

Description and Finding Aid

**ARTHUR HENSHAW PACKER COLLECTION
F2226**

Prepared by Tatiana Rogova 2014

ARTHUR HENSHAW PACKER COLLECTION

Dates of creation

[194?-2005]

Extent

6 cm of textual records

22 photographs

Biographical sketch

Arthur Henshaw Packer, sculptor, artist, designer, carver, was born on 11 May 1888 at Trowbridge, Wiltshire, England. He studied art and architecture in Bath, England and as a part of his training, did a number of carvings on public buildings around the Bath area. In 1910, after the completion of his course study, he immigrated to Winnipeg, Manitoba, joining his family who had arrived in Canada in 1907.

Upon arrival, he worked at the DeKew Company, which supplied ornamental stone and mouldings. Packer also worked on a number of small commissions, such as the carvings on Gaiety Theatre [1912?] and Marlborough Hotel [1913?] in Winnipeg. In 1913, he married his fiancée Kate Edith Cox (1886-1943) shortly after her emigration from Bournemouth, England. Packer and his wife had one daughter, June K. Ridley (1914-2001).

Packer received the commission to carve the reliefs on the tympanum of the Winnipeg Law Court around 1914. After 1914, he became a homesteader, owning a farm on the Peguis First Nations Reserve with his extended family. In 1917, he began working as a school teacher on the reserve.

Around 1935, he moved with his wife, daughter and son-in-law to Toronto, where he once again took up sculpting and carving. He designed and constructed a series of English Cottage style homes in the Kingsway area in west Toronto with his son-in-law. In 1941 he accepted the commission from Trinity College to carve the portraits of King George VI, Queen Elizabeth, Archbishop Owen and the Provost Cosgrave in the Trinity Quadrangle. He may have worked on the bas reliefs and the coat of arms on the former Postal Building at 40 Bay St. (now the Air Canada Center) around 1938 and he contributed to the carving of the QEW Monument in 1939. He is also thought to have carved the Canadian Coat of Arms on the Rainbow Bridge at Niagara Falls in 1942.

During the war period he worked for the DeHavilland Aircraft Company, modelling parts of planes. He continued to work on private commissions after 1945. Packer died in 1953 at his home in Toronto.

[Source]: Most of the biographical information on A.H. Packer comes from a biography written by his daughter, June K. Ridley, *Artist Among the Wolves*, published in 2005.

Scope and content

The collection consists of material documenting Packer’s professional work in the city of Toronto, including photographs, a report from the Toronto Historical Society Board, and his biography.

Notes:

Acquisition history:

Photographs of Packer working on the sculptures at Trinity College were given to the archives by June K. Ridley in 1995.

Restrictions on access:

None

Terms governing use and reproduction / publication:

Various copyright holders. It is the researcher’s responsibility to obtain permission to publish any part of the fonds.

Provenance access points:

Packer, Arthur Henshaw, 1888-1953

Location / File Listing:

FOLDER/UNIT TITLE	START DATE	END DATE	CONTENTS	BOX/ FILE #
<i>Artist Among the Wolves</i> Draft	1994	1994	Draft of June K. Ridley’s biography on her father, A. H. Packer, titled <i>Artist Among the Wolves</i> . Draft was compiled in 1994, transcribed from the original document written in [1974?]. The draft is annotated and edited by several unknown individuals, presumably a publisher and Ridley.	1-1
Toronto Historical Board Agenda	1995	1995	Agenda and materials for the Toronto Historical Board Meeting, 22 February 1995. Report contains materials on the redevelopment of the Postal Building (40 Bay St.) as a Raptors N.B.A. Arena. Section 10A contains letters and media highlights concerning the historical and artistic significance of the building. Material on A.H. Packer’s alleged contribution also	1-2

Arthur Henshaw Packer Collection

			included.	
Head Models of Provost Cosgrave and Archbishop Owen	[1941?]	[1941?]	9 photographs: b&w; 25.5 cm x 21.5 cm or smaller 5 negative slides (undeveloped): 10.5 cm x 12.5 cm also included Most of the photographs are headshots of the Provost Cosgrave and Archbishop Owen. Some photos of the clay and finished models are also included	1-3
Arthur Henshaw Packer and the Stone Portraits on Henderson Tower	[194-]	[194-]	8 photographs: b&w; 18 cm x 12 cm View of Henderson Tower during the process of sculpting. Models and fully carved portraits of Queen Elizabeth and King George VI. A couple of photographs also show A.H. Packer in the midst of his work.	1-4
Glass slides	1945	1945	6 photographs : glass slides ; b&w ; 8.2 x 8.2 cm. Views of Henderson Tower, one with Packer on a scaffold, during the creation of the work; the heads of the King and Queen in completed and incomplete states.	1-5
<i>Artist Among the Wolves</i>	2005	2005	Copy of A.H. Packer's biography written by his daughter June K. Ridley. Published in 2005, posthumously, 129 pages. Contains family photos of the Packer family as well as examples of Packer's most prominent work.	