

THE WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

REGISTER: Robert O'Connor Family Papers

MS. NO.: 4881

Processor: Regina Costello

Editor: Michael McCormick

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Robert O'Connor (b. 1939) was born in Dublin, Ireland, and immigrated in 1964 to New York, as there was such high unemployment in Ireland at that time. After completing a science degree, he traveled first to the United Kingdom, and subsequently to the United States. He moved to Chicago as part of a job transfer, and a new career took him to Ohio in 1988. O'Connor married Diane Baron in 1967, and together they have four children. Since coming to the United States, O'Connor went back to Ireland once to seek employment, but did not find the same opportunities there as in the United States. O'Connor has traced his family history in Ireland back a number of generations, identifying relationships primarily with the Sullivan family in County Cork.

Living and growing up in Ireland during the turbulent times of the 1960s and 1970s left a deep impression on O'Connor. Believing that children are the true victims of the conflict in Northern Ireland, O'Connor and his wife set up The Irish Children's Fund in 1982. The aim of this fund is to provide money to allow Catholic and Protestant children of poor families in Belfast and Derry, Northern Ireland to come to the United States and experience life with families in an area free of conflict. This program attempts to foster relationships between these two religious groups. In 1986, the O'Connors set up the Creative Irish Gifts Catalog Company, based in Streetsboro, Ohio, with a sole purpose of providing funding to continue the Irish Children's Fund.

The Robert O'Connor Family Papers, 1890 - 1994, consist of photocopies of certificates of birth, marriage, naturalization, diploma from University College Dublin, Ireland, an essay, family tree, genealogy, passport and five short stories.

The collection is arranged alphabetically by document type, and then chronologically.

This collection is of value to those seeking information about the Irish community in northeast Ohio. This collection will be of special interest to those seeking information about first generation Irish immigrants and their adaptation to life in the United States. It demonstrates the celebration of an Irish culture and serves as an example of how one person's vision can change the lives and have a positive impact for thousands of people. Those interested in the penmanship of a Kerry Irish man will find the short stories to be useful. Scholars researching the Troubles in Northern Ireland and the relationship between Catholic and Protestants will find pertinent data in this collection, and an

example of an interfaith initiative to bring the two groups together. This collection will also be useful to those researching the O'Connor and Sullivan families from the west of Ireland, and County Kerry, Ireland.

The researcher should also consult ms 4882 Creative Irish Gifts Catalog Records.

Provenance: Robert O'Connor, 2002.

Number of Containers: 1 Oversize Folders: 0 Oversize Volumes: 0

Size: 0.20 linear feet / 0.06 linear meters

Restrictions: None.

Container

- 1 Folder 1: Certificate of birth, Robert O'Connor, photocopy, Dublin, Ireland, 1939.
- Folder 2: Certificate of marriage, Robert and Diane O'Connor, photocopy, New York, 1967.
- Folder 3: Certificate of Naturalization, Robert O'Connor, photocopy, 1994.
- Folder 4: Diploma, University College Dublin, Robert O'Connor, Bachelor of Arts, photocopy, 1964.
- Folder 5: Essay, *Easter Week*, Robert O'Connor, photocopy, 1965.
- Folder 6: Family tree, Robert O'Connor family, photocopy, undated.
- Folder 7: Genealogy, Notes on Family History of Eugene (Owen) O'Connor (1890-1976) and his wife, Nora (nee Wiseman) (1901-1961), Eugene O'Connor, undated.
- Folder 8: Passport, copies of pertinent pages, Robert O'Connor, issued 1985.
- Folder 9: Short stories: Eugene O'Connor, *A Founding Father*, S.S. MacAnna; *Kerry Ghosts*, (in publication The Father Matthew Record), Owen O'Connor; *Kerry Cows*, (in publication The Capuchin Annual) Owen O'Connor; *Kerry Bees*, (in publication The Capuchin Annual) Owen O'Connor; *Kerry Sands*, (in publication The Capuchin Annual) Owen O'Connor; photocopies, undated.