



**Description & Finding Aid:
Helen Sanderson Sewell Fonds
CA OTAG SC089**

Prepared by Sylvia Lassam, 2003

Helen Sanderson Sewell fonds

Dates of creation:

1920 – 1950

Physical description:

47 cm of textual records and graphic material

Biographical sketch:

Helen Sanderson Sewell (1905-2001) was a Toronto artist and teacher. She attended the Ontario College of Art, graduating in 1928 with the Governor General's Gold Medal. After graduation, she taught for six years with Arthur Lismer at the Art Gallery of Ontario and in Barrie, London, and her Toronto studio. She traveled to northern Ontario to paint with members of the Group of Seven. In 1934 she married William Sewell and interrupted her career to raise four children, including former Toronto mayor John Sewell. She resumed painting when her children were in high school, specializing in portraiture, and was active in the Toronto Heliconian Club.

Scope and content:

The fonds includes correspondence, newspaper and magazine clippings, photographs, drawings, poems, notes and memorabilia relating to Helen Sanderson's student days at the Ontario College of Art and subsequent teaching career. Many of these were pasted into a scrapbook, entitled 'Art School Days', forming a distinctive memoir of student life in the 1920's and 1930's. The fonds is arranged in a single series.

Custodial history:

Material constituting this fonds was inherited by Helen Sanderson Sewell's children, who donated it to the Art Gallery of Ontario in 2002.

Notes:

Immediate source of acquisition:

Fonds was acquired from the Sewell family July 11, 2002.

Restrictions on access:

Open. Researchers must be accompanied by a staff member when using the scrapbook due to its fragile condition. Access to Special Collections is by appointment only. Please contact the reference desk for more information.

Terms governing use and reproduction / publication:

Copyright has been transferred to the Art Gallery of Ontario. Copyright belonging to other parties, such as that of photographs, may still rest with the creator of these items. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain permission to publish any part of the fonds.

Accruals:

No further accruals are expected.

Provenance access point:

Sewell, Helen Sanderson, 1905-2001

Location:

| FOLDER/UNIT TITLE | START DATE | END DATE | CONTENTS | BOX- FILE # |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|--|------------------------|
| Correspondence | 1928 | 1947? | File contains 2 letters of recommendation and a note from J.E.H. MacDonald, letters of recommendation from Arthur Lismer and G.A. Reid, and a note from Mrs. G.A. Reid. | 1.1 |
| Photograph of OCA class | | 1928 | File consists of a photograph in cardboard frame with a note on the back of the frame indicating where Helen Sanderson and Arthur Lismer are situated. | 1.2 |
| History of the Art Students' League... (reproduction) | | 1930 (original) | Photocopied article in three parts, from <i>Etcetera</i> , September, October and November 1930, marked and annotated by Helen Sanderson Sewell, indicating her involvement in sketching trips and other student activities | 1.3 |
| Art Gallery of Toronto – teaching notes for children's classes | | 1930 | Leatherette notebook containing a description of Mr. Lismer's drawing tests and other notes on teaching, and; "Considering the Ten Year Old, Problems taken in the ten year old group – 1930-1933 with some observations and a few suggestions" (23-pages of hand-written notes, with a later annotation on the front page). | 1.4 |
| Art Gallery of Toronto – Children's classes | 1930 | 1935 | 2 typed sheets from Arthur Lismer outlining pay and expectations of teachers; registration form for Saturday morning class; publications relating to children's programming at the AGT | 1.5 |
| Bolton Avenue School for Girls - children's classes | | 1934 | Brochure (1 folded, typed sheet) outlining the curriculum [HS taught classes here as part of an outreach program at the Art Gallery of Toronto] | 1.6 |
| Clippings – Arthur Lismer and Children's art education | 1934 | 1950 | Clippings from Toronto newspapers relating to art education and the program at the Art Gallery of Toronto; report of a tribute to Arthur Lismer | 1.7 |
| Arthur Lismer – published writing | 1926 | 1936 | "A Short history of painting", pamphlet, and 3 clipped articles: "Art in Canada, Child-Art and Education", "Children and art" (from Canadian Forum), "Art and adult education" (from Canadian Forum) | 1.8 |
| Miscellaneous Publications | 1920 | 1941 | File contains 3 Art Gallery of Toronto Bulletins (1933-5), a publicity brochure for the AGT, and an exhibition catalogue for the Canadian War Memorials Painting Exhibition. | 1.9 |
| Biographical information | | 1978 | File contains a short typed write-up on Helen Sewell; typed 2-page speech at the Banting Memorial School recounting a sketching trip with A.Y. Jackson and Dr. Banting | 1.10 |
| Scrap Book | 1922 | 1935 | 60-page book containing newspaper clippings, pamphlets, sketches, photographs, party invitations, poems, etc., relating to people, issues and events that document student life at the Ontario College of Art. Articles clipped relate to teachers at the College (Emanuel Kahn, Arthur Lismer and others), artistic and literary figures such as Bliss Carman and other contemporaries, romantic and inspirational stories, and listings of student awards. See inventory attached to this finding aid for a detailed list. | Box 2 |

HELEN SANDERSON SEWELL FONDS: CONTENTS OF SCRAP BOOK

Title: "Art School Days"

| PAGE NO. | CONTENTS | DATE |
|-----------------|--|------------------|
| Front endpapers | Photograph of art studio, including students at work | [192-] |
| 1 | Newspaper illustration of the Prince of Wales | [192-] |
| 2 | Clipping from the Toronto Evening Telegram: "An Artist draws his impressions of "expressionist" art!" and "What you see you don't see looking at modern "art"" by Kenneth Wells. | Nov 25 1933 |
| 3 | Newspaper clipping with illustration by Freda Pepper, teacher at the art gallery: " The strange case of D'Annunzio" | [192-] |
| 4 | Untitled newspaper clipping regarding Canadian Thomas A. Miller, 'natural living' exponent. | [192-] |
| 4 | Clipping: engagement announcement: Mary Haverson | June 23, 1928 |
| 5 | Three humorous poems, written in 3 different hands | [192-] |
| 6 | Blank | |
| 7 | Pamphlet: A. Herbert Gray: The relations of men and women. Toronto: Student Christians Movement. 26 p. with Thoreau MacDonald cover. | 1926 |
| 8 | Clipping from the Toronto Star Weekly with photograph showing Helen Sanderson as the Gold Medal winner, OCA. | June 23,1928 |
| 8 | Clipping from Saturday Night showing the same photograph as above. | [1928] |
| 9 | Clipping: "Pencil saves artist's life" (re Nison Tregor) | [192-] |
| 9 | Clipping: wedding photo of Betty Gunn | [192-] |
| 9 | Photograph of sculpture studio, with Helen Sanderson in the middle of a group of students | [192-] |
| 10 | Clipping: Another Glenna Collett (re Aleen Aked) | [192-] |
| 10 | Ink drawing of Lillian Hopper | [192-] |
| 10 | Clipping: "Art in the Milk" (re poster competition – HS won honourable mention) | [192-] |
| 11 | Clipping from The Mail and Empire, Toronto: "Awards at Ontario College of Arts" | May 21, 1928 |
| 11 | Clipping: "Ontario College of Art examination results" | [1928] |
| 11 | Clipping: "Art student wins awards" | [1928] |
| 12 | Clipping from The Mail and Empire, Toronto: Youthful artists receive awards (Toronto Humane Society poster). | May 5, 1922 |
| 12 | Clipping: O.C.A. students receive prizes | May 15, 1922 |

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|----------|--|----------------------|
| 12 | Clipping: untitled notice of the opening of the new Art College, Grange Park. | [192-] |
| 13 | Photographs: snapshot of 2 young women in the snow (HS +?); 10 thumbnail photographs of HS and classmates? | [192-] |
| 13 | Clipping: picture of an unidentified young woman | [192-] |
| 13 | Map of Georgian Bay, drawn by hand, with several marked locations (of sketching trips?) | [192-] |
| 14 | 2 Frank Godwin illustrations clipped from a magazine | [192-] |
| 14 | Clipping: "Ontario College of Art awards and scholarships" | [192-] |
| 15 | Clipping from The Toronto Star: Toronto's Bohemians, by Gregory Clark | May 15, 1926 |
| 16 | Clipping from The Toronto Star: "When art students go to summer school" | July 17, 1926 |
| 17 | Blank | |
| 18 | Clipping from The Evening Telegram: "Striking figures at art students' vivid Russian Fete" illustrated with photographs of HS and others | February 10, 1928 |
| 19 | Clipping from The Toronto Star Weekly: Photos of HS and others in costume for the Russian ball | March 3, 1928 |
| 20 | Clipping: Photographs of staff and students at the 'Masque of Dead Florentines', Masquerade Ball | [192-] |
| 20 | 2 linocut party invitations | [192-] |
| 21 | Typed party invitation from 'the Misses Tyrrell, Chestnut & Spirit, Inc.' | 1928 |
| 21 | Programme for the 9 th Annual Masquerade Ball, 'The Court of King Arthur' | 1929 |
| 21 | Clipping from the Toronto Telegram: "Biggest yachts battle at Ex" | Sept 6, 1927 |
| 21 | 2 clippings relating to a free Paintex demonstration | [192-] |
| 22 | Pencil sketch of a young man lounging in a chair, marked 'Elgin May 24 th ' | [192-] |
| 22 | Short poem, hand-written on a scrap of paper | [192-] |
| 23 | 'Bohemian Party' invitation (linocut) | [192-] |
| 23 | 'Artists' At Home' party invitation (linocut initialed CSV) | 1925 |
| 23 | 2 illustrated clippings, one captioned John Gilbert | [192-] |
| 24 | Clipping from the Toronto Telegram: "A peep behind the curtains of time", relating to Emanuel Hahn | July 3, 1925 |
| 24 | 2 clippings relating to Claire Senior Burke | [192-] |
| 25 | Pencil and watercolour sketch of a young man reading | [192-] |
| 25 | Clipping: illustration of Anna Pavlova | [192-] |

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|----------|--|-------------------------|
| 25 | Pencil sketch of a young woman reading, marked 'Ethel Curry' | [192-] |
| 26 | 2 poems, clipped from the newspaper | 192-] |
| 26 | Invitation to the OCA 6 th Annual Artists' Masquerade Ball (Italian Renaissance theme) | 1926 |
| 27 | Page from a small notebook with 4 romantic poems written in pencil | [192-?] |
| 27 | Clipping from a magazine: "Fantasy" | [192-?] |
| 28 | Clipping: photographs with captions of northern missions | 1927 |
| 29 | Trimmed, printed sheet entitled "Texts of songs, Mme Ernestine Schumann-Heink" | [Between 1925 and 1935] |
| 30 | 3 newspaper clippings relating to modern art | Jan 6, 1933 |
| 31 | Program of an Edward Johnson recital at Massey Hall | Dec 4 |
| 31 | 2 page typed and hand-written letter, signed 'L' [Lillian Nodwell?] | Sept 18 |
| 32 | Clipping from The Toronto Star: "First of army of 25,000 Toronto school children getting instruction at Art Gallery" | Feb 15, 1930 |
| 33 | Clipping: "Winchell Price" by J.M. Elson | Oct 17, 1931 |
| 33 | Clipping: "Noted young sculptor dies" (re Vernon March) | [192-?] |
| 33 | 2 clippings: poems | [192-?] |
| 33 | Clipping: "On the air tonight, Wishart Campbell" | [192-?] |
| 34 | Clipping: photograph of Walter S. Allward | [192-?] |
| 35 | Clipping: photograph of John Drinkwater | [192-?] |
| 36 | Clipping from The Toronto Star Weekly: "Ontario Society of Artists owes much to work of pioneer members" | May 3, 1930 |
| 37 | 4 clippings relating to Canadian artists: Louis Philippe Hebert, Tom Thomson, Francis J. Haxby and Colin McPhee | [192-?] |
| 37 | Ink silhouette drawing, 'Land o'dreams' | [192-?] |
| 38 | Clipping: "Canadian artists...Robert Ross" by Kenneth Wells | 1934 |
| 39 | Clipping from The Toronto Daily Star: "Cowboy sees gallery acquire art taste" | Apr 28, 1930 |
| 40 | Clipping from Saturday Night Magazine: "Among those present...Mr. Arthur Lismer" by Jean Graham | [19-] |
| 41 | 1 folded sheet from Saturday Night Magazine: "New art movement originates in Canada" by Herbert McManus | May 21, 1932 |
| 41 | Clipping": Rudyard Kipling's "If" | [192-] |

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|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 42 | Blank | |
| 43 | Magazine clipping: "Dreams" by Grace Fraser Malkin | [192-] |
| 44 | Clipping from The Toronto Star Weekly: "Ontario girl goes on leviathan-hunt in Northern Atlantic" | Apr 26, 1930 |
| 45 | Programme: 10 th Annual Artists' Masquerade (Masque of Ancient Aztecs) | 1930 |
| 45 | Clipping from the Mail and Empire: "When artists marry" | Apr 28, 1930 |
| 45 | Clipping: "Big mans now, Buddy Rogers sprouts a mustache and grows up" | [Between 1925 and 1935] |
| 46 | Clipping: "Among ourselves, our crowning glory" | [Between 1925 and 1935] |
| 46 | Clipping from Saturday Night: "The Passing Show" by Hal Frank | March 5, 1932 |
| 47 | Clipping regarding care of one's complexion | [192-?] |
| 48 | Clipping: photograph of Cyril Scott | [Between 1925 and 1935] |
| 49 | Clipping: photograph of Bliss Carman | [192-?] |
| 50-51 | 6 snapshots of a group of people (art students and teacher?) including Helen Sanderson, indicated by a pencil mark | [192-] |
| 52 | Clipping: "Richard Jack and his daughter "sit" for the camera" | [Between 1925 and 1935] |
| 52 | Invitation/program for a reception of The Oxford Group | 1932 |
| 53 | Clipping: "Winners in art examination" | [1928?] |
| 53 | Clipping from The Globe: "Making pictures – a youth in pursuit of beauty at the Toronto Art Gallery" | Feb 17, 1930 |
| 54 | Clipping: "J.E.H. MacDonald, Art College head, dies after illness:" | [1932] |
| 54 | Front cover of The Art Gallery of Toronto Programme of Education Work, 1931-1932 season. | 1931 |
| 55 | Clipping from The Globe: "Artist falters, then drops dead during speech", re Robert Holmes | May 15, 1930 |
| 55 | Clipping: "College of Art awards" | [1928] |
| 56 | Photograph of a group of students (HS is 2 nd from right) in costume for the Russian Masquerade Ball | [1928] |
| Inserted between p.56+57 | Folded sheet from The Evening Telegram: "Art Gallery to acquire \$10,000 Holmes flower collection" | Jan 23, 1932 |

| PAGE NO. | CONTENTS | DATE |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 57 | Reprint from Industrial Canada: "Relationship of Art to Canadian Industry" by Charles T. Porter | October 1938 |
| 58 | Clipping: short poem | [192-] |
| 59 | Clipping: "Awakening" by H. Caister Robinson | [192-] |
| 60 | Printed poem by Wilson MacDonald, with hand coloured decorative border | [192-] |
| 60 | Clipping: untitled art review | [Between 1925 and 1935] |
| Inserted between p.60 + endpaper | The Trader's Post, with article on Lismer, a short article by Bill Sewell, and a mention of Bill Sewell in another article | Dec 6, 1935 |
| Endpaper | Tangent (Annual publication of The Students' Club, OCA) | May 1931 |
| Endpaper | Clipping: "Friendship" | [192-?] |