

WHITTAKER, EDMUND TAYLOR, 1873-1956

Whittaker's manuscripts were donated to the University of Toronto Rare Book Library on September 1982, by Professor J.M. Whittaker via Jeffrey Crelinston.

#### SCOPE AND CONTENT

The papers consist mainly of correspondence between E.T. Whittaker and his son, J.M. Whittaker; scientific writings, reviews and articles and E.T.'s autobiographical material.

EXTENT: 11 boxes

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Edmund Taylor Whittaker, mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, was born at Southport on Oct. 24, 1873. He was educated at Manchester Grammar School and in 1891, with an entrance scholarship he entered Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1896 Whittaker was elected a fellow of Trinity College and in 1897 he was First Smith's Prizeman. In 1906 he was appointed professor of astronomy in the University of Dublin.

In January 1912 he was elected professor of mathematics in the University of Edinburgh. He held this post for 35 years retiring in 1946. In Europe and in U.S. Whittaker was very well known and he kept up an extensive correspondence with mathematicians all over the globe. Professor Whittaker held several honorary doctorates, fellowships, visiting lectureships, foreign memberships and other distinctions. He received several well-deserved medals. He was specially touched by the honorary fellowship of Trinity College bestowed on him in his later years. He was knighted in 1945.

After 1930 when he was received into the Roman Catholic Church Whittaker's interests turned into natural theology; several of his essays and books of this period, such as "Space and Spirit", have as their explicit aim the reconciliation of modern natural and cosmological science with religion.

Among his published works are:

Modern Analysis, 1902; Analytical Dynamics; History of the Theories of Aether and Electricity; The Calculus of Observations; Space and Spirit; The Modern Approach to Descartes Problem; From Euclid to Eddington; Eddington's Principle in the Philosophy of Science (Eddington Memorial Lectures); and various memoirs.

E.T. Whittaker died in Edinburgh on March 24, 1956. He is survived by Lady Whittaker, three sons and two daughters. His second son, Dr. J.M. Whittaker, was professor of mathematics in the University of Liverpool.

Jennifer Ramlochan  
October 1984

WHITTAKER COLLECTION (CONT'D)

CONTAINER LISTING:

(Boxes 1 - 10 are CORRESPONDENCE mainly between J.M. Whittaker and his father, Sir Edmund T. Whittaker). Original mss & typescripts.

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|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 1  | Letters to J.M.W. from E.T.W. 1918 - 1931                                                                                                                                                   |
| Box 2  | " " " " " 1932 - 1934                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Box 3  | " " " " " 1935 - 1938                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Box 4  | " " " " " 1939 - 1945                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Box 5  | " " " " " 1946 - 1956                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Box 6  | Letters to J.M.W. from family 1927 - 1953                                                                                                                                                   |
| Box 7  | Letters to J.M.W. from people other than family (filed alphabetically A-W) & some unidentified letters                                                                                      |
| Box 8  | Letters to E.T.W. from J.M.W. 1923 - 1956                                                                                                                                                   |
| Box 9  | Letters to E.T.W. from others (including scientists) (filed alphabetically A-Z)                                                                                                             |
| Box 10 | Correspondence (mainly with E.T. Whittaker); other papers relating to J.M. Whittaker's Cambridge career, 1924-27.                                                                           |
| Box 11 | E.T. Whittaker:<br>Scientific writings (articles, lectures, etc.)<br>reviews; biographical materials; obituaries;<br>autobiography including a bibliography of Whittaker's published works. |