



**Description & Finding Aid:
Donald W. Buchanan-James Wilson Morrice
Collection
CA OTAG SC056**

Prepared by Amy Marshall
With assistance from Gary Fitzgibbon, 2005

Donald W. Buchanan–James Wilson Morrice collection

Dates of creation:

1924-1968, predominant 1935

Extent:

2 cm of textual records

4 photographs

Biographical sketch:

Donald William Buchanan (1908-1966) was a Canadian author, art historian/critic and arts administrator. Born in Lethbridge, Alberta, he was the son of Senator W.A. Buchanan, publisher of the *Lethbridge Herald*. Donald Buchanan studied modern history at the University of Toronto and held a fellowship at Oxford University. In 1935, he founded the National Film Society of Canada (from 1950 The Canadian Film Institute). The following year, his biography of James Wilson Morrice was published in Toronto. Subsequently, he worked at the CBC (1937-40), *Canadian Art Magazine* (1942, as co-editor) and the National Film Board (1944-46), where he established the stills division. He was at the National Gallery of Canada from 1947 to 1960 and there founded the National Design Centre, eventually becoming Associate Director (1956-60) and afterward (1963) a trustee. In addition to the Morrice biography, Donald Buchanan wrote *Educational and Cultural Films in Canada* (1936), *This Is Canada* (1944), *Canadian Painters from Paul Kane to the Group of Seven* (1945), *Design for Use* (1947), *The Growth of Canadian Painting* (1950), *Alfred Pellon* (1962) and *To Have Seen the Sky* (1962). After leaving the National Gallery, he began a career as an artist/photographer; his work was exhibited successfully and appeared in published photo-essays. On his death in a car crash in Ottawa in 1966 his collection of artworks was bequeathed to the art gallery in Lethbridge.

James Wilson Morrice (1865-1924) was a Canadian painter. He was born in Montreal and studied at the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall law school. Although he was called to the Ontario Bar in 1889, he never practised law. Instead, he went to France in 1890 and studied art in Paris at the Académie Julian and with painters Henri Harpignies and James McNeill Whistler. Morrice returned to Canada often to visit and became a member of the Canadian Art Club in Toronto around 1907. On several of those occasions, he painted scenes of Quebec City and the surrounding countryside—his chief Canadian works. Among Canadian painters of the day, Curtis Williamson, Maurice Cullen and William Brymner were colleagues and friends. He travelled extensively in Europe but lived for the most part in Paris, exhibiting at the Salon d'Automne and associating with artists like Henri Matisse and Robert Henri and writers such as Arnold Bennett and Somerset Maugham. His trips to North Africa and the Caribbean produced some of his most colourful canvases. Morrice is generally considered the earliest Canadian painter to achieve an international reputation. His work is in the collections of the National Gallery in Ottawa and the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Montreal, as well as the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the Hermitage in St Petersburg and the Tate Gallery, London. He died in Tunis in 1924.

Scope and content:

Fonds consists of letters solicited by Donald Buchanan for his study *James Wilson Morrice: a biography* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1936). Correspondents include Léa Cadoret, W. Somerset Maugham, Gerald Faustus Kelly, Charles Prendergast, Elizabeth R. Pennell, Clive Bell, Walter Pach, David Morrice, Pavel Ettinger and Henri Matisse. Also included are a photograph of Morrice, a postcard from him to William Brymner, and photographs of three of his works.

Contains series:

1. Letters
2. Miscellanea

Custodial history:

Ownership of the items in this fonds was transferred from Donald W. Buchanan to the Toronto art dealer and collector W. Blair Laing at an unknown date. Kenneth R. Thomson subsequently obtained them, again at an unspecified date, and donated them to the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1995.

Notes:

Variations in title:

Previously known as the Donald W. Buchanan fonds.

Source of title proper:

Title based on the provenance and content of the collection.

Conservation:

All items are encapsulated in plastic sleeves. Letters of Clive Bell, Henri Matisse and W. Somerset Maugham have been copied for research use.

Immediate source of acquisition:

Donated by Kenneth R. Thomson in December 1995.

Language:

In English and French.

Restrictions on access:

Original letters of Clive Bell, Henri Matisse and W. Somerset Maugham may only be accessed by researchers with special legitimate reason, with permission of the archivist. Access to Special Collections is by appointment only. Please contact the reference desk for more information.

Terms governing use and reproduction / publication:

Various copyright holders. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain permission to publish any part of the collection

Associated material:

Sketchbooks of J.W. Morrice are in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Montreal. Correspondence of J.W. Morrice to Newton MacTavish is held by Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa and by the Toronto Public Library (Canadiana Collection, North York Central Library).

Accruals:

No further accruals are expected.

Related material:

Correspondence of J.W. Morrice to Edmund Morris may be found in the Canadian Art Club fonds (CA OTAG SC009) and the Edmund Morris fonds (CA OTAG SC007).

Provenance access points

Buchanan, Donald W. (Donald William), 1908-1966

SERIES 1: LETTERS

Dates of creation:

1935-1937

Extent:

1 cm of textual records

Scope and content:

Series comprises ten letters received by Donald Buchanan for his biographical and critical study of Morrice.

Location:

FOLDER/UNIT TITLE	START DATE	END DATE	CONTENTS	BOX- FILE #
Letters	1935	1935	<p>Léa Cadoret (1877-1973), Morrice's model and later, mistress, whom he met around 1898. Autograph letter dated: "Lundi 24.4.35."</p> <p>W. Somerset Maugham (1874-1965), novelist, short-story writer and playwright, whom Morrice met shortly after the turn of the century when both were members of a Paris circle of young artists and writers that met in the restaurant Chat Blanc. Autograph letter dated "March 30th, 1935." [copy only; original restricted]</p> <p>Gerald Festus Kelly (1879-1972), English painter of portraits and landscapes and member of the Chat Blanc supper club. Incomplete typed letter dated "2nd October, 1935."</p> <p>Charles Prendergast, brother of American painter Maurice Prendergast (1859-1924), friend of Morrice during the latter's first ten years in Paris. Autograph letter dated "June 30th 1935."</p> <p>Elizabeth R. Pennell, widow of American etcher Joseph Pennell (1857-1926) whom Morrice met in Venice. Incomplete autograph letter dated "August 29th 1935." (Missing page is reproduced in typescript.)</p> <p>Clive Bell (1881-1964), English critic of politics, literature and art, member of the Chat Blanc group. Autograph letter dated "Saturday." [copy only; original restricted]</p> <p>Walter Pach (1883-1958), American art historian. Autograph letter dated "October 15, 1935."</p> <p>David Morrice, the artist's nephew. Autograph letter dated "Dec. 22nd."</p> <p>Pavel Ettinger (1866-1948) Russian art critic and collector. Autograph letter dated "October 28th 1937."</p> <p>Henri Matisse (1869-1954), French painter admired by Morrice, whom he met in Morocco in 1911/12. Autograph letter dated "Nice 6 juin 1935." [copy only; original restricted]</p>	1-1

SERIES 2: MISCELLANEA**Dates of creation:**

1924-1968

Extent:

1 cm of textual records

4 photographs : b&w ; 25 x 19 cm and smaller.

Scope and content:

Series comprises later correspondence from Léa Cadoret and Henri Matisse, a postcard from James Wilson Morrice to Canadian artist William Brymner, excerpts of published works related to Morrice and photographs.

Location:

FOLDER/UNIT TITLE	START DATE	END DATE	CONTENTS	BOX- FILE #
Miscellanea	1924	1968	Autograph postcard from Morrice to William Brymner (postmark 14.I.1924 Autograph letter from Léa Cadoret to Victor Spark (dated "Juan-les-Pins 18-7-1968) Typescript letter from Henri Matisse to Buchanan, dated "Nice, le 25 janvier 1952" Extract from W. Somerset Maugham's novel <i>The Magician</i> , of a passage describing a character based on Morrice Unsourcesd review of Buchanan's book on Morrice Undated photograph of Morrice 3 photographs of Morrice oil sketches with notations (verso) "A woman (Lea Cadoret) at the Seashore," (reproduced in the Buchanan biography of Morrice), " Fishing boats, marine view Normandy, ca. 1905," The Blue Umbrella."	1-2

Box 2 contains original letters of Clive Bell, Henri Matisse and W. Somerset Maugham, and may only be accessed by researchers with special legitimate reason, with permission of the archivist.