

THE WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

REGISTER: Creative Irish Gifts Catalog Company Records

MS NO.: 4882

Processor: Regina Costello

Editor: Michael McCormick

Date: December 20, 2002

Creative Irish Gifts Catalog Company (f. 1986) was established in Illinois, by Robert and Diane O'Connor, and in latter years moved to northeast Ohio. Robert (b. 1939) was born in Dublin, Ireland, growing up during a time of much strife in Northern Ireland. His childhood experience left him with an impression that has remained with him all his life. To help ease the suffering of the children in Northern Ireland, he and his wife, Diane (nee Baron), decided to set up a fund to allow Protestant and Catholic children from the most derelict areas of Belfast and Derry, Northern Ireland, to come to the United States and spend a few weeks with a host family. The goal is to foster positive relations between the two groups, and is followed with various outings, events, and retreats back in Northern Ireland. The O'Connor's established Creative Irish Gifts Catalog company, which is based in Streetsboro, Ohio. The company provides a variety of products made in Ireland, through their catalog. Creative Irish Gifts Catalog functions as a fundraising effort to sustain The Irish Children's Fund, Inc. (f. 1982). The latter is an organization dedicated to creating lasting peace in Northern Ireland. All profits from the catalog directly support The Irish Children's Fund, and those working for the catalog originally did so in a volunteer capacity. The Irish Children's Fund, Inc. is the largest youth organization in Northern Ireland, and has received recognition by the government and civic and social service groups in the United States and Ireland. Today, it is used as a model for other international organizations that are now assisting children in troubled areas.

The Creative Irish Gifts Catalog Company Records, 1987- 2001, consist of a brochure, a catalog, a history of the company, leaflets, a newspaper clipping, a paper published at Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, and a program.

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

This collection is of value to those seeking information about the Northeast Ohio Irish community in general, and in the Creative Irish Gifts Catalog Company in particular. The collection will be of special interest to those seeking information about first generation Irish immigrants who adapt to life in a new country and who also successfully establish their own businesses. Scholars researching problem solving efforts to ease the conflict and "Troubles" in Northern Ireland during the last two decades of the 20th century and those interested in the relationships between Catholic and Protestants

will find pertinent data in this collection. Individuals interested in The Irish Children's Fund will find this collection to be a valuable resource. The researcher should also consult MS. 4881 Robert O'Connor Papers.

A video *Today is the Day*, Irish Children's Fund, Inc. 1995, has been removed to the video collection. All photographs have been removed to the photograph and print collection.

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: Brochure, Isle of Ireland and Irish Elegance, Tours of Ireland, by Creative Irish Gifts Catalog and The Irish Children's Fund, Inc., 2002.
- Folder 2: Catalog, Creative Irish Gifts first catalog, 1987.
- Folder 3: History, An Irish Blessing...., Robert O'Connor, undated.
- Folder 4: Leaflet, The Irish Children's Fund, Inc., undated.
- Folder 5: Newspaper clipping, The Plain Dealer, November 15, 2001.
- Folder 6: Paper, *An Evaluation of the Long-Term Effects on Participation in The Children's Project*, Northern Ireland, Sarah Riley and Karen Trew, School of Psychology, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 1995.
- Folder 7: Program, Twenty Years Building Friendships 1982-2001 Irish Children's Fund 20th Anniversary Program Book, 2001.