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Hamlin, Irving (1873-), Papers, 1912-1938

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30 Hamlin, Irving (1873-), Papers, 1912-1938.
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INTRODUCTION

The personal papers and correspondence of Irving Hamlin of Evanston, Illinois. The papers include personal correspondence, business records, newspaper clippings, and publications relating to seances, spiritualism, and psychical research.

DONOR INFORMATION

Unknown

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Irving Hamlin was born in 1873. The date of his death is currently unknown. It is known that he was married, but his wife's name is not identified in these papers. Hamlin lived in Evanston, Illinois, where he conducted his business interests in the Evanston Sound Proof Door Company. He was an avid researcher of the paranormal, traveling frequently to participate in seances. For a time, he was also associated with one of the professional schools at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Irving Hamlin Papers are arranged into four series, two of which contain sub-series. The four series are **Correspondence, Business, Research, and Clippings**. Included are personal correspondence, clippings, book orders, and business related documents. In almost every file there are references to the activities of the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR).

The **Correspondence** series is organized into six sub-series. These sub-series consist of Jean Comerford Letters, L. R. G. Crandon Letters, Philip Frost Letters, Walter Franklin Prince Letters, Personal Letters, and General Correspondence. The Personal Letters series is mainly correspondence with family members. All other correspondence is focused on Hamlin's interests in the paranormal, dealing mostly with seances and psychical research.

The *Comerford* sub-series contains letters mostly from Irving Hamlin to Jean Comerford. These letters are written from January 29, 1923 to April 14, 1932. These letters discuss Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Harry Houdini, and the locations and circumstances of various seances.

The *Crandon* sub-series contains both incoming and outgoing correspondence with Dr. L.R.G. Crandon. These letters are written from September 11, 1926 to September 29, 1935 and primarily discuss seances. The focus of these letters is on Dr. Crandon's wife, Margery, a spiritual medium. Also discussed is the idea of "ectoplasm".

The *Frost* sub-series includes both incoming and outgoing correspondence with Philip Frost. These letters are written from April 20, 1922 to July 8, 1937. These letters mostly concern discussions of the paranormal and Frost's business interests in Vermont, including a resort known as "Canoe Place." Also discussed in these letters are the Evanston Sound Proof

Doors, Hamlin's health, and Frost's publications.

The *Prince* sub-series consists of incoming and outgoing correspondence with Dr. Walter Franklin Prince. These letters are written from December 23, 1922 to April 27, 1928. These letters primarily discuss paranormal investigations. Also discussed in the letters are Harry Houdini, Masonic Temples, Dr. James H. Hyslop, and the Hyslop Foundation.

The *Personal Letters* sub-series contains primarily letters written to various family members. Those most often written to are Aunt Lottie, Cousin Stella Wood, and Edith; Hamlin's niece. These letters contain some information on Hamlin's interests in the paranormal, but more frequently concern the activities of the family members.

The *General Correspondence* sub-series contains both incoming and outgoing letters from July 24, 1912 to July 11, 1938. These letters concern the paranormal and discuss Tomson seances, Ectoplasmic Materialization, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and excerpts from various, related books and publications. Included in the second folder are letters discussing religion, a letter to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and a brief genealogy of the Hamlin family.

The **Business** series contains letters and records of the Evanston Sound Proof Door and the Hamlinized Folding Partition. This series contains letters written between September 1, 1926 and February 6, 1938. A diagram of the doors and a list of where they had been installed are also included. The business correspondence frequently includes discussions of the paranormal and Hamlin's research interests.

The **Research** series is broken down into four sub-series. These sub-series being the American Society for Psychical Research, Printed Materials Request Forms, Seance Records, and Scientific Journals. The main focus of the series is psychical research and paranormal activity in general. In particular the Margery Crandon and Elizabeth Allen Tomson seances are discussed. References to paranormal publications often appear in this series.

The *American Society for Psychical Research* sub-series contains letters written from December 27, 1922 to November 29, 1937. The topic most often discussed is the Tomson seances.

The *Printed Materials Request Forms* sub-series deals with Hamlin's various requests to purchase copies of books, journals, and newspapers that are paranormal in nature. Also contained in this sub-series are payments to extend Hamlin's subscriptions to various spiritual or paranormal magazines.

The *Seance Records* sub-series deals with three personal accounts of seances. These include the Hamlin account, the William T. Stead account, and the Sir Alfred E. Turner account. Also included in this sub-series are letters from Clarence and Elizabeth Tomson.

The *Scientific Journals* sub-series contains copies of paranormal journals such as Light, Banner of Life, and Reason. Also contained in this sub-series is information about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The **Clippings** series contains various newspaper articles on paranormal topics. Some articles are unidentified as to source or date. This series includes clippings about Margery Conrad being publicly discredited as a fraud.

FOLDER LIST

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- f.1 Comerford Letters
- f.2 Crandon Letters
- f.3 Frost Letters
- f.4 Prince Letters
- f.5 Personal Letters
- f.6 General Correspondence 1912-1928
- f.7 General Correspondence 1929-1938

Business Series

- f.8 Evanston Sound Proof Door

Research Series

- f.9 American Society for Psychical Research
- f.10 Printed Materials Request Forms
- f.11 Seance Records
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