

FONDS DESCRIPTION (MBMS-1) Inglis-Quinlan Family fonds

n.d., 1872-1980

1.5 m of textual records

682 photographs

Charles Inglis and his wife Cassandra (Zwicker) Inglis, daughter of Elkanah Zwicker and Catherine (Andrews) Zwicker, were prominent Mahone Bay, N.S. residents who lived on the town's main street and operated the C.J. Inglis store. The store sold dry goods, groceries and provisions, boots, shoes, crockery and hardware, lumber and shingles. The couple had two children, Clara Grace (Grace) and Percival Wellington (Percy). Both children resided in the family home in Mahone Bay for the majority of their lives.

The focal point of the Inglis/Quinlan family was the Mahone Bay home and store, where three generations were raised, worked and entertained, and Percy's well-known china and antique collection. The collection was featured on television on CBC by Lloyd Macinnis around 1962.

Approximately 3.5 meters of textual records were originally salvaged from the Inglis-Quinlan house by Mahone Bay Settlers Museum in 1988, after the death of Clara Quinlan, daughter of Grace (Inglis) Quinlan and John Quinlan, when the remaining contents of the home were being sold or discarded.

In 2023-2024, a re-appraisal of the 3.5 meters was completed. Many of the textual records were unrelated to Mahone Bay history and removed from the fonds to make room for other Mahone Bay records in the future. Therefore, only 1 meter of textual records related to Mahone Bay were selected to be properly stored, arranged, and described in a detailed Finding Aid. The selected items cover local topics such as business records, day books, marketing ephemera, visitor books, and shipping orders for the Inglis store, as well as two items for other businesses: a Share Certificate for the Ernst Hill Gold Mine and a receipt from Eisenhaur Carriage Factory. The fonds also includes topics such as calling cards, Park Cemetery, Church Confirmation, property deeds, Clara Quinlan's diaries, school related documents, local signatures, other organizations, and Clara's World War II ration book.

An accrual was processed in 2020 that comprised both textual records donated by the philatelist Roger Burton Greer (who obtained the documents c.1986 as part of a larger auction lot) and Clara Quinlan documents and photographs that were found in the Mahone Bay Museum's backlog (Acc. Nos. 1986.33, 07.6.1.9, and 1985.1.1-1985.1.446).

The accrual processed in 2020 consists of photographs accumulated by Clara Quinlan and the following textual documents: C.J. Inglis store records; two volumes of Cara Quinlan's diaries as well as her correspondence with Tom Forrestall, Will R. Bird, and others; notes on a controversial Inglis family adoption and other genealogical information; miscellaneous records relating to the Percy Inglis China Collection, including two guest books, draft articles, miscellaneous correspondence, and other documents; and notes and memoranda concerning Mahone Bay.

Charles Inglis was born in Lunenburg in 1833 to William and Elizabeth (Countaway) Inglis. Charles established the C.J. Inglis Store circa 1867 at Mahone Bay, which sold dry goods, produce and building supplies. In 1868, he married Mary Cassandra Zwicker, who was born in Mahone Bay in 1848, the daughter of Elkanah and Catherine (Andrews) Zwicker. Their first child Grace was born in 1870 and their son Percy was born in 1875 in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia. Charles died in 1915 and Cassandra died in 1926.

Their son Percival (Percy) Wellington Inglis attended King's College in Windsor, N.S. After completing his education, Percy returned to Mahone Bay to work in his father's store, which was known as the C.J. Inglis store, with his sister Grace. When Charles died in 1915, Percy assumed full responsibility for the store and it became known as the Percy W. Inglis store. He expanded the merchandise of the store to include fine china, locally hooked rugs, and floral arrangements. Percy sold life insurance and was named a local notary public and from the store issued marriage licenses, witnessed deeds and other legal documents. In his spare time Percy made hats, hooked rugs, he taught dancing lessons in the home to locals (including Belle and Minnie Joudrey), and became an avid collector of fine antique china and furniture, and occasionally offered interested visitors tours of his house to view his collection. He managed the store until he died in 1950. Percy never married, which, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, was considered unusual and was often the topic of discussion in small towns like ours. While we cannot ask Percy himself or his niece Clara Quinlan, and we do not have concrete proof, it is believed among the local community that Percy may have preferred same sex relationships. Out of the hundreds of photos we have in our archives from Percy's and his family's collection, there is only two photographs of Percy with an unidentified man who is believed to have been Percy's romantic partner.

Percy's sister, Grace Quinlan was born Clara Grace Inglis in 1870 in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia. Her family were active members of St. James Anglican Church. In 1886, Grace was sent to Girton House, a boarding school located in Halifax, N.S, however the school closed the following year and Grace returned to Mahone Bay where she became a teacher. She married circa 1894 John Quinlan, the son of Robert and Almira (Hemeon) Quinlan of Shelburne. John was also a teacher and the couple resided in the Inglis family home. In 1895, the couple had a daughter Clara Grace. Several years later John left Mahone Bay for suspicious reasons and was found dead in August 1920 at Winnipeg, Manitoba. Following John's death, Grace went to work in her family's store, assisting her brother Percy. Grace never remarried, although a Will Knaut was referred to as her sweetheart. Grace died at Mahone Bay in 1960.

Grace's daughter, Clara Grace Quinlan, born in 1895 at Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, attended school in Mahone Bay until 1913 when she was sent to Mount St. Vincent Academy in Bedford, N.S. for grade twelve. The following year she attended the Provincial Normal College in Truro where she trained to be a teacher. Following her graduation, she taught in several Nova Scotian schools as a teacher, and later vice-principal (1919-1922) before moving to the United States to work. Clara taught at Glen

Eden from 1923-1927 in Stamford Connecticut. Clara accepted an assistant principal position at the Shelburne school at a salary of \$700 a year in 1928 from the Board of School Commissioners of the Town of Shelburne. In 1930, she accepted a position at Hawthorne Street School in Dartmouth and worked there until 1950 when her uncle, Percy Inglis, died. She then returned to Mahone Bay to care for her aging mother and to run the family store, previously managed by her uncle, as the Percy W. Inglis Store specializing in fine English China. Clara also continued to sell groceries and dry goods. Clara continued her uncle's tradition of showing visitors around the family home to view his china collection. Clara ran the store until 1986. Clara played piano in the silent movie theatre according to a 1945 letter from Norman F. Shave about a memory of hearing her play piano. One of her favorite pastimes was collecting stamps and correspondence from celebrities and politicians all around the world. She sent chocolates to a lot of people at Christmas time by mail with a card. She sent out about 500 cards around 1967. Clara operated the store until 1985 when she moved to Shoreham Village, Chester, where she died in 1988.