

Robert Taft correspondence related to frontier artists, Ford - Hamilton

Section 15, Pages 421 - 429

A series of research correspondence from the Robert Taft collection relating to frontier artists. Robert Taft (1894-1955) was a professor of chemistry and author on the subjects of photography and art. The artists included here are Henry Chapman Ford, R. Atkinson Fox, Paul Frenzeny and Jules Tavernier, Gilbert William Gaul, Sanford Robinson Gifford, J. B. Girard, James F. Gookins, Elling William Gollings, Adolphe Goupil, Charles Graham, Ernest Henry Griset, John Hafen, and Hamilton Hamilton.

Date: 1930-1955

Callnumber: Robert Taft Coll. #172, Box 22

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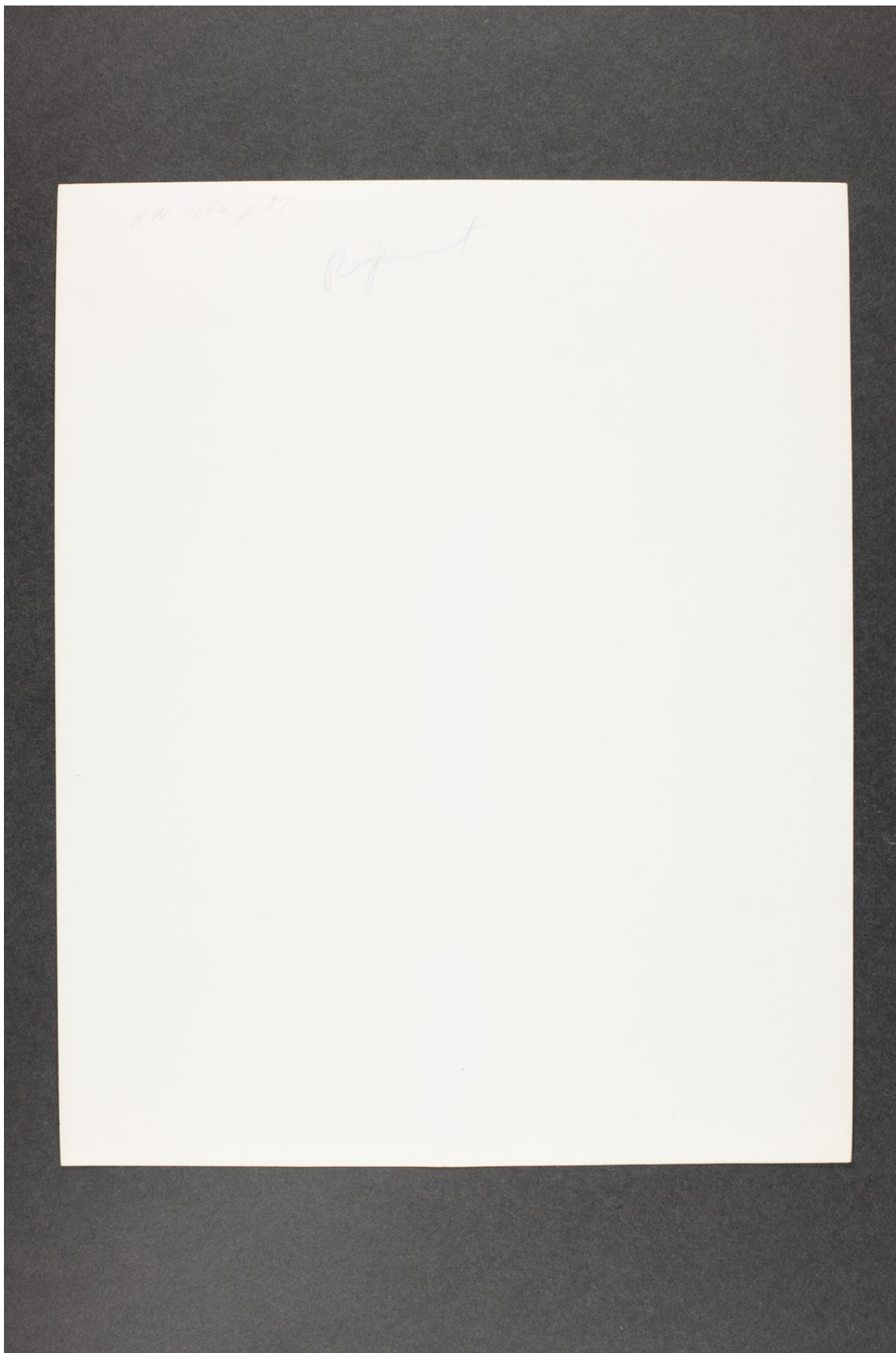
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"BANKING UP" FOR WINTER IN DAKOTA.—DRAWN BY CHARLES GRAHAM.—[SEE PAGE 45.]

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
CONSTITUTION AVENUE AT TENTH STREET

August 17, 1951

Mr. Robert Taft, Editor
Department of Chemistry
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

Dear Mr. Taft:

Mr. Setzler has referred to me your letter of August 13 regarding E. H. Griset as his paintings are in the National Collection of Fine Arts.

A black box in our possession contains 27 subjects as listed below. These are uniformly matted, 11 by 14 inches.

Carcass of the Whale, Scotland, Stone Age
Their Favorite food was the Bos Urus, Danish Shell Mound, Stone Age
Cave Tigers (Felix Spelaea)
Ancient Potters
Interior of Tumulus or Burial Mound
The Boar and the Blue Jay
German War Chariot
The Stork
The Dead Horse and the Raven
Emigration of the Gaels and the Kiouris
Mammoth and Hairy Rhinoceros, Flint Period
Cave Bear Hunt, Flint Period, Cave Dwellers
Neandertahl Man, Flint Period
Brown Bear, Norway
Hunting the Wild Horse
Hunting the Reindeer
Funeral Feast, or Primative Burial
Celtic Village
Making Flint Implements, in a Flint Field, Stone Age
Tumuli Habitation
Kjokkenmoddings or Shell-Mounds, Stone Age, Denmark
Auroch Hunt, Lake Dwellers, Stone Age
Large Lake Village on Piles, Stone Age
Lake Dwelling, Stone Age
Griffon Vulture
Straight between France and England, Frozen
Hunting the Large Irish Elk, Flint Period

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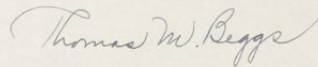
In addition we have two framed subjects:

The Mammoth Hunt, 18½ by 29 inches

The Cave Men at Lunch, 17 by 25-3/8 inches

The Connoisseur, Vol. CXV, No. 495, March 1945, pp. 30-36, contains an article by Hesketh Hubbard "A Forgotten Illustrator" which is about Ernest Grisct.

Yours sincerely,



Thomas M. Beggs, Director
National Collection of Fine Arts

TMB.jb

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December 1, 1939

Miss Maline Sumner
Public Library of Provo
Provo, Utah

Dear Miss Sumner:

I have in preparation a book The Frontier in Picture which is to deal with the artists who recorded the life and growth of the west from 1800 to 1900. Included among this group of artists is John Hafen, who, according to my notes, died in Provo in 1910. Does your library possess any material bearing on Hafen's career, i.e., newspaper clippings, manuscript material, diaries, note-books, etc.? Do you know if there are any descendants of Hafen's still living in Provo? If you know of such would you be good enough to furnish me their names and addresses?

I will greatly appreciate any help that you can give me.

Sincerely yours,

RT/bjo

Robert Taft.

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HAMILTON HAMILTON

From Denver Public

Personal Mentions.

Hamilton.- Mr. Hamilton Hamilton, an eastern artist of considerable reputation, arrived in this city a few days since, and departed for the mountains, where he purposes making some sketches of winter scenery. It is his intention to remain here some time, gathering material for pictures of the Rocky mountains.

Rocky Mountain News. Feb.26, 1873 p.4

There is a very fine painting of the "Snowy range, from Boulder hill," painted by Mr. Hamilton Hamilton, on exhibition at C.A. Kuhl & Co.'s, also a scene in Boulder canon. A few days ago Mr. Hamilton disposed of one of his recent works-Denver and the mountains, including Gray's peak- for \$200.

Rocky Mountain News. Apr.16, 1873. p.4

OUR young Denver artists- Messrs. Mills and Hamilton- have several pictures, fresh from their easels, on exhibition at C.A. Kuhl & Co.'s bookstore. These, by Mr. Hamilton are a view of the sunny range from Boulder hill, and the Haystack, in Boulder canon. Mr. Mills has a picture he terms "Noontime in the Canon. The several paintings are very fine and are sure to attract much attention from judges of artistic work. We shall refer to them again soon.

Rocky Mountain News. Apr.22, 1873 p.4

Regarding Forty-Seven Works of Art

Mr. Hamilton Hamilton, a young artist, who came to Colorado last spring from Buffalo, New York, has been quite active during the months which have intervened, in making sketches of Colorado scenery. During this time he has spent but few weeks in his studio, the time being occupied traveling about the parks, through the passes, and over the mountain ranges. Consequently the work he has done has been necessarily hurried and imperfect. His pictures-which embrace forty-seven views, running through Monument park, Boulder canon, Garden of the Gods, the neighborhood of Denver, and other important points from which rich pictures may be taken-have just been placed on exhibition at the bookstore of Messrs. C.A. Kuhl & Co., where they will also be offered for sale. We have no space to give a full list of the pictures here, but we cannot refrain from designating a few which strike us as being especially worthy of mention: (1.) Morning on the Lake; (9.) Sentinel Rock; (26.) General View of Twin Lakes; (30.) Pinnacle Rock, Boulder Canon; (31.) Snowy Range, from Boulder Hill; (39.) On Snake River; (41.) Dutch Wedding; (35.) Grey's peak.

Mr. Hamilton, we are afraid, has, in his haste to accumulate pictures, been a little careless of his reputation as a young but

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promising artist. We appreciate fully the fact that an artist must live, like the rest of us, but indiscriminate piling of color upon canvass, for the mere gain of dollars, without regard to artistic excellence or favorable criticism, is pretty sure to tell against the painter. Careful, painstaking labor, - like his picture of Boulder canon, for instance, - is more certain of success artistically and larger prices financially. There is about the majority of these pictures an overwhelming sense of gilt frame, which lends to them an additional prestige; and on this seems to depend their primary effect. Some of the smaller sketches are fair, and will probably command good figures at the sale, but we counsel the artist to be more careful of his larger paintings in the future and not put them before the public until he himself is satisfied that they are ready to stand criticism, as we know he feels these are not. Artistic fame is slowly gained, unless the artist be divine in his inspirations, and when we find a landscape painter who can make a mountain trip of thirty or forty days and come back to a metropolis, from the tear and turmoil of camp-life, with forty-seven "high-class oil paintings," we are led to believe, at first thought, that an artist must, indeed, be more than mortal in his capacities to manufacture works of art so rapidly; but when we examine his canvasses we are led to the opinion that he has painted by the yard, or for a panorama, and cut the cloth to suit the gold-gilt picture frames. In all candor we counsel Mr. Hamilton - who is young and promising - to be more careful of his reputation. He cannot afford to lose it; his hurried artistic work of a month will more than counterbalance his painstaking of a year.

Rocky Mountain News. August 17, 1873 p.4

ART AND ARTISTS

Lake San Miguel

Mr. Hamilton's last and best work, "Lake San Miguel," is on exhibition at Jackson's. The word is not misapplied if we speak of the picture as "great." The art of the word-painter dwindles before it, there is so much that, as in the presence of nature herself, is too deeply felt to be said. It is so easy to talk of the placid waters across which one may lose himself in doubt as to where in soft gray veils of torn mist the mountain and its mirror meet, and whence he knows come the voices of unseen water fowl in nooks never disturbed by men: to prattle of the dark masses of murmuring pines in the shadows that lurk below the great hills to the right, and that seem every moment to grow more luminous - of the flood of sunlight, real sunlight, that falls across and glides adown the warm tinted and sculptured peaks that rise to the left, and between which and the dark hills that screen the lake, skulking masses of white cloud flee from its bosom in terror, hastening away up the valley to safety in the dim blue distances. It is so easy to lose oneself in piercing that limitless sea of purest sky - the blue that is so pure and boundless and that yet seems as though it could never have been squeezed out of a collapsible tube of tin. Reader, it never was. At least not like that. It was, you may be assured, compounded with liberal additions of vehicle made of finely-trained eyes and well nurtured brains. It was never seen out of a window. You will never get a recipe for mixing it. Inspiration won't do it. My word for it, and I know, it is very rarely done. But it

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is there, and if you don't go and see it you will simply fail to see the finest picture that our Colorado out-of-doors has ever made anybody paint yet, and that is saying something, I believe.

J. H. M.

(This is probably J. Harrison Mills)
Rocky Mountain News. Feb. 1, 1880 p.5

We show a sketch of a little frame shanty which stands among the trees on the bank of Cherry Creek above the Broadway bridge. It was once the studio of Mr. Hamilton Hamilton, now a successful artist of New York City. His best works of that time are in Denver somewhere. There is a good sized painting of a bit of sandy road, in which the wagon and hoof tracks in the sand are well rendered. There is also a small painting of a cottonwood tree, that at first glance looks like the cold, raw work of an amateur, but holds your gaze and draws you to it until you can see the leaves quivering in the sunlight. There is also a picture of his of Lake San Miguel which is well painted. It received considerable attention at the time, and was purchased by the late Dr. R. H. Worthington.

The Coloradan. July 15, 1892 p.11
(The sketch mentioned is by Miss Nettie Bromwell)

TAKING THE PRIVATE VIEW

The Artists Let in Their Friends to See
the Pictures.

Some of the Notable Ones.

Hamilton Hamilton, N. A., is spending the season in Denver and contributes two charming works, "Blowing Bubbles" and "Widowed and Fatherless." The pose of the little maidens in the first-named work is life itself and the color very light and airy, in blues, gray and pink. Mr. Hamilton has a marvelous control of the pure flesh tones of children. Black and amber is the color theme of the second work, which is far from being a sad picture, notwithstanding the title; one cannot but feel that this handsome young creature's case is far from hopeless. The play of light and shade on the sunny curls of the child whom she is caressing is very beautiful and the picture, as a whole, will certainly prove a very attractive one.

Denver Republican, April 18, 1894. p.2

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Hamilton, Hamilton

1. 1847-1928

2.

3.

4. Jacksons letter of 3-30-39
Obit Art Dig Jan. 15, 1928
Smith, p 43
Not in D A B