

Alvena V. Seckar, Author and Artist, Artwork and Papers, 1940-1968 A&M 2002

Alvena V. Seckar, Author and Artist, Artwork and Papers
1940-1968



Title Statement

Alvena V. Seckar, Author and Artist, Artwork and Papers, 1940-1968 A&M 2002

Author: Staff of the West Virginia & Regional History Center

Publication Statement

Publisher: West Virginia and Regional History Center

1549 University Ave.
P.O. Box 6069
Morgantown, WV 26506-6069
Business Number: 304-293-3536
wvrhcref@westvirginia.libanswers.com
URL: <https://wvrhc.lib.wvu.edu>



Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2026-06-18 13:52:49 -0400.

Language Usage: English

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

A&M 2002

Unit ID

[Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

[Previous Archival Resource Key](#)

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/5774

Unit Date

1940-1968

Language

English

Abstract

Correspondence, 1954-1968, typescripts, class notes, course outlines, clippings, pamphlets, paintings, and photographs of an artist and author. Subjects include Islamic, Arabic, and Near Eastern art and the work of Paul Hogarth. Paintings include [Coal Country Scene], oil on canvas, 25 x 30, ca. 1960; [Two Children on House Steps], oil on board, 24.5 x 28, ca. 1960; and Hazel Coal Mine, oil on board, 26 x 28, ca. 1960. This collection also includes an antique children's book slate (dating from the 19th century) owned by Seckar.

Creator

Seckar, Alvena, 1916-2012

Extent

7.0 Linear Feet Summary: 7 ft. (16 document cases, 5 in. each); (1 flat storage box, 3 1/2 in.); (3 paintings)

Physical Location

West Virginia and Regional History Center / West Virginia University / 1549 University Avenue / P.O. Box 6069 / Morgantown, WV 26506-6069 / Phone: 304-293-3536 / URL: West Virginia & Regional History Center

Repository

West Virginia and Regional History Center

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

No special access restriction applies.

Conditions Governing Use

Permission to publish or reproduce is required from the copyright holder. For more information, please see the Permissions and Copyright page on the West Virginia and Regional History Center website.

Preferred Citation

[Description and date of item], [Box/folder number], Alvena V. Seckar, Author and Artist, Artwork and Papers, A&M 2002, West Virginia and Regional History Center, West Virginia University Libraries, Morgantown, West Virginia.

Biographical / Historical

Alvena Seckar was born in McMechen, West Virginia to first-generation immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia in 1915. Her father was a coal miner and the family moved frequently around the coal fields of West Virginia and Pennsylvania during her childhood.

Seckar's artistic talents were recognized while she was in school and she was able to attend college, first studying at the University of Pennsylvania. She then transferred to the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. She earned her Bachelor's Degree there in 1939 and her Master's Degree in the History of Fine Arts in 1949.

Seckar's artwork drew inspiration from her coal field childhood, depicting working class people and landscapes with sympathy but without any attempt to "prettify" her subjects. She was also inspired by her travels in post-World War II Europe, where she visited the Eastern Europe of her parent's heritage. Seckar considered herself a politically conscious artist and took part in the Civil Rights Movement, anti-nuclear movement, and other causes.

Seckar came to her second career as a writer almost by accident. She was initially interested in illustrating children's books, but after receiving several rejections, decided to write a book of her own. Like her artwork, her books drew from her childhood experiences living in the coal fields. "Zuska of the Burning Hills" and "Mischko" tell stories of children living in coal towns from Eastern European immigrant families, while "Trapped in the Old Mine" is a science-fiction story for young readers.

Seckar continued to write, paint, and exhibit her artwork throughout her life. Even when, later in life, she developed multiple sclerosis, which crippled her right hand, Seckar continued to paint and write, even teaching herself to paint with her left hand. Seckar had been working on a novel regarding the lives of her grandmother, mother, and herself -- tentatively titled "Jewels of Memory" -- which was not published before her death. Seckar passed away on 7 March 2012 in her long-time home of Pompton Lakes, New Jersey.

Related A&M Collections

556, 903, 2002, 4204, 4428

Keywords

Art and artists

Authors -- Letters and papers

Women's history -- 1929-1950

Women's history -- 1951-present

Women's history -- Education and arts

Women's history -- Emigration and immigration

Hogarth, Paul, 1917-2001

Seckar, Alvena, 1916-2012