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## Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Betty Grover Eisner papers

**Dates:** 1927-2002

**Collection number:** SC.0924

**Creator:** Eisner, Betty Grover, 1915-

**Collection size:** 10 linear feet

**Repository:** Stanford University. Libraries. Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives.

**Abstract:** Papers documenting Betty Grover Eisner's career in clinical psychology and experimental use of LSD and other drugs. Includes narrative reports and audio recordings of drug therapy sessions, articles and conference papers, book manuscripts, journals, legal documents, journals, personal and professional correspondence, and other materials.

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

## Access

With the exception of Series 2 and the world trip materials in Series 1, access to the collection is restricted. Please contact the University Archivist for information.

## Publication Rights

Property rights reside with the repository. Literary rights reside with the creators of the documents or their heirs. To obtain permission to publish or reproduce, please contact the Public Services Librarian of the Dept. of Special Collections.

## Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Betty Grover Eisner Papers, SC 0924. Stanford University Archives, Stanford, Calif.

## Acquisition Information

Gift of Betty Grover Eisner, 2001.

## Biography

Betty Grover Eisner (1915-2004), a clinical psychologist best known for her experiments with LSD and other psychoactive drugs, was born Helen Elizabeth Grover in Kansas City, MO. After completing high school in Kansas City, she attended Stanford University and earned a B.A. in political science in 1937. She volunteered with the Red Cross during World War II, then spent a year in the late 1940s traveling Europe, Asia, and Africa with her first husband, fellow Stanford graduate Will Eisner. She documented their trip in a series of columns published in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Eisner earned a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1956. She completed her dissertation on the psychology of infertile women, but by the time she graduated her primary professional interest had shifted to the use of LSD as an aid to psychotherapy. She conducted LSD experiments with Dr. Sidney Cohen at a Veterans' Administration hospital in Los Angeles, and later established a private psychotherapy practice in Santa Monica. After psychiatric research with LSD was banned in the United States in the late 1960s, Eisner experimented with using other drugs to promote psychological breakthroughs in patients, including ketamine and injectable Ritalin. Other treatments favored by Eisner included the inhalation of carbogen (a mix of 70% oxygen and 30% carbon dioxide), hot mineral baths, massage, and "blasting," a technique in which a patient was encouraged to release hostility by yelling while muffled by a washcloth.

In 1976, one of Eisner's patients died following mineral bath treatment and blasting therapy. A wrongful death investigation ensued, as well as an ethics investigation by the American Psychological Association. The Psychology Examining Committee of the California Board of Medical Quality Assurance revoked Eisner's license to practice in 1978. Eisner twice attempted to have her license restored in the early 1980s. Both attempts were unsuccessful.

Eisner was the author of *The Unused Potential of Marriage and Sex*, published in 1970, as well as an unpublished book based on her group therapy work, *I Can't, You Can't, But We Can*. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, she authored several journal articles and conference papers on her use of LSD and other drugs in psychotherapy. In 2002, she wrote a memoir titled *Remembrances of LSD Therapy Past*. Although unpublished, this memoir is available on the World Wide Web. Eisner also wrote song lyrics in the 1970s under the pseudonym Rev. B. Later in life, she wrote poetry under the name Abigail Bradbury. She and her second husband, Bill Micks, helped to found the Center for Learning, a school for the teaching of English in Mexico.

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### **Scope and Content of Collection**

The papers document Betty Grover Eisner's career in clinical psychology as well as the intersection of her career with her personal life. Included are detailed narrative reports on Eisner's use of LSD and other drugs in conjunction with psychotherapy; audio tapes of drug sessions; numerous articles and conference papers as well as drafts of two books by Eisner; dream journals, free association writing, and other personal writing; legal papers and supporting documents related to an investigation of Eisner for wrongful death and the subsequent revocation of her professional license; and professional and family correspondence. Prominent correspondents include Sidney J. Cohen, Herman Denber, Albert Hoffman, Krishnamurti, Anaïs Nin, Ron Sandison, and Lewis Terman.

### **Arrangement**

The collection consists of six series: Series 1: Personal and Family Papers; Series 2: Writing; Series 3: Correspondence; Series 4: Legal Files; Series 5: Therapy and Research Files; and Series 6: Audio Materials.

### **Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Denber, Herman C. B., (Herman Cecil B.), 1917-

Krishnamurti, J., (Jiddu), 1895-1986

Eisner, Betty Grover, 1915-

Terman, Lewis Madison, 1877-1956

Eisner, Willard D.

Nin, Anaïs, 1903-1977

Cohen, Sidney, 1910-

Hofmann, Albert, 1906-2008

Sandison, Ronald

Psychoanalysis

sound recordings

Group psychotherapy

Psychologists

Articles.

correspondence

Group psychoanalysis

LSD (Drug)--Therapeutic use

Psychotherapy

**Series 1: Personal and family papers 1927-1987**

**Series Description**

This series includes a variety of materials related to Eisner's early education, marriage, and family life. Included are report cards from Kansas City public schools and Stanford University and a scrapbook of Stanford Daily clippings which documents Eisner's involvement in campus life from 1933-1937.

The correspondence in this series is of a highly personal nature, particularly the correspondence which documents Eisner's relationship with her first husband, Will Eisner, in the years immediately prior to his death from lung cancer in 1965. Betty's correspondence with Will's family is also intensely personal, discussing the couple's marital difficulties in detail.

Also included is personal writing by Eisner, including a diary of dreams and free association writing, both of which appear to reflect her growing interest in psychology prior to enrolling in UCLA's clinical psychology Ph.D. program.

There is also a subseries comprised of material created by or about Will Eisner. It includes correspondence, documentation of his employment at the Rand Corporation and SRI, personal writings on his experiences with psychotherapy, and documents related to his estate.

A second subseries contains materials related to a year-long trip taken by Will and Betty Eisner in 1948 and 1949. Destinations included Europe, India, and Egypt. During this trip, letters that Betty ostensibly wrote to her family were published as a *Los Angeles Times* column titled "Travel Letter from Betty." Included in this series are complete manuscripts for these columns and a scrapbook with newspaper clippings of the published column. There are also letters from Will Eisner to his family while abroad, correspondence documenting a dispute over money that was seized from the Eisners at the Indian border, and Betty's correspondence with met while traveling.

**Arrangement**

Files are arranged alphabetically within each subseries.

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**World Trip 1948-1967**

Box 4, Folder 1	<b>Correspondence from Will to family during trip [1 of 3] 1948-1949</b>
Box 4, Folder 2	<b>Correspondence from Will to family during trip [2 of 3] 1948-1949</b>
Box 4, Folder 3	<b>Correspondence from Will to family during trip [3 of 3] 1948-1949</b>
Box 4, Folder 4	<b>Correspondence re: money confiscated in India 1949-1951</b>
Box 4, Folder 5	<b>Correspondence with people met on world trip 1949-1967</b>
Box 4, Folder 6	<b>Correspondence, writing, and miscellaneous materials 1948-1949</b>
Box 4, Folder 7	<b>Newspaper column, correspondence about 1948-1949</b>
Box 4, Folder 8	<b>Newspaper column, manuscripts [1 of 2] 1948-1949</b>
Box 4, Folder 9	<b>Newspaper column, manuscripts [2 of 2] 1948-1949</b>
Box 4, Folder 10	<b>Newspaper column, scrapbook of clippings 1948-1949</b>

**Series 2: Writing 1957-2002, undated****Series Description**

The bulk of this series consists of journal articles, conference papers, and other professional writing by Eisner. Most of these works have been published, although some are unpublished manuscripts. There is also a copy of a manuscript for Eisner's book *The Unused Potential of Marriage and Sex* (published 1970) and an unpublished manuscript based on Eisner's experiences with group therapy titled *I Can't, You Can't, But We Can*.

Later in life Eisner pursued creative writing and composed poetry under the name Abigail Bradbury. Although there are no examples of her poetry in this series, there are manuscripts of a series of fables, titled "New Fables for New Times," written by Eisner in the early 1990s.

**Arrangement**

Arranged chronologically.

- Box 5, Folder 1 "Current Thinking on LSD Therapy" (with Sidney Cohen) 1957
- Box 5, Folder 2 "Psychotherapy with Lysergic Acid Diethylamide" (written with Sidney Cohen) 1958
- Box 5, Folder 3 "Subjective Reports on Lysergic Acid Experiences..." (with Sidney Cohen and Lionel Fischman) 1958
- Box 5, Folder 4 "The Influence of LSD on Unconscious Activity" 1961
- Box 5, Folder 6 "Some Psychological Differences Between Fertile and Infertile Women" 1963
- Box 5, Folder 7 "Notes on the Use of Drugs to Facilitate Group Psychotherapy" 1964
- Box 5, Folder 8 "Psychedelics and People as Adjuncts to Psychotherapy" 1964
- Box 5, Folder 9 "The Importance of the Non-Verbal" 1965
- Box 5, Folder 10 *The Unused Potential of Marriage and Sex*, original manuscript [2 of 3] 1970
- Box 5, Folder 11 *The Unused Potential of Marriage and Sex*, original manuscript [1 of 3] 1970
- Box 5, Folder 12 *The Unused Potential of Marriage and Sex*, original manuscript [3 of 3] 1970
- Box 5, Folder no folder *The Unused Potential of Marriage and Sex* 1970
- Box 5, Folder 13 "The Group as a Means and Matrix for Change" 1971
- Box 5, Folder 14 *See You To-Morrow*, by the Children of Mexcales (words by Betty Eisner, pictures by Les McCann) 1972
- Box 5, Folder 15 "The Use of an Alpha Feedback Machine in a Therapeutic Problem Solving Setting" (with Jonathan D. Melvin) 1972
- Box 5, Folder 16 "The Two Faces of Man's Problem Today" 1974
- Box 5, Folder 17 "Networking Provides Realtime Application Upgrade from TRT-11 to VMS" (with Jonathan D. Melvin) 1987
- Box 5, Folder 18 "New Fables for New Times," manuscripts and drafts [1 of 2] circa 1987
- Box 6, Folder 1 "New Fables for New Times," manuscripts and drafts [2 of 2] circa 1987
- Box 6, Folder 2 "New Fables for New Times," manuscripts and drafts [3 of 3] circa 1987
- Box 6, Folder 3 "Huaulta -- Place Where Eagles Are Born," manuscript and drafts circa 1994
- Box 6, Folder 4 "Physical and Psychical Loading," paper read at Society for Scientific Exploration meeting 1995
- Box 6, Folder 5 Response to Daniel J. Benor's comments on "loading" and "telesomatic reactions" 1996
- Box 6, Folder 6 "The Sick Role Versus the Dying Role," (written with Humphrey Osmond) 1996
- Box 6, Folder 7 "Body Work and Psychological Healing" 1997
- Box 6, Folder 8 "Set, Setting, and Matrix" 1997
- Box 6, Folder 9 Excerpt from Remembrance of LSD Therapy Past 2002
- Box 6, Folder 10 *I Can't, You Can't, But We Can*, third draft (final?) [1 of 3] undated
- Box 6, Folder 11 *I Can't, You Can't, But We Can*, third draft (final?) [2 of 3] undated
- Box 6, Folder 12 *I Can't, You Can't, But We Can*, third draft (final?) [3 of 3] undated
- Box 6, Folder 13 *Living in the Now*, foreword, chapter 1, and appendix D undated
- Box 6, Folder 14 "Observations on Possible Order Within the Unconscious" undated
- Box 6, Folder 15 "Observations on the Psychotherapeutic Use of Ritalin" undated
- Box 6, Folder 16 "The Paradox of Carroll John Daly," manuscript and research material (includes manuscript of a Daly short story) undated
- Box 6, Folder 17 "Parallel Experiences" undated