



## **CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES**

**Inventory of the  
William A. Packer fonds**

**Inventory #F0559**

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## F0559 - William A. Packer fonds

**Fonds/Collection Number:** F0559

**Title:** William A. Packer fonds

**Dates:** 1933-1976, predominant 1958-1959

**Extent:** 0.5 m of textual records and other material

**Biographical Sketch/  
Administrative History:** William (Viljo) August Packer was born in Toronto, Ontario on October 15, 1919 and passed away July 10, 1998. He received his B.A. (Modern Languages) and M.A. (German Literature) degrees from the University of Toronto in 1941 and 1942 respectively, followed by his PhD. (German Literature) from Cornell University in 1950. Packer held a variety of teaching positions during his career including at Cornell University, the University of Michigan, United College in Manitoba (now the University of Winnipeg), Oakwood Collegiate Institute in Toronto, and at University College at the University of Toronto. Between 1943 and 1946, Packer interrupted his studies to serve in the Intelligence Corps in the Canadian Army, serving in both Canada and Europe. While a professor at United College, Packer was directly involved in what became colloquially known as the "Crowe case," which had its roots in a personal letter sent to Packer by his friend and colleague Harry S. Crowe. The letter was intercepted by the administration which used it as grounds to dismiss Crowe in 1958. This event, entrenched in a debate over academic freedom, and the subsequent investigations of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, eventually helped establish the association as an effective voice for the defence of university teachers' rights. Packer subsequently resigned in support of Crowe, one of 16 academics to do so. Following his resignation from United College in 1959, Packer worked as a high school teacher in Toronto and subsequently obtained a position at University of Toronto in 1963 where he remained until his retirement in 1984. In 2009, Packer was posthumously awarded the Milner Memorial Award for his involvement in the Crowe dispute. Packer married Katherine Helen Smith (1919-2006) in September 1941 and they had one child. Mrs. Packer was actively involved in librarianship and served as the dean at the Faculty of Library and Information Science, University of Toronto, from 1979 until her retirement in 1984.

**Scope and Content:** The fonds consists primarily of records relating to the Harry Crowe dispute, but also includes others pertaining to Packer's academic career and personal life. Records have been arranged in the following series:

S00450	Crowe dispute files
S00451	Other William Packer files
S00452	Katherine Packer files

**Custodial History:** After the death of William Packer, Mrs. Packer contacted the Clara Thomas Archives in 2001 and 2003 to discuss donating her husband's records but delayed in completing the agreement. The records were subsequently in the possession of their daughter for several years before the Clara Thomas Archives was approached again by an intermediary assisting Ms Packer.

**Language of material note:** Records pertaining to the course Packer taught at Royal Military College are primarily in German.

**Restrictions on  
Access and Use:** No restrictions on access.

**Finding Aid:** File list available.

**URL of Finding Aid:** <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000559.htm>

**Accruals:** The fonds comprises the following accessions: 2009-035. No further accruals are expected.

**Related Records:** Related records may be found in Harry S. Crowe fonds (F0297).

**Immediate source of** Donated by W.A. Packer's daughter Marianne Packer in 2010.

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**acquisition:**

**Other Notes:** Given the disorder of the records at the time of donation, the arrangement of the records was imposed by the archivist. File titles were supplied based on the file contents.

**Subject Access Points:** Crowe, Harry S., 1922-1981

**Provenance Access Points:** Packer, William A., 1919-1998  
Packer, Katherine Helen, 1919-2006

Date of creation: 2010/06/24

Date of last revision: 2010/08/16