

Henry Mattson Papers

Ryan Perry — IST 628 — Spring 2015

Henry Mattson Biography

Henry Mattson (1887-1971) was a Swedish-American painter known for his seascapes, nocturnal scenes and figures. Born in Gothenburg, Sweden, Mattson emigrated to the United States in 1906. Mattson began painting in 1912, while working in a machine shop in Worcester, Massachusetts. He moved to Woodstock, New York in 1916 and developed a distinctive style through being almost entirely self-taught. In the 1930s and 1940s, Mattson's career began to flourish, winning awards and wider recognition.



Initial Thoughts on Collection

- Collection housed at Syracuse University's Special Collections Research Center
 - Need to follow SCRC processing procedures
- Mattson donated the collection to SCRC in October 1964
- Collection did not appear to be in any deliberate original order—decided to reorder to make it easier for researchers
- Collection consists of over a hundred individual items—therefore description will be at the folder level

Inventory

REPOSITORY: Syracuse University Special
Collections Research Center

RECORD GROUP: Henry Mattson Papers

SERIES 1: Clippings

FOLDER 1: Magazines

FOLDER 2: Newspapers

SERIES 2: Correspondence

FOLDER 3: 1933-1945, 1948-1952, 1964,
undated

SERIES 3: Memorabilia

FOLDER 4: Exhibition Catalogs

OVERSIZED BOX: Scrapbook

FOLDER 5: Self-portraits

FOLDER 6: World's Fair Materials

FOLDER 7: Miscellaneous

SERIES 4: Publications

FOLDER 8: 1935 October - Carnegie
Magazine

FOLDER 9: 1937 May - Magazine of Art

FOLDER 10: 1943 August - The Art Digest

FOLDER 11: 1943 November - American Artist

FOLDER 12: 1945 - Encyclopedia Britannica
Collection of contemporary American Painting

FOLDER 13: 1946-1947 - Paintings of the Year

FOLDER 14: 1952 March - American Swedish
Monthly

SERIES 5: Writings

FOLDER 15: 1935 October - Radio transcript

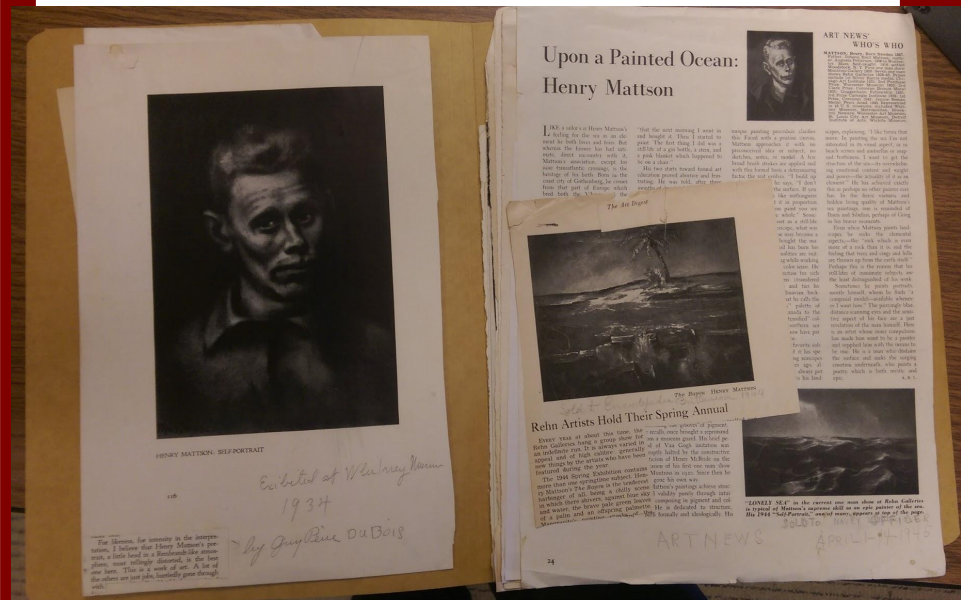
FOLDER 16: 1943 March - Autobiography in
Swedish and English

Representative Items

Series 1: Clippings

Folder 1: Magazines

Mattson saved a number of clippings related to his work, highlighting his achievements and providing insight into the works that resonated with his audience.

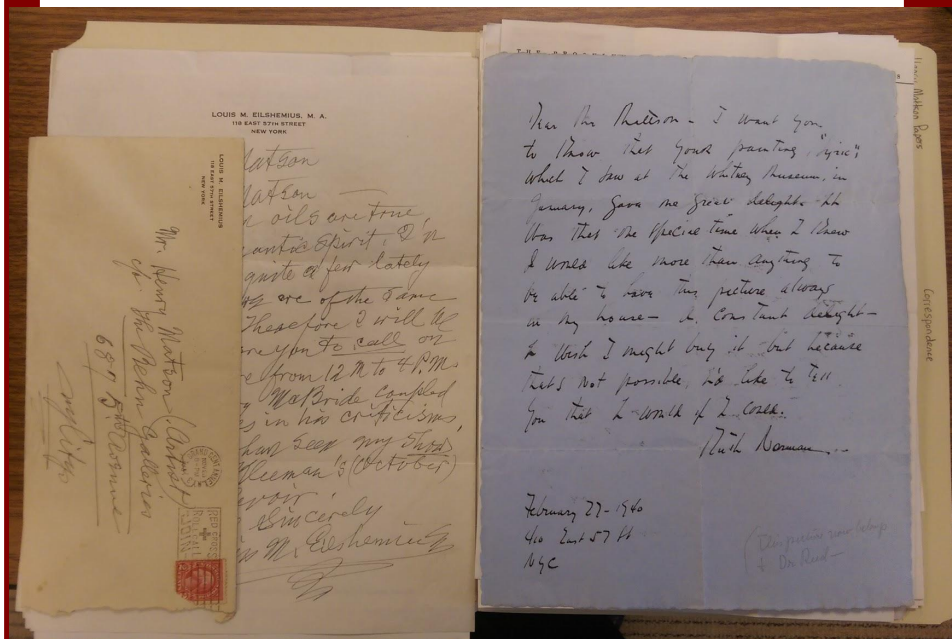


Representative Items

Series 2: Correspondence

Folder 3: 1933-1945, 1948-1952, 1964, undated

Mostly handwritten notes, often written in congratulations for an award or recognition.

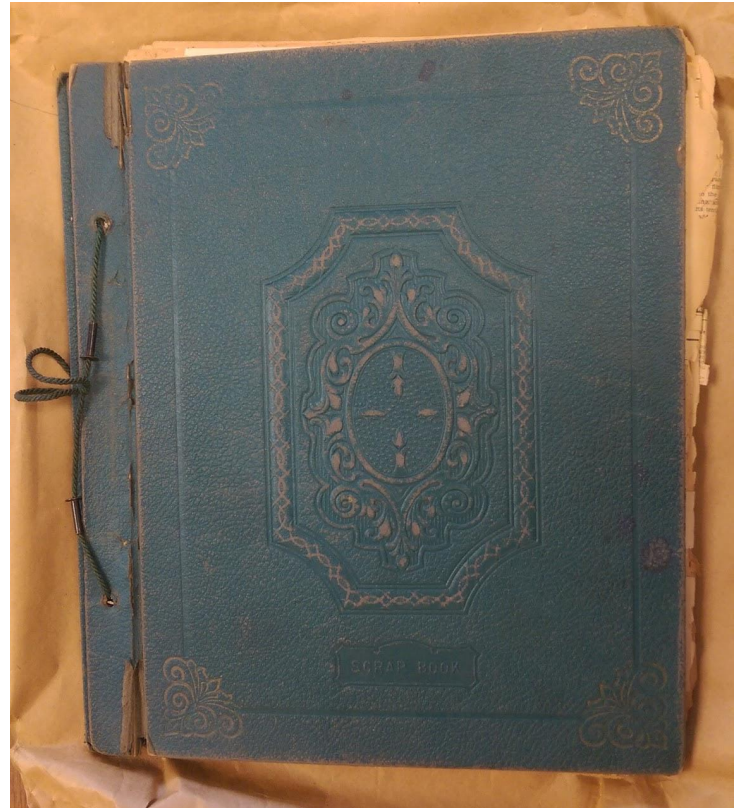


Representative Items

Series 3: Memorabilia

Oversized Box: Scrapbook

This scrapbook is in poor condition and the binding is broken. Since this item cannot fit in a standard document box, it was rehoused in a larger box, allowing it to sit flat on the shelf.



Representative Items

Series 3: Memorabilia

Folder 5: Self-Portraits

These items encompass both original works by Mattson, as well as reproductions and source images related to his paintings.



Representative Items

Series 3: Memorabilia

Folder 7: Miscellaneous

This certificate of identification exemplifies an item that defies categorification. As it would be uncommon to find a large number of related items, a “miscellaneous” folder is needed.

Certificate of Identification. — To be attached to Naturalization Certificate
Not good for travel outside Sweden, Norway and Denmark

SWEDISH AMERICAN LINE

STATE OF New York } ss.:
COUNTY OF New York }

I hereby certify that
Henry E. Mattson
whose photograph is affixed hereto, is the (_____ of the)
identical person described in the certificate of naturalization
hereto attached.

He declares he was born
in Guthrieburg NORWAY
SWEDEN
and is accompanied by the following members of
his family: _____

Henry E. Mattson
(Signature of Passenger)

Robert Mattson
(Signature of Official)

Date June 30 1937

(Seal) Swedish American Line Co. No. 972, Reg. No. 97
Swedish American Line Co. No. 1295, Reg. No. 1295

(Title of Official)

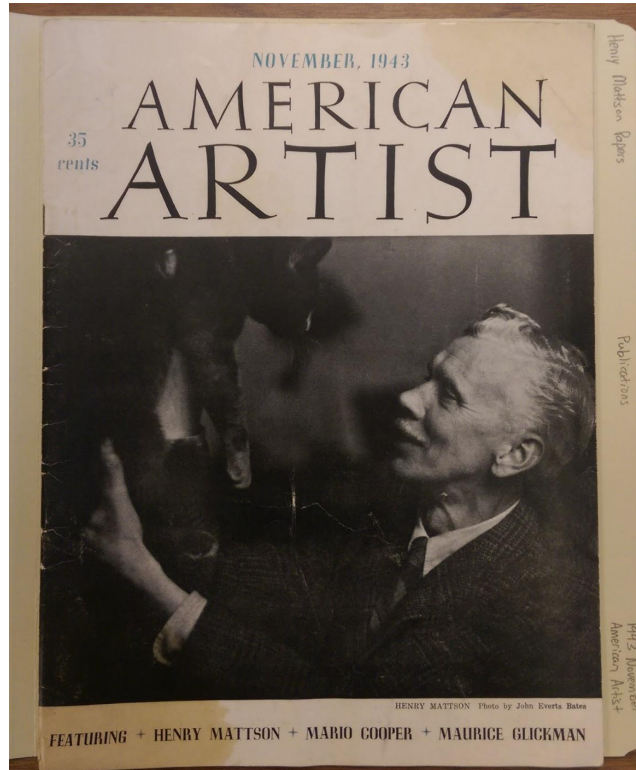
(SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE SIDE)

Representative Items

Series 4: Publications

Folder 11: American Artist

Mattson saved a number of publications where he is featured in an article—this issue of American Artist also had him on the cover.

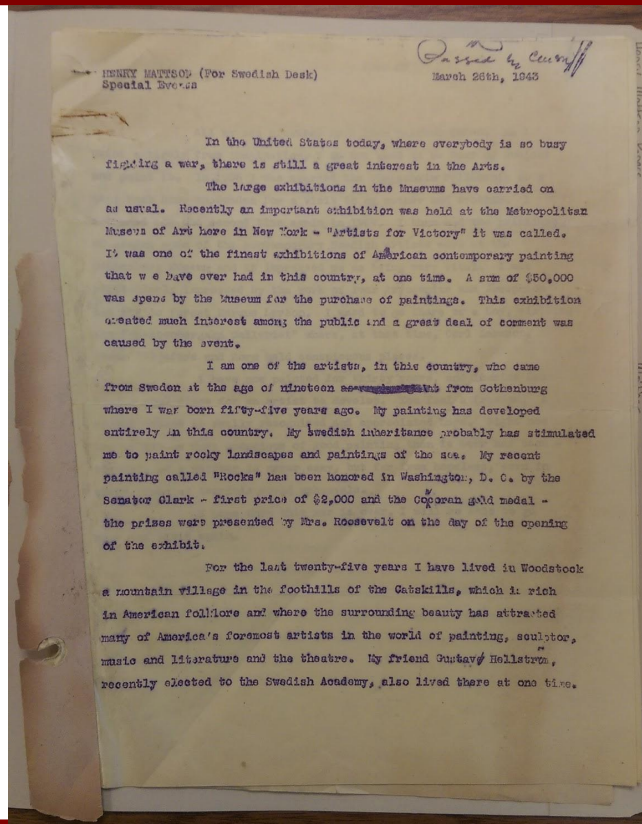


Representative Items

Series 5: Writings

Folder 16: Autobiography

This item appears to have once been a part of the scrapbook, but was separate at the time of processing. It also includes a Swedish translation.



Mission Statement

The mission of the Henry Mattson Papers is to document the painter's work and achievements through the preservation of his correspondence, memorabilia, and collected ephemera. The Syracuse University Special Collections Research Center serves the collection by providing preservation and access for these and other cultural heritage resources.

Role for Scholars

This collection poses research opportunities for researchers interested in Henry Mattson's public and personal presence in the art community. Potential research topics include: experiences of immigrant artists; Woodstock, NY as an artist community; Mattson's technique and approach to art.

Value Assessment

Informational Value

- Clippings and publications offer numerous reflections on Mattson's works
- Self-portrait sketches offer insight into his self-image

Evidential Value

- Certificate of Identification offers evidence of trip to Sweden
- Contract from post office mural in Portland, Maine serves as record of that commission
- World's Fair materials demonstrate his participation in international "Wall of Fame"

Condition Assessment

- Majority of collection (including correspondence, photos, sketches, and photographic negatives) are in **very good condition**
- The scrapbook and newsprint clippings are in **poor condition**
 - Folding has increased brittleness
 - some items have glue and metal fasteners that will likely further degrade the materials

Conservation Plan

- Newsprint would not fit in folders if it were unfolded, and doing so may make it even more fragile
- Removing glue and metal fasteners would time-consuming and also poses a risk of damaging the materials
- Rehousing negatives in acid-free paper barriers will help to protect these and other items
- Critical items could be encased in mylar enclosures

Current Environment

Housed in archival document boxes, which are stored in a climate controlled environment in Special Collections Research Center stacks.

Ideal Environment

- The conditions at “The Facility” would be ideal for these materials (50°F and 30% relative humidity)
- Photographic negatives may be better preserved if housed separately in plastic slide pages
 - As per NARA guidelines: <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/storage/negatives-transparencies.html>

Disaster Contingency Plan

Covered by Special Collections Research
Center “Disaster Recovery Manual:”

<http://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1065&context=sul>

Collection Development

- Collection was donated by Henry Mattson in 1964 and he died in 1971
 - Unlikely to obtain more materials from Henry Mattson estate
- Could acquire correspondence from the recipients of Mattson's letters or records from galleries or exhibitions he participated in

Public Services

- Once processed, these materials will be available for use by researchers
- Will need to be careful with scrapbook and other fragile items—it may be best to make photocopies for patrons instead of having them handle the materials
- Some materials would be under copyright protection
 - Permission may need to be obtained from Mattson estate and relevant publishers

Conclusion

- Henry Mattson Papers offer valuable materials for researchers interested in his career and the artistic community in which he participated
- Materials are generally in very good condition—should remain valuable for some time to come