

BETHINKING OF OLDE ORLEANS

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Alvin L. Briggs — local artist

BY C.W. LATTIN

Watercolors by Alvin L. Briggs (1834-1920) will be displayed at the Swan Library in Albion from Tuesday to April 3.

Our photo of Mr. Briggs included here was taken in 1900 showing

him as a drummer in uniform with the Albion Citizens Band.

He was widely known locally in his later years as a fine watercolorist. His

paintings were usually small, shaped rectangular in a horizontal format. Subjects included sky, trees, sheep, small streams and lakeshore.

He once stated, "I paint atmosphere."

His landscapes are characterized by being wispy and in very soft pastel colors with greens and blues predominating.

The later paintings he created were often mounted in narrow gold frames behind wide off-white or gold mats.

Seventy-five years ago his work was proudly displayed

in many well-decorated local homes. It was a status symbol.

If you think you have such a watercolor, look to see if you can find his signature in a lower corner of the painting. It's apt to be faint but will be signed A.L. Briggs or A.L.B.

Other than this, very little is known about Alvin Briggs, the man, except that he was married, his wife's name was Adeline and they had three sons.

He also unfortunately had a speech impediment that perhaps inhibited his self-esteem.

It is said that he once submitted his art work for approval in a New York gallery which was readily appreciated until he was asked to appear in person. Due to his deformity the watercolors were then rejected.

At one time, he supposedly shared a studio with artist Peter B. West which was located near the canal in downtown Albion. We also know that he lived most of his life in Albion.



Alvin L. Briggs
Artist