

FONDS DESCRIPTION (MBMS-43)

Alice M. Hagen fonds

n.d., c. 1910-2002

5.5 cm of textual records

126 photographs

101 transparencies

Alice Mary Egan was born at Halifax in 1872. The daughter of Margaret T. (Kelly) and Lt.-Col. T.J. Egan, she studied china-painting with Bessie Brown in Halifax and also took classes at the Mount Saint Vincent Convent and the Victoria School of Art and Design, receiving her diploma from the latter institution in 1899. She then pursued further ceramic studies in New York. As early as 1898, she began teaching china-painting in Halifax, eventually offering classes at the Victoria School of Art and Design. In 1901, she married John C. Hagen, who had a senior position with a British cable company. Her husband's work soon required the couple to travel to Europe, enabling Alice to study advanced luster-painting techniques. A few years later, the couple returned to Nova Scotia. Between 1912 and 1919, she joined her husband in Jamaica, where she continued teaching china-painting. Upon her return to Nova Scotia, she established a branch of the Council of the Catholic Women's League and continued china-painting and experimenting with clays and glazes. In 1930 she studied pottery techniques in England and France. The following year, she and her husband moved to Mahone Bay, where she established a pottery studio and began teaching pottery classes. She also taught elsewhere in the province through the Department of Education. At the same time, she continued her experiments with glazes and local clays, developing her "Scotian pebble" technique and emerging as Nova Scotia's most renowned artist-potter. Alice Hagen died in 1972. In 1976, a major retrospective of her work was mounted at the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery.

Fonds consists of a disassembled scrapbook containing photographs, textual documents, ephemera, and grey literature documenting the artistic career of Alice Hagen. There are also records touching on Hagen's exhibitions, her study of Native pottery designs, and a Mount Saint Vincent bursary established in her honour. In addition, there is a reference binder, assembled by staff of the Mahone Bay Museum, which includes original photographs, research notes, and photocopies of clippings, articles, exhibition catalogues, and some notes by Hagen. There are also several photographs and a number of transparencies, which together document Hagen's teaching career and examples of her pottery.

The records were found in the Mahone Bay Museum's backlog in 2017 and were processed in 2018. An accrual, consisting of a reference binder assembled by museum staff, was later found in the museum's backlog and processed in 2019. A second accrual, consisting primarily of photographs and transparencies documenting Hagen's teaching career and examples of her pottery, was found in the museum's backlog and processed in 2024.

