



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**William Edouard Scott collection**

1903-1969

Sc MG 172

## Summary

**Creator:** Scott, William E. (William Edouard), 1884-1964

**Title:** William Edouard Scott collection

**Date:** 1903-1969

**Size:** 0.63 linear feet (2 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Joan Scott Wallace, December 1981.

**Revision History:** Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

**Abstract:** William Edouard Scott was a muralist, portrait artist, illustrator, and painter. This collection consists of correspondence, clippings, diplomas, and certificates.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], William Edouard Scott collection, Sc MG 172, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Accessioned by Diana Lachatanere, 1982.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Art and Artifacts Division: artifact.

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

## Creator History

William Edouard Scott was a muralist, portrait artist, illustrator, and painter. Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, he moved to Chicago to attend the School of the Art Institute (1904-1909). While a student, he was commissioned to complete several murals in local schools; they are the earliest public works depicting African American subjects. In 1909, Scott traveled to France, where he studied with Henry

Ossawa Tanner. While abroad, he painted realistic images of Paris and the French countryside. When he returned to Chicago, Scott sold his Paris paintings and was able to fund a second trip to Europe, during which he studied at the Académie Julien and the Académie Colarossi in Paris. He returned to the United States in 1914 and devoted himself to documenting the life experiences of Black people, traveling and sketching throughout the rural south. During World War I, Scott went back to France and sketched images of African American soldiers; these drawings appeared on covers of *The Crisis*. In 1931, Scott was awarded a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship to study and paint in Haiti. He created over a hundred works during his thirteen months in Haiti and exhibited them in a Port-au-Prince show promoted by the Haitian government. The exhibition was an enormous success, and the president of Haiti purchased twelve works. When he returned to the U.S., Scott painted for the Federal Art Project, creating public murals for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. In 1943, he was the only Black artist chosen to create a mural for the Recorder of Deeds Building in Washington, D.C. By the end of his life, Scott had created over seventy-five murals celebrating Black history and culture. In 2007, the Indiana State Museum organized the traveling retrospective *Our Own Artist: Paintings by Indiana's William Edouard Scott, 1884-1964*.

## Scope and Content Note

This collection mostly consists of personal papers, clippings, school diplomas, and award certificates. The Personal papers include agreements and letters for works to be done in the District of Columbia and Florida A and M College, some financial material, and a copy of Scott's high school report card.

**Arrangement:** Arranged into 3 series: I. Personal; II. Certificates; and III. Clippings.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

African American art  
African American art -- Exhibitions  
African American artists  
African American painters  
Muralists

### Names

Scott, William E. (William Edouard), 1884-1964

## Container List

### Personal 1931-1949

- b. 1 f. 1 Agreement with District of Columbia 1949
- b. 1 f. 2 Bank book
- Correspondence
  - b. 1 f. 3 Browning, Charles P 1949 March 9
  - b. 1 f. 4 *Chicago Defender*  
Regarding gift portrait from Scott to the Robert S. Abott School.
  - b. 1 f. 5 Southside Community Art Center 1941 March 20  
Letter to Mrs. Esther Scott requesting her help in planning dedication of the Center.
  - b. 1 f. 6 Scaffold receipt
- b. 1 f. 7-8 Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College 1949 August 13-September 9  
Two letters about Scott's paintings for the college and his salary for the month of August.
- b. 1 f. 9 Report card, Mantel Training High School, Indianapolis (photocopy)
- b. 1 f. 10 Brochure for the Southside Community Art Center
- b. 1 f. 11 "Exhibition of Paintings of Mrs. Scott by Antoine Derenoncourt" typescript  
1931 December 15

### Certificates 1903-1909

- b. 2 Art Institute of Chicago Frederick Magnus Brand Prize 1907-1909  
Includes two certificates of Excellence from the Department of Still Life Painting and Department of Drawing and Painting.
- b. 2 Manual Training High School diploma 1903
- b. 2 Clippings 1930s-1960s

Includes loose clippings and 142 clippings mounted on white paper.