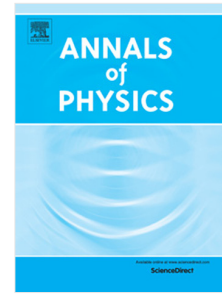


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Experimental test of entangled histories

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Abstract

Entangled histories arise when a system partially decoheres in such a way that its past cannot be described by a sequence of states, but rather a superposition of sequences of states. Such entangled histories have not been previously observed. We propose and demonstrate the first experimental scheme to create entangled history states of the Greenberger-Horne-Zeilinger (GHZ) type. In our experiment, the polarization states of a single photon at three different times are prepared as a GHZ entangled history state. We define a GHZ functional which attains a maximum value 1 on the ideal GHZ entangled history state and is bounded above by $1/16$ for any three-time history state lacking tripartite entanglement. We have measured the GHZ functional on a state we have prepared experimentally, yielding a value of 0.656 ± 0.005 , clearly demonstrating the contribution of entangled histories.

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