

Subject: Atlanta
Period

Aug 2, '77
22 E. 8 Street

(1) (40)

Nyc 10003

To:

Ms. Stelling

From:
Hale Woodruff

Just had a note (letter) from one of my former students in Atl. Ga: Robert Neal. He was most talented - a fine painter. His significance lies not only in this fact, but it was he, Robert Neal, who was my main-stay in doing the Talladega Murals. Neal was my one and only assistant. He kept my sketches, equipment etc in order during the painting. He transferred the cartoons (drawings + studies of the murals) to the actual canvas. He posed for all the hands and figure gestures that appear in the mural. His hands were most expressive, by nature, artistically structural and adaptive to what I was trying to do. I don't know what I would have done without him. I suggest that you write to him directly for whatever you think he can do in terms of the Atlanta Period. I think hearing from you as to what you want would be good. Tell him it is my suggestion.

His address: Robert Neal

711 Ferguson Ave, Dayton, Ohio

P.S. Neal can also tell you much about our years in Atlanta, in addition to the Talladega Mural saga. HA

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P.P.S. Franky, I don't recall if Robert Neal was ever a validated ~~enroll~~ enroll at Morehouse Coll. in any established degree program of that College. I only know now that he was an indispensable and useful help-mate to me during the months of preparation and final execution of the Talladega Murals. In that capacity, and in that sense, Robert Neal does now and always will rank most highly in my overall estimate of him as a truly capable, dedicated, and indeed involved participant in the representation, visually, of this momentous and historical event in American History now remembered and referred to as the "Amistad Mutiny of 1839".
H.W.

As you must now know, Mrs. Stolling, it was Dr. Buell Gallagher himself who approached me about 1936-37-38, in re: the matter of doing the "Amistad Saga". It appealed to me. Gallagher was then President of Talladega College - I had already begun to go over there once a week - Friday - to offer lectures on art - ~~at~~ at his request.

The Amistad Mutiny (3)

I had never heard of it! I was not at all in this matter of ignorance. After reading & hearing about it I agreed to paint it. It was not only a challenge - but an opportunity! Extensive research was required. I went to New Haven, Conn., Yale University Library, New Haven Historical Society etc. etc. in 1938 in preparation for the mural which was to be unveiled in spring of 1939 - one hundred years after the mutiny itself.

The trip to and from New Haven gave me the opportunity to stop off in NYC to see the World's Fair of that year and to see my painting which had been chosen as one of four artists' works to represent the State of Georgia at the Fair. For this was an honor to have been selected, particularly since the selection was made ~~on~~ on the basis of artistic quality. The factor of race did not enter into the decision of the selection's Committee.

Incidentally, the painting I did portrayed a youngster entitled "Little Boy". It was the young brother of Robert Neal who sat for it.