

*All Things Useful  
and Artistic  
Applied Arts at  
Mount Allison  
University  
1906-1960*



Owens Art Gallery

*All Things Useful and Artistic*



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*1 May to 20 September 2015*

*Curated by Jane Tisdale*

*Curatorial Assistants*

*Kealin Lamb & Rachel Thornton*

*Guest-writer Judith Friedland*

Owens Art Gallery

Mount Allison University



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# Foreword

This exhibition brings to light for the first time the history and the productions of the Applied Arts program at Mount Allison University. One of the earliest and most ambitious programs for teaching craft and design in Canada, Applied Arts at Mount Allison has nevertheless remained largely unacknowledged in the history of craft in this country. Founded on the principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Great Britain, and adapted to meet the pedagogical requirements of a liberal arts University in New Brunswick in the first half of the 20th century, the program advanced the concept of the useful and the artistic while preparing women for careers. As this remarkable exhibition shows, and as the essays by Jane Tisdale and Judith Friedland reveal, the Applied Arts program at Mount Allison is of real significance in helping us form an understanding of art education for women and the history of craft in Canada.

Exhibition Curator Jane Tisdale and Mount Allison University Archivist David Mawhinney have located many former students. Visits to the homes of these artists and/or their families have brought forward a wide range of work, most of which has not been exhibited since it was made many years ago in the Owens Art Gallery building where all Applied and Fine Arts classes were held. The ceramic studios and workshops of that time are today the galleries, vaults, Conservation Lab and offices of the Owens Art Gallery. Every artwork in this exhibition was produced here, and every artist represented in the exhibition attended classes within these walls.

I would like to acknowledge exhibition curator Jane Tisdale for her commitment to this project and her careful attention to the many artists and artworks which make up this exhibition. Jane has also mentored two Mount Allison students, Kealin Lamb and Rachel Thornton, as Curatorial Interns, furthering our commitment at the Owens to mentor young and emerging curators. Dr. Karen Grant, Provost and Vice-President, Academic and Research, Mount Allison University, has offered important support for this project, and has contributed an Introduction on the history of the education of women at Mount Allison.

I would like to sincerely thank all those who assisted with this ambitious project, especially Roxie Ibbitson, Owens Art Gallery Preparator; Lucy MacDonald, Curator of Education and Community Outreach, Owens Art Gallery; and the carpenters at Mount Allison University who fabricated custom cases for the installation. Finally, our thanks to the artists and lenders to the exhibition for so generously sharing their artworks and their memories of the Applied Arts program at Mount Allison.

*Gemey Kelly*  
Director





# Acknowledgements

I am gratefully indebted to David Mawhinney, Mount Allison University Archivist, who traveled with me to meet with Applied Arts graduates, suggested others that I should contact and provided documents and photographs for my research and for the exhibition.

My special thanks to Judith Friedland who has generously shared her research with me in the past regarding Mount Allison Applied Arts graduates and the ward aide training programs they attended. Her essay enriches this catalogue and reflects her important work on the history of Applied Arts and Occupational Therapy in Canada. Dr. Karen Grant, Provost and Vice-President, Academic and Research, Mount Allison University, has provided support for the project and has contributed an Introduction on the education of women at Mount Allison.

I would like to thank Fine Arts students Rachel Thornton, and Kealin Lamb, who is the recipient of a J.E.A. Crake ArtsWork Internship at the Owens this year, for their contributions to the exhibition. They have worked with me during all stages of planning, organizing and preparing items for display. Their enthusiasm and insights have inspired me throughout the project.

I would like to acknowledge the encouragement and guidance of Gallery Director, Gemey Kelly, who proposed the idea for this exhibition and has always supported the important research on the history of art education at Mount Allison. Thanks also to Roxie Ibbitson for his professional installation of the exhibition and especially for his design of the custom-made display cases, and to Lucy MacDonald for finding innovative ways to incorporate this exhibition into other events and activities at the Owens.

Thanks also to Roger Smith for providing many beautiful photographs for this publication, and to Robert Tombs for the design.

I would like to thank Aaron Roulston for lending previously unseen work by Max Roulston and for sharing important documents that are critical in our understanding of the history of the Applied Arts program.

Thanks to former Mount Allison weaving student, Dawn MacNutt (BA' 57), who took an early interest in the exhibition and facilitated important initial contacts.

Above all, our sincere thanks to the former students and their families who loaned work for the exhibition and shared stories and information about the Applied Arts program. Many of them are listed elsewhere in this catalogue.

An exhibition such as this evolves from many years of research which enables us to piece together this important history. In 2009, Genie Coates and Margaret Moorehead donated Elizabeth McLeod's teaching materials to the Owens, which provided further insight into the activities of the Art Department. A great deal of the information presented for this exhibition is based on extensive research by Mount Allison graduate Fredette Frame (BFA '94), and thesis work by Mount Allison graduate Emily Evans (BA '02).

*JT*



# Introduction

Mount Allison University, which was established in 1839, is a place of many firsts, particularly for women. Unlike most other universities of the time, Mount Allison welcomed women to enjoy the life of the mind just as their male counterparts had done for many years. At Mount Allison, women studied scientific and literary disciplines as well as what were called the 'ornamental traditions'. But what was significant about the Mount Allison approach was that the same rigorous standards were applied to the study of all fields.

The results were simply brilliant. Mount Allison holds the distinction for having graduated the first woman in the British Empire. Grace Annie Lockhart received a Bachelor of Science and English Literature degree in 1875. Later, in 1882, Harriet Starr Stewart became the first woman in Canada to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree. And as John Reid points out, by the turn of the century, Mount Allison could boldly and proudly proclaim that women were educated on the basis of 'perfect equality' with men.

At Mount Allison, women learned painting and drawing, and they learned the applied arts as well. Jewelry, ceramics, and works in silver, leather and wood were typical of the women's artistic pursuits, and as you will see in this catalogue and on display in the Owens Art Gallery (Canada's oldest university art gallery), these exquisite pieces show incredible skill and artistry that were the product of disciplined study as well as raw talent. The works produced by women at Mount Allison were hardly mere ornaments. Indeed, works such as those included here were the reason why then, as now, Mount Allison has been and is a leader in arts education in Canada.

It is my hope that you enjoy this exhibition of the applied arts at Mount Allison. It is a celebration of the arts and of the women who have been an integral part of our history.

*Karen R. Grant, PhD  
Provost and Vice-President  
Academic and Research  
Mount Allison University*

*The Owens Museum of Fine Arts, 1895.  
Mount Allison University Archives,  
Picture Collection, 200707/339*







*Margaret (Harris) Fraser, first graduate of the Applied Arts program, 1912. Collection of Margaret (Fraser) Murray*

*Applied Arts students L to R: Nancy Stephenson, Vera Cummings, Cathy Logan, Ruth Briggs, Gay Barrett and Joan Crowell, 1953. Mount Allison University Archives, Picture Collection, 2000.37.4/18001*



# All Things Useful and Artistic

## Applied Arts at Mount Allison University 1906–1960

*The graduates in Fine Arts this year have chosen largely the technical courses which would place them in line with the spirit of this war age, which demands the production of all things useful as well as artistic.*

–Ladies' College Principal B.C. Borden addressing graduates, May 1916,  
*The Argosy Weekly*, p. 509

By definition, Applied Arts is the application of design to everyday objects, making them 'useful as well as artistic'. The terms 'Applied Arts', 'Arts and Crafts', 'Industrial Arts' and 'Handicrafts' were used interchangeably to describe courses in the Art Department at Mount Allison between 1906 and 1960.

The teaching of art at Mount Allison began with the opening of the Female Branch of the Wesleyan Academy in 1854. Traditional art education at that time included drawing and painting and 'copying old masters'. In 1895, Mount Allison opened the Owens Museum of Fine Arts, the first University art gallery in Canada. Designed by Toronto architect Edmund Burke, the new building was described in the student newspaper as "the finest art building in the Dominion of Canada."<sup>1</sup> With a reputation based on art and music, the Mount Allison Ladies' College gained increased recognition for art education. The Ladies' College Principal, the Head of the Art Department and the Instructors within the Department, were focused on providing the best and most innovative art education for their students.

Influenced by the British Arts and Crafts movement that kindled a yearning for an earlier time when things were made by hand, Mount Allison, like other schools in North America, began to gradually expand the Art Department curriculum.<sup>2</sup> Leather tooling was offered in 1906 and woodcarving and design were added in 1907. Design was initiated as a fundamental course for all art students "with a view to preparing students to do original work in all the different departments of Art."<sup>3</sup> Metalwork and jewellery-making were added to the curriculum in 1909. An extra workroom was constructed in the Owens basement to accommodate increasing numbers of students interested in studying Applied Arts. Basketry, interior design, weaving, batik, embroidery, and even toy-making were part of the curriculum by the 1920s.

Many changes occurred on campus in the early part of the 20th century. The McClellan School of Applied Science opened in 1903 and the Lillian Massey-Treble School of Household Science opened in 1904, reflecting "the new education—by and through the use of our hands" as described by Thomas Bessell Kidner, Director of Manual Training and Household Science for New Brunswick, during his address to Mount Allison students and faculty in 1905.<sup>4</sup> The focus on incorporating manual skills in education included a course in basketry offered in the Household Science department in 1904. Basketry was added to the Applied Arts program in 1917. For students who became ward aides after WWI basketry was commonly used in rehabilitation work with injured soldiers.<sup>5</sup>

Basketry, leatherwork, weaving, metalwork and jewellery-making were skills

<sup>1</sup> *Argosy*, January 1895.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen Easton McLeod, *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999, p.51.

<sup>3</sup> *Catalogue of the Mount Allison Ladies' College, 1908–1909*, p.65.

<sup>4</sup> *Allisonia*, vol. III, no. 1, November 1905, pp. 227–229.

<sup>5</sup> Judith Friedland, *Restoring the Spirit: The Beginnings of Occupational Therapy in Canada, 1890–1930*. McGill-Queen's Montreal: University Press 2011, p. 194.





*Main Gallery of the Owens with  
weaving looms in the balcony,  
ca. 1937. Mount Allison University  
Archives, Folder 87001052*

used in Occupational Therapy by many Applied Arts graduates throughout the existence of the Applied Arts program. Occupational Therapy was a popular career choice for Applied Arts students after graduation and many of the alumni represented in this exhibition found jobs in Occupational Therapy after they graduated from Mount Allison.

Besides its important connection with the Occupational Therapy Department at the University of Toronto, Mount Allison benefitted from the resources and opportunities offered by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild. The national Guild provided resources and venues to promote and exhibit work by Applied Arts faculty and students. Founded in 1905 in Montreal, the Guild was inspired by British and American women in the Arts and Crafts movement. The Guild was dedicated to “encouraging the best arts and crafts made by Canadians of all backgrounds.”<sup>6</sup> In 1911 the Canadian Handicrafts Guild presented a Coronation gift to Queen Mary consisting of examples of craftwork from across Canada, including leatherwork by Mount Allison Applied Arts student Georgie Sherrard, a classmate of Margaret Harris who was the first graduate of the Applied Arts program in 1912.<sup>7</sup>

In 1931, the Mount Allison Handicrafts Guild was developed as a ‘cooperating institution’ of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild—a significant event in the history of the Applied Arts program. Influenced by the weakened economy of the Depression era, the Mount Allison Guild hoped to generate income for Applied Arts students, graduates and the local rural community. In addition to the three-year Applied Arts certificate, a two-year Handicrafts course was added as an option for “those who wish to study handicrafts for their own personal use.”<sup>8</sup> The Mount Allison Guild gained a reputation particularly for its tweeds made on looms imported from Norway in 1932, on the advice of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild.<sup>9</sup> The *Mount Allison Record* from December 1938/January 1939 reported that:

The Handicrafts Guild established several years ago at Mount Allison does an increasing volume of business each year. While many different kinds of craft work are sold—leather, china, basketry, metal work, Christmas cards, etc.—the weaving and selling of wool tweeds is the most important work. The wool is spun and dyed in the woolen mills at Port Elgin. The colours used are blended by Miss McLeod and needless to say are exceptionally beautiful. When samples of the tweeds were shown in New York praise was given especially to the patterns and the colours. Wool gauze curtains individually designed for each customer, are very popular. The tweed has been shown at the British Empire Exhibition in Glasgow, Scotland, at the Royal Winter Fair, Toronto and summer agencies in many other towns in the Maritime provinces.<sup>10</sup>

University President George Trueman was fully involved in promoting the Mount Allison Handicrafts Guild and the Applied Arts program, in collaboration with his cousin, Elizabeth McLeod, who directed the Art Department from 1916 until 1935. She had instigated the formation of the Guild and the important affiliation with the Occupational Therapy Department at the University of Toronto.<sup>11</sup> The association with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild brought increased national exposure to the Applied Arts program, especially through the students’ on-going participation in regional, national and international exhibitions organized by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild.

In 1937 the Mount Allison Ladies’ College formally closed, and the Art Department was integrated into the University. The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree program, the first in Canada, was initiated in the fall. There was likely an impetus

<sup>6</sup> Ellen Easton McLeod, *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild*, p.2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p.150.

<sup>8</sup> *Mount Allison University Calendar*, 1957–58

<sup>9</sup> Letter from George Trueman to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, 8 August 1932, Archives, Canadian Guild of Craft, Educational Files: Weaving School 1932–34.

<sup>10</sup> *The Mount Allison Record*, December 1938/January 1939, pp. 45–46.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth McLeod’s correspondence with President George Trueman, 1933, Mount Allison University Archives.



*Mount Allison promotional display for the Applied Arts program, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1930s. Mount Allison University Archives, Picture Collection, 200707/539*

*Applied Arts students' display at the Owens, 1937. Mount Allison University Archives, Picture Collection, 200707/1542*





*Fine and Applied Arts students,  
May 1957. Collection of Judith  
(McColm) Boswell, Applied Arts  
graduate, 1959*

*Marion McGregor McNair with  
her father, John B. McNair, at her  
Applied Arts graduation exhibit at  
the Owens Art Gallery, 1951. Mount  
Allison University Archives. Picture  
Collection. 2007.07/201*





*Portrait of Ellis Roulston*  
by Alex Colville, 1940  
oil on pulpboard  
60.4 x 50.5 cm  
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia,  
Gift of the Artist

<sup>12</sup> Mount Allison University Archives, 7837/1B/4

<sup>13</sup> Correspondence between Elizabeth McLeod and Mrs. Alice Webster, July 1938, New Brunswick Museum Archives, F3-11621

<sup>14</sup> Interview between John G. Reid and Alex Colville, January 1982. Mount Allison University Archives, 8253

<sup>15</sup> "Art Gallery News", October 6, 1951, *The Argosy Weekly*, p.3.

<sup>16</sup> "Art Gallery Renovated," January 12, 1946, *The Argosy Weekly*, p.8.

to increase the profile of the Applied Arts program at this time. In the summer of 1938, new pottery equipment was purchased, sinks were installed in the basement and part of the interior stone foundation was whitewashed.<sup>12</sup> The popularity of pottery became more apparent when the Canadian Guild of Potters was formed in Toronto in 1936. Mount Allison University Fine Arts Instructor Christian McKiel studied pottery in the summer with well-known Danish-Canadian potters Erica and Kjeld Deichmann at their studio in Moss Glen, New Brunswick.<sup>13</sup> The Deichmanns also sold their pottery through the Mount Allison Handicrafts Guild. Pottery, taught by Christian McKiel, was added to the curriculum in the fall of 1938. As the Art Department focused on gaining University status through the BFA program, the Fine and Applied Arts programs gradually developed distinct differences.

Until 1946, Fine and Applied Arts functioned symbiotically, sharing classrooms and equipment. Alex Colville agreed with this arrangement: "My idea of an ideal school has always been the sort of Bauhaus where students come and study design, and some of them later a painter—some are this and some are that."<sup>14</sup> Both Fine and Applied Arts classes were conducted on the main floor of the Owens, except for pottery. Fine Arts students often took classes in jewellery-making or weaving. Metalworking and painting classes were in adjoining rooms. Large looms operated in the balcony over the main entrance where weaving classes had been held since 1932.

George Trueman and Elizabeth McLeod had both retired by the fall of 1946. The Mount Allison Handicrafts Guild appears to have been inactive after 1946, although Mount Allison continued to be involved with exhibitions sponsored by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild. Occupational Therapy remained listed in the student calendars as a career option for Applied Arts graduates.

The fall of 1946 was a time of upheaval and change for Mount Allison and other Canadian universities. WWII had ended and the University anticipated sudden increased enrolment in all departments. During the fall of 1946, enrolment in Applied Arts was higher than it had ever been and by 1947 it was even higher as veterans returned to campus.<sup>15</sup> The basement of the Owens was hastily renovated in order to accommodate all Applied Arts equipment and classes. Looms were removed from the balcony and re-assembled in the basement. Leclerc looms manufactured in Quebec replaced the original cumbersome looms from Norway. Metal working equipment, woodcarving and basketry supplies were removed from the main floor and set up in the basement.

Applied Arts instructors Ellis Roulston (Head of the program), Sarah Hart (woodcarving), and Christian McKiel (pottery and Fine Arts courses) began to conduct all Applied Arts classes in the basement of the Owens in 1946. Ellis Roulston's younger brother Max joined the Applied Arts faculty just before Christian McKiel retired, and he continued teaching until 1961. Fine Arts classes remained on the main floor. In 1946, Lawren P. Harris became Head of the Art Department and former Fine Arts student Alex Colville joined the faculty, shortly afterwards teaching Design and Art History to both Fine and Applied Arts students.

A hierarchy that had not existed in the past between Fine Arts and Applied Arts students became evident after 1946. A separate entrance was constructed during the basement renovations and Applied Arts students and faculty entered the building directly to the basement rather than using the main doors of the Gallery.<sup>16</sup> Many of the Applied Arts students do not recall going up to the main floor of the



*Metalworking classroom, main floor of the Owens, from a painting by Mount Allison University Fine Arts student Wenda Lyons, ca. 1943.*

*Balcony, Owens Art Gallery ca. 1937*



<sup>17</sup> Conversations with former Mount Allison Applied Arts students, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Ellen Easton McLeod, *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild*, p.51.

<sup>19</sup> John G. Reid, *Mount Allison University: A History, to 1963, Volume II: 1914–1963*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p.304.

Gallery, nor do they recall much interaction with Fine Arts students except when those students came to the basement to wash their paintbrushes.<sup>17</sup>

The importance of establishing professional techniques and practices was a notable component of the Applied Arts program. Original objects, created with care, skill and technique, crafts required a specialized knowledge of tools and materials.<sup>18</sup> Former Applied Arts students recall Sarah Hart’s emphasis on the importance of keeping carving tools well sharpened to the point where carving could not be started for ‘weeks’ until all tools were meticulously prepared. Woodcarving students used mainly mahogany for carving blocks that were incorporated into various pieces of furniture by skilled local carpenters such as Levi Legere and University carpenter, Job Sears, who maintained a shop in the Owens basement until 1961.

In 1960, Mount Allison made the decision to discontinue the Applied Arts program. Financial and curricular problems were stated as contributing factors in the decision,<sup>19</sup> but as Judith Friedland notes in her essay in this catalogue on the Occupational Therapy program at the University of Toronto, there was a sense that “making things” should not be part of a university curriculum.

This exhibition examines the important place of the Applied Arts program in the history of the Art Department at Mount Allison University. Most of the work in this exhibition has been borrowed from former students, and families of former students, who use these items in their homes every day. The exhibition provides a unique opportunity to present information about the activities and accomplishments of students and faculty of the Applied Arts program at Mount Allison, and to assemble their work in one place—the place where it was originally created.

*Jane Tisdale*





*Injured soldier working on a loom specially constructed for use in bed. CAOT Publications ACE*

*Students in the ward aides course in Montreal, Divinity Hall, McGill University, summer 1919. CAOT Publications ACE*



# The Melding of Work and the Mending of Spirit Applied Arts at Mount Allison University and Occupational Therapy at the University of Toronto

When injured soldiers of World War I began to return to Canada for treatment and convalescence, women who were skilled in crafts offered their help. The soldiers often faced a lengthy convalescence and these women, known as ward aides, provided ‘occupations’ at the bedside, on the wards, and in workshops. Specific crafts were selected on the basis of what the injured soldier showed an interest in and could tolerate, and whether the craft could be adapted to meet the soldier’s limitations; for example, crafts could be used to improve physical function through building muscle strength and increasing joint range, and also to improve cognitive functioning by requiring increasing degrees of concentration, attention to detail, and problem-solving. With a long-term goal of re-establishing the injured soldier into his home and family and into a work setting, actions were graded both within an activity and across activities to gradually build skills and stamina. As an example, weaving on a small loom that was specially constructed for use in bed could be graded from a simple to complex pattern and from minimal to maximal exertion. That occupation could be followed by basket-weaving on the ward, and then woodworking in a special workshop. However, the crucial first step was for the ward aide to engage the soldier. It was her job to help restore his spirit which had been sorely challenged if not destroyed by war. For that she needed compassion, an ability to teach, and ingenuity.

<sup>1</sup>M. Gibbon. “History of occupational therapy in the Maritimes”. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 7, no. 2 (1940): 73–74. A number of other women from the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland are known to have become occupational therapists; for example, Mary Black, Eileen Keeffe, Alice Murdoch, Lillian Sweeney, Jean Blanchard, and Edith Hunton. No doubt there are more.

<sup>2</sup>Many women who became occupational therapists attended art programs; for example, at the Pratt Institute in New York, The Boston School of Art, and The Ontario College of Art in Toronto.

<sup>3</sup>Library and Archives Canada, Department of Veterans’ Affairs fonds.

In the early years of the war, ward occupations were not an organized effort, but as time went on, and casualties mounted, this intervention was seen as essential by the Military Hospitals Commission of Canada and the position was formalized. By 1918, special training courses for ward aides were offered at the University of Toronto (U of T). Three Mount Allison graduates of the Art Department attended: Greta Ogden, Wenonah Brenan, and Margaret Harris. In the spring of 1919, a course was also offered at McGill University in Montreal; it attracted seven Mount Allison graduates: Vesta Taylor, Sybil Calkin, Marjorie Ayer, Ada Ford, Bessie Bole, Jean Smith, and Marian Terry.<sup>1</sup> The courses were designed to give the women a better understanding of what the soldier had suffered, physically and emotionally, and some knowledge of hospital procedures. There were also classes in crafts—many of which were likely not needed by Applied Arts graduates from Mount Allison and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Letters of reference from the Military Hospitals Commission considered graduates of the ward aides course “qualified to teach patients a variety of crafts; for example, basketry, wood work, metal work, weaving, bookbinding, and bead work.”<sup>3</sup> The courses were in great demand despite the fact that acceptance meant that the applicant had to agree to be posted anywhere in Canada and work for the Department of Soldier’s Civil Re-establishment for at least one year upon graduation.

Even before the war an affinity between Mount Allison University and what was to become occupational therapy had been apparent in the person of Thomas

<sup>4</sup> J. Friedland and N. Davids-Brumer. "From Education to Occupation: the story of Thomas Bessell Kidner." *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74, no. 1 (2007): 27-37.

<sup>5</sup> *Allisonia*, Vol. III, No.1, Sackville New Brunswick, November 1905, p. 228.

<sup>6</sup> The original plan for re-establishing injured soldiers was instigated by a Toronto woman, Ina Matthews, who had been providing occupations at the bedside for convalescing soldiers in Sydney, Nova Scotia at the home of her sister Mrs. J.K.L. (Ethel) Ross. Matthews worked with others to bring the matter to the attention of Ottawa in Sessional Paper 35a. See *Restoring the Spirit: the beginnings of occupational therapy in Canada, 1890-1930*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> University of Toronto Archives and Records Management (UTARMS), Department of University Extension. See also W.J. Dunlop. "A brief history of occupational therapy." *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 1, No. 1 (1933): 6-10.

<sup>8</sup> Mount Allison University Archives, 7837/1A/307

Bessell Kidner. Kidner had been brought to Canada from England in 1900 by the Macdonald Manual Training Fund to organize the teaching of manual training in Nova Scotia.<sup>4</sup> From 1904 to 1911, Kidner was the Director of Manual Training and Household Science for New Brunswick. Like other reform educators of his day, Kidner was committed to the development of manual skills as a means of improving education. In an address to the students of the Household Science class at Mount Allison in 1905, he congratulated the program for exemplifying "the spirit of modern education, the spirit of investigating and *doing*, as opposed to the older spirit of passive receptivity"<sup>5</sup> (author's italics). Kidner continued with this type of work in Calgary from 1911 through 1915 when he was appointed Vocational Secretary for the Military Hospitals Commission of Canada. In his new position he was to help re-establish Canada's disabled soldiers by returning them to their former jobs or, where necessary, by retraining them for new ones. It was Kidner's program that was carried out by the ward aides and soon became known as occupational therapy.<sup>6</sup> In 1917 Kidner became a founder of the (American) National Society for the Promotion of Occupational Therapy and in the 1920s he served three successive terms as its President. Thus his presence in the Atlantic Provinces pre-war, and particularly his lengthy stay in New Brunswick, may well have influenced women from the area to take up the work when war came.

When the war was over, occupational therapists sought to expand their work to civilian populations and to establish a permanent educational program. The diploma program at U of T began in 1926 and until 1950 it was the only program in Canada. Once again, preparation in an applied arts department was considered a distinct advantage and the link between Mount Allison and occupational therapy (first established by Ogden, Brenan, and Harris) was continued. Indeed by 1931 there was talk of a collaborative program whereby students could attend the applied arts program at Mount Allison and then transfer to the occupational therapy program at U of T for their second academic year and two months of hospital experience. The minutes of a meeting of the Department of University Extension, which housed the course in occupational therapy, dated 29 October 1931 noted that "It should be understood that this arrangement would continue until such time as the University of Mount Allison could give the whole course ..."<sup>7</sup> By 1933, courses had been set out and the plan for affiliation appears to have been agreed upon. In 1939, Mount Allison President Trueman wrote W.J. Dunlop, the Director of the Department of University Extension, to confirm that the arrangements still stood, noting that Mount Allison has "greatly developed our handicraft work and I feel that there is the possibility of more students becoming interested." Dunlop's response makes it clear, however, that the arrangement had not been acted upon: on 11 December 1939, he wrote "so far, not a single student has taken advantage of the arrangement we made six years ago."<sup>8</sup>

Why Trueman was so interested in occupational therapy is not clear although it is possible that his cousin, Elizabeth McLeod, who was Head of the Mount Allison Fine Art Department from 1916 to 1935, encouraged him. She had met with Florence Wright, a graduate of both the ward aides course and the diploma course at U of T (and also a graduate of the Ontario College of Art) when Wright visited Mount Allison in the summer of 1931 and it is likely that the topic was discussed. Trueman's continuing interest in occupational therapy was apparent when he agreed to become a member of the Honorary Advisory Board of the Canadian

<sup>9</sup> Mount Allison University Archives, 7837/1A/307

<sup>10</sup> M. Gibbon. "History of occupational therapy in the Maritimes." *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 7, no. 2 (1940), p.74: 73–74.

<sup>11</sup> UTARMS, Calendars for Academic Programs. These calendars do not show any record of china painting.

<sup>12</sup> V. Hammock "Art at Mount Allison." In *Liberal education and the small university in Canada*, by Christine Storm, 105–113. Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Occupational Therapy programs now study these questions in earnest as they pursue knowledge in occupational science. The history of the profession's focus on engaging in meaningful activity is explored in Friedland, *Restoring the Spirit*.

<sup>14</sup> William Morris, "I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few." *The Lesser Arts*, In *Hopes and Fears for Art*.

<sup>15</sup> Morris "Have nothing in your homes that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful" *The Beauty of Life*, In *Hopes and Fears for Art*.

<sup>16</sup> The work done by these women attracted the attention of newspapers and magazines. See for example, G. Pringle, "God Bless the Girls in Green" in *MacLean's Magazine*, February 15, 1922.

Association of Occupational Therapy in 1932.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the idea that Mount Allison and U of T did actually take advantage of their relationship persisted and in 1940, Marion (Terry) Gibbon, a graduate of Mount Allison and a student in the ward aides course given in Montreal wrote " ... There is room for expansion [of occupational therapy] in this province [New Brunswick], as there are a number of hospitals that might and should be serviced, as well as *an excellent opportunity for part training at Mount Allison University which has an affiliated course with Toronto University.*"<sup>10</sup> (author's italics)

Looking at the occupational therapy curriculum at U of T in 1926 it's easy to see the affinity with the the Applied Arts Department at Mount Allison. In addition to the medical courses (anatomy, physiology, psychology, psychiatry, etc.), the program provided courses in art and design and practical classes in a host of crafts, including leather-work, pottery, woodwork, metal work, rug-making, bookbinding, bead work, weaving, jewellery-making, and basketry, to name the more popular.<sup>11</sup> However, as time went on, the emphasis on crafts began to decrease and by the late 1970s crafts had all but disappeared. Indeed the teaching of crafts was an issue for any academic program—whether at U of T or at Mount Allison—as there was a sense that 'making things' should not be part of a university curriculum. This criterion was not imposed by the institution in the case of U of T; rather, it came from within as occupational therapy strived to raise its academic standing. As Virgil Hammock has said in comparing the status of fine art with applied art programs at Mount Allison "it was better to be a thinker than a doer."<sup>12</sup> No one talked then of the thinking that could accompany the doing: what is creativity, what is meaningful occupation, what is the value of having pride in making something with your hands, how does being engaged divert the individual from stressful—or even pathological—thoughts, etc.<sup>13</sup>

The philosophy of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement seemed to permeate the thinking behind the use of crafts in the treatment of injured soldiers. It was understood that art was, as Morris had professed, for all, and that included patients.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, many of the articles that were produced were intended to be useful<sup>15</sup>. Usefulness was important as there was often the potential for patients to supplement their family's income (when articles could be sold in a craft shop), or to save the family money (when articles could be used at home). However, good design and proper execution were critical if items made in occupational therapy were to be sold. Thus one reason why the occupational therapy program at U of T wanted to attract Mount Allison graduates (and those from other art schools) was to ensure that graduate occupational therapists could not only teach crafts but could ensure the production of saleable items. For the art graduate herself, with few options in the early 20th century for women who wanted to work outside the home, being able to apply her art-making background in a paying job must have been attractive. Occupational therapy offered a challenge, a sense of adventure, and an opportunity to help.

By war's end, it was realized that Canada's economy could not afford to have its injured soldiers remain dependent. The importance of work had been stressed by Kidner from his manual training days through to his role as Vocational Secretary and it marked his influence on occupational therapy. This melding of work and mending of spirit in the goal of the occupational therapist could be seen in the crest worn on her hat (along with her renowned green uniform).<sup>16</sup> The crest was

<sup>17</sup>The crest was designed by N. Burnette and S. Fryer and was used in various iterations until 1988.

<sup>18</sup> Margaret Harris graduated from the Arts and Crafts program at Mount Allison in 1912, attended the second ward aides course offered in Toronto in 1918, and remained there to teach for several months. She also produced teaching materials for weaving and rug-making. Upon her return to New Brunswick, she was appointed provincial ward aide supervisor. However, by 1924, both she and Ada Ford had left for the US to take on teaching positions at the School of Occupational Therapy in St Louis, Missouri. Wenonah Brenan, became the principal of the ward aides course at McGill just two months after graduating from the ward aides course at U of T. She then went to Camp Hill Hospital in Nova Scotia and oversaw the work in that province, moved to the US, and eventually ended up teaching household science at Cornell University. Both women fought for the extension of occupational therapy to civilian populations. Greta Ogden came home to New Brunswick to work at Old Government House Military Hospital in Fredericton before returning to Mount Allison to teach and to continue with her fine work in china painting and embroidery.



*Students in the first ward aides course at the University of Toronto taking carpentry lessons in the Mining Building, Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering. CAOT Publications ACE*

triangular in shape and showed a clenched fist holding a hammer and resting on a bar, with a rising sun in the background. The symbols related to the nobility of work and how it could light up mind, body, and spirit. The Latin words *Per Mentum et Manus ad Sanitatem* were soon added<sup>17</sup> (“Through mind and hand to health”) making for a good description of the process and the outcome for which early occupational therapists strove. Mount Allison graduates from the applied arts program who became occupational therapists found their art background to be a great advantage. They used it to make an important contribution to the well-being of injured soldiers in WWI and to lobby for the importance of occupational therapy for civilians.<sup>18</sup> They were artists who were highly skilled in crafts and they had the ability to engage the soldiers and hold their interest as they taught them new skills. Through the use of his mind and his hand, the soldier then began his journey to health.

*Judith Friedland*

*Colour Plates*





Betty (Sawler) Goble  
Silver coiled wire bracelet  
Collection of the Artist







Beth (Mann) Couillard  
Silver ring with gemstones  
Collection of the Artist

← Doreen (Allison) Tuomola  
Handwoven pillow cover  
Collection of the Artist



Ellis Roulston

Silver necklace with gemstones, ca. 1950

Collection of the Owens Art Gallery, Gift of Doreen Hall

Greta Ogden →

Hand-painted china, ca. 1907

Collection of the Owens Art Gallery, Gift of Gerda Parlee and Joanna Parlee





Max Roulston  
Silver spoons  
Collection of Aaron Roulston

Margaret (Harris) Fraser →  
Beaded necklace with monogram  
Collection of Margaret (Fraser) Murray





Margaret (Harris) Fraser  
Hand-carved wooden box  
Collection of Margaret (Fraser) Murray



Barbara (Hendry) Strange  
Silver brooch with gemstone  
Collection of Ron Strange





Jean (Smith) Gregg  
Silver tureen, 1929  
Collection of Arthur Gregg



Carolyn (Manzer) McMullen  
Hand-woven basket  
Collection of the Artist

Leather-tooling templates, tools, materials  
and hand-carved leather belt  
Collection of Carolyn (Manzer) McMullen





Farnett  
SCARLET  
Leather Dye  
FARNETT COMPANY  
Lowell, Mass.

Farnett  
BLUE  
Leather Dye  
FARNETT COMPANY  
Lowell, Mass.

Orange cap with red text

Rectangular metal tin containing tools

Metal chisel with text: WELLSLEY MASS

Metal chisel with text: WELLSLEY MASS



Beth (Mann) Couillard  
Wooden stool with leather-tooled top  
Collection of the Artist



Margery (Hayes) Jamieson  
Hand-carved mahogany chest  
Collection of Elizabeth Stark





Jane (Brown) Cummings  
Silver earrings, brooch and necklace  
Collection of Alex Cummings

← Jean Dixon  
Leather-tooled billfold  
Collection of the Owens Art Gallery, Gift of Raymond Dixon



Marjorie (Moffatt) Hickey  
Hand-carved wooden stool  
Collection of the Artist



## *Lenders to the Exhibition*

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia  
Ellen Ayer  
Mary Baycroft  
Herb Beal  
David Benn  
Jessie Blight  
Judy Boswell  
Genie Coates  
Elizabeth Couillard  
Vera Cowie  
Alex Cummings  
Peggy Davidson  
Angelica De Benedetti  
Ann Evans  
Nan Fairchild  
Judith Friedland  
Marcie Fullerton  
Betty Goble  
Arthur Gregg  
Lewis Henderson  
Marjorie R. Hickey  
Johannes and Angela Huntjens  
John Jamieson  
Ann Mackenzie  
Brian Matheson  
Patricia McClelland  
Carolyn McMullen  
Harriet Meacher  
Ruth Miller  
Mount Allison University Archives  
Margaret Murray  
Margaret O'Connor  
Joanne Peill  
Margot Roach  
Ann Robinson  
Aaron Roulston  
Donna Roulston  
Barb Smith  
Pauline Spatz  
Phyllis Steeves  
Ron Strange  
Elizabeth Stark  
Brenda Trafford  
Doreen Tuomola  
Cairine White  
Carol Wilson  
Helen Wilson



*Labels for the Mount Allison Handicraft Guild provided by the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, attached to woven items created at the Owens between 1932 and 1946. Collection of Aaron Roulston, Max Roulston's papers*



## *Artists in the Exhibition*

Ellen (West) Ayer, BSc 1944; Applied Arts summer class 1940  
Nancy (Stephenson) Benn, Applied Arts Certificate 1953  
Kathryn (Thompson) Blight, Piano Teacher's Certificate 1919; Applied Arts classes 1917–1919  
Judy (McColm) Boswell, Applied Arts Certificate 1959  
Alex Colville, BFA 1942; Fine and Applied Arts Faculty 1946–1963  
Elizabeth (Mann) Couillard, Applied Arts Certificate 1958  
Vera (Cummings) Cowie, Applied Arts Certificate 1953  
Jessie Craise, Applied Arts evening classes 1940s  
Jane (Brown) Cummings, Applied Arts Certificate 1960  
Peggy (Goodspeed) Davidson, Applied Arts Certificate 1953  
Elaine Allison (Borden) Dickie, Drawing Certificate 1907  
Pearl Dinnis, Applied Arts classes 1920s  
Jean Dixon, Applied Arts Certificate 1931  
Ruth Lockhart Eisenhauer, Applied Arts Certificate 1931  
Leon Estabrooks, Applied Arts classes full-time 1948–1949  
Nan (Whalen) Fairchild, Applied Arts classes full-time 1950–1952  
Tom Forrestall, BFA 1957  
Margaret (Harris) Fraser, Arts and Crafts Certificate 1912  
Marcie Fullerton, Applied Arts evening class 1940s  
Betty (Sawler) Goble, Applied Arts Certificate 1949  
Jean (Smith) Gregg, Drawing Certificate 1916  
Margery (Hayes) Jamieson, BA 1931; Applied Arts classes 1930–1931  
Marjorie R. (Moffatt) Hickey, Applied Arts classes full-time 1939–1940  
Dorcas Johnson, Applied Arts evening classes 1940s  
Effie Johnson, Applied Arts evening classes 1940s  
Muriel (Thompson) Jonah, Applied Arts classes full-time 1926–27  
Ann (Pickard) Langley, Applied Arts classes full-time 1953–55  
Ruth Lister, Applied Arts evening classes 1930s  
Wenda Lyons, BFA 1945  
Eunice (Dixon) McCormack, BA 1928; Applied Arts classes 1920s  
Ann (Andrews) Mackenzie, Applied Arts Certificate 1958  
Marion (McNair) McCain, Applied Arts Certificate 1951  
Patricia (Pollett) McClelland, Applied Arts Certificate 1960  
Christian (Harris) McKiel, Drawing Certificate 1911; Fine and Applied Arts Faculty  
1913–17; 1922–1949  
Helen McKenzie, Applied Arts classes 1908  
Carolyn (Manzer) McMullen, Applied Arts Certificate 1960  
Harriet (Campbell) Meacher, Applied Arts Certificate 1960  
Ruth Miller, B.Comm 1958; Applied Arts evening class 1954–1955  
Margaret (Fraser) Murray, Applied Arts Certificate 1950  
Greta Ogden, Applied Arts Faculty 1923–1939  
Joanne (Bessonette) Peill, Applied Arts Certificate 1957  
Edward Pulford, BFA 1949; Fine and Applied Arts Faculty 1949–80  
Katherine (McMillan) Roach, BA 1921; Applied Arts classes 1920s  
Ann (Standish) Robinson, Applied Arts Certificate 1957  
Ellis Roulston, Applied Arts Certificate 1937; BA 1941; Applied Arts Department  
Head 1942–1960

Max Roulston, Applied Arts Certificate 1942; BA 1947; BEd 1961; Applied Arts Faculty  
1948-1961

Roger Savage, BFA 1963

Pauline (Alward) Spatz, Applied Arts evening classes 1940s

Barbara (Hendry) Strange, Applied Arts Certificate 1959

Mary Erminie Thompson, Applied Arts Certificate 1926

Doreen (Allison) Tuomola, Applied Arts Certificate 1954

Cairine (Fillmore) White, Applied Arts Certificate 1959

# Chronology

1854

The Female Branch of the Mount Allison Wesleyan Academy (later called The Mount Allison Ladies' College) opens. Art classes include drawing, oil painting, coloured crayon, black crayon, monochromatic, watercolors, Grecian painting, Oriental painting, wax flowers, and wax fruit.

1886

'China modelling' is added to the Art Department curriculum.

1895

The Owens Museum of Fine Arts (later called the Owens Art Gallery) opens on the campus of Mount Allison University. John Hammond is Head of the Art Department. All art classes are held in the Owens for the next 70 years.

1896

Elizabeth McLeod graduates from the Ladies' College and joins the teaching staff in the Art Department.

1904

The Lillian Massey-Treble School of Household Science opens on campus.

One of the courses offered is Elementary Hand Work—lessons in cord work, raffia and reed basketry. Lillian Massey-Treble hopes "to give the women of Canada a standard of what is possible in the arts of weaving and embroidery" when she donates her collection of Chinese robes and Mediterranean embroideries to the Royal Ontario Museum.

–*Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003 [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/massey\\_lillian\\_frances\\_14E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/massey_lillian_frances_14E.html)

1905

In Montreal, Alice Peck and May Phillips found the Canadian Handicrafts Guild.

The Guild is dedicated to "encouraging the best arts and crafts made by Canadians of all backgrounds."

–Ellen Easton McLeod, *In Good Hands: The Women of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999, p.2

Thomas Bessell Kidner, Director of Manual Training and Household Science for New Brunswick, addresses Mount Allison students and faculty: "For whether it be the chair on which we sit, the bed on which we lie, or the garments we wear—they are all the work of the hand!"

–*Allisonia* vol. III, no. 1, November 1905, pp.227-229

1906

Elizabeth McLeod re-joins the teaching staff in the Art Department where she had taught from 1896 to 1902. Clay modeling and leather tooling are added to the curriculum.

1907

Sarah (Stewart) Hart joins the teaching staff. Woodcarving and design are added to the curriculum: "Another new department is the Designing Class taught by Miss McLeod. Its object is to study the dividing of spaces into the most beautiful proportions. As soon as the Design class has progressed sufficiently, Miss Stewart will instruct the students in the art of working out their designs in leather."

–*Allisonia* vol. V, no.1, November 1907, p.28

## 1908

Ladies' College Principal B.C. Borden states in his Annual Report: "I have visions of an enlargement of our splendid art school by the creation of a department for the teaching of the 'arts and crafts' such as shall place Mount Allison in the lead of this important branch of technical education."

-*Allisonia* vol. V, no. 4, May 1908, p.115

"On the afternoon of December 18th the students and instructors of the Art Museum held an exhibition of their work, completed during the term. The walls of the galleries were tastefully decorated with drawings and tooled leather."

-*Allisonia* vol. VI, no. 1, January 1909, p.35

## 1909

Elizabeth McLeod attends summer courses in metalwork and design at Columbia University Teacher's College in New York City. Metalwork is added to the Applied Arts curriculum in the fall: "The making of hammered and chased brass, copper and silver utensils, such as bowls, trays, candlesticks etc. and jewelry; also the setting of semi-precious stones."

-*Mount Allison Ladies' College Calendar, 1909-10*, p.69

A room in the basement of the Gallery is renovated for some of the Applied Arts work. "The room is 40 x 30, and is situated directly under the East Gallery. A brick floor is to be laid, and the equipment necessary for the various crafts will soon be installed. Already three large windows have been put in place and prism glass is to be used so as to carry light to all parts of the room."

-*Allisonia*, vol. VII, no. 1, November 1909, p.10

## 1911

B.C. Borden resigns as Principal of the Ladies' College and becomes President of the University until 1923.

## 1912

"Miss Margaret McL. Harris, of Pictou, N.S., has the distinction of being the first Mt. Allison graduate in Arts and Crafts. This course consists of wood-carving, leather and metalwork, modelling, drawing and designing. Her exhibition is perhaps one of the most interesting features for inspection. There are two large chests displaying magnificent work in woodcarving, on one conventional, on the other naturalistic designs. Miss Harris's leather work is all of her own designing. A tray of pounded copper with fancy pattern designs, is well worthy of mention."

-*Saint John Globe*, June 1, 1912

## 1913

Sarah (Stewart) Hart resigns, and Christian (Harris) McKiel, sister of Margaret Harris, joins the teaching staff in the fall.

## 1916

Art Department Head, John Hammond retires. Elizabeth McLeod assumes directorship of the Art Department. She is formally named Head of the Department in 1930.

## 1917

Basketry is added to the Applied Arts curriculum.

## 1918

Interior decoration is added to the Applied Arts curriculum; former Applied Arts students Greta Ogden, Margaret Harris and Wenonah Brenan attend the University of Toronto ward aide training program. Subsequently, other Applied Arts students complete the program in order to assist with the rehabilitation of injured Canadian soldiers returning after WWI.

1919

McGill University offers a ward aide training program and seven Applied Arts students from Mount Allison attend. Fletcher Peacock, Mount Allison University Class of 1911, is appointed New Brunswick's first Director of Vocational Education.

1923

Toy-making is added to the Applied Arts curriculum. Greta Ogden joins the teaching staff. B.C. Borden retires and George J. Trueman becomes University President.

1924

The Household Science Department introduces a BSc degree program. Part of the coursework is provided through the Applied Arts program.

1927

Weaving and batik are added to the Applied Arts curriculum.

"The Applied Art course is arranged to meet the increasing demand for handwork. With the practice of crafts, students study drawing, modeling, design and colour. Graduates are capable of designing and executing good work in wood, metal or leather, jewelry, decorated china, basketry, weaving and the printing and dyeing of fabrics and are competent to teach these crafts."

-*Mount Allison Ladies' College Calendar, 1927-28*

1928

Art embroidery, taught by Greta Ogden, is added to the Applied Arts curriculum. She also teaches 'stitchery' in the Household Science Department. Sarah Hart resumes teaching and remains on staff until 1961.

1929

Jean Smith, former Ladies' College graduate and graduate of the ward aide training program at McGill University, joins the teaching staff; Elizabeth McLeod writes an article incorporating designs by Mount Allison Applied Arts students.

- "Another Field," *Keramic Design*, December 1929, vol. XXXI, no. 7, p.121

1931

A two-year Handicrafts certificate is added to the three-year Applied Arts program.

During the summer, Elizabeth McLeod meets with Florence Wright, director of the Occupational Therapy program at the University of Toronto and a graduate of the ward aide program and the Occupational Therapy certificate course at the University of Toronto.

-Mount Allison University Archives, 7837/IA/307

George Trueman corresponds with the University of Toronto Extensions Department, proposing collaboration between the Applied Arts program at Mount Allison and the Occupational Therapy program at U of T. M. Gibbon, "History of occupational therapy in the Maritimes."

-*Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 7, no. 2, 1940, pp.73-74

Jean Smith's students, Mary Campbell and Jean Dixon, exhibit jewellery work and win first prizes at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, Ontario.

- "Art Exhibitions", *The Mount Allison Record*, October 1931

Organized by Elizabeth McLeod, The Mount Allison Handicrafts Guild begins operating in the fall: "Mount Allison Ladies' College has recently formed an Art Guild which receives orders for discriminating gifts in metal work, jewelry, painting, china, leather tooling, batik, Hand-Block linen, weaving, basketry, and wood carving. The woodcarving is that used in Hymn boards, pew ends, pulpit and railing carving.

Graduates of the Art Gallery are employed by the Guild in the filling of these orders, thus



making utilitarian this department of creative art which has long been regarded as purely cultural.”

-*The Mount Allison Record*, vol. XV, no. 2, December 1931, p.36

## 1932

Colonel Bovey, President of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, announces an affiliation with The Mount Allison Handicrafts Guild and visits the Owens in the summer to view the facilities and to discuss the feasibility of starting a weaving school.

-“Handicrafts Guild In Annual Meeting,” *Montreal Gazette*, January 26, 1932, p.5

-Letter from George Trueman, 8 August 1932, *Archives, Canadian Guild of Craft*, Educational Files- Weaving School 1932-34

In August, after the meeting with Colonel Bovey, George Trueman orders three looms from Norway. The looms arrive at Mount Allison in November. “Miss McLeod admits defeat in the assemblage and operation of the new Danish looms recently arrived. A Danish farmer visiting Pictou NS assists: Mr Bergholm is perfectly at home with the conglomerate mass of timber, resembling a giant jigsaw puzzle. Potential weavers stood around as he fitted pieces into place. Weaving has begun with zest in the Arts and Crafts dept.”

-Victoria Burrill Ross, *Moments Make a Year*. Sackville: The Tribune Press Limited, 1932, p.158

“Mount Allison hopes, through this department, to raise the standard of the cottage arts and to become a centre through which the work of the country woman may be marketed.”

-*The Mount Allison Record*, April-June 1933, p.127

George Trueman is elected a member of the honorary advisory board of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy.

Work created by Applied Arts students for the Mount Allison Handicrafts Guild is used to promote the University during several banquets to establish Mount Allison Alumni Associations such as in Parrsboro, NS: “The hall was artistically decorated with Mount Allison colours and banners. An exhibit was sent from Mount Allison Art guild including weaving, leather tooling, jewellery, hand-painted china, pastels, post cards, batik etc. and was on display throughout the banquet.”

-*The Mount Allison Record*, December 1932/January 1933

## 1933

Arrangements are confirmed between the Director, University Extensions, University of Toronto and the Art Department at Mount Allison University, for Applied Arts students, after one year, to study Occupational Therapy and to obtain an Occupational Therapy certificate after one year at the University of Toronto and 2 months hospital training.

-Mount Allison University Archives, 7837/1A/307

## 1934

Mount Allison Handicrafts Guild is listed as a “cooperating institution” affiliated with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild. “One of the main aims of the Guild as will be apparent from the list of cooperating institutions and societies is the coordination of different groups in such a way as to prevent duplication of effort.”

-Archives, *Canadian Guild of Craft*, Educational files, 1934

## 1935

Stanley Royle replaces Elizabeth McLeod as Head of the Art Department. His opinion about ‘handicrafts’ is described in a letter written by Elizabeth McLeod:

“I do not think I emphasized enough that Mr. Royle is very much interested in handicrafts, and that side of the work is going on here under Mrs. McKiel. When we thought of taking the looms to another building he opposed it, because he said he thought that weaving was

one of the finest of crafts and its place was in the art school. He seems to think it quite as important as painting, which is pretty decent for a painter.”

–New Brunswick Museum Archives, F1-7(1)

Toy-making is removed from the Applied Arts curriculum.

#### 1936

The annual spring conference of the recently formed Maritime Art Association is held at Beethoven Hall at Mount Allison University. George Trueman addresses the group and stresses the need to include art in the public school curriculum.

#### 1937

The Ladies' College is renamed School for Girls and operates until 1946. The Art Department is integrated into the University; the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree program is initiated in the fall. Ellis Roulston graduates from the Applied Arts program. George Trueman becomes honorary Vice President of the Canadian Handicraft Guild, retaining the position until 1939.

Fletcher Peacock, a lifelong friend of George Trueman, is appointed Director of Educational Services for the province of New Brunswick and suggests that Mount Allison might be interested in adult education and “extending its work in Fine Arts, Music, Handicrafts, etc.”

–John G. Reid, *Mount Allison University: A History, to 1963, Volume II: 1914–1963*.  
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984. p.305

Arranging summer programs in adult education, George Trueman, in consultation with Christian McKiel, requests Frank W. Binns, Instructor in Engineering Drawing at Mount Allison, to produce blueprints of looms “the best size for the average home and have them available for people at summer school.”

–Mount Allison University Archives, President's correspondence, May 21, 1937, 7837/1A/84

#### 1938

Elizabeth McLeod writes about the Guild:

“[The Gallery] will be open all summer and the tweed and pottery (Deichmann's & Miss Doull's) will be for sale. The kiln is ordered and Mrs. McKiel has spent two weeks of intensive study with the Deichmann's.”

–New Brunswick Museum Archives, F3-11621

During the summer, a new kiln from the Denver Fire Clay Co. in Colorado is installed in the Gallery basement. Pottery is added to the curriculum in the fall. In anticipation of reduced enrollment due to the start of WWII, the Applied Arts course is reduced to 2 years and the 'Handicrafts' course is removed from the curriculum.

#### 1939

“The Mount Allison Handicraft Guild exhibited tweeds at the New York World's Fair and at the Sportsmen's Show in Boston and New York; exhibit of Canadian Handicraft in Vancouver. Today the Guild produces from one thousand to twelve hundred yards of material a year, which is sold at its own office housed in the Art Department of the University, at the Canadian Handicraft Guild branch at Eaton's, College Street, Toronto, and by various dealers throughout the Maritime Provinces. A number of students taking Handicrafts are preparing for Occupational Therapy.”

–Report of the President to the Board of Regents for the Year 1939–40, p.27

#### 1940

China painting (originally called 'china modelling') is removed from the curriculum. The 3-year Applied Arts Course resumes.

1941

The first BFA degree in Canada is granted at Mount Allison University. Ellis Roulston receives a BA from Mount Allison University and joins the Applied Arts faculty.

1942

Representing Mount Allison University, Ellis Roulston attends the Canadian Handicraft Guild conference in Toronto. Max Roulston graduates from the Applied Arts program. Alex Colville graduates from the Fine Arts program. Both enlist in the Canadian Army.

1944

Instructed by Ellis Roulston, "76 members of the Air Force and Army took a special two-weeks course under the auspices of the Canadian Legion Educational Service. These courses, which were in handicrafts, were designed to prepare those taking them to return to their stations or camps and teach in the hobby huts and recreational buildings."

-Report of the President to the Board of Regents for the Year 1944-45, p.23.

During the war, Sarah Hart assists with the rehabilitation of injured RCAF soldiers at the Station hospital in Moncton: "I worked with 200 men in 5 wards showing them how to weave placemats, make leather gloves, brief cases, baby shoes and do silver work. They couldn't use blow torches in bed so they just did the cutting."

-Vera Ayling, "She Carved Her Life in Art", *Saint John Telegraph Journal*, 4 August, 1973

1945

George Trueman and Stanley Royle resign.

1946

During the summer, the Applied Arts Program is moved to the basement of the Owens. "Due to extensive renovations to the basement of the school, the entire applied arts dept. will take up quarters there." It was later noted by University President, Ross Flemington: "Work was done using the cheapest materials and the fastest methods."

-Report of the President to the Board of Regents for the Years 1946-47 and 1961

In the fall, Lawren P. Harris becomes Head of the Art Department, a position he holds until 1970. Alex Colville joins the faculty; his former teacher, Elizabeth McLeod, resigns from the Art Department after nearly 50 years.

"An exchange exhibition was inaugurated and arranged by the Directors of student work between the Owens School of Fine and Applied Arts and the Fine Arts Department of the University of Toronto. The work of the Mount Allison students was displayed in the main rotunda of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, and received very favourable reviews from the Toronto press and interested individuals."

-Report of the President to the Board of Regents for the Year 1946-47

1948

Ellis Roulston's brother Max joins the faculty as 'assistant in Applied Arts', and teaches mainly pottery until 1961; Ellis Roulston is elected President of the New Brunswick Branch of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and President of the Guild of Canadian Weavers.

Student trips are arranged by Ellis Roulston over the next few years to various locations such as Parrsboro, NS where gemologist Eldon George supplies gemstones for the Applied Arts program; the Deichmann's pottery studio in Moss Glen, NB; Dorchester Penitentiary where Ellis Roulston instructs prisoners and initiates a craft shop there for the sale of prisoner's work; and to local exhibitions of craftwork: "The students of the Applied Arts Department of the Owens Art Gallery enjoyed a memorable afternoon when Mr. Roulston, head of the department, made arrangements for the students to attend the Handicrafts Exhibition under the auspices of the Amherst Kinsman Club in the Armories at Amherst. At one-thirty a special bus left the Gallery with 32 students and four instructors. After arriving at the armories, the students viewed the display consisting of handmade pottery, weaving,

spinning, doll making, rugs, bed spreads, clothing, jewellery, wood-carving, stone-cutting and leather.”

–“MT.A. Art Students Visit Amherst EX.”, *The Argosy Weekly*, October 23, 1948. Conversations with former Applied Arts students, September–December 2014.

1949

The student-initiated “Art in Action” program demonstrates techniques to the public: “The awesome process of creation will be everywhere on view this Monday evening, February 21st, when the Studio Club presents its program of “Art in Action.”

Calling forth the riches of the earth, the students will be using as raw materials pigments from western Canada, fur from Siberia, semi-precious stones from Latin America, linen from Britain and good old Maritime mud. Craftsmanship typical of each of the three years of the Applied Arts course will be demonstrated.”

–“Art in Action On View Mon. Night”, *The Argosy Weekly*, February 19, 1949, p.8

In May, Christian McKiel retires after 32 years of teaching.

1950

Ellis Roulston is on sabbatical leave from September 1950 to September 1951, to study metalwork and weaving in Stockholm Sweden.

He writes on his return: “On the whole (in Sweden) there seems to be a general public dislike for articles that are shoddy, and a strong appreciation for those that are good in quality and workmanship. It is to be hoped that the Canadian public will some day develop to a greater extent this same dislike and demand than exists at the present time.”

–“Prof. E. Roulston Praises Swedish Handicraft”, *The Argosy Weekly*, Nov. 24, 1951, p.8

1951

The Nova Scotia Metal Arts Guild is founded. Ellis Roulston and several former Mount Allison Applied Arts students have their work approved and stamped by the Guild.

On November 7, HRH Princess Elizabeth and HRH Prince Philip tour Canada. Their train stops at the Sackville station where they are presented with a programme with a hand tooled leather cover worked by Ellis Roulston. The cover bore the coat of arms of Lord Sackville in whose honour the name Sackville was given to the area immediately west of the Tantramar River in 1762.

–“Royal Couple in Sackville”, *The Argosy Weekly*, Nov. 10, 1951, p.1

1954

On the occasion of the centenary of the opening of the Mount Allison Ladies’ College, Elizabeth McLeod receives an honorary degree for her dedication to art education for women. The degree is presented to her by Christian McKiel, her former student and colleague.

1956

The two-year Handicrafts course returns to the curriculum “designed for those persons who wish to study handicrafts for their own personal use.”

–*Mount Allison University Calendar, 1957–58*

Sackville carpenter, Levi Legere, is hired by Ellis Roulston to construct furniture for students in woodcarving classes.

1957

A special committee is established by the policy committee of the Board of Regents to study the financial problems and curriculum in the Art Department and in the Music Department: “They discover a deeper malaise caused by the offering of too many different courses to a diverse and ill-defined clientele.”

–John G. Reid, *Mount Allison University: A History to 1963, Volume II: 1914–1963*, p.304

1958-59

The committee consults with Lawren P. Harris and Ellis Roulston, and despite the arguments of Ellis Roulston in favour of Applied Arts, the committee decides that such courses are "below University level."

-John G. Reid, *Mount Allison University: A History to 1963, Volume II: 1914-1963*. p.305

1960

In February, the Applied Arts program is 'abolished' by the Senate of the University; Ellis Roulston resigns, and moves to Halifax where he becomes Supervisor of the Handcrafts section of the Nova Scotia Adult Education Division. Applied Arts graduates from the class of 1960, Patricia Pollett and Marion MacDonald, are employed by him there.

- "Handcrafts New Head Appointed", unidentified newspaper clipping, 1960

Ellis Roulston is President of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild from 1960 until 1962.

1961

Sarah Hart and Max Roulston remain on staff until May 1961 to allow students to complete course work. Sarah Hart retires at age 81. Max Roulston teaches craftwork at the School for the Deaf in Amherst, NS while completing a Bachelor's degree in Education at Mount Allison University. Job Sears who assembled furniture and constructed frames for students in the Gallery basement workshop, also retires after 50 years at Mount Allison.

# Mount Allison University Applied Arts Faculty

Elizabeth McLeod, left, with a group of Mount Allison students, ca. 1912  
Mount Allison University Archives, Picture Collection, 2008.01/1001



## Elizabeth McLeod (1875–1963)

Educated at the Mount Allison Ladies' College in the 1890s, Elizabeth McLeod dedicated most of her teaching career to the Art Department at Mount Allison. She studied metalwork and jewellery at Columbia University during the summer of 1909 in order to provide professional training for her students in this 'new' course at Mount Allison. When Art Department Head, John Hammond, retired in 1916, she assumed leadership of the Art Department. Following current trends in art education, she initiated important affiliations with other schools and organizations. With her cousin, University

President George Trueman, she developed the Mount Allison Handicraft Guild that focused on promoting and selling student weaving and pottery. Together, they also established an agreement with the University of Toronto for Applied Arts students to study Occupational Therapy. After retirement, she received the title 'Professor Emeritus'. In recognition of her lifetime of dedication to art education for women, Mount Allison University awarded Elizabeth McLeod an honorary degree in 1954.

Sarah Hart with John Hammond's daughter Katherine, ca. 1911.  
Mount Allison University Archives, Picture Collection 8800.03/11



## Sarah (Stewart) Hart (1880–1981)

Born in Saint John, NB, Sarah Hart studied at the Women's Art School, the Art Students' League and at The Cooper Union in New York City. She began teaching woodcarving and leather tooling in the Applied Arts program at Mount Allison in 1907, although she was likely teaching informally before then. In 1914 she married Sackville dentist Dr. Edward Hart, a widower with three sons. She had two children of her own before she resumed teaching woodcarving in the Applied Arts program in 1928. During the 1930s and 40s she taught extension classes for the Art Department in local communities

including Amherst, NS where high school student Alex Colville attended her classes on the second floor of the local Post Office building. She continued to teach woodcarving in the Applied Arts program until 1961. After retirement from teaching she continued to paint with a group of local artists.

Christian McKiel demonstrates pottery to students in 1937 in the basement of the Owens. Mount Allison University Archives, Picture Collection. 2007.07/943



## Christian (Harris) McKiel (1889–1978)

A student of John Hammond, Sarah Hart and Elizabeth McLeod, Christian McKiel graduated from the Mount Allison Ladies' College with a teacher's certificate in drawing in 1911. In 1912 her sister, Margaret Harris, was the first Applied Arts graduate at Mount Allison. McKiel studied at the Art Students' League in New York and

during the summer of 1920 at Provincetown MA, with Charles W. Hawthorne, who painted her portrait titled *Provincetown Girl*. In 1913 she started teaching drawing, clay modeling and design in the Art Department at Mount Allison. In 1917 she married Harry W. McKiel, Professor of mechanical engineering and later Dean of Science at Mount Allison University. They had one child, George, who died suddenly in 1934 at age 15. During the summer of 1938 Christian McKiel ordered a kiln and other supplies and studied pottery at the Deichmann's studio in Moss Glen, NB. In 1943 she was the first woman in the Art Department to receive

the title of 'Assistant Professor', and 'Professor Emeritus' in 1950. Also known for her portraiture and still-life painting, she was actively involved in exhibiting her work at the Royal Canadian Academy, the Art Association of Montreal, the Maritime Art Association and as a member of the Nova Scotia Society of Artists.



*Greta Ogden, ca. 1910*  
Collection of Gerda and  
Joanna Parlee

#### **Greta Ogden (1875–1939)**

Born in Sackville, NB, Greta Ogden was a student at the Mount Allison Ladies' College for several years, starting at age 8. In 1918, like several other Mount Allison graduates, she attended the ward aide training program at the University of Toronto. She assisted with the rehabilitation of WWI soldiers at the Old Government House Military Hospital in Fredericton before returning to Sackville to teach in the Applied Arts program at Mount Allison beginning in 1923. Her mother, Alice, and her older sister, Ethel, had been teachers in the Art Department at the Ladies' College many years earlier. Greta had particular expertise in china painting, basketry and embroidery. She supervised a European art tour with her students during the summer of 1928 and continued teaching in the Applied Arts program until her death in 1939.



*Jean (Smith) Gregg ca. 1938*  
Collection of Arthur Gregg

#### **Jean (Smith) Gregg (1897–1963)**

Ladies' College graduate ('16) Jean Smith joined the teaching staff after attending the ward aide training program at McGill University and studying metalwork at the Parsons School of Design in New York City. She taught metalwork and design from 1929 until 1932. She encouraged her students to create original designs rather than copying from books. She urged the Principal of the Ladies' College to allow nude models for figure drawing classes. In defiance, she modeled partially nude for her drawing students in 1930 and frequently campaigned for better equipment and improved facilities in the Art Department. Later, when she worked as an interior decorator in Saint John, NB, she returned to Mount Allison to re-design the reception room at the Ladies' College residence, using fabric produced by the Mount Allison Handicrafts Guild for curtains and upholstery.



*Ellis Roulston, ca. 1950*  
Collection of Aaron Roulston,  
Max Roulston's papers

#### **Ellis Roulston (1909–1976)**

Ellis Roulston received a certificate in Applied Arts in 1937 and a BA in 1941 from Mount Allison University. He was a student assistant in the Applied Arts program between 1938 and 1940 and he frequently managed the Mount Allison Handicrafts Guild. In 1941 he joined the teaching staff and soon became Head of the Applied Arts program. He received a sabbatical in 1950–51 to study metalwork and weaving at the State Art School in Stockholm, Sweden. He was known especially for his creative jewellery designs, meticulous weaving and professional work ethic. Students recall his dry humour and his serious manner with 'roll call' every day for small classes of 3 to 5 students. He held professional positions as President of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild; President of the Guild of Canadian Weavers; member of the Royal Society of Arts; and Exhibition Director of the Maritime Art Association. He was also a founding member of the Nova Scotia Metal Arts Guild where the *Ellis Roulston Memorial Award* is still presented annually. He won many awards for his metalwork and weaving and was highly respected among his peers. As Head of the Applied Arts program at Mount Allison for nearly 20 years, he brought a sense of professionalism to the program, focusing on technical skills and materials.



*Max Roulston, ca. 1940  
Collection of Aaron Roulston,  
Max Roulston's papers*

#### **Max Roulston (1917–2012)**

Max Roulston, younger brother of Ellis, studied Applied Arts at Mount Allison and received a certificate in 1942. After serving in the Canadian Army, he returned to Mount Allison and completed a BA in 1947. In 1948 he assisted Christian McKiel in pottery and by 1950 he was promoted to full Instructor. He continued to teach mainly pottery until 1961, experimenting with innovative glazing techniques. He won awards for his pottery and excelled at metalwork, jewellery and leatherwork. His wife, Emilie Church, was also a skilled potter who studied with well-known china painter and potter, Alice Hagan, in Nova Scotia. Emilie and Max raised three children while they lived in Sackville. Later in life they also raised their grandson Aaron, who considers Max and Emilie as his parents. Max received a BEd from Mount Allison in 1961 and taught for a few years at the Amherst School for the Deaf in Nova Scotia. Afterwards, he moved with his family to Halifax where he worked at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and at the Nova Scotia Art Bank. In retirement, he built a house near Canning, NS where Aaron and his family continue to live.



*Alex Colville, ca. 1950  
Mount Allison University  
Archives, PictureCollection,  
200707/1130*

#### **Alex Colville (1920–2013)**

Alex Colville studied Fine Arts at Mount Allison University between 1938 and 1942. Since Fine and Applied Arts students attended many of the same classes at that time, Alex Colville and Max Roulston were classmates. It was common for students and faculty to model for each other in drawing and painting classes and the portrait of Ellis Roulston by Alex Colville from 1940 in this exhibition is a good example of this practice. Other subjects in Colville's student work included Max Roulston, Elizabeth McLeod, Applied Arts students at looms and other student activities at the Owens. When Alex Colville returned to teach in the Art Department, Applied Arts students attended his classes in design and art history. Applied Arts students fondly remember his advice and interest in their designs, particularly for leatherwork and interior design projects. In 1963 Colville retired from teaching and soon gained recognition as one of Canada's most renowned artists.



Owens Art Gallery  
Mount Allison University  
Sackville, New Brunswick  
Canada E4L 1E1  
www.mta.ca/owens

1 May to 20 September 2015

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*Frontispiece:*

Gay Barrett, Applied Arts student,  
creates a piece of jewellery at  
the Owens, 1953. Collection  
of Aaron Roulston,  
Max Roulston's papers

*Front cover:*

Barbara (Hendry) Strange  
Silver brooch with gemstone  
Collection of Ron Strange

*Back cover:*

Doreen (Allison) Tuomola  
Handwoven pillow cover  
Collection of the Artist

*Inside back cover:*

Poem by an unidentified Applied Arts  
Student, 1949. *Argosy Weekly*, January  
29, 1949, p. 7. Mount Allison University  
Archives

*Photo credits:*

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**Mount  
Allison**  
UNIVERSITY

## Owed To The Art Gallery

Weaving, pottery, leather, metal, wood,  
Applied arts, applied art, are we ever good?  
From dawning till darkness  
And all through the night  
We solder, we solder,  
And shine our silver bright.  
Mrs. McKiel, Mrs. Hart, Alex, Ellis, Max.  
Do this, do that, and who's got the wax?  
Spare time, spare time,  
What on earth is that?  
That's when we do our work  
And take up the slack.  
There's basketry also, and then there's design  
We love doing this, and it's always in on time!  
Textile, poster paint, Interior Dec. too,  
Ed. 1, Fine Arts, antiques, oh foo!  
Practice teaching Saturdays,  
Mamma's darlings there.  
On Tuesday nights comes mammas.  
And then we tear our hair.  
They call this the snap course  
And think we never work,  
Our classes all are over by ten,\* if we don't shirk.  
Only then homework commences,  
We are all in bed by two.  
We have two nights to call our own  
And all day Sunday too. \*\*  
Ex - am - in - ations?  
That's what they say,  
Our examinations  
Are our work every day.  
Rush here, rush there,  
Soon 'twill all be o'er  
And we'll look back and call all this  
"The Happy Days of Yore".

—Writ by hand in spare time—

\* p.m. that is.

\*\* This is what we call spare time. We do our homework in spare time.

