

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Henri Gadbois *Happy Birthday* 2013

HETAG NEWSLETTER No 21, March/April 2018

Though HETAG as an organization has been around for 17 years (!), the HETAG Newsletter in the current form is only turning two: the first issue appeared in March 2016. Just in time to be a second birthday present, the University of Houston Libraries have added the full run of the [HETAG Newsletter to their Digital Library](#) and made it available to the world via the web. Many thanks to the University of Houston Libraries (and especially HETAGer Christian Kelleher, Head of Special Collections at UofH, who made this happen) for helping spread the word about the fabulous art of Houston. (And thanks also to the Hirsch Library of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and Librarian Jon Evans, who have been mounting the HETAG Newsletter on their internal system for some months now.)

Note: Henri Gadbois didn't make the Faux Food birthday cake above just for HETAG, but I don't think he'll mind our sharing it. Visit his website to see more of his [Faux Food](#) creations.



Houston Earlier Texas Art Group (HETAG) Newsletters



HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Let's all go to CASETA!

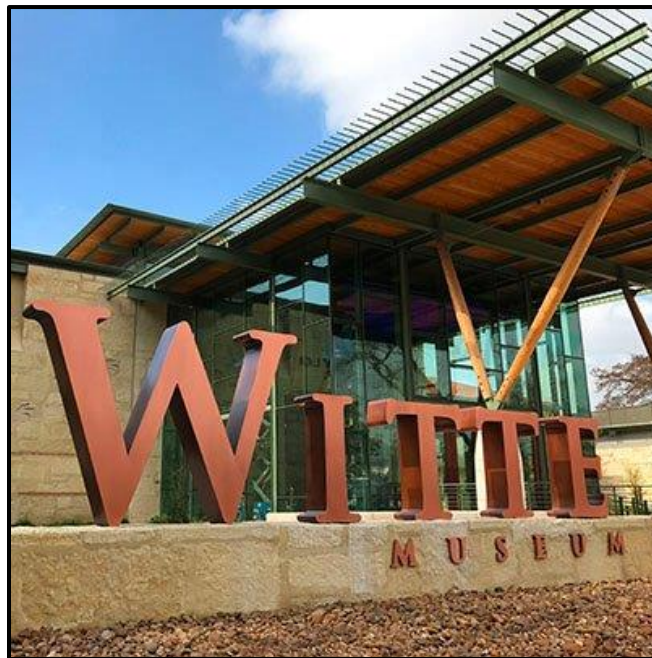
(That's the Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art)

The event that we look forward to with giddy anticipation all year long is almost here. The [16th Annual CASETA Symposium](#) will take place at the Witte Museum in San Antonio, April 27-29, 2018.

We have a few more weeks to wait, but NOW is the time to [register at the website](#). It's sure to be the best ever.

This year HETAG is a Gold level sponsor of the CASETA Symposium thanks to these generous HETAGers who pooled their donations to get us there:

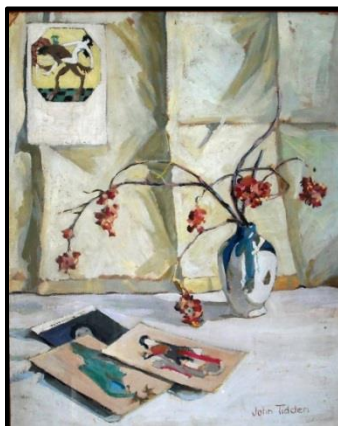
Minnette Boesel, Bonnie Campbell, Leila and Henri Gadbois, Paulette Harbin, Christian Kelleher and Theresa Clark, Rex Koontz, Sandra Lloyd, Larry Martin, Sarah Beth Wilson and Joseph McKeel, Bill and JoAnn Owens, Trilla and Bob Pando, Stan Price and Clay Huffard, Shirley Rose, Kay Sheffield, Richard Stout, Earl Weed, and Mary Ellen and Tom Whitworth.



HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

John Clark Tidden: A Houston artist almost lost, but not forgotten.

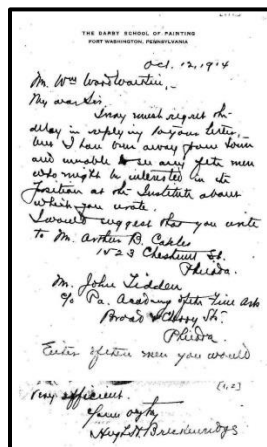
We've seen a lot of Earlier Houston Art over the 17 years HETAG has been around, but the universe of Houston art we haven't seen is much, much larger, of course. One of my favorite works from those that I've never seen (in person, anyway), is this 1923 painting by John Clark Tidden (1889-1957), titled *Bittersweet*.



John Clark Tidden *Bittersweet* 1923 (l); Tidden in 1920 (r)

I love the spare-ness of the composition, coupled with what looks to be a lush use of paint. And then there's that strange picture-within-a-picture in the upper left, of a naked woman on the back of a satyr. I'm sure that must make some art historical reference, or have some symbolic meaning, that I don't know.

Tidden was hired by Rice Institute in 1914 to teach drawing in the Architecture School, at the suggestion of Philadelphia artist, Hugh Breckenridge.

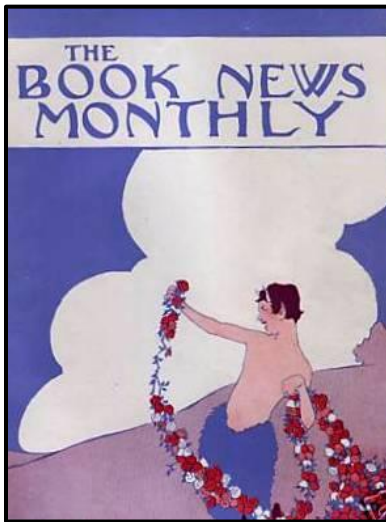
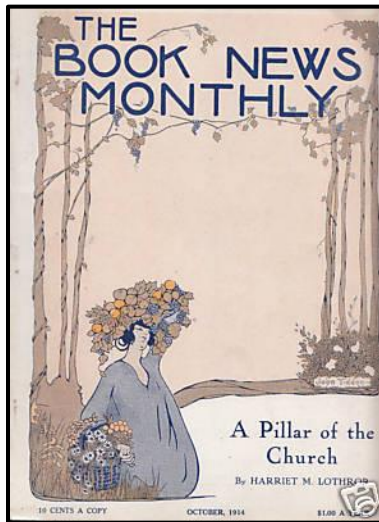


"Letter from Hugh Breckenridge to William Ward Watkin, Oct. 12, 1914." (1914) Rice University: <http://hdl.handle.net/1911/12902> (l); John Clark Tidden *Portrait of John M. McIntosh* c1919 (r)

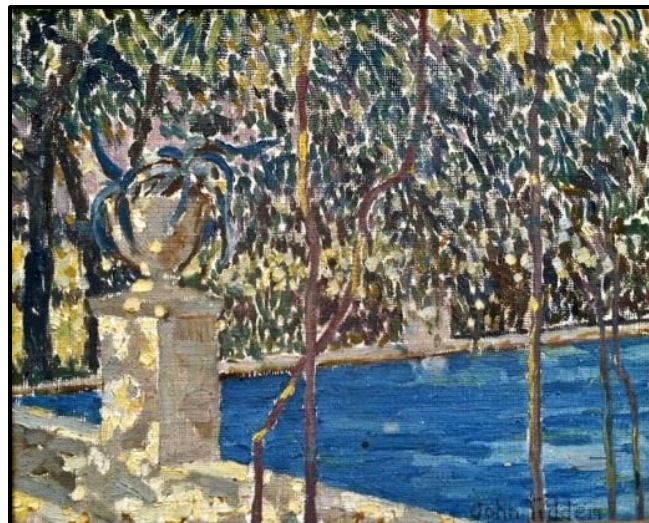
HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

He took a break from teaching to volunteer for service in World War I, after which he painted a number of portraits as tributes to his fallen friends. He taught at Rice until 1925, and was very popular with the students, by all accounts. Not only was he one of the brightest lights of the Houston art world during his years here, but he was also a force in local theater, as a designer, director and actor.

He moved back to the East in 1925, to his native New York, where he pursued a career as an illustrator and portrait painter. Some of his whimsical designs graced magazine covers over the years.



The only one of Tidden's paintings that I have ever seen in person is this small view titled "*Villa D'Este, Rome*", done while he was guiding a student summer art tour of Europe 1923.



HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

The one I'd most like to see is *Florence, Bobby's Nurse*, shown here in an exhibition catalog photo. Bobby was his son, born in Houston, who stayed here after his parents divorced and Tidden departed.



So keep Tidden in mind as you are out and about looking at Earlier Houston Art. There must be more of his work somewhere -- he was a popular artist working here for 10 years, and a good one. Too bad he is now part of that large group of our earlier artists who are almost forgotten.

The mission of HETAG is to illuminate Houston's art history by providing viewing opportunities for art, by supporting and doing research on the artists and art communities working in Houston through the years, and by spreading the word.

**Randy Tibbits, coordinator
HETAG: The Houston Earlier
Texas Art Group
tibbits@rice.edu**



Emma Richardson Cherry *Roses* c1890s watercolor