

Kenneth Oppel Fonds

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Kenneth Oppel fonds. – 1981-2005. – 18 full archival boxes, each 13.0 cm, for a linear total of 2.34 metres.

Biographical sketch: Kenneth Oppel, one of Canada's best-known writers for children, was born in Port Alberni, British Columbia, in 1967. His first children's novel, *Colin's Fantastic Video Adventure*, was published in 1985 (on the recommendation of Roald Dahl). Oppel attended the University of Toronto's Trinity College, studying cinema and literature. He has lived in Oxford and Dublin, and now resides in Toronto with his wife, Philippa Shepherd, and their three children. Author of more than 17 novels, picture books and biographies, Oppel's list of awards won grows as quickly as his bibliography, including the CLA Award, the Red Maple Award, the Ruth Schwartz Award, the Pacific Northwest Award, the Sunburst Award, and the coveted White Raven designation for his picture book *Peg and the Yeti*. Oppel's *Silverwing* trilogy has sold more than a million copies worldwide. Among many other honours, his novel *Airborn* won the Governor General's award for children's literature (2004). *Skybreaker*, its sequel, was *The Times* (London) Children's Novel of 2005, and won the Red Maple Award and the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Award for 2006. In 2007, Oppel was awarded the distinguished Vicky Metcalf Award for a body of work.

Scope and content: These fonds represent the literary archive of an award-winning Canadian author for his books for young people, consisting of original manuscripts for published and unpublished works. These range from a few sample essays written by Oppel in university to manuscripts of his earliest published novel and all his other works for children, including the two books that won the Governor General's literary award for fiction for children. Correspondence, criticism, notebooks and contracts relating to his children's books are included. Of the 18 archival boxes, thirteen contain manuscripts for published works, two contain unpublished manuscripts and idea notebooks, and three contain contracts, correspondence, background materials, biographical materials and reviews.

Series and Sub-series

Box 1 / 13.0 cm

Series 1.0 – Correspondence

1.1 Fan Mail

1.1.1 General fan mail

Dates of creation: 1984 – 1995

Physical description: 31 letters (numbers assigned)

Scope and content: fan mail, mostly from children; arranged in chronological order.

1.1.2 Early Silverwing fan mail

Dates of creation: 1998, 1999

Scope and content: Silverwing fan mail, Group letter from 5 schools. Arranged in chronological order; original folder represented – file title based on the title written on the original file.

1.2 Personal mail

Dates of creation: 1984 - ?

Physical description: 5 personal letters and holiday cards related to books

1.3 Business mail

Dates of creation: 1984 – 2002

Physical description: 5 letters (numbers assigned)

Scope and content: Non-editorial. Mail from various publishers, writers' organizations and other business organizations. Arranged chronologically.

1.4 Editorial mail

Scope and content: correspondence with publishing companies and literary agents for editorial purposes.

Arrangement: All files are organized chronologically. Order of the following files is based on the order of publication.

1.4.1 Colin's Fantastic Video Adventure

Dates of creation: 1983 – 1992

Scope and content: correspondence with Murray Pollinger, Penguin, E.P. Dutton. 65 letters (numbers assigned); original folder represented.

1.4.2 Cosimo Cat

Dates of creation: 1989 – 1999

Scope and content: 20 letters (numbers assigned), mostly with Scholastic Canada Ltd. (some letters contain faxed sample illustrations for the book); original folder represented.

1.4.3 The Live-Forever Machine

Dates of creation: 1989-1994

Scope and content: 35 letters (numbers assigned) from Murray Pollinger and Kids Can Press; original folder included.

1.4.4 Dead Water Zone

Dates of creation: 1991-2000

Scope and content: 67 letters (numbers assigned) from Murray Pollinger, Kids Can Press, Little Brown and Company (sample illustrations are included). Original folder and envelope which the contained mails are represented in the folder.

1.4.5 Follow That Star

Dates of creation: 1991-1994

Scope and content: 16 letters (numbers assigned) from Murray Pollinger, Kids Can Press (sample illustrations).

Box 2 / 13.0 cm

1.4.6 Galactic Snapshots and Cosmic Snapshots

Dates of creation: 1992-1996

Scope and content: 37 letters (numbers assigned) from Murray Pollinger, Penguin, Hamish Hamilton Children's Book. The correspondence on the two books were intertwined and could not be separated. Original folder represented.

1.4.7 Silverwing

Dates of creation: 1996-2004

Scope and content: 43 letters (numbers assigned), mainly with Hodder Children's Books, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

1.4.8 Biography Series

Dates of creation: 1996-1997

Scope and content: 7 letters (numbers assigned) from Kids Can Press.

1.4.9 Emma's Emu

Dates of creation: 1994-1995

Scope and content: 12 letters (numbers assigned) from Hamish Hamilton Children's Books, Penguin, Kids Can Press; original folder represented.

1.4.10 Sunwing

Dates of creation: 1998-2000

Scope and content: 22 letters (numbers assigned) from Aladdin, Writers House, Simon & Schuster, and HarperCollins; original folder represented.

1.4.11 The Barnes and the Brains series

Dates of creation: 1990-1998

Scope and content: 126 letters (numbers assigned) - correspondence with Hamish Hamilton, Murray Pollinger, and Penguin; original folder represented.

1.4.12 Peg and the Whale

Dates of creation: 1997-2000

Scope and content: 23 letters (numbers assigned) with Writers House, Simon & Schuster; original folder represented.

1.4.13 Firewing

Dates of creation: 2001-2002

Scope and content: 17 letters (numbers assigned) with Hodder Children's Book, HarperCollins, Alladin, Simon & Schuster.

1.4.14 Miscellaneous

Scope and content: Includes editorial mails regarding Peg and the Yeti and other unpublished materials; rejection letters (from various publishers such as Orca Book Publishers, Murray Pollinger, Kids Can Press, Scholastic); 16 letters (numbers assigned).

2.0 Publicity

2.1 Advertisement

Dates of creation: June 1990

Scope and content: Advertisement for The Live-Forever Machine in "Quill & Quire Magazine" June 1990.

2.2 Scholastic catalogues

Dates of creation: 1990-1999

Physical description: 6 catalogues which contains books written by Kenneth Opperl (arranged in chronological order).

Scope and content: 2 Kids Can Press catalogues (Fall 1990, Fall 1993); 4 Harper Collins catalogues (2 copies of Jan. – Apr. 1997, Sept. -Dec 1998, Sept. - Dec. 1999).

2.3 Marketing plans

Physical description: A paper sheet with contacts for special market

Scope and content: A marketing plan for Silverwing prepared by the publishing company Hodder/HC (3 pages).

Box 3 / 13.0 cm

3.0 Writings

3.1 Published materials

3.1.1 Colin's Fantastic Video Adventure

Physical description: 1 folder

Scope and content: Early version of Colin's Fantastic Video Adventure (not published); illustrated by Raeside. Booklet format: 9 pages and Book cover. Original folder included.

3.1.2 Cosimo Cat

Physical description: 1 folder

Scope and content: manuscripts, edited drafts and notes/emails from editors. Draft 1: 6 pages, typed; draft 2: 5 pages, typed; draft 3: 8 pages, revised; draft 4: 10 pages and a letter from an editor.

3.1.3 The Live-Forever Machine

Physical description: 5 folders

Scope and content:

- Folder 1/5: handwritten and typed notes, 141 pages and 30 pages in 2 notebooks
- Folder 2/5: 2 drafts are stored in the folder
 - Rough draft: 129 pages, some typed, some handwritten
 - First draft, edited and commented by Joanna Dutka, Feb. 2/89, was stored in an envelope which is represented in this folder (121 pages).
- Folder 3/5: second draft, edited, includes handwritten notes, redundant chapters (267 pages)

- Folder 4/5: third draft, edited (177 pages)
- Folder 5/5: third draft, edited (172 pages)

Box 4 / 13.0 cm

3.1.4 Dead Water Zone

Physical description: 8 folders

Scope and content:

- Folder 1/8: handwritten and typed notes, was stored in an envelope which is represented in this folder (272 pages)
- Folder 2/8: draft, edited, dated Aug 14/91 (119 pages)
- Folder 3/8: edited draft and a letter from the editor (222 pages)
- Folder 4/8: draft, edited, dated Oct 1991, was stored in an envelope which is represented in this folder (142 pages)
- Folder 5/8: draft, typed (67 pages)
- Folder 6/8: first proof with a letter from the publisher (94 pages)
- Folder 7/8: proof (171 pages)
- Folder 8/8: partial proof with a sample cover page illustration (14 pages)

3.1.5 Follow That Star

Physical description: 1 folder (44 pages)

Scope and content: 5 edited manuscripts, 3 letters/comments from editors

3.1.6 Cosmic Snapshots

Dates of creation: 1992

Physical description 1 folder

Scope and content: 2 drafts each dated June 18/92 and June 20/92 (9 pages and 8 pages each)

3.1.7 Galactic Snapshots

Physical description: 1 folder

Scope and content: handwritten notes: 10 pages; 2 drafts: 12 and 17 pages each

Box 5 / 13.0 cm

3.1.8 Silverwing

Physical description: 7 folders –

- Folder 1/7: notes from 1995 to 1996 for Silverwing aka Darkwing, was stored in a folder which is represented in this folder (94 pages)
- Folder 2/7: first draft and notes, dated July 1995 (183 pages)
- Folder 3/7: second draft, dated Aug 1995 (162 pages)
- Folder 4/7: third draft, dated Aug 1996 (273 pages)

Box 6 / 13.0 cm

- Folder 5/7: an edited manuscript with a letter from the editor (270 pages)
- Folder 6/7: final manuscript, dated Nov 1996 (142 pages)
- Folder 7/7: galley proof and letter from publisher, was stored in an envelope which is represented in this folder (226 pages)

3.1.9 Biography series – Laura Secord, Sam Steele

Physical description: 1 folder (136 pages)

Scope and content: drafts of biographies (Laura Secord and Sam Steele) researched and written in contract with Kids Can Press publishing company

Box 7 / 13.0 cm

3.1.10 Emma's Emu

Physical description: 1 folder; handwritten notes (3 pages)

Scope and content: 3 drafts

- Draft 1: 20 pages, dated June 28, 1994
- Draft 2: 28 pages, photocopied
- Draft 3: 18 pages, photocopied

Correspondence with Hamish Hamilton Children's Books with suggested cuts (2 pages). Correspondence with Fitzhenry & Whiteside and galley proof (27 pages); original folder represented.

3.1.11 Sunwing

Scope and content: 5 folders –

- Folder 1/5: notes, dated 1998, 8 pages of synopsis and 9 pages of “questions to be answered”
- Folder 2/5: first draft dated June – Oct. 98, 264 pages, divided by rough chapters
- Folder 3/5: edited manuscript (241 pages) with a letter from the editor (8 pages + 10 pages of revision notes), dated Dec. 1998

Box 8 / 13.0 cm

- Folder 4/5: edited manuscript (219 pages) with a letter from the editor (4 pages, Simon & Schuster), dated Nov 1998
- Folder 5/5: galley proof (143 pages)

3.1.12 The Barnes and The Brains series

Scope and content: 1 folder – notes and rough drafts of:

- A Bad Case of Ghosts: 12 pages, Feb 9/91
- A Bad Case of Magic: 26 pages, June 5/91
- A Bad Case of Magic: 23 pages, Feb 11/93, edited by Hamish Hamilton Children's Books
- A Bad Case of Robots: 7 pages, Nov 13/91
- A Bad Case of Robots: 14 pages, Nov 21/91
- A Bad Case of Robots: 17 pages, Dec 5/91
- A Bad Case of Glurp: 13 pages, Nov 22/91
- A Bad Case of Glurp: 6 pages, Nov 26/91
- A Bad Case of Volts: 9 pages, Nov 26/91
- A Bad Case of Volts: 18 pages, Dec 2/91
- A Bad Case of Dinosaurs: 27 pages, July 14/92
- A Bad Case of Vampires: 17 pages, Feb 7/95
- A Bad Case of Vampires: 29 pages, Feb 23/95
- A Bad Case of VooDoo: 28 pages
- Handwritten notes: 8 pages
- Edited galley proof of Barnes & Brains series + a letter from Scholastic Canada: 37 pages

3.1.13 Peg and the Whale

Scope and content: 1 folder – earlier version titled “Jack Was Every Inch a Sailor” (7 pages draft + a letter from Kids Can Press); revised manuscript, dated May 1998 (4 pages); rough proof with sketches of illustrations (21 pages); illustration samples (3 sheets, colour).

Box 9 / 13.0 cm

3.1.14 Firewing

Scope and content: 12 folders –

- Folder 1/12: outline: dated 2000, 9 pages proposal of Firewing for HarperCollins
- Folder 2/12: first draft (152 pages, 15 chapters), dated Nov 2000,

includes synopsis (6 pages), outline (11 pages) and notes (2 pages)

- Folder 3/12: second draft, revised (240 pages + 12 pages of draft revision notes)
- Folder 4/12: a manuscript edited by HarperCollins Canada, dated July 2001 (230 pages)

Box 10 / 13.0 cm

- Folder 5/12: edited manuscript, dated July 2001 (230 pages)
- Folder 6/12: edited manuscript and a letter from the editor, dated July 2001 (230 pages, by Simon & Schuster)
- Folder 7/12: Second draft, uncorrected, dated Oct. 2001 (235 pages)
- Folder 8/12: edited manuscript, dated Nov 2001 (234 pages)

Box 11 / 13.0 cm

- Folder 9/12: edited manuscript, dated Dec 2001 (232 pages, by Hodder Children's Books)
- Folder 10/12: edited manuscript, an original envelope represented (329 pages, by HarperCollins)
- Folder 11/12: comments (3 pages) and style sheets (24 pages) from an editor at Simon & Schuster
- Folder 12/12: galley proof (152 pages, from Hodder Children's Books)

Box 12 / 13.0 cm

3.1.15 Airborn

Scope and content: 6 folders –

- Folder 1/6: handwritten + typed notes (95 pages)
- Folder 2/6: draft, dated Apr 5/02 (242 pages)
- Folder 3/6: edited manuscript (378 pages) with a comment (5 pages) from an editor at HarperCollins

Box 13 / 13.0 cm

- Folder 4/6: edited manuscript (407 pages) with a letter (5 pages) from the editor at HarperCollins
- Folder 5/6: edited manuscript (370 pages) with a letter (1 page) from an editor at HarperCollins, was stored in an envelope represented in this folder
- Folder 6/6: additional letters/comments from editors (3 letters, total

11 pages)

3.1.16 Peg and the Yeti

Physical description: 1 folder – 3 edited drafts (3 pages each); a rough proof (17 pages with pencil sketch); a proof with coloured illustration (19 pages); an editor's comment (4 pages).

Box 14, 15 / tot. 26.0 cm

3.1.17 Skybreaker

Dates of creation: 2003-2005

Physical description: 7 folders

Scope and content: all folders contain one of 7 edited manuscripts with letters from editors

- Folder 1: Rough partial draft, dated Dec 4/03, 238 pages
- Folder 2: Final Revision, Feb 2005, 227 pages
- Folder 3: Draft, Nov/04, 214 pages + 3 pages of notes + A comment from an editor, Tim Wayne-Jones, 2 pages
- Folder 4: Draft, Dec/2004, 424 pages + 9 pages of comments from HarperCollins
- Folder 5: first complete draft, Oct/04, 266 pages
- Folder 6: Copyedit, 2005, 454 pages + 2pages of editor's note
- Folder 7: draft, Oct/04, 310 pages + 5 pages of editor's note from HarperCollins + 9 pages of partial chapter dated April 1/02

Box 16 / 13.0 cm

3.2 Unpublished materials

Arrangement: Organized in alphabetical orders. All works were filed under shorts in an original folder. The original folder is represented

3.2.1 The Amulet of the Demon-Lord

Dates of creation: copyright 1981

Physical description: 1 folder; a draft; 22 pages

3.2.2 Aunt Lucy's Cousin

Dates of creation: not dated

Physical description: 1 folder; draft; 6 pages

3.2.3 The Bus Driver

Dates of creation: 1982

Physical description: 1 folder; draft; 5 pages

3.2.4 Cat on the Snow

Dates of creation: 1984

Physical description: 1 folder; four drafts

- Draft 1: 7 pages, 1984
- Draft 2, 3: 7 pages each, not dated
- Draft 4: 5 pages, March/April 1985

3.2.5 Dean's First Flight

Dates of creation: 1984

Physical description: 1 folder; draft; 6 pages

3.2.6 Digging Down

Dates of creation: 1982

Physical description: 1 folder; 4 pages

Scope and content: a draft and a rejection letter from a publishing company, Potlatch Publications Ltd.

3.2.7 Diving

Dates of creation: Dec 1983

Physical description: 1 folder; draft; 9 pages

3.2.8 Far From Home

Dates of creation: Dec 1984

Physical description: 1 folder; draft; 5 pages

3.2.9 Hannah and the Haunted Typewriter

Dates of creation: October 1991

Physical description: 1 folder

- Edited draft, Oct 29/91, 37 pages
- Edited draft, Oct 21/91, 21 pages
- Rough notes, Oct 17/91, 18 pages
- Rough material, Oct 21/91, 16 pages

3.2.10 Hermes' Sandals

Dates of creation: 1986

Physical description: 1 folder; draft; 147 pages

3.2.11 The King's Taster

Dates of creation: 1992

Physical description: 1 folder; 3 drafts

- Draft 1: 4 pages, Aug 28/92
- Draft 2: 4 pages, Aug 30/92
- Draft 3: 5 pages + title page

3.2.12 Ludlow on the Run

Scope and content: 3 drafts and notes

- Draft 1: 5 pages, July 3/90
- Draft 2: 5 pages, July 16/90
- Draft 3: 5 pages
- notes: 2 pages

Earlier versions with different titles "Ludlow" and "Doctor Metropolis"

3.2.13 Lykanthrope

Dates of creation: Copyright 1982

Physical description: draft; 32 pages

3.2.14 Philippa Slept

Dates of creation: 1990

Physical description: draft; 14 pages

3.2.15 Rocking Horse

Dates of creation: 1983

Physical description: 2 drafts (14 pages each) and 1 completed work in student publication "Themes and Variations" pages 1-8

3.2.16 The Spectral Signal

Dates of creation: 1990

Physical description: draft; 24 pages

3.2.17 The Shakes

Dates of creation: Not dated

Physical description: draft; 2 pages

3.2.18 Slow Dancing

Dates of creation: March 1985

Physical description: poem; 1 page

3.2.19 "Speak Hands for Me!"

Dates of creation: 1982

Physical description: draft; 8 pages and 1 pages of note

3.2.20 Too Hot For Socks

Physical description 4 pages of editor's comment from Scholastic-Tab Publications; 4 pages of draft copy 1, 3 pages of draft copy 2

3.2.21 Not titled

Dates of creation: 1992

Physical description: 2 screenplay drafts (99 pages, 119 pages each); (screenplay version of Dead Water Zone?)

Box 17 / 13.0 cm

3.3 Unfinished materials

3.3.1 Ridley's Splinter

Dates of creation: 1989-1990

Physical description: first draft, Chapter 1-13, 94 pages; 29 pages of notes and extra materials; original envelope and folder represented.

3.3.2 There and Back

Dates of creation: 1986-1987

Physical description: 2 drafts, stored in an envelopes represented in the folder (draft copy 1: 99 pages, draft copy 2: 71 pages, rough notes: 14 pages)

3.4 Student essays and scripts

Scope and content: essays and scripts written while attending University of Toronto

3.4.1 Certificate of Merit

Scope and content: Certificate of Merit for attending CBC Telefest '89, with comments from judges for Dead Dog and Chain Letter.

3.4.2 Brian Doyle and the Modern Folk Tale

Dates of creation: 1988

Physical description: essay; 12 pages and 1 page of grade note

3.4.3 Nostalgia and Longing in Terry Gilliam's Brazil

Dates of creation: 1989

Physical description: essay; 20 pages and 1 page of grade note

3.4.4 Dead Dog

Physical description: screenplay; 5 pages

3.4.5 A Chain Letter

Dates of creation: 1989

Physical description: screenplay; 2 copies (16 pages 15 pages each)

3.4.6 Plain and Simple

Dates of creation: 1989

Physical description: screenplay (14 pages and 1 page of grading)

3.5 Story ideas and notes

Dates of creation: 1988-1991

Scope and content: handwritten notes in four notebooks

- Notebook 1: 1988/9, 34 pages
- Notebook 2: 1988/9, 26 pages
- Notebook 3: Oct 1989- , 95 pages
- Notebook 4: Sept 1990- , 94 pages

Box 18 / 13.0 cm

Series 4.0 – Photographs

4.1 Book covers

Scope and content: sample book covers from The Live-Forever Machine, Dead Water Zone, Emma's Emu, Bad Case Series and Silverwing.

Series 5.0 – Reviews

5.1 Colin's Fantastic Video, 34 reviews

5.2 Cosimo Cat, 1 review

5.3 The Live-Forever Machine, 2 reviews

5.4 Dead Water Zone, 4 reviews

5.5 Sunwing, 4 reviews

Series 6.0 – Financial Records

Note: All files are arranged in chronological order

6.1 Royalty statements

Dates of creation: 1984-1999

Scope and content: royalty statements from publishing companies including HC, Hodder, Penguin, Kids Can, LB, Scholastic, Simon & Schuster, Orca.

6.2 Rights and permissions

Scope and content: copyrights for “Colin’s Fantastic Video Adventure”, “The Live-Forever Machine”, as well as Foreign Sales permissions.

6.3 Payment receipt records

Scope and content: payment statements from publishing companies.

6.4 Revenue Canada taxation

Scope and content: correspondence with Revenue Canada for Income Tax Purposes.

6.5 Contracts

Scope and content: 13 literary contracts (numbers assigned), including: work for hire contracts, author contracts, agreements with literary agents and publishing companies.

6.6 Grant applications and receipts

Series 7.0 – Research notes

7.1 Photocopies: collection of photocopied background research materials

7.2 Writing guidelines

Series 8.0 – Miscellaneous personal materials

8.1 Biography

Dates of creation: 1981-1993

Scope and content: Kenneth Oppel’s biography + bibliography 1981-1993, 2 pages.

8.2 Newspaper clipping

Scope and content: 20 periodical and newspaper articles (numbers assigned) clipped by Oppel for research related to books, 12 newspaper and magazine articles (numbers assigned) about Kenneth Oppel for the publishing of Colin’s Fantastic Video Adventure.