Description & Finding Aid:
Frederick S. Challener Collection
CA OTAG SC013

Prepared by Amy Marshall
With assistance from Gary Fitzgibbon, 2002
Frederick S. Challener collection

Dates of creation:
[ca.1927]-1955

Extent:
43 cm of textual records

Biographical sketch:

Frederick Sproston Challener (1869-1959) was a Canadian painter and educator. Born in Whetstone, England in 1869, he came to Canada in 1870. Living in Toronto, he studied at the Ontario School of Art, was first exhibited in 1900 at the Royal Canadian Academy and subsequently worked as a newspaper artist. After a tour of Europe and the Middle East in 1898-99, he began working as a muralist and participated in the decoration of the recently completed Toronto City Hall. At the end of the First World War, Challener worked as a painter for the Canadian War Records Department. He made his career chiefly by creating murals for passenger boats, restaurants, hotels—such as Fort Rouillé in the King Edward Hotel, Toronto—office buildings and theatres, including the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto. He also produced easel paintings, watercolours and drawings in a realistic, romantic style. From 1927-1952 he taught at the Ontario College of Art, during which period he made notes and assembled material on Canadian artists. He died in Toronto in 1959. Challener was a member of numerous arts organizations including the Toronto Art Students' League, Ontario Society of Artists, Royal Canadian Academy, Society of Mural Decorators of Toronto and the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto (founding member, 1908). His work is in the National Gallery of Canada, the Civic Art Gallery, Winnipeg, the Art Gallery of Ontario and numerous public buildings.

Scope and content:

Collection consists of newspaper articles, reproductions, illustrations, exhibition notices and invitations, death notices, photographs and biographical notes on 113 Canadian artists (birthdates 1803 to 1915) and five arts organizations: Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, Ontario Society of Artists, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, Toronto Art Students' League, and Canadian Society of Graphic Art.

Custodial history:

The material now constituting the Frederick S. Challener collection was purchased from Thomas Roche Lee in 1959. Initially the AGO Library split up material by subject and filed it in the artists' vertical files sequence; the Challener collection was reconstituted in 1978. Notes on the Canadian Society of Graphic Art and Harry Speirs were re-discovered in 2001 and reintegrated with the collection.

Notes:

Variations in title:
Previously known as the "Frederick S. Challener notes."

Immediate source of acquisition:
Purchased from Thomas Roche Lee in 1959.

Restrictions on access:
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Associated material:
The National Library of Canada holds archival materials of Frederick S. Challener, as well as Challener’s notes on Canadian painter Arthur Heming (1870–1940), originally in the materials collected by T.R. Lee.

Related groups of records in different fonds:
Materials on the immediate source of acquisition for this collection can be found in the Thomas Roche Lee collection (SC014).

General note:
T.R. (Thomas Roche) Lee (1915- ) was an ephemera collector and amateur art historian, author of *Albert H. Robinson, the painter’s painter* (1956).

Provenance access points:
Challener, Frederick S., 1869-1959

Box 1

Box 2

Box 3

Files on the Ontario Society of Artists, Toronto Art Students League, Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, Canadian Society of Graphic Art.