

## HAL EMPIE COLLECTION-MSS 35

Records: 1950-1987

No. of Boxes: 13 boxes, 22 cu. ft.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - Hal Empie

Hart Haller (Hal) Empie was born on March 26, 1909 in Safford, Arizona Territory. Empie started drawing at age five and has never stopped. Presently he lives and paints in Tubac.

As a teenager Empie worked at the Best Drug Store in Safford. After his graduation from high school, Empie attended the University of Arizona for a semester as a pre-med student, then returned to Safford to marry his sweetheart. In order to take advantage of a job offer as a pharmacist in Cook's Drug Store, Empie went to Denver, where he completed the Capitol College of Pharmacy course. He passed the Arizona State Board Pharmacy examination in 1919 and received a special dispensation to practice, since he was only 20 years of age.

Hal Empie worked in the Solomonville drug store for five years and then was a sign painter before taking charge of the Duncan Drug Store in 1934. He purchased the drug store in 1941 and set up his easel next to the prescription counter, where he painted between customers. Empie started drawing his famous Kartoon-Kards in the mid 1930s. He copyrighted some 126 designs of these humorous Western cartoons, and one of them was reproduced on a billboard as a motivator for World War II aircraft factory workers.

Empie's first love is oil painting. Self-taught, his only instruction was in 1950 when he studied under Polish artist Frederick Taubes. Empie has painted literally thousands of pictures, including several religious oils.

By Mona L. McCroskey  
Compiled August 1987

### HISTORICAL NOTE

These are the papers of Hal Empie, born March 26, 1909 in Safford, Arizona Territory. He was a pharmacist at age 20, owner and operator of the Art Gallery Drug store in Duncan, Arizona. Later, a mostly self-taught artist and art teacher. Empie has received numerous awards and accolades during the course of his career. His work has been published in *Life Magazine* as well as *Arizona Highways*. Besides regional Southwest galleries, the Los Angeles County Museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City have also exhibited Empie art. Adding to his many honors, the Carnegie Library at Syracuse University has established The Hal H. Empie Collection of Western Art. Empie is also well-known for his humorous western theme Kartoon-Kards.

The collection consists of oil paintings, family photographs, pencil sketches, color prints and original cartoons.

## Box 1

- Folder 1 Biography and "Hal and Louise Empie: Their Time in Duncan." ND.  
2 Correspondence, Reg Manning, 1966- 1969.  
3 Correspondence, 1981-1987.  
4 Empie Family photographs and Ruth Ann Empie resume.  
5 "Reminiscences of Pharmacy in the Southwest," in Pharmacy and History, Vol. 22,  
No. I, 1980, pp. 2 7-35.  
6 Building plans for the Art Gallery Drugs store in Duncan.  
7 Newsclippings, photographs for Empie painting, The Robe.  
8 Newsclippings, photographs for Empie Greenlee Mural, 1954.  
9 Empie art class newclippings and photograph, 1950s.  
10 Newsclippings, Hal Empie Day, Cowboy Christmas, 1985.  
11 Newsclippings, Art Gallery Drug Store.  
12 Newsclippings, art galleries and shows.  
13 Newsclippings, Empie postcards.  
14 Newsclippings, Empie retirement.  
15 Newsclippings.  
16 Ephemera.

## Box 2

Photographs of Empie paintings, family photos, pencil sketches, Kartoon-Kards  
(\*NOTE-All photographs can be found found in the Empie Photo Collection)

- Envelope 1 Fresh Air, 1963  
The Jones Place, 1965
- 2 Earth Spirit, c. 1968  
Tres Frijoles, 1968  
Papel de Trigo, 1968  
Que Esta Haciends En Sonora, 1968  
Ranch in the Upper Valley, 1969
- 3 Gold Camp, 1970s  
Last Time We Met, 1970s  
Better Times Ahead, 1970s  
Mill at Hi Tower Road, 1970s  
Untitled, 1970s
4. Tequila Break, 1972  
Banditos, 1973  
New Arrival, 1974
- 5 It's About Time, 1970s  
Untitled, 1970s (\$1500)  
The Revival, 1970s

- To Borrow a Pony, 1970s  
Untitled, 1970s (\$895)
- 6 Early Start, 1970s  
Drifter, 1970s  
High Country, 1970s  
A Good Life, 1970s  
Man From Peridot, 1970s
- 7 More Paleface Come, 1980s  
A Full Day, 1980s  
Straight For Santa Fe, 1980s
- 8 The Crossing, 1982  
Cool Clear Water, 1982  
The Sheriff, 1982  
Mimbres, 1982
- 9 Casa Mi Tio, 1983  
Cuidado Conejos, 1983  
Little Muddy, 1983  
The Thirsty Land, 1983  
Tank at Wood Canyon, I 1983
- 10 Meeting at Ash Springs, 1983  
Visitando Abuela, 1983  
The Sheltered Life, 1983  
One Thing After Another, 1983
- 11 Steeplerock in October, 1983  
The Stewart Place, 1983  
Amigos, 1984  
Morning at Mud Springs, 1984
- 12 Ta Pasaron Los Gringos, 1 1984  
Council Rock, 1984  
The North Pasture, 1984  
The Last Wagon, 1984  
Corral at Hidden Canyon, 1984
- 13 Road to Steeplerock, 1985  
Thunder Mountain, 1985  
Spring Runoff, 1985  
Vamanos, 1985  
Buenos Dias, 1985

- 14 Look Ma, No Hands, 1986  
The Baron, 1986  
The Breeze Speak, 1986
- 15 Duncan Flood, 2 copies, 1972
- 16 Business cards
- 17 Notecards
- 18 Duncan Drug store prescription labels
- 19 Postcards from Wall Drug store
- 20 "Porcupine Aiggs" (4 boxes)
- 21 Allie Ann Empie, photo, c. 1940
- 22 Hart Empie, photo, c. 1945
- 23 Hal, Zona and Gus Empie, c. 1930
- 24 Mezzanine Gallery invitation, 1983
- 25 Empie Christmas cards
- 26 Empie studio cards, Duncan
- 27 Duncan High School Wild-Kats decals
- 28 Miscellaneous cards
- 29 Miscellaneous pencil sketches
- 30 Photos of Empie paintings:  
The Pony Salesman, 1983  
Last One to Wigwam is Paleface, 1983  
Road to Aravipa, 1983  
Morning at Mud Springs, 1985  
A Full Day, 1985  
The Friendly Land, 1985
- 31 Kartoan-Kards catalog, 1980s
- 32 Art show programs

- 33 Eastern Arizona College Show, 1983
- 34 "Making Arrangements for a Saddle," from Horse Lovers' Magazine, cover, 1950
- 35 Racetrack photograph at Duncan, 1962
- 36 Photographs of Hal Empie in his studio
- 37 Photo of Hal Empie, c. 1921
- 38 Art Gallery Drug bags, miscellaneous pencil sketches
- 39 Seventeen Original Empie Kartoon-Kards:
- 01 Ad for Kartoon-Kards, Cowboy on Horse
- 02 Picturesque Arizona - Petrified Forest. Wood, wood everywhere - but the darn stuff won't chop !"
- 03 "Greetings from (Boulder) Hoover Dam!" Cowboy, horse and rattlesnake eye plump lady tourist bending over to pick wildflower, dam in background. "Boy! What a Structure! 'Yuh know, 01' Paint - they say th' base measures 650 feet!"
- 04 Two gentleman playing game with medical records cards: "A great game - lots o' cards - but I'm runnin' otta chips!"
- 05 "Reflexes Okay!" - Knee jerk kicks doctor.
- 06 "At th' clinic The Alps Bunk."
- 07 "X-Ray Lab" - patient swallows "plaster" foe x-rays.
- 08 Man on crutches with bandaged foot on wheels and bandage on nose: "In Rochester, Minnesota: Havin' a wonnerful time - wist you were here!"
- 09 "Greetings from the Clinic" - patient arrives at information booth.
- 10 People waiting for appointments: "A view of our club -Th' 'Clinicwatchers: Blessed is he who waits, and growth not impatient, for he shall inherit th' right (by an' by) to move up - and wait for another room!
- 011 "At Yellowstone National Park, Handkerchief pool -- 'Where Nature Takes in Washings.'"
- 012 Tourist treed by bear. "At Yellowstone Park. Not in the proper mood to write."
- 013 "At Yellowstone Park - Where Nature furnishes free steam heat an' fizz-water!"
- 014 "Yellowstone Park - Where it's easy to make friends."
- 015 "Greetings from th' Great Salt Lake. Just cruisin' around on my. own power."
- 016 Old prospector and burro, "Life's about ore."
- 017 Dog scratching fleas. "Way out West--we've got everything!"

## 45 Reprints of Empie Kartoon-Kards

- R.1 Business card - Cowboy on horse.  
R 2 Ad - Sahuaro and desert. (P. 100)  
R.3 Ad - cowboy on horse.  
R 4 "Hello - had a hard trip - I'm in no shape t' talk." (106)  
R 5 "In Reverse Now - headin' Back!" (C 110)  
R 6 "Just a-saggin; an' a-draggin'" (C 11)  
R 7 "Greetings - won't write now-may not have time anyway." (C 116)  
R 8 "Way Out West. I'm About to become a part of this country." (P 119)  
R 9 "Way Out West - trying' to take it easy on this trip!" (C 109)  
R10 "Th' Pressure is Terrific!" - cow with bulging udder. (C 1080)  
R11 "In th' Far, Far West! Writing is out of the question - if you were here, you'd understand."  
(C 107)  
R 12 "Greetings from Arizona. I'm all turned around - you'll hear from me later." (P 120)  
R 13 "Way Out West. Jest a roun' about way o' sayin' howdy !" (C 115)  
R 14 "Way Out West. Don't know th' ropes, but I'm doing the best I can." (C 114)  
R 15 "Way Out West - Where things happen. Shore got my foot in it this time!"  
R 16 "Oh well - I wuz travelin' by air ennyhow." (by Joel and Hal Empie) (C 105)  
R 17 "H'lo- All I get-comes the hard way!" (C 125)  
R 18 Panting dog runs across the desert. Caption: "The Plainsman - I think that I shall never see anything as lovely as a tree!" (C 104)  
R 19 "Western Trails - Just finished another lap." (C 123)  
R 20 "Tombstone, Arizona - just breezin' thru." (P 114)  
R 21 "Tucson, Arizona - just breezin' thru." (P 102)  
R 22 "Phoeniz, Arizona - just breezin' thru." (P 109)  
R 23 "Santa Fe, New Mexico - just breeizn' thru." ( 117)  
R 24 Generic card, Howdy ! Just popped up in -- . This country does somethin' to yuh." (P 121)  
R 25 Howdy! Just popped up in Taos, New Mexico. This country does somethin' to yuh."  
(P 116)

### Box 2 Continued

- R 26 Howdy! Just popped up in Phoenix, Arizona. This country does somethin' to yuh." (P 108)  
R 27 Howdy! Just popped up in Tucson, Arizona. This country does somethin' to yuh." (P 101)  
R 28 "We're off - broke away at last! Gonna be hard t' catch!"  
R 29 Tearful but smiling cow stands on her own udder. "Tb' Bottleneck:  
What's production without transportation?" (C 124)  
R 30 Dog scratching fleas. "Way Out West--we've got everything?" (C I I 8)  
R 31 "Can't write today - still on the move. Travelin' Light." (C 1 13)  
R 32 "At El Paso, Texas - casual salutations from an easy-going country." (C126)  
R 33 "Howdy from Albuquerque, New Mexico! Gotta hit the trail again soon  
- won't write now" (P 118)  
R 34 "Howdy from Scottsdale, Arizona ! Gotta hit the trail again soon -won't write now" (P111)  
R 35 Barefoot Mexican in cart pulled by burro. "Travelin' Thru the West. Haven't had t' walk yet." (C 103)

- R 36 Two buzzards roost on saguaro limb. “Way Out West. Ho-Hum. Roostin’ here tonight.” (C 122)
- R 37 “Greetings from Arizona. At peace with th’ world.” (P 115)
- R 38 “Greetings from New Mexico. At peace with th’ world. (P 115)
- R 39 “Grand Canyon, Arizona” - scared tourist rides mule along cliff.
- R 40 “Howdy from here! Hongriest fish I ever saw - any kind of tackle will do.” – cow used as fishing tackle. (C 117)
- R 41 “See the Thing?” sign in foreground, sign on saguaro, “‘Bout 52 miles east o’ Tucson,” tourist atop saguaro. “Way Out West. Just saw the Mystery of the Desert! I ‘m in no positioj to write now!” (P 106)
- R 42 Tourist in car in mountain road, sign “To home sweet home.” “Way Out West - enjoying the scenery - don’t know when I’ll be able t’write.” (C 119)
- R 43 Tourist chisels message in Table T Rock, Devils State Park, Wisconsin. (W 202)
- R 44 Tourist clutches neck of horse racing along steep cliff. “Greetings from Grand Canyon, Arizona - too durn busy t’write.”
- R 45 Farmer, cow and huge cheese: “Whey out in Wisconsin. We’re th’ big cheese out here! Wish I curd have written sooner.” (198)

### **Box 3 Publications**

- Folder 1 West Coast Druggist, 1948, The Rocky Mountain Druggist, 1948, Hoofs and Horns, 1953.
- 2 Arizona Pharmacist, 1982, 1983. Old West, 1984.
- 3 Western Horseman, 1984, Art West, 1985, v.2 & 3.
- 4 Art West, 1985, American Artist 1985
- 5 Old West, 1985, Arizona Pharmacist, 1986, True West, 1986
- 6 Tucson Lifestyle, 1986
- 7 Arizona Highways Magazine, 1938, V. 14, No. 9 & 12, The Rocky Mountain Druggist, 1938, p. 12.
- 8 Arizona Highways Magazine, 1967, 1975.

### **Box 3 Continued**

- 9 Arizona Highways Magazine, photocopies of Empie cartoons, Tucson Visitor, 1984

### **Box 4 Correspondence from Frederic Taubes, 1950s, Printer’s plates for cartoons.**

#### **Scrapbook No. 1 (tan):**

Newspaper clippings  
 Photos of Empie paintings, c. 1950  
 Empie newspaper cartoons  
 Correspondence and Greeting cards  
 Safford High School report cards, 1924-1926  
 Hoofs and Horns, 1953  
 Empie Family photographs, c. 1885-1918

## Scrapbook No. 2 (blue)

Newspaper clippings  
Arizona State Druggists' Conventions  
Labels and Letterheads - Empie  
Photographs  
Poetry - Empie  
Autographed magazine covers  
Original Empie Kartoon-Kards  
World War II newspaper articles  
Correspondence  
Guest editorials - Empie

### Original Empie Kartoon-Kards

#### **Box 5**

Folders 1-25

#### **Box 6**

Folders 26-50

#### **Box 7**

Folders 51-75

#### **Box 8**

Folders 76-100

#### **Box 9**

Folders 101-125

#### **Box 10**

Folders 126-150

#### **Box 11**

Folders 151-175

#### **Box 12**

Folders 176-200

#### **Box 13**

Folders 201-208

Miscellaneous Drawings

Folders 209-219

**Sepia Prints- 11 ½” x 14 ½”**

(signed by Empie, Tubac, 1987 Located in Folio Map Drawer)

1. “No Customers”
2. “Apache Home”
3. “Trailin’ Chacon” (2 copies)

**Color Prints- 16” x 20”**

(signed by Empie, Tubac, 1987)

1. “Gettin’ A Mite Chilly”
2. “The Thirsty Land”

**Color Prints – 18” x 24”**

(signed by Empie, Tubac, 1987)

1. “Tonight Let It Be Lonebrow”
2. “The Last Wagon”
3. “Mi Casa En San Jose”

**Color Prints – 23” x 36”**

(signed by Empie, Tubac, 1987)

1. “On a Blue River”
2. “The Grand Canyon in July – South Rim
3. AP 11/11/350 (signed, 1985)

June 1991