9-1999

GEN MS 01 Katharine E. O’Brien Papers Finding Aid

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KATHARINE E. O’BRIEN PAPERS
GEN MS 1

Total Boxes: 2
Linear Feet: 0.75

By
Susie R. Bock

Portland, Maine
September, 1999

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Administrative Information

Provenance: These papers were donated in 1999 by O'Brien's executor and came with a collection of her books.

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Biographical Note

Katharine E. O'Brien (d. 1998) was born in Amesbury, Massachusetts, but raised in Portland, Maine. A graduate of Deering High School, she later taught mathematics there for over three decades and led that institution to taking first place among Maine schools for 20 years in the National Mathematics Contest sponsored by the Mathematical Association of America. Ms. O'Brien received a BA from Bates College, a MS from Cornell University, and a PhD from Brown University. She lectured at what was then the University of Maine, Portland and at the National Science Foundation Summer Institutes at Brown University. Her many awards include an honorary degree from the University of Maine and the Deborah Morton Award from Westbrook College, now part of the University of New England.


Description of the Papers

The Katharine E. O'Brien Papers span the period 1947-1998 and consist primarily of typescripts of her poems.

Correspondence, 1978-1993 & undated; ca 20 items in one folder.

Letters received and drafts of letters sent, primarily relating to publication of her poetry. There is one excellent draft of a letter from Miss O'Brien dated March 12, 1998 in which she sums up her career.

Writings, 1947, 1980-1981, but largely undated; ca. 300 items in ten folders

Primarily drafts of poems with some other writing; includes one published piece (music) and some correspondence (re the Buchwald Interview) and notes on poetry. Her poetry is both autographed and typewritten and includes changes. The poems are arranged by title and if none, by first line, with many of the poems written on verso of
algebra lessons or tests. There are often several copies of the same poem, each with the same hand annotations or corrections. Each typescript includes her name and address, suggesting that this was the version she sent to publishers. Most of the typescripts are of single poems, but there is a more extensive typescript and notes for *Poet's Holiday: An Anthology*, an unpublished book.


Commencements, including the University of Maine commencement when she received an honorary degree, houses and people.

Miscellany, undated, ca. 17 items in seven folders.

Printed material, correspondence, address/telephone book and notes.

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<td>Music, When I Set Out for Lyonesse, 1947</td>
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<td>Poems (By title or first line)</td>
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<td>Alert, see Reward</td>
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<td>Allergy, see verso, The Average Man</td>
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| 1   | 6      | Behind the Desk, see verso, The Average Man  
Bernoullis, The (2)  
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Genetic Engineering  
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| 9   | L-P    | Life Span (2)  
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Sibling (3)
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Spray-can caveat
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      |        | Talking Back to the Sponsor  
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      |        | Writing on the Wall (2)  
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      | 14    | House, undated  
      | 15    | University of Maine Commencement, 1960  
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<pre><code>  | 2 17  | Sebago Cottage, undated |
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