

REFERENCE CODE: AkAMH

REPOSITORY NAME:

Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center
Bob and Evangeline Atwood Alaska Resource Center
625 C Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: 907-929-9235
Fax: 907-929-9233
Email: resourcecenter@anchagemuseum.org

Guide prepared by: Sara Piasecki, Photo Archivist

TITLE: Merlin F. Pollock Collection

COLLECTION NUMBER: B2013.012

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Dates: circa 1937-1941

Extent: 22 items

Language and Scripts: The collection is in English.

Name of creator(s): Merlin F. Pollock

Administrative/Biographical History:

Merlin F. Pollock was born in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, in 1905. He was educated at the Art Institute of Chicago, and subsequently studied fresco painting at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts. In Chicago, Pollock worked as a muralist and was hired to be supervisor of the Illinois Federal Art Project.

In 1937, he was one of a dozen artists sent by the Works Progress Administration to Alaska to document life in the territory in an effort to publicize the Matanuska Valley Colony. Pollock arrived in Ketchikan on June 4, 1937, and the rest of the group followed a few days later. The 12 artists (some of whom, like Pollock, had brought their wives) were eventually split into three separate groups for traveling throughout the area. Pollock's group sailed to Juneau, moving on to Seward and Palmer. They were then sent to McKinley Park, where Pollock stayed for a month. They made a brief visit to Fairbanks before returning to Palmer on the Alaska Railroad. The whole group was ordered back to their home projects by Thanksgiving.

Pollock served with the United States Navy during World War II; after the war, he held various positions at Syracuse University School of Art until his retirement in 1970. Pollock died in 1996.

Scope and Content Description:

The collection consists of 13 black-and-white photographs, including at least one study for a painting, and materials related to the 1941 "Competition for the Mural Decorations of the Anchorage, Alaska, Post Office and Court House."

Arrangement: Arranged by format.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS AND USE

Restrictions on Access: The collection is open for research use.

Physical Access: Original items in good condition.

Technical Access: No special equipment is needed to access the materials.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

The Anchorage Museum is the owner of the materials and makes available reproductions for research, publication, and other uses. Written permission must be obtained from the Anchorage Museum before any reproduction use. The Anchorage Museum does not necessarily hold copyright to all of the materials in the collections. In some cases, permission for use may require seeking additional authorization from the copyright owners.

Preferred Citation:

Merlin Pollock Collection; Anchorage Museum, B2013.012

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition and Appraisal Information

Included in a collection of Pollock's works purchased by the Museum in 2003. Transferred to the archives in 2013.

Processing Notes

Four duplicate photographs discarded. News clipping copied onto archival paper and discarded.

Separated Materials

Original art in Collections.

RELATED MATERIALS

2003.017.1-.55

SUBJECTS

Pollock, Merlin F., 1905-

Alaska Art Project

United States. Works Progress Administration

Federal aid to the arts--United States

Courthouses--Alaska--Anchorage--Designs and plans

Fishing—Alaska
Log cabins--Alaska
Anchorage (Alaska)

Detailed Description of the Collection

Photographs

- .1 – [Man smoking pipe, holding four fish. Study for painting. See 2003.017.1-4]
- .2 – [Five men outside log cabin, with three fish on cabin wall]
- .3 – [Man wearing raincoat, brimmed hat, shirt with armorial design, and pants with cuffs rolled up, smoking a pipe]
- .4 – [Man from .3, wearing raincoat, brimmed hat, and carrying backpack]
- .5 – [Two men holding fish outside log cabin; manuscript note on verso “L.R.B.Y.G.B.Y.” with pencil drawing, probably by Pollock]
- .6 – [Shirtless man seated on log next to fire in front of log cabin]
- .7 – [Log cabin]
- .8 – [Shoes hung from a branch over a fire, with log cabin visible at right]
- .9 – [Fish propped against log cabin wall]
- .10 – [Mural design sketch, showing Abraham Lincoln in center of semi-circular design with motto “So as to make it... a union of hearts and hands as well as of states”]
- .11 – [Interior of building, with scaffolding next to mural being completed; rows of desks fill the room and note on chalkboard reads “Track Team meeting in 317 Tue 2/9/37 your last opportunity to make the team, meeting at 2:50 P.M.”]
- .12 – [Mural design sketch showing two pioneer families in room interior]
- .13 – [Mural design painting, possibly depicting Cook meeting Alaska Natives near Cook Inlet]

Anchorage Post Office and Courthouse Mural Project materials

- Manuscript note. “Preliminary study for competition for the mural decoration of the Anchorage, Alaska Post Office and Court House 1941 to be done in true fresco.” Written on half sheet waste paper with title “Report of the meeting of the Basic Design Committee, Peter Piening, Chairman, September 12, 1962”
- Typescript note. “Captain Cook, searching for a passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean, entered what is now named Cook Inlet, but what he called, in his disappointment, Turnagain Arm, sent a landing party ashore at a spot opposite what is now Anchorage to display the flag, claim territory and bury a bottle containing dates, etc. This incident is described in Cook’s journal. Preliminary sketch for the U.S. Treasury Department, Section of Fine Arts Mural Competition for Anchorage, Alaska Court House. Note: I did not win this competition but was a runner-up and was assigned a post office mural commission for O’Fallon, Illinois.” No date
- Typescript announcement. “Competition for the Mural Decorations of the Anchorage, Alaska, Post Office and Court House, open to all American artists who live in Alaska or who have painted there.” 1941
- Bulletin. “Section of Fine Arts- Special Bulletin. The artists receive a bill of rights. Extract from the address by President Roosevelt at the dedication on March 17, 1941 of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.”
- Plan. “East Wall Elevation.”

- Plan. "North Wall Elevation."
- Plan. "West Wall Elevation."
- Plan. "South Wall Elevation."
- Plan. "Court Room Plan."
- Clipping. "Alaska celebrates its discovery by Capt. Bering today." July 16, 1941

Guide written: February 6, 2013