

# Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA)

## E.R. Seary Fonds Description

*Fonds description written by Anita Best under the co-sponsorship of the Canadian Council of Archives and the Association of Newfoundland & Labrador Archives. Reformatted by Renee Lawrence.*

### **TITLE:**

E.R. Seary Fonds

### **COLLECTION NUMBER:**

Special Collection Number SC I.11  
Accession Number 80-005

### **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

30 cm of textual records

### **DATES:**

196?-1977

### **ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY/BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**

Edgar Ronald Seary (1908-1984) was born in Sheffield, England to Henry and Edith (Brunt) Seary. He was educated at Sheffield University and afterwards became a research scholar and fellow there. He lectured in Mannheim, Germany, training interpreters for diplomatic and consular service, and at Rhodes University in South Africa. During World War II he was a captain in the South African Army. In 1951 he was appointed to the chair in English at the College of Arts and Science in Baghdad.

Seary came to Newfoundland in 1954 and for the next 16 years was head of Memorial University's department of English. He helped to develop the field of Newfoundland studies at Memorial and published several articles on Newfoundland toponymy and the derivation of names. With G.M. Story and W.J. Kirwin, he co-authored an ethno-linguistic study of the Avalon Peninsula in 1967. In 1970 he was named Henrietta Harvey Research professor. His *Place Names of the Avalon Peninsula of the Island of Newfoundland* was published in 1971 and quickly became a standard reference work. Seary's second major work, *Family Names of the Island of Newfoundland*, was published in 1976. It provided a comprehensive account of Newfoundland surnames from the earliest historical documents.

Seary was a founder and sometime president of the Canadian Linguistics Association and of the Association of Canadian Teachers of English. Among his honours were the Heritage Award of the Newfoundland Historical Society and honorary degrees from Memorial University and the University of Sheffield, as well as Fellowships in the Royal Society and of the Society of Antiquaries of London. After his death, he was commemorated in Seary's Peak, a hill 4 km west of Broad Lake in the district of Bellevue, NF. He was married to Agnes Gwendolen Crookes.

[Source: Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador]

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT:**

Fonds consists of the working papers of Professor Seary for his 1976 publication *Family Names of the Island of Newfoundland*. It includes an index of family names and information about different spellings of surnames, geographic distribution of surnames and particular information about persons with specific surnames culled from selected historical documents. Also included in this fonds is a file of miscellaneous clippings about surnames, folklore survey cards pertaining to Newfoundland surnames, newspaper clippings about Seary's research and other subjects, correspondence between Seary and various individuals about family names and other academic subjects. An extensive collection of E.R. Seary papers is located in English Language Research Centre in the Memorial University Arts and Administration Building [A3019].

## **RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS:**

No restrictions on access

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### **LANGUAGE:**

English

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Title based on creator and contents of fonds

