

McLean County Museum of History

Montgomery, Alfred Collection

Processed by
JoAnna Mink
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1860-2013
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

Brief History

Alfred Montgomery (1858-1922) was born in Logan County, Illinois, and moved to Bloomington in 1893 from Mason City, Iowa. He was known as the Farmer Artist or the Corn Artist and considered by the Lakeview Museum in Peoria as Bloomington's best-known painter. He achieved renown in artistic circles for his paintings of farm animals and still lifes featuring corn. He settled in Los Angeles in 1906, spent the next decade in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and died in Los Angeles in 1922.

Scope

The collection includes newspaper clippings about Montgomery's exhibitions and sometimes dramatic personal life; information about exhibits and gallery showings; and several scans of his paintings, many held in private hands.

Box and Folder Inventory

Folder 1: Newspaper Articles – 1877-1900 (*Pantagraph*, unless noted)

- 1.1 “West”, December 13, 1877.
- 1.2 “East Downs,” November 27, 1879.
- 1.3 “Drowned in the West,” July 2, 1889.
- 1.4 “A Good Customer for a Fine Picture,” January 13, 1892, and follow-up article, February 4, 1892.
- 1.5 “Montgomery Arrested,” August 1, 1896 and “Montgomery Released,” August 4, 1896.
- 1.6 “Art Exhibition,” May 7, 1898.
- 1.7 “Farm Painting for Paris,” *Bulletin*, November 20, 1899.
- 1.8 “Den Thompson In Art,” *Daily Bulletin*, January 5, 1900.
- 1.9 “Alfred Montgomery the artist,” March 2, 1900.
- 1.10 “Paint Is the Thing,” *Daily Bulletin*, April 1, 1900.
- 1.11 “Art on Western Farms,” April 6, 1900.
- 1.12 “Fall of Social Lion,” *Daily Bulletin*, May 3, 1900.
- 1.13 “High Price of Picture Fades,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 3, 1900.
- 1.14 “Alfred Montgomery Misstates Facts Anent His Picture,” *The Inter Ocean* (Chicago), May 3, 1900.
- 1.15 “Heard At The Barber’s,” May 5, 1900.
- 1.16 “True Art Vs Lucre,” *The Inter Ocean* (Chicago), May 6, 1900.
- 1.17 “True Art Vs. Lucre,” *Daily Bulletin*, May 8, 1900.
- 1.18 “Wants Spelling Better Taught,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 20, 1900.

Folder 2: Newspaper Articles – 1901-2007 (*Pantagraph*, unless noted)

- 2.1 “Hits Chicago Again”, *The Inter Ocean* (Chicago), January 8, 1901.
- 2.2 “Caricatured in Story,” *Daily Review* (Decatur), January 11, 1901.
- 2.3 “Painter Montgomery at Work,” October 12, 1901.
- 2.4 “Farmer Artist Making Gossip,” *The Decatur Herald*, February 26, 1906.
- 2.5 “Closing Day Will Be Feast of Good Things,” *Dixon Evening Telegraph*, August 11, 1906.
- 2.6 “Many Famous Speakers Coming,” *Dixon Evening Telegraph*, December 21, 1906.
- 2.7 “Montgomery in Oklahoma,” February 6, 1908.
- 2.8 “Dick Little Writes Up A. Montgomery,” February 17, 1908.
- 2.9 “Montgomery in Denver,” September 17, 1908.
- 2.10 “Artist Assails Lorado Taft, the President, and Others,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 17, 1912.
- 2.11 “Mr. Montgomery the Painter Man,” November 3, 1914.
- 2.12 “A. Montgomery, Famous Corn Painter, Once Lived Here,” May 1, 1922.
- 2.13 “What Do You Think About It?” May 21, 1942.
- 2.14 “Alfred Montgomery, Eccentric Genius, Made Corn a Subject for Works of Art,” February 6, 1944.
- 2.15 “Claimed His Paintings of Corn So Realistic Pigeons Deceived,” July 5, 1948.
Plus clipping of included photos.
- 2.16 “Corn Paintings His Specialty,” February 5, 1956.
- 2.17 “Alfred’s Grandson Tells ‘How Come He’s Grandson,’” February 5, 1956.

- 2.18 "Twin City Collector Contribute to Exhibit", September 22, 1968.
- 2.19 "Alfred Montgomery Farmer Painter" (partial), February 23, 1986.
- 2.20 "The Corn King. Lakeview Museum hosts exhibit of crisp, lifelike paintings by Alfred Montgomery," *Peoria Journal Star*, January 29, 2006.
- 2.21 "Eccentric Bloomington artist garnered acclaim with corn" ("Page from Our Past" column), April 1, 2007.
- 2.22 Transcription, (probably *Pantagraph*), "A. Montgomery, Famous Corn Painter Once Lived Here," 4 pgs., undated.
- 2.23 "Corn Picture For Paris," (newspaper, date unknown).

Folder 3: Magazine / Journal Articles

- 3.1 "Dr. Gowdy and the Squash," by Henry B. Fuller, *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, January 1901, pp. 262-282 (See newspaper article in file, "Caricatured in Story," *Daily Review*, January 11, 1901).
- 3.2 "Alfred Montgomery: Itinerant Midwestern Artist, 1857-1922," by Henry W. and Jean Tyree Hamilton, *Bulletin* (Missouri Historical Society), January 1978.

Folder 4: Exhibition / Gallery Material

- 4.1 Flier, "Alfred Montgomery: Farmer Painter," Lakeview Museum, Peoria, September 29 through November 3, 1985, includes brief biographical sketch by Merle H. Glick, (2 copies).
- 4.2 Montgomery exhibit, Illinois State Museum, Springfield, March 1 through April 6, 1986.
- 4.3 Notice from Winter 2005 *Decoy News* (Lakeview Museum) with mention of a Glick donation.
- 4.4 List of thirty-nine Montgomery paintings exhibited at Lakeview Museum (no date of exhibit provided).

Folder 5: Paintings

- 5.1 Sale of Paintings by Alfred Montgomery," Merle H. Glick, December 1990.
- 5.2 Fliers (8) with details and sale prices of individual paintings, referred to by Merle H. Glick in 5.1. On heavy buff paper, the paintings are:
 - "Pile of Corn, with Squash"
 - "Corn, with Pumpkin, Sack, Box, Barrel, and Scoop" dated 1916
 - "Six Ears of Corn" dated 1899
 - "Corn, with Sack and Large Box"
 - "Five Sheep, with Stone Barn" dated 1897
 - "Corn, with Sack and Scoop"
 - "Corn in Overturned Barrel, with Sack of Corn"
 - "Eight Ears of Corn, with Pumpkin and Basket"
- 5.3 Scan of Montgomery painting "Sheep in Hay, 1896," held by Bloomington Public Library.
- 5.4 Scan of Montgomery painting of corn in overturned basket, held by Bloomington resident (name and address withheld).
- 5.5 Scan of Montgomery painting of two ears of corn, held by a Logan County resident (name and address withheld).

- 5.6 Scan of Montgomery painting “Corn with Barrel, Pumpkin, Sack and Basket,” held by a Logan County resident (name and address withheld).
- 5.7 Scan of Montgomery painting “Corn, with Pumpkin, Sack, Box, Barrel, and Scoop” held by Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences, Peoria, IL.
- 5.8 Scan of Montgomery painting of four ears of corn held by Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences, Peoria, IL.
- 5.9 Scan of Montgomery painting of two ears of corn held by Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences, Peoria, IL.
- 5.10 Scan of Montgomery painting of basket and corn held by Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences, Peoria, IL.
- 5.11 Scan of Montgomery painting of barrel, pumpkin and corn held by Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences, Peoria, IL.
- 5.12 Two PastPerfect records for Montgomery artwork held by the McLean County Museum of History: One drawing (of two dead mallards dated 1892) and one oil painting (barrels, corn and pumpkin placed inside barn) plus color printouts of these two works attached to an email from Tod Eagleton dated August 3, 2015.
- 5.13 email with July 1948 Pantagraph newspaper print of photo of mural and two paintings hanging at the Humphreys home

Folder 6: Biographical information

- 6.1 Chronology, “A Brief Chronology of Alfred Montgomery,” by Henry W. and Jean Tyree Hamilton, 2 pgs., undated.
- 6.2 Two pages on Montgomery, source unknown (photocopy provided by Lakeview Museum).
- 6.3 U.S. Census listings: 1860, 1880, 1900, 1910 and 1920, from Ancestry.com.
- 6.4 Record of marriage of Alfred Montgomery to Essie E. Waddington, March 5, 1879, from *McLean County, Illinois Marriages*.
- 6.4 Alfred Montgomery’s dates and death information from Ancestry.com.
- 6.5 Alfred Montgomery’s dates and death information from Gilmore Cemetery, Empire Township, McLean County, Illinois.
- 6.6 Information about Esther Waddington Montgomery (Alfred’s first wife) Gilmore Cemetery, Empire Township, McLean County, Illinois.
- 6.7 Listing for Esther Elizabeth Montgomery from the Illinois Statewide Death Index.
- 6.8 Information for Esther Elizabeth Montgomery from findagrave.com, including photos of grave.
- 6.9 Notes outlining dates relevant to Alfred Montgomery compiled by a volunteer.
- 6.10 Listing for Adora Flint Montgomery (Alfred’s second wife) from California Death Index.

Folder 7: Miscellaneous

- 7.1 Letter from Jean (Mrs. Henry W.) Hamilton to Barbara Dunbar, Dec. 9, 1925(?).
- 7.2 Letter from Henry W. Hamilton to McLean County Historical Society, Nov. 16, 1975.
- 7.3 Letter from Henry W. Hamilton to Barbara Dunbar, March 13, 1976.
- 7.4 Letter from Mrs. J. Warren Sanders, Tulsa, Oklahoma, to Mr. Peterson, Feb. 28, 1949 (photocopy provided by Lakeview Museum).
- 7.5 Christmas card, Carl Behr, 2013, featuring two Montgomery paintings.