

ART OF THE NEW DEAL
Influence of New Deal Art Programs on
Art in North Carolina

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By
Lora Sue Tinsley

Dr. Ann Horton-Lopez

Thesis Advisor

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the historic precedent established during the depression era by federal patronage of the arts. From 1933 to 1943 the country became the recipient of first-rate art at reduced prices and artists received support that allowed them to survive while continuing to sharpen their skills. Government patronage benefited the economy, the unemployed, and the needy artist. This historical overview includes a study of the various government programs and the art centers established to encourage growth in the arts. A variety of all types of arts, including visual arts, literature, theater, music and architectural projects, raised public understanding and appreciation of the arts.

Considerations requisite to making this determination included an in depth study of the WPA programs; the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), the Treasury Section (The Section), the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP), and the Work Progress Administration Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP). The descriptive nature of this study required interviews with current property owners, archival owners and local postmasters. Investigative research entailed photography of data, maintenance of field notes for verification of data, personal observations and interpretations including investigation of the physical locations of murals and sculpture. Interviews and observations uncovered data leading to consideration of the physical environments including: which works were moved or covered, present day conditions of the paintings and sculpture, and documentation of those endangered by deteriorating conditions of their current locations.

The expressed goal of the WPA art programs was "to unite artists and society through participation in the Arts" (Contreras, 1983, p. 18). Findings confirmed forty-four post offices in North Carolina received murals or sculpture created by New Deal artists. Museums were established within the state including the North Carolina Museum of Art. With the establishment in Raleigh of the first art center in the nation, art instruction expanded within state universities, art centers, and public schools. North Carolina universities also established art programs designed to provide art instruction to those with an interest in art as well as to future teachers who were expected to present visual art instruction in the public schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Families and lives were in chaos; unemployment was at an all time high, finances were in ruin, and bread lines were a daily occurrence. This was the state of the nation in the early 1930s. People were starving. Banks and businesses were failing daily. Artists who depended on patrons and corporations to buy their work were also suffering. People did not invest what few dollars they had in paintings and sculpture. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's *NEW DEAL* provided work and sustenance to the unemployed including: farmers, industrial workers, and hungry artists. When questioned concerning work relief for artists, Roosevelt's relief director, Harry Hopkins, argued, "They've got to eat just like other people" (McKinzie, 1974 p. X).

Wonderful works of art arose from the scars of the Depression. Work Projects Administration (WPA) mural and easel paintings were often the first original works of art seen by many rural Americans. WPA artists created a lasting legacy in both rural and city environments throughout the country. Four New Deal agencies provided art programs-the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP), the Works Projects Administration Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP), and the Treasury Department Section of Fine Arts Project (The Section).

The Federal Works Progress Administration (later the Works Project Administration) existed from 1935 to 1943 and provided employment to thousands of out of work writers, actors, musicians, and artists. The WPA artists alone created approximately 10,000

works of art including easel paintings, drawings, sculptures and many murals that still exist in numerous public buildings. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 26) As Francis O'Connor said, "something very vital indeed, something revolutionary happened to American culture during the 1930s" (O'Connor, 1969, p.26). Artists such as Raphael Soyer, Stuart Davis, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Jacob Lawrence, and Ben Shahn survived the depression and from this period went on to achieve illustrious careers, creating a body of work still enjoyed today. (McKinzie, 1974, p. 176)

Until the late 1800s, Americans regarded the art of America as provincial and unsophisticated when compared to art produced in Europe. American art has evolved from the days of its youth with American styles of art dominating the twentieth century. The American regionalist style, made popular by such artists as Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton, grew out of this era. WPA alumni included artists who "not only put U.S. art on the map but shifted the center of that map from Paris to New York" (Strickland, 1997).

In 1935, Andrew Mellon, a former Secretary of the Treasury, contributed \$50,000,000 in old world masterpieces and cash for the construction of the National Gallery of Art on the mall in Washington, D. C. (McKinzie, 1974, p. 43) Mount Rushmore was completed with funds from the WPA. The establishment of rural electric corporations brought electricity to isolated areas when the WPA funded the construction of Hoover dam and other hydroelectric plants. The San Francisco and Oakland Bay Bridges were constructed during this era in California.

Among the projects constructed in North Carolina by the WPA was the outdoor theater at Manteo. President and Mrs. Roosevelt were present for the premiere

performance of Paul Green's "The Lost Colony". (State Archives, Cohn, p. 47). Today theater attendees pass through Fort Raleigh, a National Shrine completed by WPA. The Veterans Tower on the campus of North Carolina State University in Raleigh was also constructed from WPA funds. (State Archives, Cohn, p. 25) The North Carolina Symphony Orchestra was developed with WPA assistance and is still in existence today. (State Archives, Cohn, p.11) With WPA dollars, a United States Treasury Mint was remodeled in Charlotte, North Carolina, establishing the first art museum in the state. (State Archives, Cohn, p. 25) The Art Society of Raleigh, North Carolina, collaborated with the WPA in the establishment of America's first WPA sponsored art center in 1935. (State Archives, WPA Art Center, 1935-1942) Further collaboration between these two agencies resulted in the current day North Carolina Museum of Art, also located in Raleigh. (State Archives, NCAS, Executive Records, 1925-1985)

Numerous schools, libraries, post offices and other federal buildings were constructed across the nation. Artists were employed by the thousands to decorate and enhance these new structures. Predominant themes for work of this period were American culture and history. The aesthetic consciousness of everyday Americans was stimulated by the far reaching scope of these programs. Lives were enriched at WPA art centers by studying folk arts, photography, and ceramics. Visitors experimented with metalworking, created original jewelry, and experienced sculpture construction. Interested participants learned how to decorate their homes as well as how to create more pleasing garden and landscape designs. Interest was peaked by the traveling art exhibits that introduced local communities to original works of art previously available only in galleries and museums.

Government patronage of the arts during the Depression resulted in “a more invigorating effect on American art than any past event in the country’s history,” wrote George Biddle. (Strickland, 1997) WPA art programs served as a collective apprenticeship for artists who established American art as an international leader in the field by providing an opportunity for young artists to experiment with their craft, develop innovative techniques, and collaborate with their peers. (Strickland, 1997) Project artist Jacob Kainen, stated “American art suddenly came of age” (Strickland, 1997). The WPA projects were cancelled in 1943, as the country channeled all available resources toward preparations for World War II. The establishment of new jobs in industry resulted in a decrease in the unemployment rate and an improvement in the overall economic condition of the country. (Strickland, 1997) FAP graphic artist Abe Ajay wrote in a memoir of the period “thus ended the noblest experiment of them all” (Strickland, 1997). Federal Art Project poster artist, Anthony Velonis, later wrote, the WPA programs gave hope to a generation of artists enabling them to become creative citizens instead of alienated revolutionaries. (Strickland, 1997) “Government sponsorship had helped launch an aesthetic revolution” (Strickland, 1997).

Statement of Research Problem

Limited information exists regarding WPA murals and sculpture in North Carolina and the artists who produced them. The purpose of this investigation was 1) to identify and document the artwork installed by WPA artists in North Carolina, and 2) to identify the location and condition of these works of art.

Statement of Research Questions and Objectives

The question for investigation was as follows:

To what extent did the WPA programs promote the production of murals and sculpture in North Carolina and what are the current locations and condition of these WPA works? Consideration of the following areas was necessary in developing a response to the research question:

- a. Identification and location of the murals and sculptures
- b. Identification of the artists and collection of pertinent information concerning each artist and the production of the murals or sculptures
- c. Consideration of local attitudes concerning WPA art works

Significance of the Study

Studying WPA art in North Carolina is significant within the context of historic preservation. Research of this era was conducted for the following reasons:

- a. To raise awareness of locations and physical conditions of the WPA murals and sculpture in North Carolina.
- b. To document the history and location of WPA sponsored visual art projects in North Carolina.
- c. To identify the need for preservation and restoration of the murals and sculpture, which are historic artifacts from the WPA era.
- d. To raise awareness of the unique art produced by WPA artists in North Carolina.

Assumptions and Limitations

It was the expectation of the researcher that this historical research would uncover a clearly documented record of the four WPA programs. This record was expected to include the location of the art work and descriptive information concerning the qualifications and experience of the individual artists chosen to execute the commissions.

The researcher was confident biographical information would be readily available concerning any artist chosen to paint or sculpt for a government agency. It was also assumed the WPA art work in North Carolina would be easily found and that, in most instances, it would still be located in the place where it was originally installed.

As the WPA programs were established in the 1930s and early 1940s, many of the artists are now deceased, eliminating the possibility of personal interviews. While interviewing local postmasters, it was discovered they had little or no information at their disposal concerning the present day location of the murals and sculpture supposedly installed in their post offices. Many of the murals have been relocated, covered, destroyed, or changed ownership. As a result of public opinion in the 1970s, one mural was ripped from the post office walls and returned to Washington, D. C. for storage. The subject of the mural or sculpture and the name of the artist was frequently unknown to present day postmasters. Local citizens seldom possessed knowledge of a WPA art located in their community.

The researcher had limited access to biographical information concerning the artists and the history of their work, agency correspondence awarding commissions, and communication regarding proposed designs, as the National Archives has been closed for more than two years for renovation. The deteriorating condition of older post office buildings resulted in many murals and sculptures being in need of extensive restoration. Without costly renovation, the future of the artwork is uncertain, research may be limited, and a cultural history could be lost to future generations of North Carolinians. Additionally, deteriorating conditions of the murals and poor quality lighting in the post offices complicated visual documentation using photography.

Definition of Terms

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| CCC | Civilian Conservation Corps |
| FAP #1 | Federal Project No. One (Art, Music, Theatre, Writers Project under WPA) |
| FAA | Federal Art Project (Of PA/FP #1) |
| GSA | General Services Administration |
| PWA | Public Works Administration |
| PWAP | Public Works of Art Project (1933-1934) |
| Section | Treasury Section of Painting and Sculpture (later, Section of Fine Art) |
| TERA | Temporary Emergency Relief Administration (1934-1935) |
| TRAP | Treasury Relief Art Project (1935-1939) |
| WPA | Works Progress Administration (1935-1939) (after September, 1939: Works Projects Administration of the Federal Works Agency; liquidated 1943) (1939-1943) |
| WPA/FAP | Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (a composite abbreviation, not current during 1930's, that is used here to designate the WPA Federal Art Project, which became the WPA Art Program of the Federal Works Agency after September, 1939, and the Graphic Section of the War Services Division after March, 1942; it was liquidated in July, 1943) |
| New Deal Projects | PWAP, TERA, Section, TRAP, WPA/FAP |

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In his plans for the New Deal, Roosevelt often expressed his desire for Americans to experience a more abundant life (McKinzie, 1974 p. X). The President was referring

to more than material objects. His desire focused on an overall improvement in life style to include the "cerebral as well as the physical" (McKinzie, 1974 p. X). The Roosevelt family descended from Dutch patroons, old families of wealth, who were considered among the patrician elite of America. (McKinzie, 1974, p. X). The Roosevelts had instilled within them "a strong grounding in the traditional arts"(McKinzie, 1974 p. X) resulting in the President's desire to instill an appreciation for the traditional arts. Roosevelt possessed a strong sense of noblesse oblige and felt the noble thing to do was to promote painting, theater, and other creative arts (McKinzie, 1974 p. X) just as he supported them while a private citizen at Hyde Park Manor. He provided his recognizable name and a limited amount of financial support to the development of this effort. Roosevelt's "paternalism" (McKinzie, 1974 p. X) paved the way for the beginning of federal subsidies for the cultural arts. An upsurge of nationalism during the Depression also contributed to the idea of mass cultural awareness. Americans expressed "a new concern for locale, the vernacular, and the American scene; for a culture which was uniquely American" (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI).

Government subsidy for artists was justified on the grounds it prevented the skills of artists from deteriorating during a period when there were few private commissions and sales because of the failing economy. (McKinzie, 1974 p. XI) Federal agency support of the arts "aspired to make art a larger part of American life and thereby improve the quality of that life" (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI). The chief of the Federal Art Project, Holger Cahill, believed large production and mass production would result in a change in the quality of life. "He inclined to leave judgment of the quality of the work to posterity" (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI). The United States Treasury's champion of art for the people,

Edward Bruce, held that presenting consistently good art to the American people would achieve the same goal. (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI) Bruce had "strong convictions about what constituted 'good' art, and artists who worked for the Treasury had to meet his technical and aesthetic standards" (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI).

Each art program had both successes and failures during the course of its history. The Treasury unit brought paintings and sculpture to more than a thousand American towns, many of which formerly had no original art. (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI) The Federal Art Project returned to the taxpayers well over 2,500 murals, 17,000 sculptures, 108,000 easels, and 11,000 designs. (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI) In addition, it operated over 100 community art centers, compiled a 20,000 piece Index of American Design, and made posters, models, photographs, and many other items. (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI).

Neither the Treasury nor the Federal Art Project was successful in convincing representatives of the American people that federal art patronage was such an enriching activity that it should be considered worthy of continued government subsidy. (McKinzie, 1974, p. 187) "The value of work by artists who later achieved renown would easily equal the amount of money spent on the projects" (McKinzie, 1974, p. 126). The Treasury's art unit received its funding from the public construction program, which ran out in the early 1940's. The Federal Arts Program was closely associated in the mind of the public with the theater and writers projects. These projects proved to be politically radical and as a result lost popularity. "All of Roosevelt's cultural projects became the focus of the powerful conservative coalition the voters returned to Congress in 1938" (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI). Although the art effort lasted a few more years, new legislation weakened the central control of the government agencies resulting in a decline in the

weakened the central control of the government agencies resulting in a decline in the quality of the work. (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI) Questions concerning the "criteria for quality art, the place of art in American life, and the compatibility of the creative temperament with the requirements of bureaucratic efficiency were never resolved satisfactorily" (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI). Roosevelt, now overcome by world events, abandoned the art projects. He concluded they "added nothing significant to the most important task of his life, winning the Second World War" (McKinzie, 1974, p. XI).

In the 1930s, painters depicted prevailing social issues and cultural problems as they recorded and documented the America way of life as never before. (Baiggel, 1974, p. 13)

"They explored cities, small towns, and rural hamlets, and they painted. They scrutinized hay wagons and modern automobiles, revival meetings and urban political gatherings, dirt farms and enormous industrial complexes, quiet side streets and roaring midways. A few sought radical change and lent their art to revolutionary causes, while others were content to sit back and let the national scene unwind across their canvases" (Baiggel, 1974, p.13).

Art had entered the mainstream of American life. "Views of the hallowed past, of the squalid present, and of a possibly happier future appeared with consistent regularity" during this period (Baiggel, 1974, p. 13). Just as in the 1930s, the public of today easily relates to the overall subject matter depicted by artists of the WPA as the murals continue to reflect a large spectrum of commonly shared experiences. (Baiggel, 1974, p. 13)

With the arrival of the Depression era, "the old concept that there was something in America for everybody who worked went down the drain, ending the American dream of

a better life for every individual" (Contreras, 1983, p. 17). Out of the confusion of this period emerged two men who aided the American artists by working to establish a basis for federal support of the arts. Edward Bruce was a lawyer, businessman, and professional painter of some note. Holger Cahill was a writer, museum curator, and art expert. These two men directed and organized New Deal art programs that created jobs for impoverished artists.

Prior to this "the federal government had never supported the arts on a national scale" (Contreras, 1983, p. 18) or held itself responsible for the cultural development of the American citizenry. "The artist in any society is seldom compatible with government bureaucracy; he or she more often assumes the role of questioner and critic" (Contreras, 1983, p. 18). The art programs established by Edward Bruce assumed officially approved and socially useful forms. The resulting works of art were designated for embellishment alone and were not intended as propaganda capable of transforming society. (Contreras, 1983, p. 19) Constraints were placed on the creativity of participating artists that sometimes resulted in conflicts between the government and the artists they hired. Bruce set the goal "to obtain the best work available from the most notable and promising artists" (Contreras, 1983, p.19). Cahill believed art should be available to all strata's of society and not considered a luxury reserved for the rich alone as art belonged to all people. (Contreras, 1983, p. 19) He encouraged whole community participation wherever possible in the arts programs as a means of providing Americans throughout the country the opportunity to incorporate both fine and utilitarian arts into their daily existence. (Contreras, 1983, p. 19)

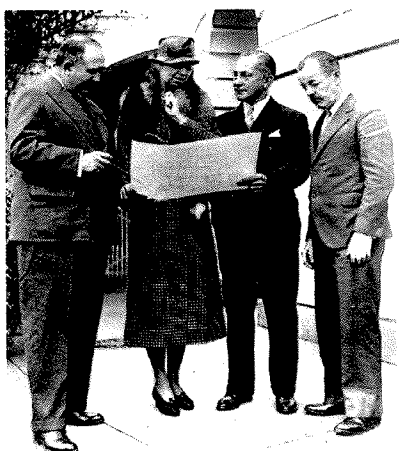
New Deal art was "derived from three basic cultural sources: the Depression era, the contemporary American scene, and the Mexican mural movement" (Contreras, 1983, p. 20). Artists of the era were not immune to the human despair experienced by all Americans as they witnessed their suffering first hand. (Contreras, 1983, p. 20) Artist

began to reject European themes in favor of American realism, developing their subjects from daily life and the social consciousness of the period. (Contreras, 1983, p. 20) They painted "society on welfare, society at play, society working, and society sustained by the new idealism" (Contreras, 1983, p. 25) of the New Deal. Suddenly, artists realized they did not have to go to Paris to study art, they could simply paint what they knew and experienced. Mexican mural artists of the 1920s reinforced this concept of people's art. Mexican muralists Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros greatly influenced the New Deal art movement. Orozco and Rivera both traveled to America where they painted murals on public walls (Contreras, 1983, p. 24). Rivera painted a large mural in Detroit depicting the industrial age as well as a mural at Rockefeller center in New York that was destroyed before completion because of the inclusion of controversial subject matter related to Rivera's political beliefs. As artist in Residence at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, Orozco executed a series of murals in Baker Library entitled "Indians of the New World" which "encompassed the impact of technology on modern society" (Contreras, 1983, p. 24).

Introduction to the History of New Deal Art Programs

The economic crisis of the 1930s resulted in the unemployment of almost 10,000 artists and approximately fifteen million workers throughout the United States (O'Connor, 1969, p. 16). Artists were unemployed in disproportionate numbers, regardless of their level of expertise, as art was considered an "expendable luxury" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 16). Artists faced the choice of either deserting their profession or accepting a government handout.

During the last years of Herbert Hoover's administration, the government "followed a policy of wishful reassurance concerning the economy while leaving it to state agencies to deal with the appalling human tragedy of unemployment and insolvency" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 16). Under Hoover's administration, there was little relief in sight, despite the Emergency Relief Act of 1932. Things began to change in the first one hundred days of Franklin Roosevelt's administration. "Federal innovations in monetary, commercial, industrial, and agricultural policy" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 16) were quickly put in place. Unemployment persisted in spite of these early programs. The Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933 "provided direct grants and matching funds to State relief agencies" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 16). These grants amounted to welfare and the head of FERA, Harry Hopkins, felt a more promising solution could be found in the form of work-relief programs. These programs would provide the needy artists with jobs which would both dignify the stipends they were paid while allowing them to preserve wherever possible their professional skill. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 17) Hopkins felt work-relief would "replace the degradation of the dole with a sense of independence and accomplishment, while at the same time helping to prime the pump of the sluggish economy" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 17). Those on work relief would retain purchasing power and pride.



"Initiating the Public Works of Art Project, Washington, D.C., 1933" (McKinzie, 1973, p. 11). "From left to right, Edward Bruce, Eleanor Roosevelt, Lawrence W. Robert, assistant Secretary of the Treasury, and Forbes Watson, technical director of PWAP, with a map of the regions in which artists would be organized" (McKinzie, 1973, p. 11).

The Civil Works Administration (CWA), founded in November, 1933, put into place the first work-relief programs. Artists were included among the first "one hundred professional and white-collar classifications for work-relief" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 17). For the first time, with the establishment of the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), the government supported the work of large groups of artists. Prior to the establishment of this new program, the government had only commissioned individual works for the enhancement of public buildings and monuments. These commissions were awarded through an already existing structure of a Federal artistic activity within the Treasury Department. This department was assigned the "constructing and embellishing of public buildings" such as "post offices, courthouses, government hospitals and similar Federal facilities" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 22). The supervising architect of the Procurement Division of the Treasury was charged with the establishment of the PWAP under the umbrella of the Treasury Department.

The Public Works of Art Project (PWAP)

George Biddle, a school classmate of President Roosevelt, wrote to FDR in May, 1933, to suggest the establishment of a system of government patronage similar to that which had supported the Mexican mural movement during the twenties. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 17) The Mexican government paid artists "plumbers' wages in order to express on the walls of the government buildings the social ideals of the Mexican revolution" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 19). Biddle further expressed his belief to Roosevelt that artists could contribute to and express in lasting monuments the social ideals he was struggling to establish. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 19) He was convinced that an American mural movement could result "for the first time in our history, in a vital national expression"

(O'Connor, 1969, p.18). FDR shared Biddle's suggestion with the Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and his wife Elilnor, who were both dedicated to the arts. Morgenthau and other influential associates soon organized the PWAP, hiring George Biddle and Edward Bruce as key advisors. Bruce was hired as director and assumed the "delicate task of initiating work-relief for artists" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 18). He was uniquely qualified as he had been a lawyer, a banker, newspaper owner, art collector and, since 1923, a professional painter. (O'Connor, 1969, p.18) Bruce "laid the groundwork for a national program and solicited the help of museum directors and others active in the arts throughout the country" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 18).

Eight months after Biddle's suggestion to FDR, the PWAP was up and running. The basic organizational structure was designed around sixteen regions previously established by the Civil Work Administration. "Regional directors were appointed and sixteen volunteer committees were established" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 18). Subcommittees were structured for individual states. Bruce quickly organized a Washington staff that included "Forbes Watson as Technical Director and Edward Rowan assisting him, and Cecil H. Jones, W. L. Johnstons and Ann Craton" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 19). In as few as four days, the regional committees were functioning and the first artists were hired (O'Connor, 1969, 19). Although PWAP was of short duration (approximately eight months) it demonstrated clearly "patronage of the arts was a feasible function of government" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 21).

The primary goal of the PWAP was "to furnish work for unemployed artists in the decoration of non-Federal public buildings and parks" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 20). To be eligible for participation in the program, artists had not only to be in need employment

but also demonstrate they were qualified to produce work that could be judged a "genuine embellishment of public property" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 21). Bruce stressed the idea that the PWAP was not a relief measure, but a public works program intended to employ artists for the purpose of beautifying public buildings in America. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 19) PWAP also wanted subject matter limited to the "American Scene" excluding anything "experimental, unconventional, or possibly titillating" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 21). Under the PWAP 3,749 artists produced approximately 15,633 works of art (O'Connor, 1969, p. 21). "Weekly wages ranged from \$26.50 to \$42.50 and were determined by the pay scales set up by the Civil Works Administration (CWA) for skilled craftsmen" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 21).

The PWAP program revealed an early conflict between leaders who wanted to aid all starving artists regardless of their level of expertise or experience and those who felt work acquired by the government should be of only the finest quality. Ultimately, two programs arose from this conflict. First, the Section of Painting and Sculpture was established under the Treasury Department and employed only the "best available professional artists" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 21). Later, in the fall of 1935, the Works Progress Administration established the Federal Art Project. Both programs operated simultaneously, with each undergoing "administrative changes" until their demise by Presidential order in 1943. (O'Connor, 1969, p.21)

The Treasury Section (The Section)

Approximately five months after the end of the PWAP, Henry Morgenthau, under his authority as the Secretary of the Treasury, established the Section of Painting and Sculpture. Edward Bruce also headed this agency with assistance from Forbes Watson

and Edward Rowan. The stated goal of the Section was to "secure the best possible art for the embellishment of government buildings" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 21). Under the Treasury Department, one percent of the construction budget for all public buildings was set aside for "artistic decoration" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 22). This agency did not have to go to Congress with its hat in hand and negotiate for funds as did their later counterpart the Works Progress Administration/Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP).

The first projects commissioned by the Section were the newly completed Justice Department and Post Office buildings in Washington, D. C. These projects called for the completion of twenty-two murals and fourteen sculptures with a budget of \$116,000. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 22) An advisory committee of twenty-one experts from throughout the United States was formed. Each advisor sent the Section a list of artists from around the country that they felt were capable of producing the proposed work. Artists receiving "three or more votes were Thomas Hart Benton, George Biddle, John Steuart Curry, Rockwell Kent, Leon Kroll, Reginald Marsh, Henry Varnum Poor, Boardman Robinson, Eugene Savage, Maurice Sterne, and Grant Wood. Artists with less than three votes were invited to apply for other commissions. Artists not initially selected were invited to design murals for small post-offices around the country" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 22). Future commissions were awarded through open competitions at both national and local levels, with designs being submitted anonymously. Artists not immediately chosen were invited to submit designs for "lesser buildings". (O'Connor, 1969, p. 22) The practice of awarding work in lesser buildings to runner-ups was expected to encourage artists so they would continue to apply for future competitions.



"Maurice Sterne, Henry Varnum Poor, Edgar Miller, and Olin Dows were the jury who chose a mural design for a post office in each of the 48 states. This was the largest mural competition conducted by the Section of Fine Arts, 1,477 were submitted" (McKinzie, 1973, p. 56)

In 1939, the Section announced the *Forty-Eight State Competition*. This nationwide competition solicited designs for designated post offices in each of the forty-eight states. "The winning sketches were organized in a traveling exhibition in November, 1939" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 23). The Section announced approximately eleven nationwide competitions. Four competitions sought designs for major post offices, with other competitions announced to select designs for the "Interior Department, War Department, and Social Security Buildings in Washington as well as for the U. S. Government Building at the New York World's Fair" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 23).

Additional activities undertaken by the Section included: (1) "circulation to museums, libraries, schools, and other institutions of exhibits illustrating art work executed under its program; (2) planning and supervising, in cooperation with the New York World's Fair Commission, the execution of the decorations for the Federal and foreign buildings at the Fair; (3) aiding the Marian Anderson Mural fund Committee in obtaining a mural (by Mitchell Jamieson) for the Interior Department to commemorate the artist's 1939 Easter concert at the Lincoln Memorial; (4) collaboration with other Government agencies and private institutions in sponsoring National Art week, November 25 to December 1, 1940, which was set aside to direct nationwide attention to American arts and crafts with a view to stimulating interest in them and their commercial aspects; (5) organization of a

competition to enlist the collaboration of American artists in depicting defense and war activities; and (6) extension of the art programs to the camps of the Civilian Conservation Corps" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 23-24). With mounting criticism over federal funds being spent on the arts, FDR recommended in 1941 "curtailing all non-defense construction projects" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 24). The Section was phased out in July, 1943. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 24)

The Section kept an eye on the subject matter and style being utilized by the artists they commissioned. "They were known to demand prudent changes" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 24) if objections were raised while a work was in progress. This lack of individual artistic freedom was considered one of the "basic weaknesses of the Section" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 25).

The Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP)

Unlike the Section, the TRAP was designed to meet "the ever-increasing need for nationwide relief" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 25). An appropriation of a little less than five billion dollars was established in 1935 for purposes of art-relief. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 25) Roosevelt created the "Works Progress Administration by executive order and placed his chief relief manager, Harry Hopkins, in charge" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 25). The WPA developed a plan entitled the *Federal Art Project*. Subsequently, the Treasury Department accepted a grant from the WPA to "establish a relief program connected with the decoration of public buildings" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 25). This program, known as the Treasury Relief Art Program (TRAP), was under the direction of Olin Dows. It functioned from December of 1938 until June of 1939. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 25)

“The TRAP operated under WPA employment regulations. This meant that it hired about 90 percent of its artists from the relief rolls and paid the going wage of \$69 to \$103 a month for 96 hours work” (O’Connor, 1969, p. 25). The majority of their assigned projects were for murals and sculptures for small post offices and other federal buildings which were already built or whose budgets did not provide for artistic decoration. (O’Connor, 1969, p. 25) Commissions were generally awarded to a master artist who submitted designs to the Section competitions. Dows hired artists from the work relief rolls as assistants. This practice “assured a high level of professional artistic competence while at the same time providing, on a small scale, much needed employment” (O’Connor, 1969, p. 26). Under direction of the TRAP, 89 murals and 43 sculptures were completed, along with the completion of approximately 10,000 easel paintings created by 446 artists. (O’Connor, 1969, p. 26) The impact of this program was much less than “Federal Arts Project of the Works Progress Administration—which began a month after the start of the TRAP” (O’Connor, 1969, p. 26). The WPA/FAP more successfully met the needs of unemployed artists.

The Work Progress Administration Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP)

“The activities of the WPA/FAP reached almost every community in the nation—as did the noise from Congress over its appropriations” (O’Connor, 1969, p. 26). Because this program accomplished the most against the greatest odds, it is the best remembered of all the New Deal art programs. (O’Connor, 1969, p. 26) This was truly a work-relief program that strove to provide employment to artists on the relief rolls regardless of the professional level of skill they possessed. The Division of Professional and Service Projects, established in July, 1935, set up Federal Project Number 1 which encompassed

not only art but music, drama, and literature. These four programs were conceived in August, 1935, and fully running by October. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 26) Unlike previously mentioned work-relief programs, which were generally run at the state level, Federal Art Project Number I was run on a national level. In July, 1939, the title of the WPA was changed from Works Progress Administration to Work Projects Administration and placed under the auspices of the Federal Works Agency.

Holger Cahill directed the WPA agency throughout its entire existence. Cahill was a recognized authority on American folk art as well as a recognized writer and critic (O'Connor, 1969, p. 27). "He had been in charge of public relations at the Newark Museum and director of exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art—positions which brought him in contact with many of the country's leading artists" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 27). Ninety percent of the artists working for the Federal Art Project were hired from the relief rolls. If necessary, the other ten percent could be hired from non-relief sources. It was Cahill's belief that among these artists we would find the "talent and the skill necessary to carry on an art program which will make contributions of permanent value to the community" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 27-28). The goal of the Federal Art Project directed by Cahill's was the employment of artists in a variety of enterprises. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 28). Through the employment of creative artists, Cahill hoped to secure for the public "outstanding examples of contemporary American art; through art teaching and recreational art activities to create a broader national art consciousness and work out constructive ways of using leisure time; through services in applied art to aid various campaigns of social value; and through research projects to clarify the native background

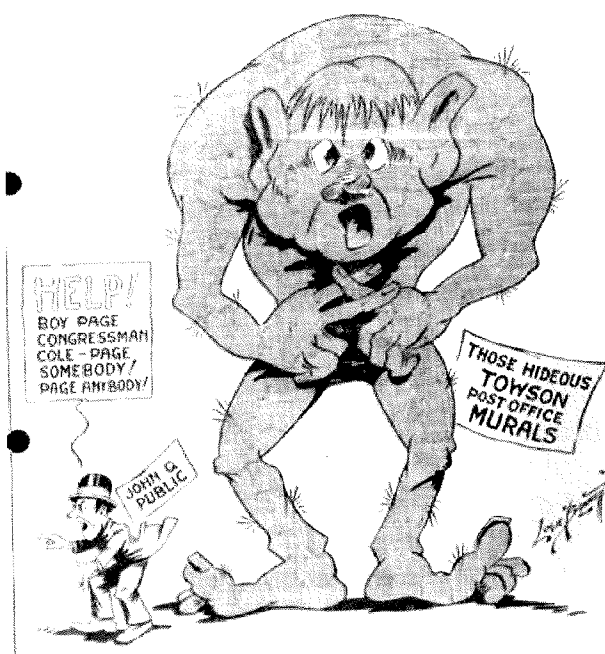
of the arts" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 29). The project aimed toward the integration of the fine and practical arts within the daily life of the community. (O'Connor, 1969, p. 28)

Work began in southern post offices under the Works Progress Administration with artists choosing subject matter considered appropriate to the proposed location of the mural or sculpture. Local committees and post office patrons felt some ownership due to the fact they were consulted, by the government agency in charge, concerning the choice of artist and the topics represented on the murals. An attitude permeating many areas of the South, in the aftermath of reconstruction after the Civil War, often caused southerners to "have little faith that non-southerners would represent them as they saw themselves" (Beckham, 1989, p. 8). Southerners continued to believe those from outside the region viewed the contemporary South negatively and harbored the attitude that Southern life had no place in modern day America. (Beckman, 1989, p. 8)

Ultimately, the agency responsible for the majority of the murals in southern locations was the Treasury Section of Fine Arts. Under the leadership of Edward Bruce, the Section was organized in October, 1934. "According to that order, the agency was to secure fine artwork to embellish public buildings and thus encourage the development of art in the United States; it was to seek the cooperation of the art world in selecting artists and whenever possible, to employ local talent; it was to choose artists through objective competitions wherever practicable, though certain established artist could be commissioned on the basis of their reputations" (Beckham, 1989, p. 9). The Section was not intended as a welfare program for needy artists, but was to be based on merit which was expected to enhance public buildings with finest contemporary art available in America. (Beckham, 1989, p. 10) The Section wished to awaken the American people to

the “possibility of a national mural art” (Beckham, 1989, p. 3).

As a whole, the Southern populace shared a sense of pride in traits clearly defined as characteristic of the Southern region, while individually cherishing traits, which separated their specific corner of the South from the overall region. This mindset caused the Section to try and please the populace within each region of the country. Because of this practice, postal customers and citizens in general felt free to express their reaction to murals located in their local post offices and people were “adamant in their demand to see scenes consistent with local fact” (Marling, 1982, p. 161). Local patrons felt the “Milestones of American Transportation” as the subject of the Towson Post Office murals was better suited to a railway station or a bus terminal. Editorial comments in the *Jeffersonian* suggested parts of the mural were copied from “one of Buffalo Bill’s old side show banners”(Marling, 1982. p.152-153).



Cartoon from the *Jeffersonian*, Towson, Maryland (1939) as cited by Park and Markowitz in 1984 on page 24.

Section records indicate Southern postal patrons wrote to specify their exact objections as well as their delight concerning the murals. Sue Beckham stated “the

people who used the post office everyday and found no reason to comment on the mural had been depicted as they saw themselves" (Beckham, 1989, p. XVI), they were satisfied with the resulting art expression.

Southern artists of this era were beginning to identify with a form of Regionalism just as Benton, Curry, and Wood in the Midwest. Southern regional art has only recently become recognized and studied by art experts and historians. Regionalists sought an audience among everyday people rather than among the elite of American society. "The Section attempted to set up a truly regional art, the first art recognized as such in the South" (Beckham, 1989, p. XVI). Few schools existed at this time in the Southern region where artists could receive formal training. To further their training, artists of the region traveled to the larger cities of the Northeast and to Europe. Due to a smaller pool of skilled artists from which to choose, the Section often-assumed "Southern art to be underdeveloped at best" (Beckham, 1989, p. XVI) and "frequently gave up too soon on finding Southern artists to paint the Southern scene and appointed artists from the Eastern establishment" (Beckham, 1989, p. XVI). Artists hired from outside the Southern region often did not share a Southerners viewpoint of their history and culture. "They painted instead the South of myth and fantasy" (Beckham, 1989, p. XVI) as portrayed in print, on film, or in oral history spread by those not native to the Southern region.

The mural program lasted from 1934 to 1943. During this period, the federal government established a program designed "to decorate new federal buildings with a mural art of the American people" (Beckham, 1989, p. 3). Murals and sculpture in post offices and other federal buildings in rural areas and small towns did not become wide spread until late in 1937. Between 1937 and 1943, Southeastern post offices and

courthouses were the recipients of around three hundred works of art which amounted to nearly one-fourth of the entire nine-year output of this New Deal program. (Beckham, 1989, p. 3) In spite of the fact, the Section tried to enhance federal buildings in the South with murals or sculpture that would both please and enlighten citizens the selection process encountered success as well as times of great frustration. (Beckham, 1989. P. 4) Local committees and government officials found themselves at odds over proposed selections when artists, from outside the region, were appointed who then depicted Southern history and culture with stereotypes of the period.

In general, artists selected to paint the murals in all regions were selected through competition. If the building to be decorated was of national prominence, such as the Justice and Post Office buildings of Washington, D. C., the competition was open nationally to artists from any region. More often, competitions were limited to artists of a specific region who possessed knowledge of the area. "To qualify to enter a regional competition, an artist had to live in that region or to have grown up in it" (Beckham, 1989, p. 10). Very few entries were submitted in the southern region. To overcome this problem, qualifications were modified to consider an artist native to the region who had lived in the area five years or in the case of smaller towns the regulation was restricted to two years (Beckham, 1989, p. 10). Because very few art schools and museums were in operation in the Southern region it was difficult as well to find qualified persons, with a broad enough knowledge of art, to serve on selection committees.

Competitions were held in most instances when the commission was for \$1,500 or more. (Beckham, 1989, p. 10) Commissions for smaller towns were usually less than \$700. (Beckham, 1989, p, 10) The Section often chose artists who demonstrated

competence in their entries who had not been selected in previously held competitions. If solicited entries in a competition were not of good quality or there were few entries, the Section selected an artist based on "competent work for the Section" (Beckham, 1989, p. 11). After the appointment of an artist, the Section advised the artist, when practical, to travel to the location and view firsthand the area to be embellished. In a letter to the editor of the *Westerly Sun of Westerly*, Rhode Island, Edward Rowan expressed his opinion that "the members of the Section feel as keenly as your readers that the murals which we are placing in post offices throughout the country carry the most meaning for the people when they deal with subject matter with which the people are familiar and when they reflect the local interests, aspirations, and activities, past and present, of the public for whom the work is intended" (Marling, 1982, p. 164).

RESEARCH ORIENTATION AND DESIGN OF STUDY

The purpose of this investigation was (1) to examine WPA art production in North Carolina and (2) to identify the artwork along with the current location and condition.

Therefore, the research question is as follows: To what extent did the WPA programs promote art production in North Carolina?

Specific objectives of this research are:

1. to identify the art produced and the place of installation
2. to identify the artists and collection of pertinent information concerning each artist and the production of their works of art
3. to determine the value of New Deal programs and the extent to which the WPA artists contributed to the visual arts in North Carolina

I chose to examine an era I did not experience but heard about at the knee of my parents and grandparents. The elders of my family still reminisce about the Great Depression. In researching the 1930s through the early 1940s, I explored the financial and emotional condition of the people who lived through the years of the Depression. I concentrated primarily on the contributions of WPA artists to visual art in North Carolina while also considering the influence of government patronage throughout the country.

Collection of Data

In researching the WPA, I ventured in several directions, including trips to eighteen post offices in North Carolina. I visited small post offices in Red Springs and Beaufort, a Federal courthouse in New Bern, and a law office in Roanoke Rapids. I explored a chiropractic office in Wake Forest, the Daily Record Office in Dunn, and the Treasure House in Wallace. Many former post offices have been sold or leased to private companies or private individuals who promised to ensure the safety of art work left in place. In some instances, the artwork has been returned to government agencies or transferred to new post offices or other locations.

I researched records located within the North Carolina State Archives and continued to explore links on the World Wide Web. My visits to the State Archives uncovered information concerning the establishment of the North Carolina Museum of Art, the early records of the WPA Art Center located in Raleigh, and actual photographs of patrons at work within the Raleigh Art Center. I reviewed materials from the Sampson-Livermore Library at UNC-Pembroke, the Sloane Art Library at UNC-Chapel Hill, the Davis Library at UNC-Chapel Hill, the Cumberland County Main Library, and links to

the National Archives. The Joyner Library at East Carolina University yielded information on the beginnings of the School of Art at ECU and a historical perspective of their school of education. East Carolina Teachers' Training School provided the earliest art training offered education majors in North Carolina. This training was designed to prepare education majors to share the world of art with their students. I visited the present day Greenville Art Center, where I perused records concerning their involvement as a WPA art center. I also previewed a collection of prints housed there on permanent loan from the WPA. These works of art are now under the umbrella of the General Services Administration (GSA) in Washington, D. C. Many collections of WPA Art have been inventoried and placed on permanent loan to museums around the country.

Research Methodology

Analysis of the data required the researcher to systematically search, arrange, and study the interviews kept in a journal, along with examining field notes and photographs taken to document the collected data. The researcher then analyzed the commissioned artwork of the WPA program in North Carolina with the intent of establishing a connection between the WPA murals and sculpture installed in local post offices and their relationship to their local environment. After viewing the visuals, and collecting the descriptive data from a variety of resources, the investigator was able to organize and examine each area of investigation relative to the physical location of the commissioned artwork. After separating the data into categories, the categories were organized into two areas of investigation: the physical environment of the artwork and the artist(s). The physical environments were examined for: 1) information pertaining to the identification of the murals and sculpture and their actual location, 2) identification of the artists and

collection of pertinent information concerning each artists and the production of the visual art, 3) examining the physical and cultural environments in the actual location and areas surrounding the murals and sculpture, and 4) examining records and physical locations of former art centers and museums established during the era to determine how they were influenced by WPA agencies.

RESULTS

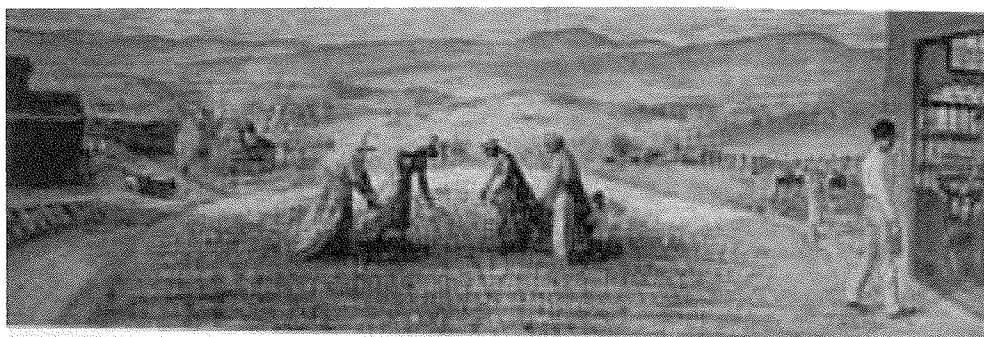
Who were the Artists? What was their Inspiration?

Gastonia, North Carolina Francis Speight

Francis Speight was a native of Bertie County born in 1896. His early introduction to drawing, under the tutelage of his sister Tulie, developed into a lifetime devoted to painting. While attending Wake Forest College, he commuted to Meredith College in Raleigh, where he furthered his knowledge of art under the direction of Miss Ida Poteat. He moved on to Washington, D. C. where he studied at the Corcoran Art Gallery, and ultimately journeyed to Pennsylvania where he received instruction at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Speight spent thirty-three years as a teacher on the Academy staff. In 1961, Speight returned to eastern North Carolina to become artist in residence at East Carolina University. He was the first native North Carolinian honored with a retrospective exhibit of his work at the North Carolina Museum of Art. Francis Speight was also the first artist, native to the state, to be publicly honored by North Carolina for his contribution to the fine arts. A class taught by Speight at UNC in 1934 was the forerunner of the art department established at the University. His painting style leaned toward Realism with an Impressionist's touch (Foushee, 1972, p.183). During his long

career, Speight received an impressive array of other awards, and examples of his work are included in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum, the Woodmere Art Gallery in Philadelphia, and many other East Coast museums.

Speight entered a competition in 1938 sponsored by the Section and was assigned a mural for the post office in Gastonia entitled "Cotton Field and Spinning Mill" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 222). The postmaster raised an objection to Speight's original design because it included white women laboring in the fields picking cotton (Beckham, 1989, p. 164). The design was modified before installation.



Francis Speight *Cotton Field and Spinning Mill*

Wayne R. Dunn, the current postmaster in Gastonia, states this oil on canvas mural represents a plantation scene "of four ladies wearing aprons picking cotton in a cotton field. One lady at the bottom length of her skirt, has a child standing next to her. There are mountains in the background. This was during the horse and buggy days as shown on the mural. To the right shows a gentleman walking into a cotton mill, as another gentleman is standing, spinning cotton on a spinning frame machine. The painting, depicts a Southern Plantation Scene". The 11' 4" by 4' mural was restored by "Mr. Speight's daughter to keep it looking fresh and to keep the valuable piece from deteriorating" (Dunn, Postmaster, 2002).

Wilmington, North Carolina William F. Pfohl

In 1933, the Raleigh News and Observer mentioned the work of William F. Pfohl when reporting on the Third Annual Exhibition of the North Carolina Association of Professional Artists. Pfohl exhibited a series of etchings of his hometown, Winston-Salem. Many of these etchings were used in book illustrations for Ernest Eller's *Houses of Peace*, a story of the Old Salem Community (Foushee, 1972, p.196). Pfohl was commissioned in 1940 to paint an oil on canvas mural for the Wilmington post office entitled "Port of Wilmington" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 222). Pfohl "painted the mural in Winston-Salem on canvases which he carried to Wilmington in large rolls and then mounted them like wallpaper" (Foushee, 1972, 47).



William Pfohl *Port of Wilmington*

Beaufort, North Carolina Simka Simkhovitch

Simka Simkhovitch was born in Russia in 1893 and immigrated to America in 1924. He painted a series of four oil on canvas murals for the Beaufort, North Carolina, post office. Information garnered on a visit to this site specified "the subjects of the four murals are as true to Beaufort today as they were when they were painted in 1940" (Pinneo, 1983, p. 32). These murals were painted in the Greenwich, Connecticut studio of Simkhovitch, then framed and mounted on the post office walls in Beaufort. The four murals, completed in 1940, were entitled Crissie Wright, "Mail to Cape Lookout,"

"Goose Decoys," and "Sand Ponies." The largest of the four paintings relays the legend of a schooner, the Crissie Wright, which floundered on Shackleford Banks in 1886. All hands perished despite the efforts of local citizens, and several of the crew are buried in a historic burying ground on Ann Street in Beaufort. The lighting of the picture reflects the bonfires built on the beach during the rescue effort. (Pinneo, 1984, p. 15)

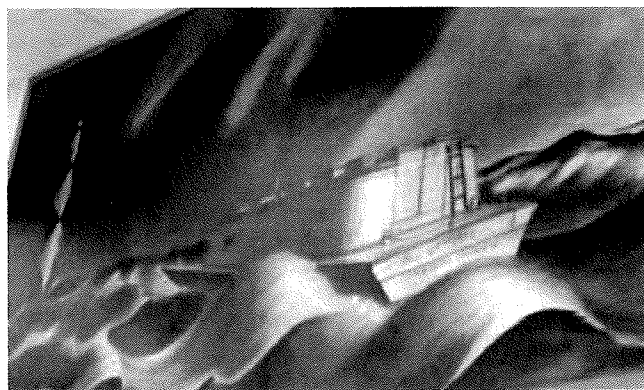


Simka Simkahovitch *Crissie Wright*

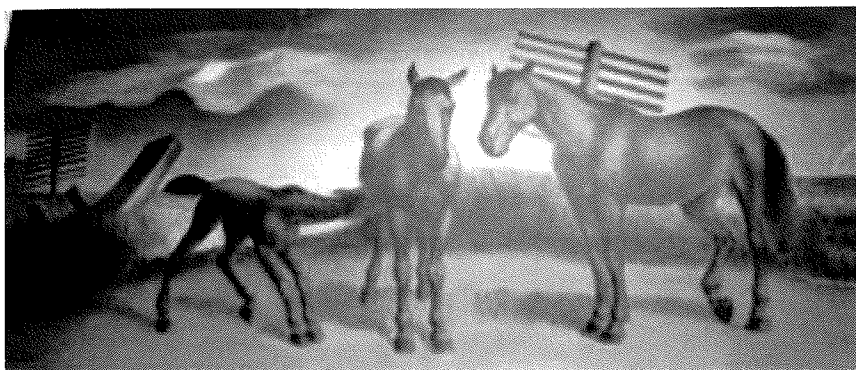
Local lore says the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, in the second mural, was constructed as a result of the wreck of the Crissie Wright. In this mural the supply and mail boat, the Orville W., is approaching the lighthouse through stormy skies and turbulent waters. The mural represents the hardships the lighthouse keeper and the boat crew had to overcome while performing their duties. (Pinneo, 1984, p. 15) The painting of Canadian geese suggests the presence of wildlife in the town is a natural occurrence.



Simka Simkhovitch *Canadian Geese*



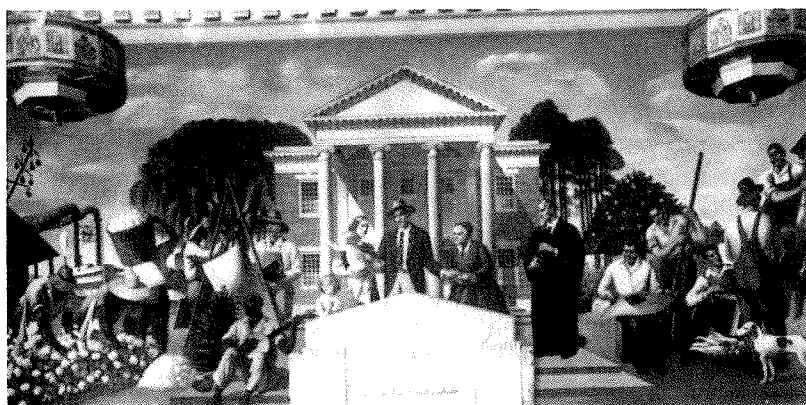
Simka Simkahovitch *Orville W.*



Simka Simkhovitch
Banks Ponies

Some controversy arose over the tails of the ponies pictured in the last of the canvases, as local patrons felt the tails were too slick for wild banks ponies (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 19). Artists had to cover all expenses connected with their commissioned project. Simkhovitch received \$1900.00 for his work on the Beaufort murals (Pinneo, 1994, p. 15).

In the Jackson, Mississippi, combination post office and courthouse, Simkhovitch painted a mural in 1938 entitled "Pursuits of Life in Mississippi." With Simkhovitch being commissioned to paint the Jackson mural, the selection committee in Jackson and regional artists wanting to work in the area had reason to believe the Section was not sincere in their efforts to recruit regional talent (Beckham, 1989, p. 77).



Simka Simkhovitch *Pursuits of Life in Mississippi*

Whiteville, North Carolina Roy Schatt

Roy Schatt's greatest claim to fame was as a photographer of famous personalities of the 1950s, with the most well known being the actors James Dean, and Paul Newman, and actresses Marilyn Monroe, and Grace Kelly. Educated in New York, he began his career as an illustrator for government agencies in the 1930s. Schatt also studied acting and directed shows for the US Army's special forces in India. Schatt returned to photography after the war and director Lee Strasburg allowed him to photograph at the Actors Studio. Schatt currently has work on display at the US National Portrait Gallery in Washington and at the Chicago Art Institute.

The Whiteville, North Carolina, mural by Roy Schatt is listed as missing. The original sketch caused controversy in its time. Patrons felt "the representation of tobacco leaves is faulty, both as to shape and appearance" (Park, Markowitz, 1984. p. 18) and the locals were critical of this error. Tobacco and its harvesting were often a source of contention.

Reidsville, North Carolina Gordon Samstag

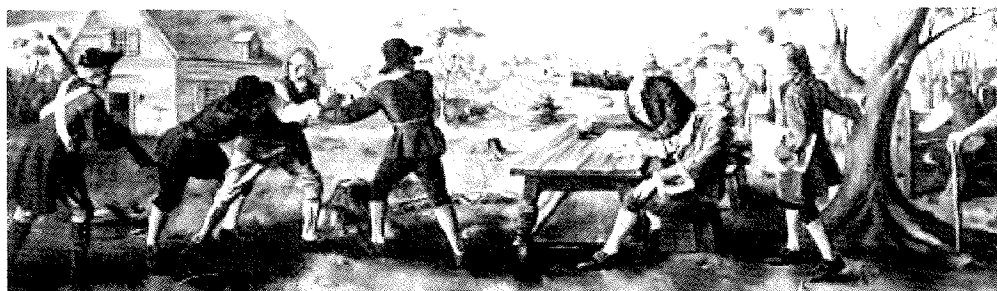
The citizens of Reidsville also wrote to criticize the incorrect representation of the harvesting process painted by Gordon Samstag. Samstag was a New York painter who taught at the National Academy Schools from 1930-1936. Samstag's oil on canvas mural entitled "Tobacco" was completed in 1938 and installed in the Reidsville post office to the sounds of controversy. Samstag depicted tobacco being harvested correctly, one leaf at the time, but he showed the leaves being removed first from the top while everyone in North Carolina knew the priming of leaves begins "at the bottom of the stalk where the earliest ripening occurs, and proceeds up the stalk in successive priming until the harvesting is completed" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 19).

Gordon Samstag
Tobacco



"Local citizens could often not see beyond inaccurate details, and the Section understood that people cared most about what they knew best" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 19). The former Reidsville post office has been converted into the current day City Hall with local government proudly displaying the mural in it's original location.

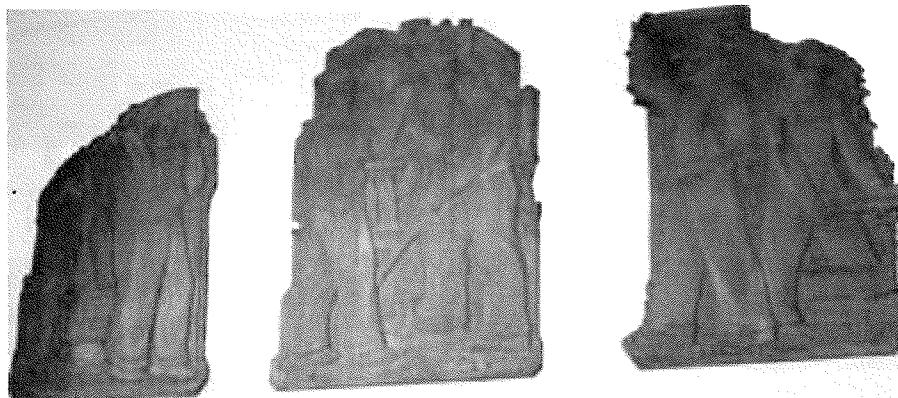
Gordon Samstag was an American born in New York City on June 21, 1906. He lived in Australia in the 1950's and 1960's where he established a major visual arts program at the University of South Australia in Adelaide. Additionally, Samstag painted two oil on canvas murals (14' 6" x 4') in 1940 for the Scarsdale, New York Post Office entitled "Caleb Heathcote Buys the Richbell Farm" and "Order in Old Scarsdale Manor."



Gordon Samstag *Caleb Heathcote Buys the Richbell Farm*
Order in Old Scarsdale Manor

Hamlet, North Carolina Nena De Brennecke

In 1942, Nena De Brennecke carved three mahogany reliefs that were installed in the Hamlet, North Carolina, post office. The three reliefs entitled "Peaches," "Drilling," and "Dewberries" remain in place as originally installed. De Brennecke was born in Argentina on May 7, 1888.

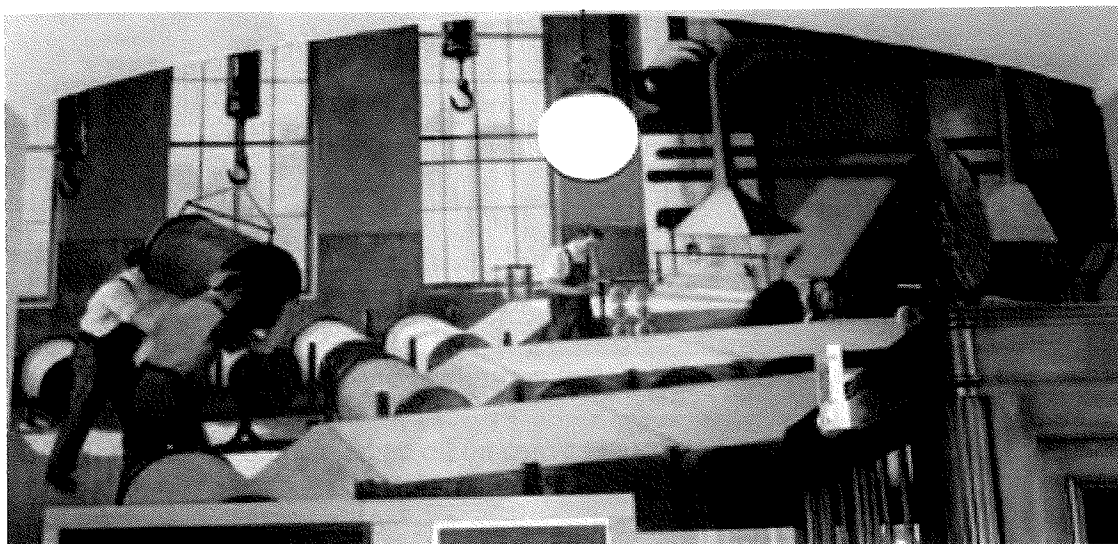


Nena De Brennecke *Peaches, Drilling, Dewberries*

Installed in Windsor, Connecticut, in 1943 were three woodcarvings by De Brennecke named "Stringing," "Transplanting," and "Harvesting." In 1940 for Paulsboro, New Jersey, de Brennecke carved three wood reliefs named "Oil Refining" and in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania, she completed three wood reliefs called "Raccoon, Deer and Fox."

Burlington, North Carolina Arthur Leroy Bairnsfather

Arthur Leroy Bairnsfather installed two impressive oil and canvas murals in the Burlington Post Office in 1940. The murals are entitled "Cotton Textiles" and "Historical Railroad Station". "Cotton Textiles" depicts the interior of a textile plant.

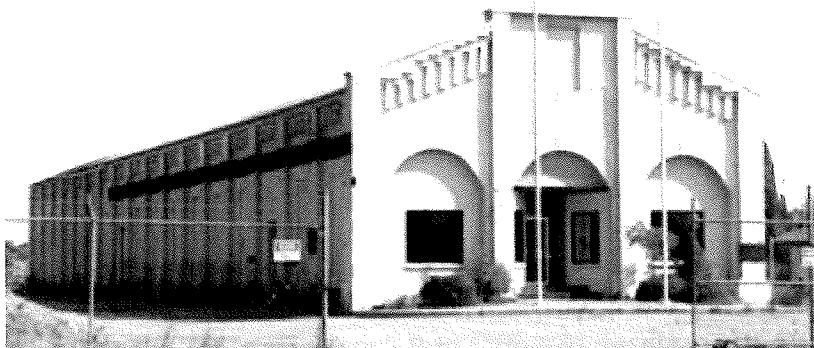


Arthur Bairnsfather *Cotton Textiles*



Arthur Bairnsfather *Historic Railroad Station*

The background in "Historical Railroad Station" includes a now abandoned train station currently undergoing renovation. The murals remain in place in the former post office building currently owned by Lab Corps.



Abandoned Railway Station in Burlington featured in Historic Railroad Station Mural

Bairnsfather also installed an oil on canvas mural in 1939 in the Monroeville, Alabama post office named "Harvesting". A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Bairnsfather submitted three initial sketches to the Section after he was commissioned to paint a mural for the Monroeville post office. A grain harvesting scene was chosen by the Section and installed in January, 1939. The local community and postmaster were both so delighted with the results, they requested an additional mural for the opposite wall of the lobby.

Ahoskie, North Carolina Julien Binford

Julien Binford completed a mural entitled "The Peanut Harvest" for Ahoskie, North Carolina, which is currently listed as missing. In 1941, "Forest Loggers" was executed for Forest, Mississippi. Binfords' mural "features two mules and four black lumber workers struggling to move the heavy trunks of two tall trees in the midst of a dense forest" (Beckham, 1989, p. 185).



Julien Binford *Forest Loggers*

A native of Powhattan County, Virginia, Binford studied in New York and was one of the few Southern artists who returned home to work (Beckham, 1989, p. 16). He was also among a number of artists in the South who painted murals to decorate the baptisteries of Southern churches (Beckham, 1989, p. 83). Binford was assigned the mural for the Saunders Branch Post Office in the city of Richmond, Virginia. Public opinion was against his proposed sketch from the beginning as he represented the burning of Richmond that occurred near the end of the Civil War (Beckham, 1989, p. 250-252). The citizens of Richmond were not happy being shown in such a state of undignified chaos.



Julien Binsford Saunders Branch Post Office *The Burning of Richmond*

Chapel Hill and Morganton, North Carolina Dean Cornwell

Dean Cornwell attempted to design murals so "it would appear that the doorway belonged there instead of looking like a hole that had been cut in the picture after it was made" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 118). Working around doorways, vestibules that intruded into lobbies, grills, light fixtures, and large clocks, when designing murals to fit the space, was often a problem for artists embellishing federal post offices. "The Laying the Cornerstone of Old East" is an oil on canvas mural by Cornwell completed for Chapel Hill, North Carolina, in 1941. The townspeople admired Cornwell's work despite the fact

it resembled illustration with frozen expressions and elegant, fashion-plate attire.

(Marling, 1982, p. 308)



Dean Cornwell *The Laying of the Cornerstone of Old East*

Dean Cornwell was a well-known magazine illustrator with an established reputation who attracted the attention of the Section in the National Competition of 1935. (Marling, 1982, p. 308) He was awarded the commission for Morganton, North Carolina, in 1938, and painted two murals showing “Sir Walter Raleigh” and the “First Landing on North Carolina Shore.” Although the Section disapproved of nudity in murals, Cornwell’s mural portrayed one full-length Native American figure in the foreground, facing the Spaniards with his back to the post office lobby wearing his leather leggings and displaying his muscular backside. (Beckham, 1989, p. 225) “Southern mural Indians are either clad in full Plains Indians’ cool weather costumes, or they expose more than their ancestors ever exposed” (Beckham, 1989, p. 225).

Born in 1892, Cornwell was equally confident as a muralist and an illustrator. In the 1920s, his work was published in magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, where he provided illustrations for serialized novels. By the 1930s, he was working for all the popular publications of the period and Dean Cornwell was a household name. He also created several war posters and full-page color advertisements for Seagrams Whiskey, General

Motors, and Coca Cola. Cornwell also executed murals for the Los Angeles Library.

(www.bpib.com/cornwell.htm)

Belmont, North Carolina Peter DeAnna

In Ellicott City, Maryland, Peter DeAnna, completed two oil on canvas murals entitled "Building of Ellicott Mills" and "Landscape of Ellicott City." These murals were installed in the post office in 1942. "Major Chronicle's South Fork Boys" was an oil on canvas mural painted for Belmont, North Carolina. This mural features a Revolutionary War encampment. "Major Chronicle was from a prominent Belmont family, and he, along with his locally-recruited troops, played an important role in the crucial Battle of Kings Mountain, where the twenty-five year old major was fatally wounded"

(www.ci.belmont.nc.us.phcityhl.htm). DeAnna (1920-1980), a Washington, D. C. artist, was just twenty years old when he completed the Belmont mural in 1940. After 1970 the building was purchased by the city of Belmont for their City Hall. The mural remains in place.

Red Springs, North Carolina John W. de Groot

John W. de Groot completed an oil on canvas mural for Christianburg, Virginia, entitled "Great Road" in 1939. De Groot included breechcloths on the Indian Warriors in his original sketch but they disappeared in the final mural (Beckham, 1989, p. 225).



John de Groot
Great Road

Motors, and Coca Cola. Cornwell also executed murals for the Los Angeles Library.
(www.bpib.com/cornwell.htm)

Belmont, North Carolina Peter DeAnna

In Ellicott City, Maryland, Peter DeAnna, completed two oil on canvas murals entitled "Building of Ellicott Mills" and "Landscape of Ellicott City." These murals were installed in the post office in 1942. "Major Chronicle's South Fork Boys" was an oil on canvas mural painted for Belmont, North Carolina. This mural features a Revolutionary War encampment. "Major Chronicle was from a prominent Belmont family, and he, along with his locally-recruited troops, played an important role in the crucial Battle of Kings Mountain, where the twenty-five year old major was fatally wounded" (www.ci.belmont.nc.us.phcityhl.htm). DeAnna (1920-1980), a Washington, D. C. artist, was just twenty years old when he completed the Belmont mural in 1940. After 1970 the building was purchased by the city of Belmont for their City Hall. The mural remains in place.

Red Springs, North Carolina John W. de Groot

John W. de Groot completed an oil on canvas mural for Christianburg, Virginia, entitled "Great Road" in 1939. De Groot included breechcloths on the Indian Warriors in his original sketch but they disappeared in the final mural (Beckham, 1989, p. 225).



John de Groot
Great Road

A three section oil on canvas mural was installed in the Red Springs, North Carolina, post office in 1941. The three sections were entitled "The Coming of the Scots," "War—The Battle of Little Raft Swamp," and "Peace--Work and Knowledge." The center mural depicts a battle between Tories and Whigs, the last Revolutionary War battle fought in North Carolina (Caruthers, 1856, p. 3-4).



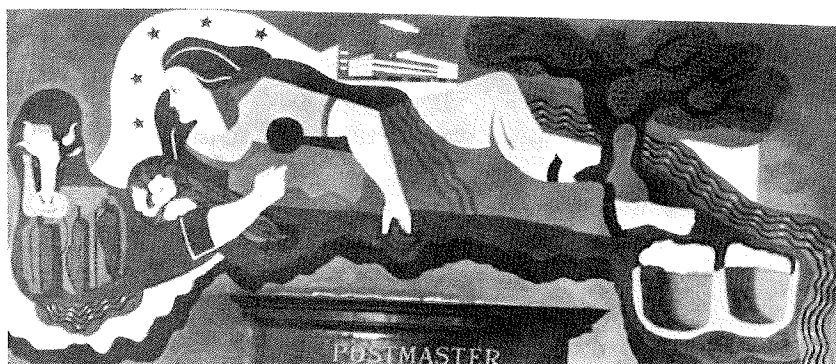
John de Groot *The Coming of the Scots, War--The Battle of Raft Swamp, Peace--Work and Knowledge*

Warrenton, North Carolina Alice Dineen

In the town of Corbin, Kentucky, Alice Dineen installed an oil on canvas mural in 1940 entitled "The Dark and Bloody Ground." In Warrenton, North Carolina, she completed an oil on canvas in 1938 entitled "North Carolina Pastoral."

Wake Forest, North Carolina Harold G. Egan

New York artist Harold G. Egan completed for the Okolona, Mississippi, post office a mural that is now listed as missing. The mural, entitled "The Richness of the Soil," completed in 1939, became the center of a prolonged controversy which developed over the intended subject matter.



Harold Egan Okolona, Mississippi *The Richness of the Soil*



Harold Egan *Richness of the Soil No. 2*

In North Carolina, Egan painted a mural for the Wake Forest Post Office entitled “Richness of the Soil No. 2.” This mural, completed in 1941, is currently located in a chiropractic office in renovated post office space. During remodeling, the chiropractor installed a wall in front of the mural so it is currently unavailable for public viewing.

Additional works of art were installed in Mebane, Roxboro, and Leaksville, North Carolina. Margaret C. Gates installed an oil on canvas mural in Mebane, North Carolina, entitled “Landscape--Tobacco Curing”, in 1941. The original was destroyed, but it was replaced by a duplicate completed in 1964 by Henry D. Rood, (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 222). Six oil on canvas panels were completed for Greenville, Kentucky, in 1940 by Allan Gould entitled “Source of Power.” Located in Roxboro, North Carolina, on the current day Piedmont Technical Institute campus, is a Gould mural entitled “Gathering Tobacco” completed in 1938. Gould was born in New York City on June 17, 1908.

Jennie Ruth Greacen Nickerson, born in Appleton, Wisconsin, on November 23, 1905,

completed a sculpture, in 1941, for the town of Leaksville, North Carolina.

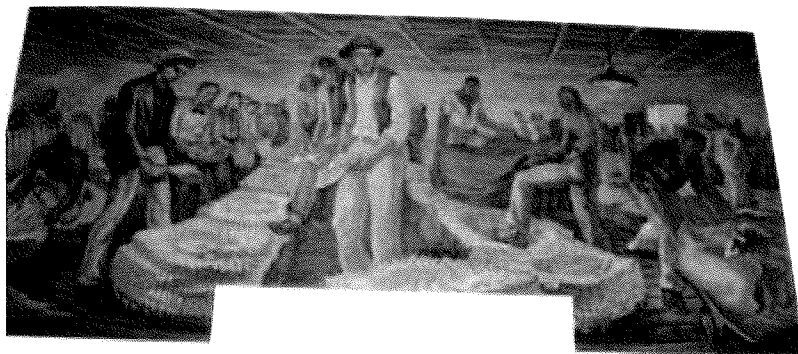
Lincolnton, North Carolina Richard Jansen

In Sauk Centre, Minnesota, Richard Jansen completed an oil on canvas in 1942 entitled "Threshing Wheat." "Threshing Grain" was the subject of a canvas completed for Lincolnton, North Carolina, in 1938. Reedsburg, Wisconsin, received an oil on canvas by Jansen in 1940 titled "Dairy Farming." Born in Milwaukee, Jansen received his training in Milwaukee and from the Art Students League in New York. As a teacher at the Layton School of Art he participated in many watercolor exhibits.

Louisburg, North Carolina Richard Kenah

Richard Hay Kenah, a painter and illustrator, was born on February 3, 1907 in New Brighton, Pennsylvania. His formal training began at Antioch College and continued at the Art Institute of Chicago. After gaining a reputation as a muralist, Kenah became an illustrator for the War Department during the 1940s. For the Bluefield, Virginia, post office Richard Kenah painted a tempera painting in 1942 entitled "Coal Mining." In the small town of Louisburg, North Carolina, he installed an oil on canvas painting in 1939 entitled "Tobacco Auction." This mural depicts tobacco sales as they were conducted during the 1930's in North Carolina. Kenah was awarded this commission based on the quality of designs he entered in the Pittsburgh post office competition. The Louisburg mural took eleven months to complete and was installed in June, 1939, to widespread public acclaim. (Mecklenburg, 1979, p. 77) In describing the theme for the mural Kenah stated: "to farmers everywhere, the labor of planting, of hopeful attention to growing forms, and the sweaty satisfaction of harvest, all point up to one climax—the sale. The auctions, with buyers led in bidding by a caller's rhythmic gibberish, are exciting realities

to tobacco people" (Mecklenburg, 1979, p. 77). Kenah installed an oil on canvas mural entitled "Ohio Harvest in Bridgeport, Ohio, in 1940.



Richard Kenah *Tobacco Auction*

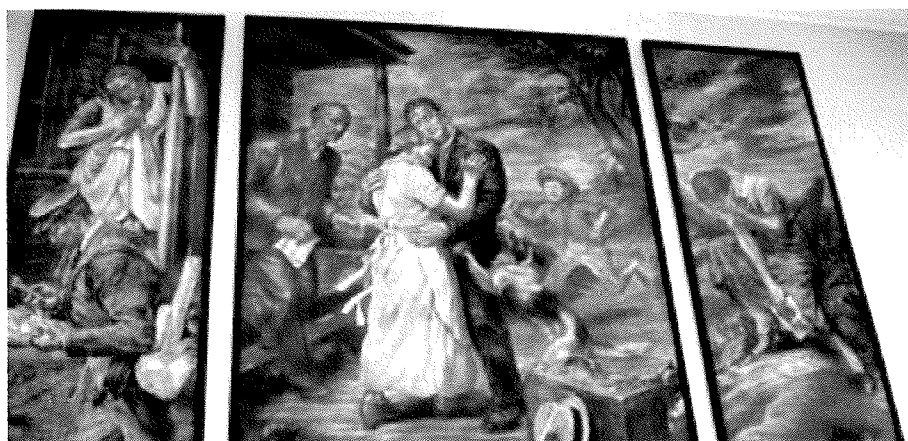
Rockingham, North Carolina Edward Laning

Edward Laning was born in Petersburg, Illinois, in 1906. Laning completed a mural for a combination post office and court house in Bowling Green, Kentucky, in 1942, entitled "The Long Hunters Discover Daniel Boone." Local patrons found many faults with Laning's design, including the fact his clothing was inappropriate for the season depicted in the mural.



Edward Laning *The Long Hunters Discover Daniel Boone*

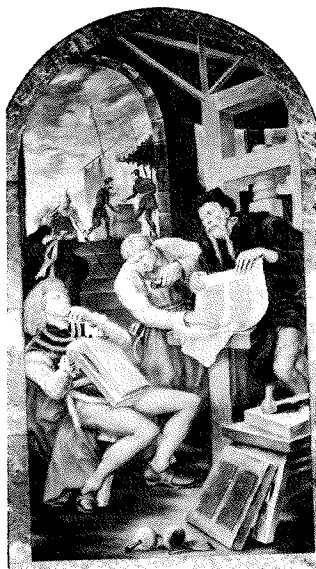
In Rockingham, North Carolina, Laning installed a triptych in 1937 entitled "The Past as Connecting Thread in Human Life". The section on the left side of the triptych shows a tired woman waiting patiently as the mailman goes through his bag searching for a long-awaited letter. The right hand panel depicts sorrow and grief by showing a seated woman, head in hand, crying over the news that has just arrived in the letter clutched in her hand. The center panel shows a mother hugging her son who has just arrived home. His father is shown holding a letter they have just received telling of his imminent homecoming. News traveled slowly during this era, and few telephones were available in the area. Often the mail was the only means of long distance communication.



Edward Laning *The Past as Connecting Thread in Human Life*

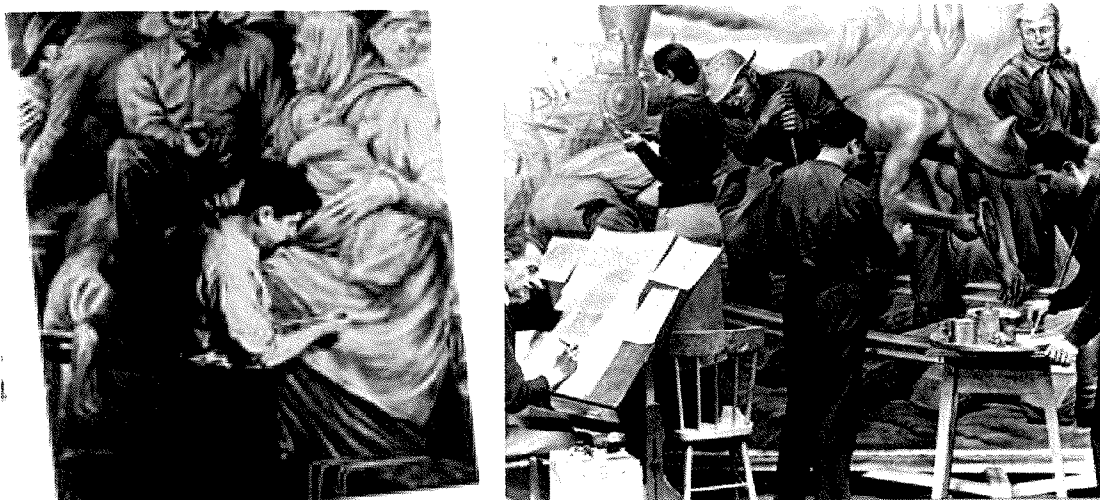
"The best known series of library murals are those in the New York Public Library painted by Edward Laning. Entitled 'Story of the Recorded Word,' four panels present the four great stages of writing from markings on clay or stone to the linotype machine" (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 56). In 1934 Laning "proposed murals for the New York public library while on PWAP". These murals were finally commissioned in 1938 and executed under the direction of the WPA/FAP in 1942. The subject of the mural for a vaulted ceiling located in the library was Prometheus. In addition to the vault, Laning

completed four arched panel murals and two over door murals (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 161). Thirty-two year old Edward Laning was probably the FAP muralist “to bring the most favorable publicity to relief administration art” (McKinzie, 1973, p. 112). His mural sketches, submitted for the dining room of Ellis Island, were approved by Rudolph Reimer.



Edward Laning Library Murals: *The Story of the Recorded Word*

As the commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization, Rudolph Reimer had a reputation for being very demanding concerning the subjects and accuracy of details featured in the murals located in the buildings belonging to the Commission. When Laning's Ellis Island mural received critical acclaim, Isaac Stokes, as a member of the board of the New York Public Library, recommended Laning to execute the panels for the main floor of the library. During the 1930s, this was the most prized commission in New York City (McKinzie, 1973, p. 113).



Edward Laning *Ellis Island*

The mural designed for the Immigration and Naturalization Ceremonial Courtroom 3, depicted "The Role of the Immigrant in the Industrial Development of America." This oil on canvas mural was begun in 1936 and completed in 1937. Laning and his assistants depicted a multiethnic work force with two European laborers working beside a Chinese worker. During this point in American history laborers were generally separated by race and ethnic background. (Kanderson, 2001, p.5)



Edward Laning *The Role of the Immigrant in the Industrial Development of America*

Laning's Ellis Island mural has been restored and is now housed in the Federal Courthouse in Brooklyn (Park, Markowitz 1977, p. 108). Laning also completed a 6' x 3' 6" oil on canvas for the Baptismal font in the Church of St. Illuminator in Manhattan in 1933, representing the "Baptism of Christ." For the Hudson Guild in Manhattan he

painted a fresco entitled "Neighborhood Activities."

Sanford, North Carolina Pietro Lazzari



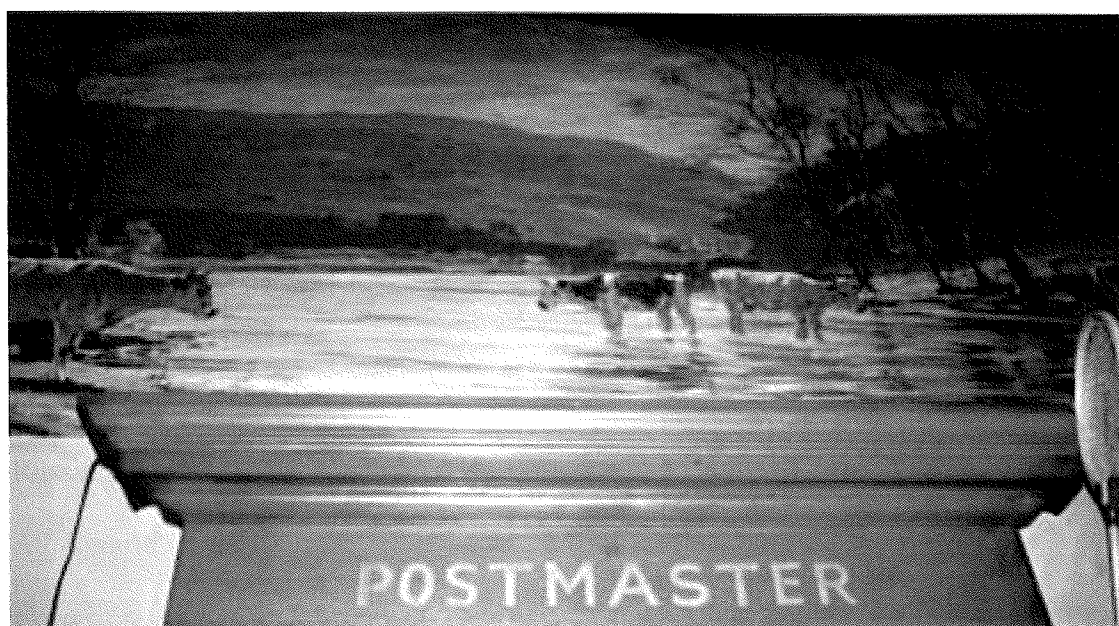
Pietro Lazzari *The Kinfolk of Virginia Dare*

"The Kinfolk of Virginia Dare" was the subject of a mural completed in 1938 for the Sanford, North Carolina, post office. This mural, recently restored by the Sanford Woman's Club, has been installed in a new addition to the Lee County Court House. A sculpture entitled "Good News" made of glazed tempera by Lazzari was commissioned for the Brevard, North Carolina, post office in 1941. Lazzari also completed two tempera paintings entitled "News from Afar" and "Harvest at Home" in 1942 in Jasper, Florida. Lazzari was born in Rome, Italy, on May 15, 1898. He was apprenticed to a Roman sculptor named Jerace, at the age of fifteen. He received a Master Artists degree in 1922 and presented his first exhibit at the Theatre of the Independents in Rome. He was employed by a newspaper, *Messaggero*, to illustrate articles with portraits of athletes. Lazzari travel to the United Sates in 1925 and married an American, Elizabeth Paine in 1926. He was hired by a newspaper in New York to sketch courtroom drawings of the Charles Lindbergh kidnapping trial. He painted four post office murals for the US Section of Fine Arts and developed a method of painting in polychrome concrete. Lazzari later taught painting and sculpture at the American University in Washington,

D. C. He completed for his bronze busts of notable public figures with the most well known being of Adlai Stevenson and Eleanor Roosevelt. He died on May 1, 1979 in Bethesda, Maryland.

Wallace, North Carolina G. Glen Newell

In 1940, G. Glen Newell completed an oil on canvas entitled "The Crossing" for the post office in Crawford, Nebraska. An oil on canvas was commissioned for the Wallace, North Carolina, post office and installed in 1941. This mural is housed today in a gift shop named "The Treasure House". The son of the current owner stated that his parents were required to sign a paper promising not to destroy or deface the mural before the post office could become their property.



G. Glen Newell *Daydreams*

Southern Pines, North Carolina Joseph Presser



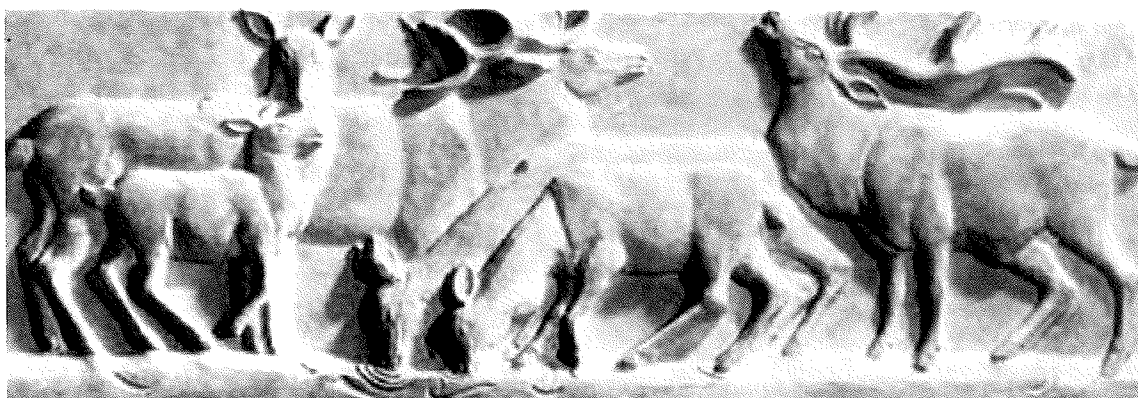
Joseph Presser *Horses*

In local post office in the small village of Southern Pines, North Carolina, Joseph Presser installed an oil on canvas mural in 1943 whose subject was based on horses. Other artists who made contributions to North Carolina post offices were: Duane Champlain, Bruno Piccirelli, Louis Ribak, Alicia Weincek, Sam Bell, and Jean Watson. Installed in Forest City, North Carolina, in 1939 was a plaster relief by Duane Champlain entitled "Rural Delivery." A sculpture entitled "Unity" was completed in 1939 by Bruno Piccirelli for the Marion, North Carolina, post office. Louis Ribak was born in Russian Poland on December 3, 1903. He installed a mural entitled "View Near Albermarle" in 1939 in the Albermarle, North Carolina, post office. Ribak's last known place of residence was Broadway, North Carolina. Alicia Weincek, a native of New York painted an oil on canvas in 1938 for the town of Mooresville, North Carolina, a mural based on the local cotton industry entitled "North Carolina Cotton Industry." The town of Canton, North Carolina, was the recipient of seven terra cotta relief sculptures completed by Sam Bell. Installed in 1940, the sculptures are collectively named "Paper".

Jean Watson designed, in 1940, a mural for Madison, North Carolina, which depicted "Early Summer in North Carolina."

Elkin, North Carolina Anita Ruth Weschler

Anita Ruth Weschler, sculptor and painter, was born in New York City in December, 1903. Weschler studied at Art Students League in New York City and at the School for the Arts in Chester Springs, Pennsylvania. She created a sculpture in 1939, entitled "Early Days at Elkin" for the town of Elkin, North Carolina.



Anita Weschler *Early Days at Elkin*

Kings Mountain, North Carolina Verona Burkhard

The first of Verona Burkhard's murals was installed in the post office in Powell, Wyoming, in 1938. The subject of this oil on canvas mural was "Powell's Agriculture Resulting from the Shoshone Irrigation Project" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 233). In 1939, Burkhard completed an oil on canvas mural entitled "James and Granville Stuart Prospecting in Deer Lodge Valley—1858" for Deer Lodge, Montana. For Kings Mountain, North Carolina, she painted in 1941 a mural entitled "Battle of King's Mountain." When questioned concerning her work for the WPA, Burkhard replied "there is hardly anything to tell" (Mecklenburg, 1979, p. 38-39). Burkhard was born in Paris just before World War I to American parents who were both artists. She received

formal training at the Art Students League with Boardman Robinson. She mounted her first exhibit at the age of 20 at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. On the strength of previous designs submitted for the Los Angeles Terminal Annex post office, Burkhard was invited to submit studies for the Los Angeles Immigration and Naturalization Station. She completed this commission in March, 1942 and requested permission for installation. Because the building was appropriated for the war effort, the murals were never hung. Edward Rowan arranged a new display area for the murals with the subject of "Pre-Spanish Cultures in North, South and Central America". They were eventually hung in a Washington, D. C. dormitory for women war workers. The lounge area became the home for Burkhard's murals as well as several sculptures by an Native American artist. (Mecklenburg, 1979, p. 38-39)

Weldon, North Carolina Jean de Marco

In Danville, Pennsylvania, Jean de Marco installed a bas-relief formulated from aluminum entitled "Iron Pouring" in 1941. For the Section "most sculptures were small reliefs for installation over the postmaster's door" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 132). The Section suggested to sculptors "in general the most successful decorations for spaces of this type have been silhouetted reliefs applied to the wall" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 132). In Weldon, North Carolina, de Marco installed a plaster relief in 1940 entitled "Early Childhood of Virginia Dare." A plaster sculpture was completed in 1942 for the State Department Headquarters in Washington entitled "Peaceful Pursuit of American Life." De Marco was born in Paris, France, on May 2, 1898 and immigrated to America.

Wilmington, North Carolina Thomas G. Lo Medico

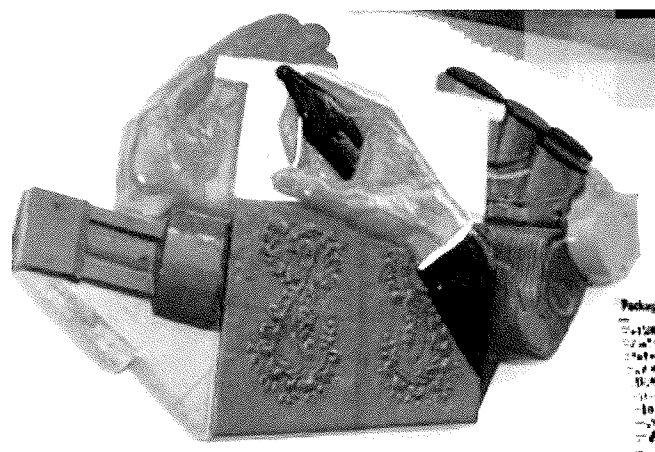
Thomas Gaetano Lo Medico installed eight-plaster reliefs in the Wilmington, North

Carolina, post office in 1937. The subject was the "History and Present Day Themes Related to Wilmington and Its Surroundings." A terra cotta relief by Lo Medico entitled "Potter" was placed in the post office in Crooksville, Ohio, in 1939. He also created a sculpture entitled "Screeching Eagle" for the city of Saint Louis, Missouri.

Eden, North Carolina Ruth Nickerson

Currently located in a new post office in the town of Eden, North Carolina, (formerly Leaksville) you will find a terra cotta glazed sculpture entitled "American Oriental Rug Weaving" sculpted by Ruth Nickerson in 1941. In New Brunswick, New Jersey, Nickerson placed a sculpture in 1937 called "The Dispatch Rider." "Ruth Nickerson was accustomed to direct carving." So the Section did not have to send her models "to a commercial firm to be copied or pointed up" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 133).

Ruth Nickerson *American Oriental Rug Weaving*



Dunn, North Carolina Paul Rudin

Hoover Adams, the current owner of the *Daily Record* in Dunn, North Carolina, stated that the newspaper office was formerly a post office constructed in 1939. Paul Rudin created for this space a relief sculpture entitled "Cotton and Tobacco." The people

shown in the sculpture are wearing shoes that have been enhanced with gold. Mr. Adams stated the mural reminded him of the spiritual "Oh, Them Golden Slippers."



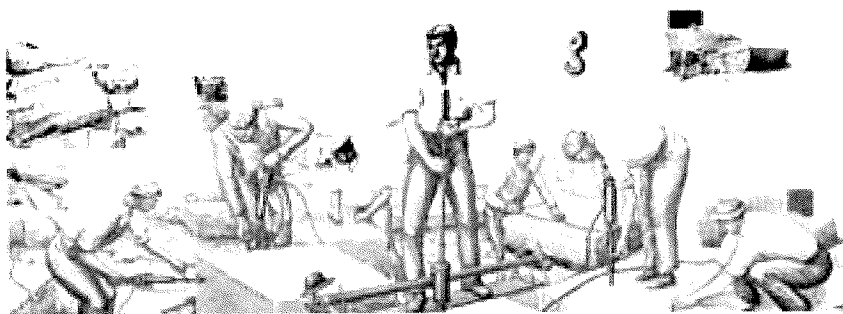
Hoover Adams, Editor, *The Daily Record*, Dunn, North Carolina



Paul Rudin *Cotton and Tobacco*

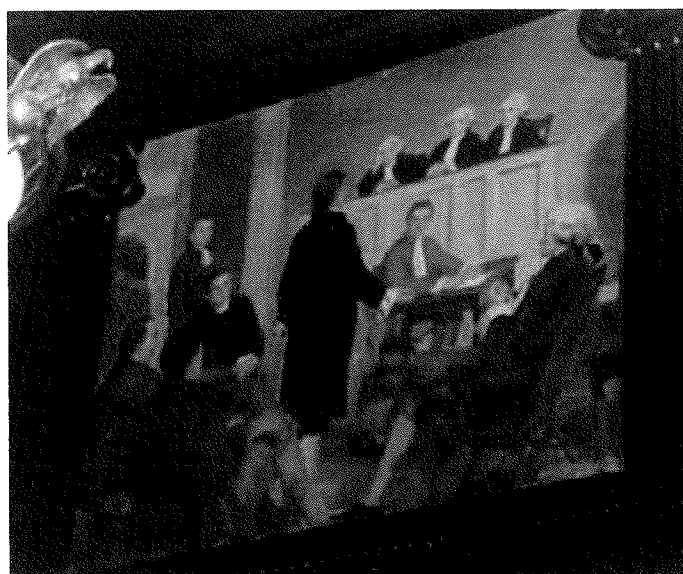
Paul Rudin participated in the 48 State competition in 1939 by submitting a sketch for the post office in Westerly, Rhode Island. His composition addressed the drilling and sawing operations that are necessary preparation prior to extracting the granite stone common to the area. Rudin features workers getting dirty grasping and seizing the tools

necessary for quarrying granite. (Marling, 1982, p. 166-167)



New Bern, North Carolina David Silvette

David Silvette was born in 1909 in Virginia. For the combination courthouse, post office, and customs house of New Bern, North Carolina, David Silvette painted three oil on canvas compositions entitled "The Bayard Singleton Case," "First Printing Press in North Carolina (1749)," and "First Provincial Convention in North Carolina (1774)." The paintings continue to be housed in the original location. The building is currently utilized exclusively as a Federal Court House and is not open to the general public except on scheduled court dates. "A separate appropriation of \$3,031.29, about 1% of the total cost for building, was obtained for the murals located behind the bench. The commission given to David J. Silvette of Richmond, Virginia was completed in 1938" (Baxter, 1983, p. 1). "The murals represent four historical scenes in New Bern's history, entitled 'Justice, Liberty, and Freedom'" (Baxter, 1983, p. 2). The left Panel, "Justice," shows a court scene where "for the first time on official record, anywhere in America, their court held in 1776 that a law was unconstitutional" (Baxter, 1983, p. 2).



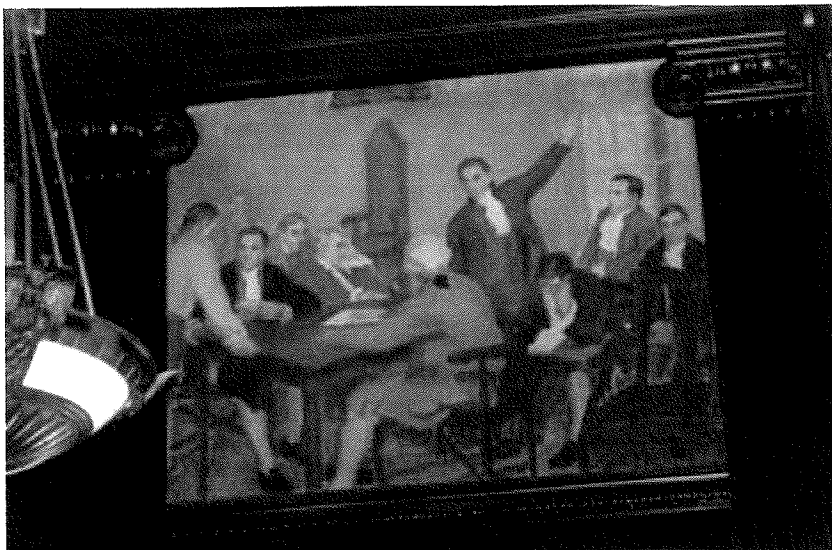
David Silvette *The Bayard Singleton Case*



David Silvette *The First Printing Press in North Carolina, 1749*

The double center panel contains two scenes representing "Liberty". The left side features Baron Christopher deGraffenried of Bern, Switzerland who founded the settlement at New Bern in 1710. The right side focuses on James Davis, the first printer in North Carolina who set up his printing press in 1749. He published the "first newspaper, first pamphlet, and first book in North Carolina" (Baxter, 1983, p.1). The right panel stands for "Freedom" and features the first Provincial Convention, held in 1774 at New Bern" (Baxter, 1983, p. 2). "The first anywhere in America to be called and

held in defiance of British orders" (Baxter, 1983, p. 2).



David Silvette *The First Provincial Convention in North Carolina, 1774*

Siler City, North Carolina Maxwell B. Starr

As a native of Scarsdale, New York, Maxwell B. Starr worked for both the TRAP and the Section. For Brooklyn Technical High School in Brooklyn, New York, Starr completed, in 1941, a mural entitled "History of Mankind in Terms of Mental and Physical Labor". In 1947, he designed for Rockdale, Texas, an oil on canvas called "Industry in Rockdale."



Maxwell B. Starr *History of Mankind in Terms of Mental and Physical Labor*

In 1942, Starr installed an oil on canvas representing "Building the First House at Siler's Crossroads" in the Siler City, North Carolina, post office. He was paid \$400 to

complete the mural, which depicts nineteenth-century Matthews Crossroads along with the stagecoach stop at the John Siler House. (Osborn, Selden-Sturgill, 1991, p. 134) The Siler House was built in the early 1800's and stood on the site of the current post office constructed in the 1930s.



Maxwell B. Starr *Building the First House at Siler's Crossroads*

Statesville, North Carolina Saul Swarz

In 1948, in the Statesville, North Carolina, post office and courthouse, Saul Swarz installed two freestanding wood sculptures about freedom entitled "Freeman Prosper" and "Defend Freedom." "One represented a young mountaineer from the hills about Statesville hovering protectively above symbolic figures of the Four Freedoms" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 23). He also completed a terra cotta sculpture in 1940 for the Linden, New Jersey, post office titled "Industry." Swarz worked in Kanagawa, Japan as a sculptor from 1955 to 1958.

Williamston, North Carolina Phillip von Saltza

In 1940, Philip von Saltza completed two oil on canvas murals. The first for the Milford, New Hampshire, post office was entitled "Lumberman Log-Rolling." The subject of his oil on canvas located in the Williamston, North Carolina, post office was "The First Flight of the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk." In Saint Albans, Vermont, von Saltza painted two oil on canvas murals in 1939, "Haying" and "Sugaring Off." In

Schuyler, Nebraska, he installed an oil on canvas mural entitled "Wild Horses by Moonlight" in 1940. His mural design was originally entered in a competition for a mural for the town of Safford, Arizona which attracted a large number of high quality entries. As a result Von Salza was offered an alternate commission of Schuyler, Nebraska.



Philip von Saltza *Wild Horses by Moonlight*

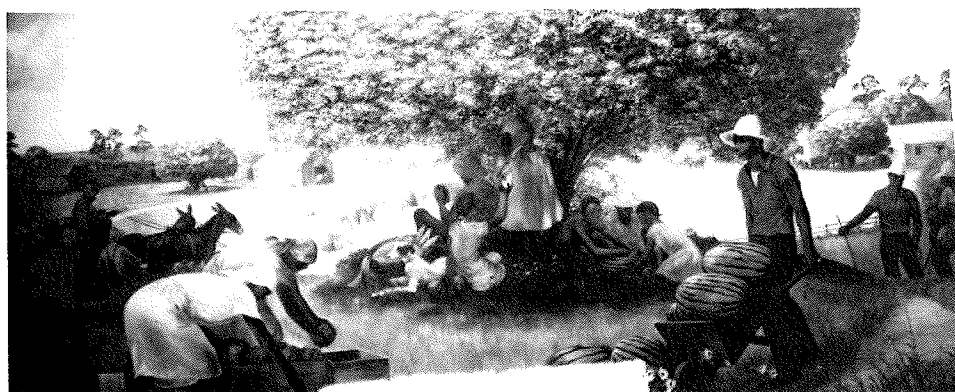


Philip von Saltza *The First Flight of the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk*

Laurinburg, North Carolina Agnes Tait

Agnes Tait was born in 1894 and spent the majority of her life in New Mexico. She died in 1981 after a full career as a portrait, landscape, and mural painter. "Fruits of the Land" was completed in 1941 for the Laurinburg, North Carolina, post office by Agnes Tait. This oil on canvas mural was torn down in the 1970's when it was deemed

politically incorrect because of the content. This mural has reverted to the ownership of the Smithsonian Institute (Beckham, 1989, p. 179-181). "A few artists, mostly from the North, communicated in their work a sense of black life apart from cotton and whites. The South is the only region in which any Section murals or sculptures have all black figures" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 91). Tait, a native of New York and Rhode Island, painted "the black community" in her Laurinburg mural. "In a scene of summertime harvest of melons, cotton, and peaches on the fertile coastal plains, the artist tried to convey a 'feeling of labor and Earth's abundance'" (Park, Markowitz, 1989, p. 91). The scenes shown in this mural are "comparable to similar murals celebrating community life in the rest of the country" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 91).

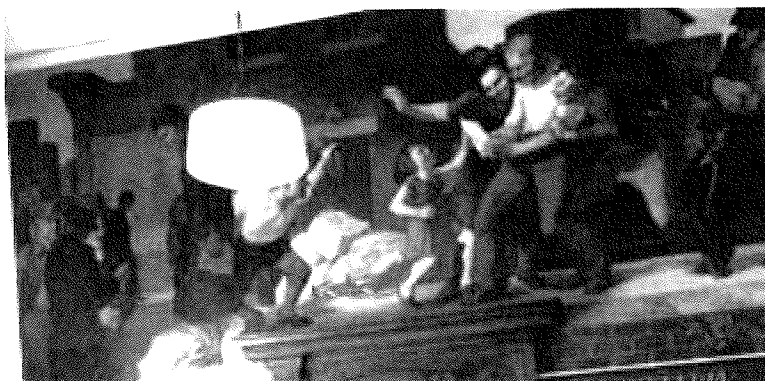


Agnes Tait
*Fruits of the
Land*

Boone, North Carolina Alan Tompkins

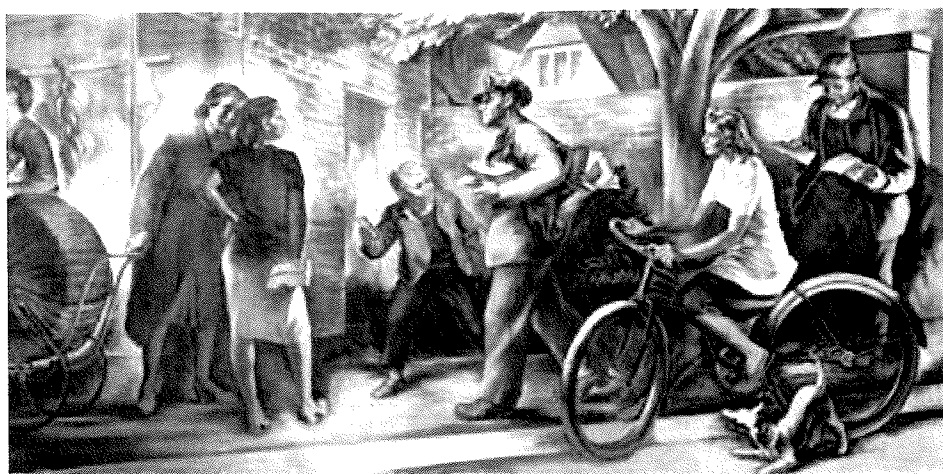
One mural completed in 1937 by Alan Tompkins is entitled "The Delivery of the Mail." Tompkins painted a second mural 1937 named "The Arrival of the Mail". This mural, installed in the post office of Martinsville, Indiana, shows a scene full of people demonstrating emotional extremes. The mural depicts a scene on the porch of a typical small town post office. The demeanor of the central figures is one of great excitement over news they have received by mail. Descending the steps on the right we find a

woman who has received tragic news. Two figures on the left clutch a letter in anticipation of the news they will find inside. The overall mural depicts the extremes of joy and grief that can result from the receipt of news arriving by mail. (Marling, 1982, p. 149) In Martinsville, Indiana, Tompkins described his design for the post office by saying "he wanted to convey a sense of the warmth and genuineness of friendly interest in others in American community life" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 47) as well as the idea "of the importance of the mail in the daily drama of our existence" (Marling, 1982, p. 149). Tompkins was born on October 29, 1907 in New Rochelle, New York.



Alan Tompkins *The Arrival of the Mail*

For the North Manchester, Indiana, post office Tompkins completed in 1938 an oil on canvas named "Indiana Farm—Sunday Afternoon." In 1942, Tompkins installed a mural at the Broad Ripple Postal Station in Indianapolis, Indiana, called "Suburban Street." In this oil on canvas mural he attempted "to interpret in visual terms those intangibles of democratic community life which we are now fighting to preserve" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 95).



Alan Tompkins *Suburban Street*, Indianapolis, Indiana

Daniel Boone was the subject of more than one southern mural. Alan Tompkins depicted "Daniel Boone on a Hunting Trip in Watauga County" in 1940 for the town of Boone, North Carolina. "Alan Tompkins was awarded the commission for the Boone, North Carolina, post office on the basis of a scene of Connecticut tobacco farming, and had to come up with a new design showing Daniel Boone on a hunting expedition" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 16).

Concord, North Carolina Edward Buk Ulreich

New York artist, Edward Buk Ulreich, was born in 1889 in Austria-Hungary. He designed a mural entitled "The Spirit of North Carolina" in 1942 for the town of Concord, North Carolina. In New Rockford, North Dakota, he completed a oil on canvas painting in 1940 called "Advance Guard of the West." Designed for Queens, New York, were murals painted for children based on the "Evolution of the Art of Writing" and on "the technological advances of printing which make education available for the masses" (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 36). In Columbia, Missouri, Ulreich utilized the "Pony Express" and "Stage Coach" as subjects for oil on canvas murals completed in 1937 for the post office. They have been reportedly removed. A oil on canvas entitled "History of

Florida" was completed in 1939 for the Tallahassee, Florida, post office. "A few of the artists who painted subjects of Indian life, in explaining their murals, wrote strong statements of sympathy for the Indians. Ulreich, was quoted in the New Rockford, North Dakota, newspaper as saying: 'I feel that Americans should become more familiar with the beauty and character of the red man. Because the white men wished to justify their greed for land, the Indian, unfairly, was often placed in an unfavorable light, and it has been my endeavor to portray them in the higher character in which I see them'" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 36).

Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina Charles W. Ward

Charles W. Ward (1900-1962) was a student of painting and sculpture at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. For most of his adult life he was active as an art teacher instructing students in drawing and painting at the Trenton Junior College and the School of Industrial Arts, Trenton, New Jersey. Ward completed a mural for installation in the Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, post office entitled "Cotton Pickers." This 11' 11" by 5' 4" oil on canvas mural was commissioned in 1937 and installed in 1938.



Charles W. Ward *Cotton Pickers*

Although still in existence and housed in its original post office location, this mural has been listed as missing by Park and Markowitz. The current owners of the building have remodeled the structure to house the law firm of James, Wellman and White. Though the attorneys have carefully preserved the history and integrity of the original post office design, the mural is presently in need of costly restoration. The law firm is currently working with representatives of the National Archives in an attempt to place the mural in the Trenton, New Jersey, post office. Three other oil on canvas murals completed by Ward are installed in this location. The murals completed between 1935-1937 are entitled "Second Battle of Trenton," "Rural Delivery," and "Glass Manufacture." The Trenton murals were "the nations first Post Office murals under the Public Works of Art Project" (Encyclopedia of Biography, p. 91). The 7' by 12' mural, "The Industries of Trenton", included a self-portrait of Ward as well as a portrait of his father. Due to recent renovations the Trenton murals will be relocated and reinstalled within a newly designed courthouse building. (Bianco, 1998, p. 5) "The acceptance of the WPA murals affirmed the great promise of the young artist and secured him a place in American art history" (Bianco, 1998, p. 5). Ward also completed two murals which adorn the walls of the Bucks County Playhouse Inn, in New Hope, Pennsylvania" (Encyclopedia of Biography, p. 91).

Ward described his vision for the Roanoke Rapids mural in a letter to Forbes Watson, Advisor, Section of painting and Sculpture, dated April 7, 1938. Ward states: my mural for the Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, Post Office is a very simple one:

All of the figures excepting the plantation owner who is
in the upper left riding away on a fat horse, are Negroes. Close

to the man on the horse is a shack such as the poor Negroes live in.

Most of the figures are picking and handling cotton including children who should be in school. Little mongrel hound. In the distance a load of cotton on its way to the gin. Also high tension lines and towers (Roanoke Rapids had 6 cotton mills, a paper mill and a power plant on the Roanoke River). I hope I have gotten some of the Negro rhythm as they toil in the sun. (National Archives, Entries, p.104-59).

Ward was paid \$560 for the mural with payment being made as follows: \$200 when the preliminary sketches are approved; \$100 when the mural is one-half complete; \$260 when the mural is complete, installed and approved" (National Archives, 1937, Rowan). The local newspaper in Roanoke Rapids called their mural "a monstrosity" and said: "This may be called Roanoke Rapids' first concrete example and first-hand information of that which critics of the administration call 'boondoggling'" (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 23).

Community Art Centers

Everyday Americans throughout the nation, especially those living in communities outside the largest metropolitan areas, were afforded few opportunities to experience the arts. Whether in the town or the city, Americans everywhere were eager to share the art experiences offered by WPA Art Centers. The Community Art Center program spread across the nation with the opening of seventy centers run by the WPA/FAP.



Art Center Melrose, New Mexico

The founding philosophy of the community art center was "active participation, doing and sharing, and not merely passive seeing" (O'Connor, 1973, p. 43). Therefore, art centers stressed "learning through doing" (O'Connor, 1973, p. 43). Art centers quickly became a center of community life where "the amateur may share with the professional in the rich experience of creative expression" (O'Connor, 1973, p. 43).



State Archives Children Experiment with Art Media at local WPA Art Center

After opening their doors, these centers acted as galleries for the art work from national and local sources, as centers for lectures in the arts, as centers where techniques

were demonstrated, and opportunities for exploration of media became a reality. Art centers became a meeting place for hobby club activities as well as a place where citizens were offered the chance to explore painting, sculpture, and arts and crafts. "There was also an active interest in community problems such as housing, landscape gardening, and town planning, and the decoration and furnishing of the home" (O'Connor, 1973, p. 43). Centers readily adapted themselves to the "needs and interests" (O'Connor, 1973, p. 43) of the local participants. Emphasis was placed on native handicrafts in Western states while "technical problems and hobby interests" (O'Connor, 1973, p. 43) were accentuated in industrial communities.

A "spirit of cooperative learning and sharing has characterized the art center movement" (O'Connor, 1973, p. 43). "The seventy communities in which art centers have been organized have expressed their approval of the program by contributing nearly half a million dollars in the past three and a half years" (O'Connor, 1973, p. 43). "During that time more than six million persons have attended art classes, art demonstrations and lectures, exhibitions, discussions, and various forms of group activity in the centers" (O'Connor, 1973, p. 43). Holger Cahill's objective for establishing art center programs was a desire to "naturalize art in American communities hitherto barren of art and art interest" (O'Connor, 1973, p. 43). These programs were structured as a means of stimulating creative potential and providing resources previously withheld from the arts.

The first WPA art center in the nation was established in Raleigh, North Carolina, in December, 1935. This cooperative effort by the North Carolina State Art Society and WPA officials had far reaching results. With WPA help, the establishment of a State Museum of Art in North Carolina became a reality. Outreach programs were established

in the Raleigh City Schools, on the campuses of Shaw University and St. Augustine's College, and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



James McLean, Director of Raleigh Art Center, the first in the Nation



The North Carolina Art Society collaborated with WPA in establishing art programs in Raleigh. *Board of Directors, Katherine Arrington, President*

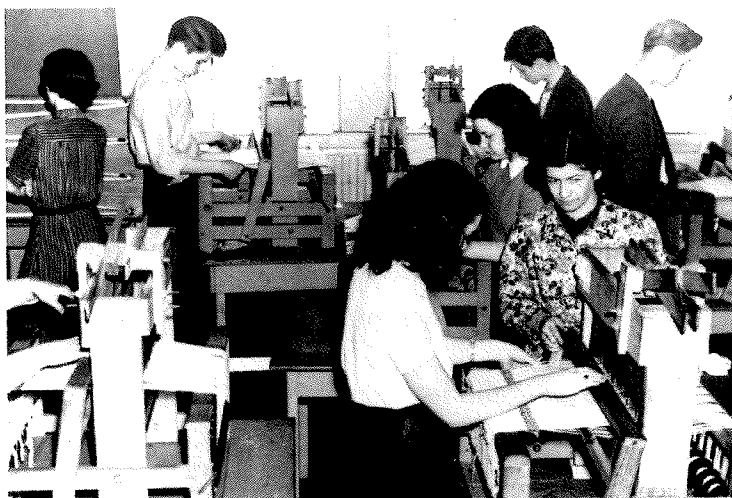
A satellite gallery was sponsored in Manteo, North Carolina. Additional art centers opened in North Carolina were located in Winston-Salem, Asheville, Greensboro, Greenville, Sanford, Kinston, Concord, and Wilmington. Satellite centers were established for soldiers on Fort Bragg and for Marines at the United Service Club (USO) in Jacksonville. An art studio was opened by the WPA for a Field Artillery group at Fort Bragg under the leadership of Private Frank Duncan, Jr. Marines from Jacksonville, North Carolina, and Cherry Point, North Carolina, both participated in classes offered in a satellite center at the Greenville Woman's Club directed by the Greenville Art Center. This art center continued to operate after WPA funds evaporated. In 1943, a young Marine wrote to Lucy Cherry Crisp, director of the Greenville Art Center. His simple statement might readily sum up the feelings of students and adults throughout the nation

who were experiencing the creation of art for the first time.

I hope you understand just how much last weekend meant to me. Making something with my hands and seeing it take shape was not only a surprise to me but an inspiration as well....believe me, I feel much better now...I should have started this last Monday night and kept on until tonight with a thesis on 'How much a fellow can enjoy doing something different'. I can't really describe how it is, but the feeling of having made something myself certainly felt wonderful Monday morning. Thanks again for the clay modeling and for the hospitality.

(State Archives, Crisp, p. 2-3).

The state director of the Federal Art Project in North Carolina, D. S. Defenbacher, specified the Raleigh Art Center was designed to meet the needs of the Raleigh community. The new art center "was intended to be a permanent institution for community participation in art through the enjoyment of exhibitions and the participation in productive work" (N. C. Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 2, box 119). "The art center first operated in a downtown location until 1937 when it was moved to the Needham Broughton High School. Since that time, "it has conducted galleries and classes in most of the city schools at one time or another" (State Archives, WPA Report, 1939). "The gallery at Needham Broughton school operated with a changing series of exhibitions until 1941" (State Archives, WPA Report).



Needham Broughton students experience *Weaving* taught by a WPA Artist

In the first year of operation, extension exhibits were shown in the following schools, as a free supplement to their art curriculum: Needham Broughton High, Hugh Morson High, Shaw University, St. Augustine's, and Meredith College. (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 6)

In May, 1936, an extension art gallery opened at Shaw University (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 7). Classes in painting, drawing and design were also established with the art center staff offering instruction to the two hundred Negro students who immediately enrolled (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 7). "It is significant to note that this gallery was the first of its kind to be established in the South, and it is the first to be established under the Federal Art Project (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 7)." In April, 1939, a gallery was started in the Crosby-Garfield Grammar School for Negroes (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 7)."



Young Painters work under direction of WPA artists, Raleigh School System

The galleries at Needham Broughton and Crosby-Garfield both "functioned as an integral part of the school curricula, with attendants present during the school day to discuss the exhibitions and give gallery talks. Most of the exhibitions have been furnished by WPA, with occasional one-man shows by local artists and other non-WPA exhibits" (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 8). An exhibit was also held at the local Woman's Club. Members of this local organization were often involved in hanging and changing exhibits as well as monitoring the exhibits during opening hours. Included in the exhibits, along with paintings, were examples of pottery, metal, old glass, china, coins and stamps. Demonstrations in linoleum cutting, color, modeling, frieze making, and soap carving were presented to 1,677 adults and children in the first year (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 6).

The first traveling exhibits shown in North Carolina were arranged through the "Phillips Memorial Gallery, the Whitney Museum, the Newark Museum, the American Federation of Arts and through the individual artists who are represented in these museums" (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 8). The center's schedule of exhibits included the work of local artists and craftsmen. Two major shows during the first season were reserved for "local and state artists" (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 8). The WPA considered the display of the work of local talent to be of the utmost importance in stimulating artistic growth in the area. The art center staff believed patrons would be "inspired more deeply" by the work of their neighbors and acquaintances (State Archives, Annual Report, p. 8). By 1948 more than four million people had participated in art center programs in North Carolina. (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 8)

A variety of activities were sponsored by art centers with media demonstrations assuming great importance as patrons were eager to learn how to create their own artistic expressions. Lectures offered in the first year featured the following topics: "Portraiture," "The Fine Art of Silvercraft," "The Art of Wood Block Cutting and Printing," "Art for Children," and "Watercolor Painting," (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 10).

The art center offered recreational art classes for those who wished to explore with instruction by competent staff members. Patrons enjoyed the "greatest possible freedom for individual expression" with criticism being offered for their personal development. (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 10) Traveling exhibits contributed greatly to the growth of participants as they allowed the serious student an opportunity to compare their work with that of established artists (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 10).

The WPA Art Centers also enjoyed a stimulating partnership with art teachers in the surrounding areas. Traveling exhibits coordinated by the WPA offered local school children a first hand opportunity to view the work of recognized artists. Art center classes "augmented the work of the public schools by providing greater freedom than the large classes and strict schedules of any public school curriculum" permitted (State Archives, WPA Annual Report, p. 11).

Art Education

The North Carolina Art Society (NCAS) was organized in 1924. As President, Katherine Pendleton Arrington, was actively involved in early art education programs in the public schools of North Carolina. Arrington was instrumental in securing "reproductions of famous paintings for classroom study by donating \$1000 to the Department of Public Instruction to be used for matching grants of \$20 each to fifty

elementary and 'union' schools wanting to purchase them" (State Archives, NCAS report, 1927-1990). Original paintings were also acquired "to be circulated for exhibition in the state's public schools" (State Archives, NCAS report, 1927-1990). In 1939, the first State Art Gallery became a reality when the state guaranteed the Art Society "exhibition space in a public building" (State Archives, NCAS report, 1927-1990). In the beginning, the State Art Gallery was operated by the staff of the Federal Art Project while NCAS was waiting for funding from the Phifer bequest designated as operational funding for the society. "In 1946 the State Art Gallery assumed responsibility for the North Carolina Artists Exhibition which had been organized and mounted from 1938-1945 by the Person Hall Art Gallery on the campus of the University of North Carolina" (State Archives, NCAS report, 1927-1990). "Educational tours for art teachers, museum volunteers, and film and slide programs (including kits designed to be circulated in communities and schools across the state) were discharged to further the art education and art appreciation goals of the society" (State Archives, NCAS report, 1927-1990). The expressed society goal of opening a North Carolina Museum of Art was realized in 1956. (state Archives, NCAS report, 1927-1990)

As a result of funding difficulties, art instruction in the fourteen Raleigh city schools was suspended for eight years. Since there were few qualified art teachers in the Raleigh area, the WPA saw the minds of the approximately 9,000 area children as fallow ground where they could accomplish their most effective work. (State Archives, WPA Report). Center officials reasoned adults possessed established and preconceived ideas concerning art, while children possessed open minds which were "more plastic and receptive to this cultural training" (State Archives, WPA report).

In 1937, with the cooperation of local school officials, the WPA began activities in three of the city schools for "the purpose of giving art instruction, providing gallery facilities, hosting lectures, and offering demonstrations to a multitude of eager youths" (State Archives, WPA report). The art center staff was excited by the opportunity to experiment and "set up a method of art teaching based upon the newer conceptions of art and art teaching" (State Archives, WPA report). They structured a plan designed to develop and form an outlet to the child's imagination and creative powers through working with the art materials while under the direction of an experienced artist. The program stressed art appreciation rather than professional training and aimed to expose students to the best "original art creations and the best prints and reproductions available (State Archives, WPA Report)." The art center also wished to provide a gallery, properly set up and equipped with furniture and lighting, structured to provide a proper setting for exhibits. Exhibits were tied to an educational purpose with gallery talks and lectures designed for visiting groups.

The art center staff also collaborated with any other agencies within the community and school system that could benefit from the assistance of the center. In the 1930's North Carolina law "required that all elementary school teachers take art courses, and each summer the Department of Education brought visiting artists to the Chapel Hill campus. In 1934 and again in 1935, Francis Speight, probably North Carolina's most famous artist, was persuaded to return for the summer from Philadelphia, where he taught regularly at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts" (Ackland Museum, p. 4-5). These courses were readily received and, as a result, the first full time art teacher, Russell T. Smith, was hired in 1936.

A rotary system for art instructors was established by the Raleigh Art Center for the public schools. This system allowed each artist to only instruct students in their special area of expertise, thereby assuring the best possible instruction was provided. This was an especially important practice at the high school level where students were interested in "more fields of art than one teacher can hardly be prepared to teach in a highly specialized and thorough manner" (State Archives, WPA report).

Among the earlier art instruction offered in North Carolina were drawing classes taught by Kate Lewis, the first art teacher on the campus of East Carolina Teachers Training School (ECTTS). Lewis taught a six-day schedule with part of her time being devoted to teaching art in the Greenville City Schools. The founders of ECTTS demonstrated an "early commitment to provide a well-rounded education of the individual teacher that included fine art courses in music and art" (Duffy, 1999, p. 9). In 1916, the drawing classes were designed to give prospective teachers "particular knowledge of drawing" and to "train the mind, the eye, and the hand to work together—to cultivate habits of thought and observation and to create an appreciation of the beautiful" (Duffy, 1999, p. 9). Training in drawing was "consistent with turn-of-the century progressive education in America" (Duffy, 1999, p. 9). In 1929 the curriculum was renamed 'Public School Art'. Courses now included perspective, supervision of public school art, freehand drawing, and art appreciation" (Duffy, 1999, p.9). This curriculum underwent another change in 1940 when it was changed to Art Education. The first art majors were graduated in 1946 (Duffy, 1999, p. 10). During this time the "emphasis was placed on creativity, art appreciation and studio arts training" (Duffy, 1999, p. 10). In 1938, Kate Lewis was named the Art Department Director. When she

retired in 1946 she was recognized, along with her many students, as having a large role in helping "raise the level of art instruction in state public schools" (Duffy, 1999, p. 10).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Reflections and Further Questions

The researcher explored further links to the Library of Congress, the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, the State Archives of North Carolina, and the Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Consideration was given to critics of the WPA, as well as those who sang the praises of each of these programs. Reviewing primary source interviews with artists who participated in the WPA projects afforded insight into their individual experiences and the specific outcomes of their individual participation. The reactions of the artists were as varied as their work. A particular point is whether artists of note were proud of their participation as WPA artists. One source indicated many were not.

A large variety of educational opportunities were offered in WPA art centers ranging from photography, printing, metal working and painting to the exploration of crafts. Throughout the country, public feeling concerning the usefulness and lasting benefits of these programs varied greatly. Many artists felt they benefited from their jobs as teachers in art centers. Many participants, such as Raphael Soyer, Stuart Davis, Louise Nevelson, and Jacob Lawrence, went on to illustrious careers in the visual arts. (McKinzie, 1974, p. 176). The art center established under the WPA on the south side of Chicago, still remains in existence. Another of the better-known art centers was the Harlem Renaissance, where prominent artist Jacob Lawrence received his earliest training.

Conclusion

Research has upheld the premise that WPA projects affected later art movements. In many states, government entitlement programs of the 1960's sprouted from the seeds sown by these original WPA art programs. A visible outgrowth of the WPA remains with the expansion of current art education programs birthed by the New Deal. Controversy surrounded these federal programs almost from the beginning. Feelings were mixed concerning the value and lasting effect of all four programs. Many patrons regarded the art programs as beneficial while others thought they were the perfect example of a government waste of resources. Many arguments evolved around the quality of the artwork, the manner by which artists were selected, and the topics that were approved at local sites. Because art museums of the 1940s featured traditional style instead of the contemporary American style emphasized by the government programs, increased attendance can not be cited as a measure of success.

Statistics, compiled by the American Federation of Art in 1941, concluded WPA art centers enjoyed a large public response. Seventy-seven new art museums opened between 1938 and 1941. Thirty-two of these museums opened through cooperation with the WPA. The general public became exposed to the works of art through the exhibitions, the schools of art and the public institutions that displayed the murals, sculpture and other works" (Hendler, 1996, p. 2). Public awareness of contemporary art was heightened by government projects. As a result, sales seemed to benefit from the exposure.

Art critics also offered conflicting views. Roosevelt backers tended to prefer the new realism in artistic style (McKinzie, 1974, p. 175). Some critics felt much of the art

produced was not of the best quality. Critics held to their own aesthetic and political prejudices even after the passing of a generation. Art historian and longtime director of the Whitney Museum, Lloyd Goodrich, considered the Section and WPA program "the greatest single factor in our history for extending the influence of art throughout our people" (McKinzie, 1974, p. 175). Art historian and critic James Thrall Soby felt "the vast increase in American respect for the visual arts stems in good part from the federal projects" (McKinzie, 1974, p. 175). Senator Jacob K. Javits, "speaking in support of a new scheme to aid the arts in 1960's", invoked the WPA experiments, which, he said, "made substantial contribution to the development of the arts in America" (McKinzie, 1974, p. 175). Democratic Senator Ralph Yarborough contended, "the program resulted in stimulation...such as this country probably never had before or since" (McKinzie, 1974, p. 175-176). Republican Senator Barry Goldwater objected: "I do not think the Government did anything to inspire artists during that period" (McKinzie, 1974, p. 176). Cultural historian Jacques Barzun espoused the theory "all the WPA proves is that from a huge grouping of American artists a sizable amount of good work can be obtained" (McKinzie, 1974, p. 176). Public opinion seems to uphold the view that the WPA artists did indeed contribute to the visual arts in America to a discernable extent.

Painter Stuart Davis stated "the artists of America do not look upon the art projects as a temporary stopgap measure, but see in them the beginning of a new and better day for art in this country" (Adams, Goldbard, 1995, p. 9). The New Deal art programs left a lasting legacy in that they "supported abstract artists, including those that would later be known as the Abstract Expressionists." Additionally, "New York replaced Paris as the center of Western art" as a result of government patronage. This extensive patronage

"supported so many young artists in the 1930s and gave them freedom to experiment" (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 63), to try new styles and grow through their experiences working with other WPA artists of the period. "The artists for the most part were able to sustain themselves through difficult times. Many artists gained experience, their careers were helped and life-time friendships began during the WPA.

Joseph Solman states "the abstract-expressionist movement is unthinkable without the encouragement to survive and experiment that was given these artists by the WPA" (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 63). Twentieth century art movements such as "surrealism, abstract expressionism, pop art, minimilism, and graffiti evolved from the experiments of the artists of the WPA" (Hendler, 1996, p. 2).

Appreciation for the arts was expanded across the country. Phillip Reisman recalls the Federal Art Project "started a whole movement of art departments in the colleges, theater departments, amateur theater, the organization of museums all over the country in towns that never dreamt of a museum" (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 63). The establishment of Community Art Centers throughout the country contributed a "new acceptance of art" (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p.63). A large number of artists who experienced teaching for the first time in art centers discovered a desire to teach that outlasted the WPA programs. A puppetry program for children was conducted under the auspices of the WPA art center in Greenville, North Carolina (O'Connor, 1973, p. 199). Art centers were established in Raleigh, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and Wilmington, for U. S. Army units on Fort Bragg, and in a United Service Organization (USO) in Jacksonville. (State Archives, WPA Annual Report)

After discovering many WPA murals and artists of the era were influenced by the

work of Mexican muralists, the researcher reviewed "Art of the 1930s by Edward Lucie-Smith. In this book, Lucie-Smith studied the tumultuous life and work history of the painter Diego Rivera. In the early 1930s, Rivera created a series of industrial style murals in the city of Detroit, Michigan. He was also invited to San Francisco to paint murals in the San Francisco Stock Exchange Club and in the San Francisco School of Fine Arts" (Lucie-Smith, 1985, p. 90). Many WPA artists of the 1930s were influenced by the fresco technique and subject matter of the murals by Rivera.

Additional research revealed the fact an artist in residence at East Carolina University during the 1960-1970s worked for the WPA. A Russian immigrant was hired to paint four murals, oil on canvas, for the small post office in Beaufort, North Carolina. Oil on canvas was often utilized as the *Fresco* process was expensive and required scaffolding to remain in place in post office lobbies for months on end (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 116).

During the ten years of the Federal Arts Program "the mural division created over 2500 murals throughout the country in a variety of styles ranging from 'regionalism' to the 'surreal' and 'abstract'" (O'Connor, 1969, p. 29). The subjects of the WPA murals were often reflective of the history or daily life of the area in which they were housed. Forty-four locations in North Carolina were recipients of art projects financed by the WPA (Park, Markowitz, 1984, p. 222).

Government patronage continues today through the National Endowment for the Arts at the federal level, and the National Endowment for the Humanities at the state level. These agencies "patronize artists, museums, and schools and scholars in a variety of ways" (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 64). The WPA established a legacy of "public art, not

only public murals and architectural sculpture, but paintings and graphics now in museum collections and various institutions" (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 64). "The practice in the 1930s of allocating one percent of the cost of a public building for works of art has continued and has produced many pieces, mostly large outdoor sculpture and various mosaic murals" (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 64). "The art projects of the 1930s were not merely means of employing artists, but set a precedent for the idea of art as an integral part of society and as part of the public environment" (Park, Markowitz, 1977, p. 64). First observers of these federal programs, intended to create art for the people, amassed a large body of knowledge representative of the conflicting attitudes of the public. An American Regionalist style was promoted and, for the first time, Americans began to develop styles of their own instead of simply emulating those taught in Europe. Patrons discovered art was not only for the elite as they took advantage of the opportunity to create art for the first time. Many artists attributed the later success of their careers to the extensive exposure they received while working with the New Deal arts programs. Art education as a discipline, became more accepted in America because of public exposure to the educational programs of the WPA.

Appendix A

CHART OF NORTH CAROLINA SITES

| COMMUNITY | ARTIST | DATE | COMMENTS |
|---|---------------------|---------|--|
| Ahoskie "The Peanut Harvest" | Julien Binford | | Missing/Mural |
| Albemarle "View Near Albemarle" | Louis Ribak | 1939 | Mural |
| Beaufort "Crissy Wright" "Goose Decoys" "Mail to Cape Lookout" "Sand Ponies" | Simka Simkhovitch | 1940 | Four Panels/Oil On canvas |
| Belmont "Mayor Chronicle's South Fork Boys" | Peter De Anna | 1940 | Oil on canvas |
| Boone "Daniel Boone on a Hunting Trip in Watauga County" | Alan Tompkins | 1940 | Oil on canvas |
| Brevard "Good News" | Pietro Lazzari | 1941 | Glazed Tempera |
| Burlington "Cotton Textiles" "Historical Railroad Station" | Arthur Bairnsfather | 1940 | Two Murals/Lab Corps Headquarters Federal Building |
| Canton "Paper" | Sam Bell | 1940-41 | Seven terra-cotta Reliefs |
| Chapel Hill "Laying The Cornerstone of Old East" | Dean Cornwell | 1941 | Oil on canvas |
| Concord "The Spirit of North Carolina" | Edward Buk Ulreich | 1942 | Mural |
| Dunn "Cotton and Tobacco" | Paul Rudin | 1939 | Sculpture/Daily Record Newspaper Office |

| | | | |
|---|-------------------|------|--|
| Eden "American Oriental Rug Weaving" | Ruth Nickerson | 1941 | Glazed terra cotta sculpture Relocated |
| Elkin "Early Days at Elkin" | Anita Weschler | 1939 | Sculpture |
| Forest City "Rural Delivery" | Duane Champlain | 1939 | Plaster relief |
| Gastonia "Cotton Field and Spinning Mill" | Frances Speight | 1938 | Oil on canvas |
| Hamlet "Peaches" "Drilling" "Dewberries" | Nena de Brennecke | 1942 | Three mahogany relief sculptures |
| Kings Mountain "Battle of King's Mountain" | Verona Burkhard | 1941 | Mural |
| Laurinburg "Fruits of the Land" | Agnes Tait | 1941 | Oil on canvas/ unceremoniously ripped from wall early 1980s; resides in bad condition in National Museum of American Art storage |
| Leaksville | Ruth N. Greacen | 1941 | Sculpture |
| Lincolnton "Threshing Grain" | Richard Jansen | 1938 | Oil on canvas |
| Louisburg "Tobacco Auction" | Richard Kenah | 1939 | Oil on canvas |
| Madison "Early Summer in North Carolina" | Jean Watson | 1940 | Oil on canvas |
| Marion "Unity" | Bruno Piccirelli | 1939 | Sculpture |

| | | | |
|--|-------------------|------|---|
| Mebane | Margaret C. Gates | 1941 | Destroyed; copy by Henry D. Rood installed in 1964 Oil on canvas |
| Mooresville | Alicia Weincek | 1939 | Oil on canvas |
| Morganton | Dean Cornwell | 1938 | Two Murals |
| "Sir Walter Raleigh" "First Landing on North Carolina Shore" | | | |
| New Bern | David Silvette | 1938 | Three Murals/Oil on canvas/Federal Courthouse |
| "The Bayard Singleton Case" "The First Printing Press in North Carolina" (1749) "First Provincial Convention in North Carolina" | | | |
| Red Springs | John DeGroot, Jr. | 1941 | Three Murals |
| "War—The Battle of Little Raft Swamp" "The Coming of the Scots" "Peace—Work and Knowledge" | | | |
| Reidsville | Gordon Samstag | 1938 | City Government Offices/Oil on canvas |
| Roanoke Rapids | Charles Ward | 1938 | Law Office of James, Wellman & White/ Oil on canvas |
| Rockingham | Edward Laning | 1937 | Triptych/Oil on canvas/City Office |
| Roxboro | Alan Gould | 1938 | Mural in place/ Piedmont Technical Institute |
| Sanford | Pietro Lazzari | 1938 | Lee County Courthouse/Mural |
| "The Kinsfolk of Virginias Dare" | | | |
| Siler City | Maxwell B. Starr | 1942 | Oil on canvas |
| "Building The First House at Siler's Crossroads" | | | |
| Southern Pines | Joseph Presser | 1943 | Oil on canvas |
| Horses | | | |

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|------|-----------------------|
| Statesville | Sahl Swarz | 1948 | Two sculptures |
| "Freeman Prosper" | "Defend Freedom" | | Wood |
| Wake Forest | Harold Egan | 1941 | Chiropractors Office |
| "Richness of the Soil No. 2" | | | wall built over mural |
| Wallace | G. Glen Newell | 1941 | Housed in "The |
| "Daydreams" | | | Treasure House"/Oil |
| | | | on canvas |
| Warrenton | Alice Dineen | 1938 | Oil on canvas |
| "North Carolina Pastoral" | | | |
| Weldon | Jean de Marco | 1940 | Plaster relief |
| "Early Childhood of Virginia Dare" | | | |
| Whiteville | Roy Schatt | 1941 | Missing/Tempera |
| "Harvesting Tobacco" | | | |
| Williamston | Phillip Von Saltza | 1940 | Oil on canvas |
| "First Flight of the Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk" | | | |
| Wilmington | William F. Phohl | 1940 | Mural |
| "Port of Wilmington" | | | |
| Wilmington | Thomas Lo Medico | 1937 | Eight plaster reliefs |
| "History and Present Day Themes Related to Wilmington and Its Surroundings" | | | |

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Appendix B

WHO'S WHO IN THE NEW DEAL

JACOB BAKER (1895-1945) Administrator of Federal Emergency Relief Administration and later of the WPA. One of the principal creators of Federal One and the WPA/FAP. Internal politics and personality conflicts shortened his tenure on the project he created (1935-1936).

GEORGE BIDDLE (1895-1945) Artist and friend of FDR's since school days at Groton and Harvard. His letter to FDR calling for relief for artists is considered the seed of all New Deal art projects. Painted a number of works for Section.

EDWARD BRUCE (1880-1943) Businessman, lawyer, banker, artist, and head of The Section of Fine Arts. Though he showed an early aptitude for art, Bruce established a successful career as a businessman in the Far East. At age 42, he left the Far East and his business career to study painting in Italy. After three years of study with Maurice Sterne, he returned and embarked on a successful career as a painter. In 1923, he was instrumental in the creation of the PWAP and was named its chief. Actively working for a successor organization, he oversaw the creation of the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture. Fighting for the integrity and vision of the Section through its various name and administrative changes sapped Bruce's strength. He died of a heart attack in early 1943.

HOLGER CAHILL (1887-1960) Born Sveinn Kristjan Bjarnarson in Iceland. At

an early age Cahill's parents bought him to North America. To escape a difficult childhood, Cahill left home at thirteen, working on ranches, railroads, and as a merchant marine. Deciding to become a writer, he moved to New York City. He took journalism courses at New York University at night and made friends with artists in his Greenwich Village neighborhood. In 1922 he joined the Newark Museum; in 1932 he became Exhibitions Director of the Museum of Modern Art. While at MoMA, Cahill organized a number of important exhibitions of American folk art. A writer of fiction since the 1920s, Cahill published novels and short stories as well as doing museum work until 1935 when he was chosen as the National Director of the Federal Art Project (1935-1943). Upon leaving the WPA/FAP, he resumed his writing career.

JOHN MICHAEL CARMODY (1881-1963) As first administrator of the Federal Works Agency (July 1, 1939), Carmody oversaw both the WPA/FAP and the Section.

OLIN DOWS (1904-1981) Artist and art administrator. Dows was director of The Treasury Relief Art Project (1935-1938) and an important aide to Edward Bruce. His memoirs are a good source of information on the TRAP and Section.

HALLIE FLANAGAN (1890-1969) National director of the Federal Theatre Project (1935-1939).

FRANCES CLARK HARRINGTON (1887-1940) A member of the US Army Corps of Engineers (1909-1935), Colonel Harrington was named Assistant Administrator of the WPA in 1935. He was named Administrator in 1938 when Harry L. Hopkins

left the WPA. When the Works Progress Administration became the Work Projects Administration the title of his position was changed to Commissioner.

HARRY LLOYD HOPKINS (1890-1946) A social worker, Hopkins was appointed Director of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1933. With bold plans and unfailing energy, he quickly took over the massive Federal relief efforts, culminating in the creation of the WPA in 1935. In December 1938, he was named Secretary of Commerce and held the post for two years. A close friend of FDR, Hopkins helped manage his 1940 campaign and was tapped to lead the Lend-Lease program with the United Kingdom in 1941. Throughout the War, Hopkins remained FDR's closest advisor.

HOWARD OWEN HUNTER (1896-1964) Hunter was successor to Francis C. Harrington as Commissioner of the WPA (acting Commissioner, 1940; Commissioner, October 1941-1943).

HAROLD LE CLAIR ICKES (1874-1952) An important member of the New Deal, Ickes, as head of the Public Works Administration (1933-1938) oversaw the construction of Federal buildings, many of which were adorned with New Deal Art.

HENRY MORGENTHAU, JR. (1891-1967) Secretary of the Treasury (1934-1945), Morgenthau and his first wife, Elinor (d. 1949) were great supporters of the Arts. A good friend of FDR's since the 1920's, Morgenthau was a direct line to the President from Edward Bruce's Section until the Section was placed under the Federal Works Agency (1939).

THOMAS C. PARKER (1905-1964) Assistant Director of the WPA/FAP (1935-1940). During the critical 1939-1940 period, Parker served as acting director while Holger Cahill was on a sabbatical to work on the New York World's Fair. Parker left the WPA/FAP to become director of the American Federation of Arts (1940-1952).

CHRISTIAN J. PEOPLES Director of the Treasury Department's Office of Procurement. He was Edward Bruce's direct supervisor.

MRS. INCREASE ROBINSON Born Josephine Dorothea Reichmann in Chicago, Illinois on April 2, 1890. (Her parents were Frank Joseph Reichmann, transportation Official, and Josephine Lemos, an artist in a long line of artists.) A graduate of Hyde Park High School, she was the Vice President of her high school class (Class of 1909). She took the name Increase Robinson after the death of her first husband, Philip Increase. She was a member of the Chicago Art Club and the Chicago Society of Arts. She worked as a painter, teacher, lecturer, gallery owner, and State Director of the Federal Art Project in Illinois between 1933 and 1938. Controversial and autocratic during her years on the FAP, she was the frequent focus of the Chicago Artists' Union for her handling of the artists as well as her financial practices. In March 1938 she was finally removed as State Director of the Illinois FAP and replaced by George Thorpe.

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT (1882-1945) President during the Great Depression era. It took some time for FDR's promise of a New Deal to eventually reach America's artists, but when it did, it was on a scale never before seen in governmental

patronage of the arts. His key advisors included Henry and Elinor Morgenthau, George Biddle, Edward Bruce, and FDR's wife Eleanor.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT (1884-1962) A frequent speaker or guest at important gatherings or exhibition openings, Eleanor Roosevelt gave generously of her time and prestige to the New Deal arts projects.

LINCOLN ROTHSCILD (1902-1983) Artist and art administrator. Director of the Index of American Design (1937-1941).

EDWARD BEATTY ROWAN (1898-1946) Art administrator. Rowan and Forbes Watson were second in importance to Edward Bruce in the Section. Working closely with Bruce on all aspects of the program, Rowan oversaw much of the daily work of the Section.

NIKOLAI SOKOLOFF (1886-1965) National director of the Federal Music Project (1935-1939).

BREHON BURKE SOMERVELL (1892-1955) A graduate of West Point (1914), Somervell quickly found his niche transporting supplies to American troops during World War I. Working on a number of engineering and supply projects after the war, he was named Head of the New York City WPA in 1936. A tough administrator and no friend of the arts, Somervell's tenure was marked by controversy, protest, and, on the part of the artists, unbridled hate. His cutting of wages and employment allocations and the destruction of a WPA/FAP mural at Floyd Bennett Field for supposed Communist

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propaganda made him an easy target for the artists. He returned to military duty in November 1940.

FORBES WATSON (1880-1960) Art critic and administrator. Watson was one of Edward Bruce's closest advisors on the Section. His numerous articles in the art and popular presses reinforced the Section's image as the "quality" Federal Art Program.

ELLEN SULLIVAN WOODWARD (d. 1971) Joining the FERA in 1933, Woodward assumed control of Federal One from Jacob Baker in July 1936, and remained in charge of the projects through December 1938. Woodward was responsible for overseeing the restructuring of Federal One as the needs and goals of the WPA as a whole were modified.

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