

MS
Coll.
373

Llyod Roberts Collection of Grey Owl Papers

Dates:

1937-1950

Extent:

3 boxes

Scope and content:

Collection includes correspondence from Archibald Stanfield Belaney (also known as Grey Owl), and Anahareo (also known as "Pony" and Gertie) to Roberts; typescripts of an unpublished article "Grey Owl the Man" and of a thirteen-part programme on CBC radio entitled "My Friend Grey Owl" by Roberts; and *The Men of the Last Frontier*, by Grey Owl, 1932, bound by Grey Owl and "Pony" with lengthy inscription to Roberts, and manuscript drawing on inside covers and fly leaves.

Biographical sketches:

William Harris Lloyd Roberts was born in Fredericton, N.B., on 21 October 1884, to Sir Charles G.D. Roberts and Mary Isabel Fenety. He was educated privately and attended King's College School in Windsor, N.S., and public schools in Fredericton he began writing as a reporter for the News in Nelson, B.C. in 1911, and later for the Ottawa Citizen. He then wrote and edited for the Canadian Immigration Service before retiring in 1920 to make writing his career. His books of poems included *England over the Seas*, 1914; *Along the Ottawa*, 1927; and *I Sing of Life*, 1937. His essays included *The Book of Roberts*, 1966. He also wrote several plays and articles, short stories, poems and radio programmes. From 1925 to 1939 he was parliamentary reporter for *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Reference:

The Canadian Who's Who, 1955-1957, p. 925

Archibald Stansfeld Belaney (also known as Grey Owl), was born in Hastings, England, on 18 September 1888. Belaney was a well-known conservationist and writer who falsely presented himself as an Indigenous person. Although born in England, he portrayed himself as the son of a Scottish man and Apache woman and named himself Grey Owl. Raised by two aunts and his grandmother, Belaney had an unhappy childhood. As a boy, he was fascinated with North American Indigenous peoples. At 17, he left England for Northern Canada where, apart from his war service, he spent the remainder of his life. Through his association with the Ojibwe of Northern Ontario, he learned about the local environment. Shortly after his arrival, Archibald Belaney presented himself as part Indigenous and began to use the name Grey Owl. As Grey Owl, he published his first book, *The Men of the Last Frontier* (1931). Anahareo, his Algonquin and Kanyen'kehà:ka (Mohawk) wife, convinced him of the need for conservation, and that became the central theme of his writings. As Grey Owl, he was appointed to Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba, and later to Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan, to head a beaver conservation program. He wrote three books in Western Canada: *Pilgrims of the*

Wild (1934), *The Adventures of Sajo and her Beaver People* (1935) and *Tales of an Empty Cabin* (1936). His work was extremely popular, especially in Britain, where he did two lecture tours. Shortly after his death in 1938, the *North Bay Nugget* published an article on 13 April 1938 in which it revealed that Archibald Belaney had falsely identified himself as Grey Owl and was not Indigenous.

Reference:

Smith, Donald B., and Tabitha de Bruin. "Archibald Belaney (Grey Owl)." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. May 9, 2023.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/archibald-belaney-grey-owl>

Notes:

Shorthand notations are used throughout the finding aid and are as follows:

- ALS: Autograph letter signed (signed by the author of the letter, handwritten)
- TLS: Typed letter signed (typed letter signed by hand)

| Box:Folder Number | Contents |
|-------------------|---|
| 1:1 | 2 ALS from Grey Owl, Riding Mountain National Park Neepawa, Manitoba, [1931?], 1931 |
| 1:2 | 1 ALS from Grey Owl, Prince Albert National Park, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, 5 June 1932. With envelope |
| 1:3 | 1 ALS from "Pony" Gertie, Waskesiu Beach [Lake] Saskatchewan, 15 July 1933. With envelope |
| 1:4 | 1 ALS from Grey Owl, Beaver Lodge, Prince Albert National Park, via Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, 28 October 1933 |
| 1:5 | 1 ALS from Grey Owl, Beaver Lodge, Prince Albert National Park, via Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, 14 February 1934 |
| 1:7 | 1 photograph, Grey Owl in Rocky Mountain National Park. 8" x 10" glossy. Inscribed to Roberts. |
| 1:8 | 1 photograph, Beavers and friends, Rocky Mountain National Park. 11 3" x 5" prints |
| 1:9 | 1 photograph, Grey Owl with friends. Copy print or still, 7 ½" x 13" mounted. [From National Film Board film on Grey Owl?] |
| 1:10 | 1 photograph, Gertie on her horse, with Roberts and his daughter. Colour print, 5" X 5" |
| 1:11 | "Grey Owl the Man", by Lloyd Roberts. Typescript, carbon copy, signed, with TLS from E.K. Brown, associate editor of <i>The University of Toronto Quarterly</i> , 18 August 1937. |
| 1:12 | Donald B. Smith, [a biographer of Grey Owl], Toronto to Mrs. Roberts, 1 ALS, 6 May 1971. |

| Box:Folder Number | Contents |
|-------------------|---|
| 2:1-2:13 | "My Friend Grey Owl". Typescript, carbon copy, with holograph revisions, for a 13-part CBC radio series. Last page of part 13 signed by Roberts |
| 2:14 | "Hands off the Little People". Typescript signed by Roberts on p.30 |
| 2:15-2:36 | "A Book for Boys : Brother to the Beaver". Typescript with holograph revisions, and p.157 signed by Roberts |
| Box 3 (flat) | The Men of the Last Frontier, by Grey Owl. Toronto : Macmillan Company, 1932 Drawings with captions in pencil on end papers, and inscription to Roberts from Gertie and Archie Grey Owl and brief notes about bead work on binding on half title page. Bound in brown buckskin with beadwork on front cover. |