

MS.  
COLL.  
270

DOW (HELEN J.) COLLECTION OF ALEX COLVILLE PAPERS

Helen Dow is a Professor of Fine Art at Guelph University. She has published articles and a major book on Alex Colville (The Art of Alex Colville. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972). She was a colleague of Colville's at Mount Allison University ca. 1961-1962 and has corresponded with him from 1963 to the present. She has also purchased many of his paintings and drawings.

This collection consists primarily of a long sequence of letters from Alex Colville to Helen Dow, many of which contain detailed comments on individual paintings as well as on his aesthetic and philosophical views. In addition there is correspondence from Colville's wife, Rhoda, thanking Helen Dow for small gifts, and from his daughter, Ann, who worked at Fischer Fine Art Ltd., London, Eng, the firm handling Colville's English sales. A xerox copy of an early letter from Colville to H. Steinhauer which discusses a painting purchased by Steinhauer is also included.

In addition there is a copy of Colville's B.A. thesis, French Painting in the Nineteenth Century, submitted at Mount Allison University, May 1942, and a draft of a catalogue of the art collection at the university, compiled in 1950.

Period covered: 1942 to 1987

Extent: 1 box

Accession number 87.047

Gift of Professor Helen J. Dow in 1987

Katharine Martyn  
Edna Hajnal

January 1990

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Box 1

CORRESPONDENCE

Alex Colville to Helen Dow. 1963-1987. 232  
A.L.S. 5 Christmas cards.

Letters are one to two pages in length, occasionally longer. They discuss the artist's current projects, frequently giving background information about individual paintings and drawings. Colville often attempts to describe the underlying theme for recently completed work and there are many references to his philosophical as well as aesthetic views. He comments on books he finds interesting, and on the work of other artists. Some personal and family news is included, documenting his trips abroad and travels within Canada, as well as lectures given and honours received.

Many letters comment on the drafts of articles by Helen Dow or on the chapters of her book on Colville which she sends to him for his reaction.

Alex Colville to H. Steinhauer. Yarmouth, N.S.  
May 1, 1944. A.L.S. (xerox copy) 1 leaf.

Describes how he came to paint "The St. John River, near Woodstock", purchased by Steinhauer. With this letter is a xerox of a form letter dated June 2, 1972 from David Steinhauer offering the picture for sale.

Ann Colville to Helen Dow. 1973-1982. 8 T.L.S.

Most letters discuss Helen Dow's purchases of Colville works from Fischer Fine Art Ltd., Colville's English agent, for whom Ann worked.

Rhoda Colville to Helen Dow . 1969 and 1980.  
2 A.L.S.

Letters thank Helen Dow for gifts.

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WRITINGS

Box 1

Alex Colville. French painting in the nineteenth century. A thesis ... submitted to the Faculty of Arts, Mount Allison University ... for the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts. Scakville, N.B. May, 1942. Typescript (Carbon copy) 33 p.

Alex Colville. Catalogue of the art collection of Mount School of Fine and Applied Art (Owens Art Gallery). [ca. 1950] Holograph. 13 leaves.