate hoaxes from cases he believed to be genuine. One case in particular featured prominently in his research: that of the "Sauchi" poltergeist, which manifested around 11 year old Virginia Campbell in 1960-61, leading Dr. Owen to conclude that some poltergeist phenomena were indeed real. A second case that began in 1966 would occupy Dr. Owen on and off again for several years: that of 11 year old Matthew Manning, who later visited Dr. and Mrs. Owen in Canada in 1974. Research such as this led in 1969 to the Owens being offered the job of directing parapsychology research for the Toronto based New Horizons Research Foundation (NHRF) for five years. They accepted the offer and came to Canada the following year. The New Horizons Research Foundation was a non-profit organization that dealt in psychical research and Dr. Owen came on as the Foundation's Vice President as well as the editor of its journal, "New Horizons: Journal of the New Horizons Research Foundation", published from 1972-1978 and incorporated the "Transactions of the Toronto Society for Psychical Research". The Toronto Society for Psychical Research (TSPR) was another organization dedicated to psychical research with Iris Owen as its Secretary-Treasurer. It was under the TSPR's auspices that the Owens' famous Philip experiment was conducted. Headed by Iris, the Philip experiment sought to recreate the table tilting experiments of British psychical researchers such as Kenneth J. Batchelder, who determined that group psychokinesis was possible. To do so, an imaginary ghost named Philip was

created as a way to guide and focus the sitter group's psychical energy as questions were posed to and responses sought from the imaginary Philip. Dr. Owen continued researching and writing papers for the NHRF right up until his and Iris' retirement in 1994, when they moved to Calgary. Dr. Owen passed away in 2003.

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

Iris May Owen, born Iris May Pepper, was a British immigrant to Canada who made significant contributions to the field of psychical research, particularly concerning table tilting and group psychokinesis (PK). Owen was born in Meldreth, in Cambridgeshire, England, in 1916. In the Second World War, she served in the armed forces as a radio intercept officer, helping to decode German "Enigma" messages. Following the war, Owen worked as a nurse in a cancer radiology clinic. She married her husband, A.R.G. (George) Owen in 1952 and had a son, Robin, in 1955. Both George and Iris were interested in researching psychical phenomena, particularly concerning psychokinesis and poltergeists. With her husband, Iris Owen spent much of the 1960s analyzing case studies of poltergeist phenomena and came to conclude that some poltergeist phenomena were indeed real. A particularly famous case began in 1966 and would occupy the Owens on and off again for several years: that of 11 year old Matthew Manning, who later visited Dr. and Mrs. Owen in Canada in 1974. Research such as this led in 1969 to the Owens being offered to direct parapsychology research for the Toronto based New Horizons Research Foundation (NHRF) for five years. They accepted the offer and came to Canada the following year. The New Horizons Research Foundation was a non-profit organization that dealt in psychical research and Dr. Owen became the foundation's Vice President as well as the editor of its journal, "New Horizons: Journal of the New Horizons Research Foundation", which published from 1972-1978 and incorporated the "Transactions of the Toronto Society for Psychical Research". The Toronto Society for Psychical Research (TSPR) was another organization dedicated to psychical research, with Iris Owen as its Secretary-Treasurer. It was under the TSPR's auspices that the Owens' famous Philip experiment was conducted. Headed by Iris, the Philip experiment sought to recreate the table tilting experiments of British psychical researchers such as Kenneth J. Batchelder, who determined that group psychokinesis was possible. To do so, an imaginary ghost named Philip was created as a way to guide and focus the sitter group's psychical energy as questions were posed to and responses sought from the imaginary Philip. Iris published the experiment's results in a 1976 book, "Conjuring up Philip: An Adventure in Psychokinesis", where she concluded that table tilting is the result not of deceased spirits tilting the table, but of group psychokinesis – she firmly believed that the imaginary Philip only responded the way the group desired and provided no information that they as individuals or a group did not already possess. The Owens retired in 1994 and moved to Calgary, where Iris passed away in 2009.

Custodial history

The material was donated by Robert Owen to the Survival Research Institute of Canada, which in turn donated the material to the Archives in 2011, with Walter Meyer zu Erpen, the institution's President, acting as the transferring agent.

Scope and content

The fonds was arranged in part by the transferring agent according to specifications he provided. This particular fonds consists primarily of a typescript of Batcheldor's "Macro-PK in Group Sitzings: Theoretical and Practical Aspects", as well as a brief biographical description created by Walter Meyer zu Erpen and a DVD containing a digitized version of the typescript.

Notes

Title notes

Immediate source of acquisition

Acquired by the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections in 2011

Restrictions on access

There are no restrictions on this material.

Finding aids

A finding aid can be generated from this description.

Related material

This fonds is one of a series of fonds and collections transferred to the Archives by Walter Meyer zu Erpen, President of the Survival Research Institute of Canada, related to survival and parapsychology research. Other such fonds and collections transferred by Meyer zu Erpen are the Survival Research Institute of Canada fonds (MSS 372; A11-60), Survival Research Newsletters and Periodicals Collection (MSS 374; A11-62), Debra Barr and Walter Meyer zu Erpen Research and Publication Collection (MSS 375; A11-63), Jenny O'Hara Pincock fonds (MSS 376; A11-64), Spiritualist Hymnals and Manuals Collection (MSS 377; A11-65), Kenneth J. Batcheldor fonds (MSS 378, EL 39; A11-66), Mary Olga Park fonds (MSS 380; A11-71), Albert Batten fonds (MSS 379, PC 329, EL 40; A11-67), Howard Reed fonds (MSS 381, EL 41; A11-107). Also related, but not transferred by Meyer zu Erpen, is the Hamilton Family fonds (Mss 14, Pc 12, Tc 70; A.79-21, A.79-41, A.79-52, A.79-56, A.79-65, A.80-08, A.80-25, A.81-09, A.86-56)

Accruals

Further accruals are likely.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** published

Series descriptions

New Horizons Research Foundation (NHRF)

Date: 1975-1994 (date of creation)

Physical description: 90 Items

Publication status:

published

File / item list

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
	File - New Horizons Foundation - Position Papers, Reviews, and Reprints - List 1987-1994			1 1
	File - NHRF - A Brief History. 1970-1984 1985			1 2
	File - NHRF - 1 1984			1 3
	File - NHRF - 2 1984			1 4
	File - NHRF - 3 1984			1 5
	File - NHRF - 4 1985			1 6
	File - NHRF - 5 1985			1 7
	File - NHRF - 6 1985			1 8
	File - NHRF - 7 1985			1 9
	File - NHRF - 8 1985			1 10
	File - NHRF - 9 1985			1 11
	File - NHRF - 10 1985			1 12
	File - NHRF - 11 1985			1 13
	File - NHRF - 12 1986			1 14
	File - NHRF - 13 1986			1 15
	File - NHRF - 14 1986			1 16
	File - NHRF - 15 1986			1 17
	File - NHRF - 16 1986			1 18
	File - NHRF - 17 1986			1 19
	File - NHRF - 18 1986			1 20
	File - NHRF - 19 1986			1 21
	File - NHRF - 20 1986			1 22
	File - NHRF - 21 1986			1 23
	File - NHRF - 22 1987			2 1
	File - NHRF - 23 1987			2 2
	File - NHRF - 23a 1987			2 3
	File - NHRF - 24 1987			2 4
	File - NHRF - 25 1987			2 5

	File - NHRF - 26 1987	2 6
	File - NHRF - 27 1987	2 7
	File - NHRF - 28 1987	2 8
	File - NHRF - 29 1987	2 9
	File - NHRF - 30 1991	2 10
	File - NHRF - 31 1991	2 11
	File - NHRF - 31a 1993	2 12
	File - NHRF - 32 1991	2 13
	File - NHRF - 33 1992	2 14
	File - NHRF - 34 1992	2 15
	File - NHRF - 35 1992	2 16
	File - NHRF - 36 1993	2 17
	File - NHRF - 37 1993	2 18
	File - NHRF - 38 1994	2 19
	File - NHRF - 39 1987	2 20
	File - NHRF - 40 1985	2 21
	File - NHRF - 42 1986	2 22
	File - NHRF - 43 1986	2 23
	File - NHRF - 43 1986	2 24
	File - NHRF - 44 1986	2 25
	File - NHRF - 45 1987	2 26
	File - NHRF - 46 1975-1977	2 27
	File - NHRF - Proposals for Activities in Period Commencing 1 July, 1983 1983	2 28
	File - NHRF - Report for the Year 1 July, 1983 to 30 June, 1984 1984	2 29
	File - NHRF - A Research Brief on Experiments to be Conducted by the Toronto Society for Psychical Research in 1987 and 1988 1987-1988	2 30
	File - NHRF - Society for Scientific Exploration: Third Annual Meeting, Princeton University, October 29-31, 1984 1984	2 31
	File - NHRF - TSPR - Owens DVD Copy of Papers, Journals and Photos ca. 2011	2 32
	File - Journal of the New Horizons Research Foundation Incorporating Transactions of the Toronto Society for Psychical Research (Iris Owen's bound copy) 1978	3 N/A

Correspondence and Research Files

Date: 1959-2011 (date of creation)

Physical description: 183 Items

Publication status:

published

File / item list				
Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
	File - A.R.G. Owen (1919-2003) and Iris M. Owen (1916-2009) 2009			3 1
	File - A.R.G. Owen - Articles by and/or About ca.1959 - 1989			3 2
	File - A.R.G. Owen - Parapsychology Awards and Prizes 1964-1977			3 3
	File - Field of Parapsychology - Status Of 1990-1995			3 4
	File - Miscellaneous Correspondence - Arranged Chronologically 1971-2000			3 5
	File - Correspondence - John Beloff 1988-1994			3 6
	File - Correspondence - J. Henry Bennett, Genetics, Cambridge and Adelaide 1956-1996			3 7
	File - Correspondence - John Robert Colombo 1994-1999			3 8
	File - Correspondence - Peter Underwood, FRSA, and the Ghost Club Society 1991-1999			3 9
	File - Biometry - C.A.B. Smith's Life, Form and Number 1965			3 10
	File - Book Reviews of Louisa Rhine's "The Invisible Picture" 1981-1982			3 11
	File - Conjuring Up Philip - Retrospective Review in the Australian Parapsychological Review 1992-1993			3 12
	File - Donald Colin (Ben) Webster (1930-1997) 1997-1998			3 13
	File - Ian Stevenson's Study of Reincarnation Cases 1988-1999			3 14
	File - Languages - "Maths Research" 1990?-1995			3 15
	File - Matthew Manning 1974-2012			3 16
	File - Miscellaneous Newspaper and Magazine Articles 1976-1999?			3 17
	File - New Frontiers Newsletter (Oregon, Wisconsin) 1992-1995			Box 3, folder 18
	File - Robert L. Bourgeois - Psychokinesis and Contact With an Artificial Spirit: a Replication of the Philip Phenomena 1994			3 19
	File - Society for Psychical Research (SPR) Founders - Slide - Presidents of the Society before 1990			3 20
	File - Thurmond Table Levitation Group, 4-Minute Home Movie of Levitation of 65-pound Dining Room Table, DVD copy ca.1974-75			3 21
	File - Notes for March 17th - The Death and Dying Experience	n.d.		Box 3, folder 22

	File - Collected Books (In Banker's Box) 1964-2000	4 N/A
	File - Graphic Material (In Oversized Box) 1974	1 1
	File - VHS: Thurmond Table Levitation Group, 4-Minute Home Movie of Levitation of 65-pound Dining Room Table. ca.1974-1975	2 N/A