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THE PIONEER ARTISTS OF TAOS

In a word association test most average American given the word "Taos" would probably respond with "artists." The fact that the remainder would say "Indians" amounts to approximately the same thing because most of them know the Indians through the work of the artists. Unlike many word associations, this one is entirely appropriate and logical because Taos and its physical surroundings influenced the Taos artists and their works in a way that is not true of most places we think of as art centers of the past or present. Conversely, few places in the world are so well known because of the works of their artists.

To the extent that these artists are related to the place where they worked, they are also definitely related to each other, but like any other group or school of artists, generalizations about them as a group must be carefully qualified. Probably the most basic qualification is that there was no Taos school of art in terms of the way the artists painted. They were not given to writing manifestoes about the proper methods and techniques of art. They didn't believe that any "ism" was the only road to salvation; in fact, they were a remarkably inarticulate group in this respect. In an age when artists were aggressively vocal about what art should be, these men left very scanty records of their thoughts on the subject. The Taos school, if there is properly such a thing, was not a school of method or philosophy of art, it was an attitude, almost a way of life. The Taos artists shared the fact that in Taos and its countryside each of them found an element that brought into focus his particular talents and emotions.

Kenneth Adams sums it up in this way: "In seeking some quality com-

mon to all of these eight individuals who reacted differently to the stimulus of the physical environment and the human life it embraced, I think I might say it was love: love that had in it elements of reverence for the awe-inspiring grandeur of

the mountains, expanse of cultivated fields and desert, and the simple 'rightness' of 'belonging' that characterizes the Indians and the Spanish-American inhabitants of the Valley."

If a love for an undeniably beautiful and slightly exotic land was the



"HUNGER"

Gilcrease Collection

WALTER UFER

thing the Taos artists had in common, what was it that made them gravitate to this spot? Individual psychologies aside, they were in the beginning a segment of a discernable trend. The art historian E. P. Richardson writing of the 19th century says: "The century closed on the pale, quiet note of the Ten American Painters and their contemporaries, who in search of refinement, had excluded all but the purely esthetic from their attention. In style a watered-down combination of Sargent's brush work and French impressionism prevailed." In reaction to this "quietude" many young American artists were turning to an art that revolved around a vigorous realism which demanded a lively and earthly subject matter. Some who became the most famous found this in the life of eastern cities; others found its equivalent in a slightly more romantic vein in the beautiful valley of Taos. Again Richardson writes: "It was originally an impulse of realism, a desire to paint something of great character and interest in the American land that led to the formation of the famous colonies. The fact that they, too, rose out of the new realism of the beginning of the century is not often remembered."

If the founders of the Taos colony were participating in a trend, the rest of the story is in the opposite direction. The famous New York Armory Show in 1913, which introduced so called "modern art" to America, made little impression on Taos. The men who originally came there apparently found what they felt they needed, and the storms that raged around the theories of "modern art" in the early part of the 20th century affected them very little in their tranquil backwater. Today, compared with what may be called the mainstream of American art, the works of the Taos men are conservative. It must be remembered that the colony was not a product of reaction. Most of the artists were well trained when they arrived in Taos and they simply continued to quietly and competently develop styles that were correct for them. All of them grew and matured as artists, but the inspiration came from within; what was happening in Europe or the Eastern United States was not necessarily pertinent to their problem.

Because the work of the Taos artists did not coincide with what historians think of today as the mainstream of American art, does not mean that they were unknown during their time; in fact, it could almost be said they created their own mainstream in their own area. The story

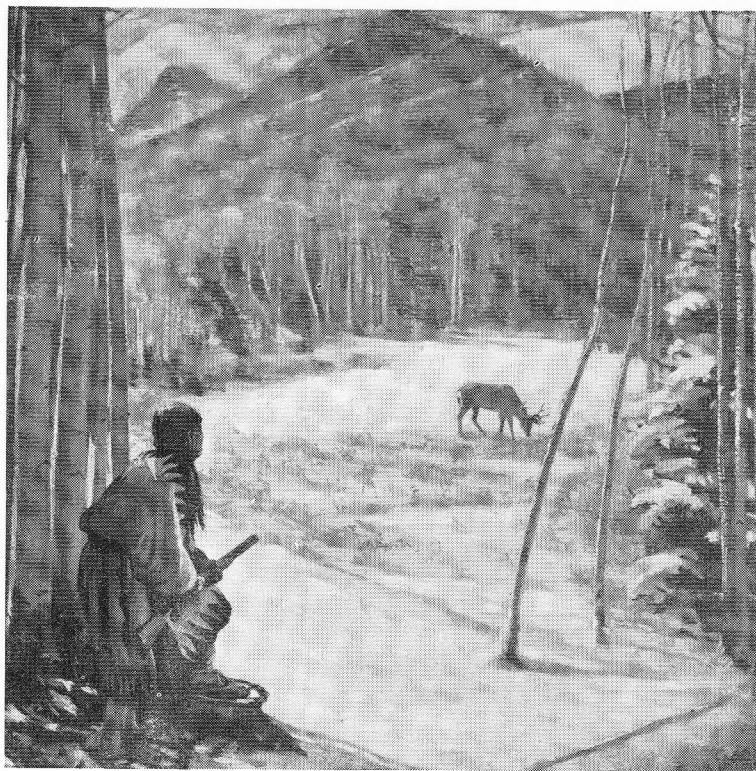
of the founding of the colony is told in detail in other articles in this issue, but in general Taos was beginning to function as an art center shortly after 1900.

In 1914 an organization was formed that included the core members of the Taos art movement. This was the Taos Society of Artists, which originally was comprised of Bert G. Phillips, E. L. Blumenschein, Joseph H. Sharp, O. E. Berninghaus, E. Irving Couse, and W. Herbert Dunton. Later Walter Ufer and Victor Higgins were added to the list, and still later E. Martin Hennings, Catherine C. Critcher, and Kenneth M. Adams became members. Significantly, the constitution of the society contained no pronouncements on what was the proper way to paint. The purpose was to encourage good art, and more particularly to generate an appreciation of art on the part of the public. In this respect the society was so successful it put itself out of operation. At a time when few dealers or museums west of the Mississippi, were interested in contemporary art, the Society arranged exhibits of the members' works. The exhibits were available to any community, and "anything that had a roof and walls" was acceptable as a gallery. The enthusiastic reaction of an art-starved public very quickly established the Society

as an important force in Southwestern culture. Other artists were attracted to the area, and the success of the society gradually changed this artistic hinterland into an area of intense artistic activity. By 1927 the society was dissolved because its members felt their aims had been accomplished. Besides, they were all selling so well they seldom had first class canvases available for exhibits.

Success brought change. It brought new artists, but also it brought new business in the form of services for tourists—what the early-comers refer to contemptuously as commercialism. Taos is still a flourishing art colony, but certainly in the years after 1927 its character gradually changed. Many who came there worked, and continue to work in the best Taos tradition, but some paintings began to appear that, as Frank Waters said, "could have been done anywhere," and this by definition was not in the true Taos spirit.

Whatever the change, the artists of Taos, with the members of the Taos Society as their nucleus have made a unique contribution to American art. They recorded an aspect of American art that was romantic and slightly exotic and at the same time uniquely American. They reflected a love of the land to which Americans of any time will readily respond. C.C.P.



"TAOS HUNTER"

Gilcrease Collection

BERT PHILLIPS

BERT PHILLIPS

... To Capture Beauty

Bert Phillips was the first artist to permanently reside in the little Mexican village of Taos. It is said that he had been there but a few days on his first visit when he knew that here he would stay and make his home. That was in 1898. Soon after arriving in Taos, Phillips began painting the local scene and the immediate sale of these works enabled him to stay and establish a residence and studio. He remained in the picturesque village until his death in June of 1956.

Bert Greer Phillips was born in 1868 in the town of Hudson which lies on the Hudson River south of Albany, New York. This had been the country of the Mohawk Indians, where many of the scenes from the novels of James Fennimore Cooper were laid. It was perhaps the reading of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* which gave young Phillips his first interest in the American Indian. He was particularly attracted by the Indian's love of nature. As a boy, Phillips developed an unusually keen and appreciative sensitivity to beauty. His creative life began early; at 16 he was already expressing his philosophy concerning beauty; at this time, in 1884, he left home to begin study at the Art Student's League in New York.

Phillips was a student at the League and at the National Academy of Design for the next five years. He then opened a studio in New York and painted for a living until 1894, at which time he followed the pattern of the artists of his day and went abroad. The first few months were spent pleasantly in England; later he journeyed to Paris and enrolled in the Academy Julien. At the Academy he met Ernest L. Blumenschein, a young artist from Ohio with whom he enjoyed a strong fellowship, cemented by common interests and similar approaches to life.

Bert Phillips did not remain long in Paris for he was anxious to return to his homeland where he could pursue his dream of long standing. He believed the culture of the American Indian possessed qualities and color highly suitable for the creative needs of the artist. His friend Blumenschein

was also interested in the native American as an art subject, consequently, when the latter returned in 1896, the two young artists worked together and shared a studio in New York City. Their mutual interest in the Indian led, likewise, to a carefully planned sketching trip to Mexico. It was on this first trip made in the fall of 1898 that the artists first saw and felt the enchantment of Taos.

The appeal of Taos to Phillips was the most natural thing in the world. The Taos Valley is a spot of idyllic beauty and Phillips was a romantic soul—delighted with the charm of nature. The serenity of the Sangre de Cristo range overlooking the valley, the dry, clear air, the vivid coloration of the landscape, the rustic buildings of adobe, and the presence of the Indian wrapped in his white Arabian-

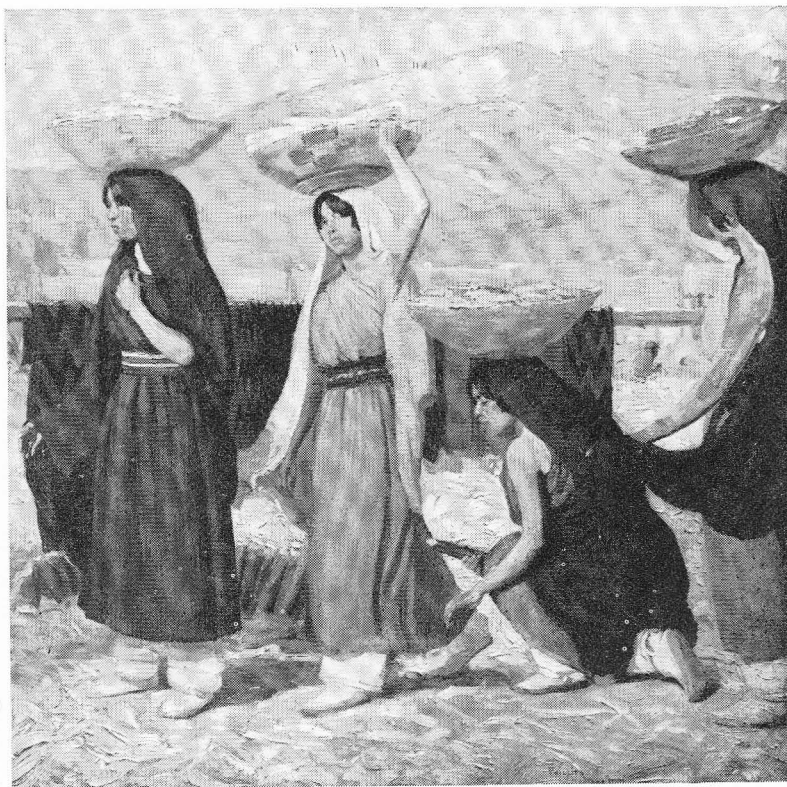
like sheet, provided Phillips with impressive material for his creative impulse. Phillips' paintings are mirrors to his character; they reflect the poetic nature of the man and reveal an intimate devotion to beauty which molded his outlook on life.

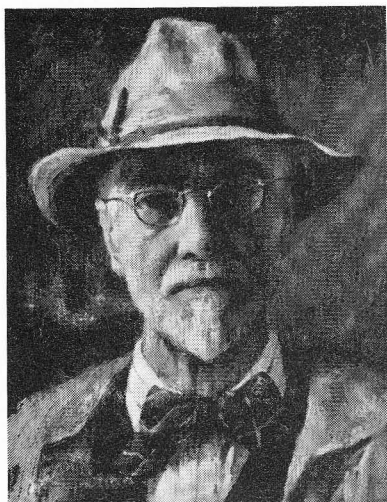
Bert Phillips has secured a permanent place in the history of American art. He belongs to that select group of notable artists who painted the American Indian in his natural environment, his own peculiar contribution being to have faithfully painted the Pueblo Indian in the last phase of his native culture before the inroads of modern civilization altered it completely. The Gilcrease Collections contain several paintings by Phillips which illustrate well his love of Taos and his ability to capture its inimitable beauty. M.W.

"CORN MAIDENS"

Gilcrease Collection

BERT PHILLIPS





SELF-PORTRAIT J. H. SHARP
Gilcrease Collection

In 1893 Joseph Henry Sharp happened upon the beautiful Taos country while he was making a sketching trip through the West. Realizing that he had stumbled upon an artist's paradise he made up his mind to return. Soon after this Sharp met Ernest Blumenschein and Bert Phillips in Paris where they had all gone to study. He described to them the beautiful scenery and picturesque Indian and Spanish peoples of the New Mexico country, and partly as a result of his vivid description, Blumenschein and Phillips made the long trek from Denver to Taos in a covered wagon in 1898. They loved the land and stayed to establish the first studios of what was to become the Taos art colony.

A few years later Sharp returned to Taos and established a home and a studio. He continued to spend most of his summers there painting the Indians and scenery of the New Mexico desert.

* * * *

While still a young boy Joseph Sharp's hearing started to fail and when deafness forced him to drop out of public school at the age of 14 he entered the School of Design in Cincinnati. In 1881 he made his first trip abroad, studying in Antwerp, Munich and Paris; later he spent several months with Frank Duveneck at the Prado in Madrid. He returned to the United States in 1890 and for the next four years served during the winter months as an instructor in life classes at the Cincinnati Art Academy, resigning in 1902 to make the Southwest his permanent home.

Sharp had exhibited in the Paris Exposition in 1900, where international attention was drawn to his Indian subjects; that same year the United States Government acquired a

JOSEPH HENRY SHARP

First Artist to Visit Taos

group of his paintings and installed them in the Smithsonian Institution. In 1901 the government, through President Theodore Roosevelt, built a small studio and cabin for Sharp near the Custer battlefield at the Crow agency in Montana. Here he spent a number of winters painting portraits of Indians as well as scenes which depicted their crafts and their culture.

Sharp's total deafness prompted his use of a writing pad to communicate with his visitors; there were always little scraps of paper on his table which he handed to those who wanted to "talk" with him. Sometimes he talked in the sing-song voice so typical of the deaf, while at other times he preferred to write notes. This tragic loss did not affect his spirit; throughout his life his notes and letters reflect his characteristic wit and sprightliness. (See announcement of opening of studio, 1901. Page 11.)

Though versatile in all his art work, Sharp's studies of Indian characters brought him his highest recognition. He painted practically all the noted Indians of the time, including some

200 of the Custer battle warriors. He had a true humanitarian regard for the personalities and characteristics of these people who represented a dying civilization. He painted with affection and understanding their customs and rituals, their crafts and habits. Sharp's close acquaintance with the Indians and his affectionate regard for them enabled him to capture the mood of a defeated people in cultural transition. His paintings are, therefore, imbued with a veracity and quality of truth which lend them considerable historical value.

Sharp was noted for a long life of perseverance and hard work. He lived to the age of 93 and during his lifetime traveled to the ends of the earth, painting as he went. His long life was a kaleidoscope, reflecting the artist's vital interest in people and scenery the world over. He sketched Koko Head in moonlight, Fuji at dawn—he painted Chinese rice fields in Hawaii, castle gardens in Spain. However his outstanding artistic contribution was his paintings of the American Indian, for whom he had great sympathy and understanding.

V.H.

"DRUM SONG"

Gilcrease Collection

JOSEPH H. SHARP



O. E. BERNINGHAUS

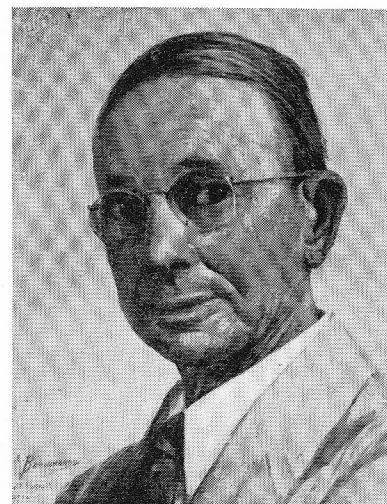
"For the Artist, Taos Had Everything"

Oscar Edmund Berninghaus first visited Taos in 1899 after a railway brakeman told him of the little Mexican village and the Indian Pueblo lying at the foot of Taos Mountain. The brakeman's vivid description of the inhabitants of this little known country, the pueblos in which they dwelt, their customs and manners, and their strange religious dances and rituals, sent Berninghaus on a twenty-five mile wagon trip over what was little more than a goat trail. Fascinated by the people, the adobe architecture, the sagebrush and the mountains, Berninghaus determined to return the following year for a longer stay. This he did each year, spending more time in Taos, until he finally settled there permanently in 1925.

Taos seemed the ideal location for Berninghaus. His work as a commerci-

al artist in St. Louis resulted in repeated commissions for illustrated pamphlets describing the scenic wonders observable along the line of various railroads by whom he was employed. The western country was new to him and wherever he went the unfamiliarity of the landscape intrigued him. He learned to like the West and all that went with it: the strange shapes of mountains rising abruptly from the desert—the pinion, the cactus, the sagebrush, and high up on the mountainsides, the aspen. Above all, Berninghaus developed a genuine love for the Indian and his horses, a love he so skillfully transferred onto canvas.

Berninghaus expressed his own feeling for Taos in the St. Louis *REPUBLIC* in 1913: "This is a splendid country for an artist because there are



SELF-PORTRAIT BERNINGHAUS
Gilcrease Collection

more varieties of atmosphere here than I have found in any other place. Up in the hills one can get the right setting for old trapping pictures. There are many varieties of sage and cactus for background, according to the elevation you choose. The Taos Indians are a splendid type; in fact, the best I have ever seen, and if one wants to paint Mexican pictures, he can get a background near Taos, just as picturesque as any spot in Old Mexico."

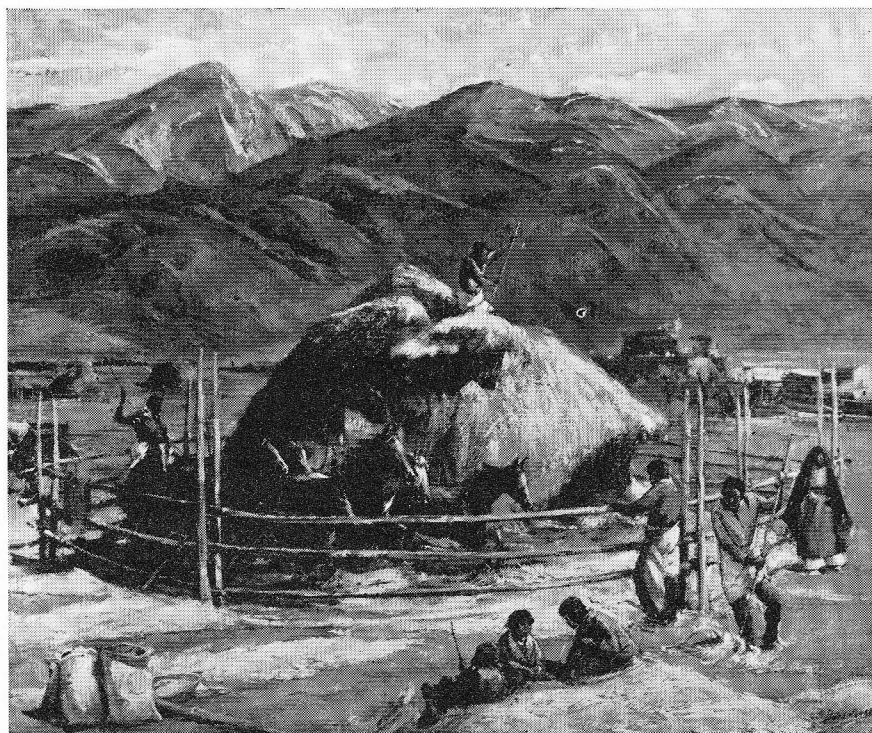
Berninghaus was an exceptionally hard-working man. His art was largely self-taught except for three terms of night classes at Washington University. He was extremely conscientious and meticulous about his work, spending most of his waking hours at his easel or in doing research for his paintings, yet they are not stiffly executed views. His paintings are the reflections of a man who was closely identified with the life around him—a man who loved and enjoyed this life and whose feelings were so poignantly revealed in his work.

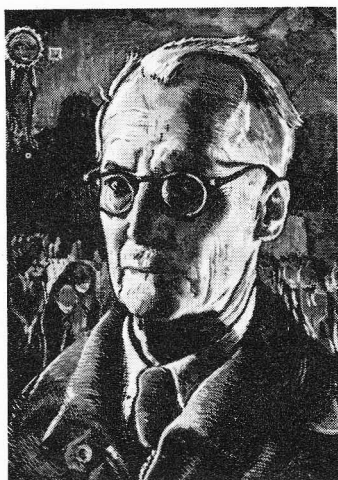
Before his death on April 27, 1952, at the age of 78, Berninghaus said in a newspaper interview: "I think the colony in Taos is doing much for American art. From it I think will come a distinctive art, something definitely American—and I do not mean that such will be the case because the American Indian and his environment are the subjects. But the canvases that come from Taos are as definitely American as anything can be. We have had French, Dutch, Italian, German art. Now we must have American art. I feel that from Taos will come that art." J.S.

"THRESHING TIME"

Gilcrease Collection

O. E. BERNINGHAUS





SELF-PORTRAIT BLUMENSCH
Gilcrease Collection

The founder of the Gilcrease Museum, Thomas Gilcrease, enjoyed the art and the friendship of many of the artists of Taos—one of his special friends was the late Ernest L. Blumenschein. Perhaps there was a strong common understanding between these two men, since they have both been vitally concerned with the spirit, the soul, the deep-running—often misunderstood—spiritual life of the American Indian. On the one hand the artist painted his feeling for and understanding of these elemental people who lived in such great harmony and communion with nature. Gilcrease, the prodigious collector of all things concerned with the Indian, on the other hand has gathered together from all corners of the world the whole cloth and the fragments which tell of the natives of this land—and from which historians will continue to card, re-weave and unfold the fabric of a people, a way of life and a civilization now of the past.

The two men worked towards the same—often one helping the other. They were both successful in their respective endeavors. These were strong men working with powerful forces; it is not strange that they found a great sympathy for these free and unfettered hunters of the woods and plains.

It has been said that no white man—nor a “civilized Indian”—will ever know the ways of the Indian, nor truly see his gods and understand his love and awe for the things in nature, but many men try. Some get close to the source and to the mood and spirit. This closeness sometimes touches the poet or the artist in a man

and he is gifted then with an uncommon insight.

Ernest Blumenschein had this insight regarding the Indian—it is evident in his many paintings of the people and their ways. Perhaps he was deeply moved by a mysticism, a pantheism in their lives; he has attempted to illustrate this aspect of the American native more often than any other artist. This is difficult—this painting of a spiritual attitude, a basic love of all things good in nature, of a Spartan concept of living. How can it be put on canvas for others to see and understand? Certainly it cannot be done by drawing meaningless abstractions or distorted, pseudo primitive signs. Fortunately Blumenschein was an honest man; he painted meaningful pictures in his own creative style which do give a feeling of the almost unliteral spiritual life of the American Indian. “Enchanted Forest” and “Moon, Morning Star and Evening Star”, illustrated here, are examples of his successful interpretation of highly meaningful subjects.

Ernest Blumenschein was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, on May 26,

1874, but grew up in Dayton, Ohio. At the age of 18 he gave up the study of music and went to New York to become an artist; he later studied at the Academy Julien and at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. On his return to America he became a successful illustrator and with his friend Bert Phillips “discovered” Taos. This phase of his life and the early days of Taos as an art colony are so important that Blumenschein’s account of this, written many years ago, will be quoted in full.

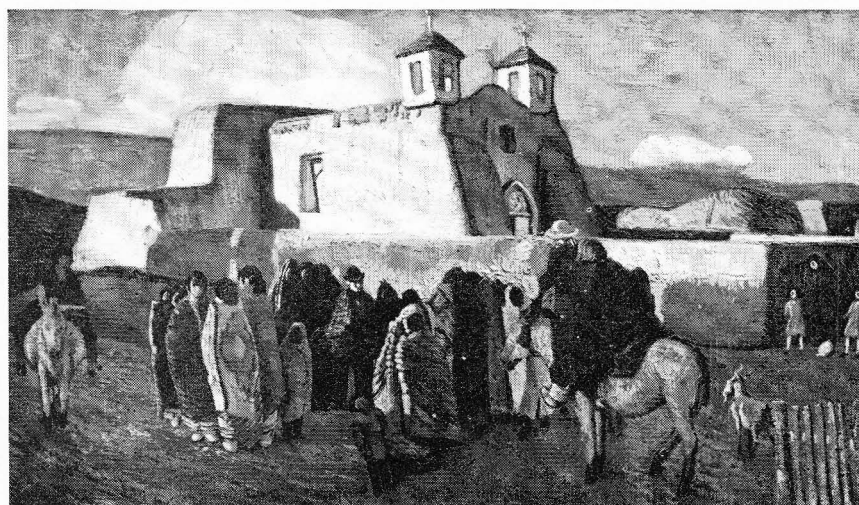
“I want to record the official beginning so will slip back a long time when I was an art student in Paris. There I met Henry Sharp. From him I heard for the first time of the Indian village of Taos where he had sketched for a couple of weeks. It was located at the foot of a mountain in northern New Mexico. I remember being impressed, as I pigeonholed that curious name in my memory with a hope that some day I might pass that way.

“Returning soon after to America, McClure’s new magazine, destined to become famous and die, assigned me a job of illustrating, that obliged

“TAOS PUEBLO”

Gilcrease Collection

ERNEST BLUMENSCH



me to visit New Mexico and Arizona. It was a short trip, but a thrilling one, in midwinter. When I got back from this journey I was so enthusiastic over the possibilities of a sketching trip in the plateau country, that I induced Bert Phillips to save his money and accompany me the following summer.

"Phil and I decided to outfit at Denver. We purchased a light wagon to be delivered with harness, at a corral where we had obtained two broncos. We loaded that vehicle to its capacity with our camping and painting apparatus.

"Without betraying our ignorance, we carefully observed how the cowboys harnessed the animals.

"Then away we drove—headed for Mexico. In those days we could camp by the roadside when night overtook us. We would stake out the horses on the end of long ropes, cook our meals on a frying-pan and crawl under the wagon to sleep. June, July, part of August we spent sketching in the Rockies of Colorado.

"The second of September we crossed La Veta pass into New Mexico. A decided change came in the scenery as well as in the roads. The heavy thunderstorms of summer had ruined the mountain roads. We broke double trees and single trees by the dozen. After passing Questa we climbed up a steep grade on a miserable road. At the top of this foothill, at the edge of a canon, on a narrow curve, we slid into a deep rut and the wagon suddenly sat down. One rear wheel collapsed and there we were balancing with our precious load at an angle of forty-five degrees.

"Experienced mountaineers would have replaced the wheel with a spruce sapling but we decided to take the broken member to the nearest blacksmith shop.

"The nearest blacksmith was at Taos, over 20 miles away. We flipped a three dollar gold-piece to see which of us stayed on the mountain with the outfit and one horse. It was my fortune to get the task of carrying the wheel on horseback to Taos. At 4 p.m. on the third of September, 1898, I started down the mountain on what resulted in the most impressive journey of my life.

"It took me until dark to reach the bottom of the long hill. There I spent the night with a hospitable Spanish-American farmer—one dollar for frijoles and bed and frijoles again for breakfast.

"It was early in the morning when I resumed my 40-mile horseback ride. My muscles soon ached from carrying the broken wheel. What had seem-

ed a simple job when we tossed the coin had become a painful task.

"The wheel grew larger and heavier as I shifted it to all conceivable positions, from arm to arm, then to my neck or back or feet. Even the horse resented the badly balanced burden on his saddle and grunted his displeasure at every stop.

"Vividly I recall the discomfort of lugging that unwieldy load with no relief in sight, no wagon going my way, no hope to ease sore muscles until I reached Taos, the dim picture of which I had made in imagination from Sharp's slight description.

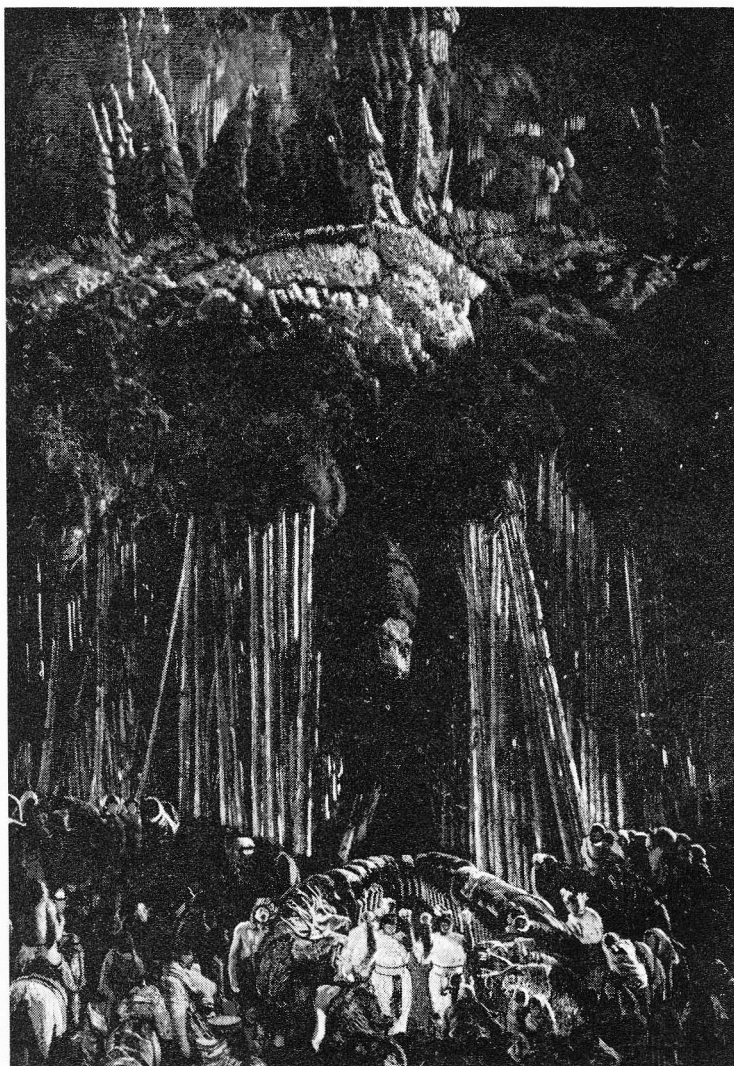
"But Sharp had not painted for me the land or the mountains and plains and clouds. No artist had ever recorded the New Mexico I was now seeing. No writer had ever written down the smell of this air or the feel of that morning's sky. I was receiving under

rather painful circumstances, the first great unforgettable inspiration of my life. My destiny was being decided as I squirmed and cursed while urging the bronco through those many miles of waves of sagebrush.

"The morning was sparkling and stimulating. The beautiful Sangre de Cristo range to my left was quite different in character from the Colorado mountains. Stretching away from the foot of the range was a vast plateau cut by the Rio Grande and by lesser gorges in which were located small villages of flat-roofed adobe houses built around a church and plaza, all fitting into the color scheme of the tawny surroundings.

"The sky was a clear, clean blue with sharp moving clouds. The color, the effective character of the landscape, the drama of the vast spaces.

(Cont. p. 10)



"ENCHANTED FOREST"

Gilcrease Collection

ERNEST BLUMENSCHNEIN

IRVING E. COUSE

In Pursuit of the Red Man

Foreign artists, especially the French, have long been puzzled by the apparent desire of Americans to find suitable art-worthy subjects abroad—rather than at home. By the end of the 19th century Americans were taking a new look at their homeland and their people; some of these artists traveled to the Southwest where the clear air, the angular landscape and the remnants of an ancient and ageless people offered a rich field for artistic activity.

Irving Eanger Couse (1866-1936) is one artist who studied in France and profited by the experience, learning something of importance besides the techniques of painting. He absorbed the French feeling for beauty and acquired an ability to express himself with paint and brush.

Soon after 1900 Couse returned to America; he traveled into the southwest and to Taos. Laura M. Bickerstaff points out in her book **Pioneer Artists of Taos** that Couse came to Taos as a result of his search for an Indian type which would justify the name, Red Man. He had been disappointed with the skin tones of the natives who lived in the rain-shrouded northwest. However, on the brilliant, sunbaked plains of New Mexico Couse found the red-hued skin coloring he had longed to paint. Here he studied and painted the American Indian, bathing him in his own glowing colors. "The Arrow Maker," in the Gilcrease collection, is an excellent example of Couse's use of the reflected light of an open fire with an Indian subject. In this painting the clear-cut profile is revealed in a peaceful attitude; the overall effect is one of timelessness—wrought by careful composition. The highlighted areas and surface richness of the painting done in reds, yellows and blues, presents a feeling of warmth and contentment.

Is there any wonder that Couse's paintings were reproduced by the Santa Fe Railroad and distributed to eager millions? Why this appeal? Likely it is because Couse has colorfully and dramatically captured the Indian

in expressive repose as has no other artist.

"Couse liked to take a model and go down by the Rio Grande and make small sketches, or in October when the aspen blazed yellow and gold in the mountains, he would go high up in the canyons and sketch these colorful trees. He preferred to paint the Indian in a landscape because it was his natural environment."¹ However, Couse was essentially a studio painter. His habit was to begin his large canvas in his studio, composing from the sketches made out of doors with the model before him.

Irving Eanger Couse was born September 3, 1866, in Saginaw, Michigan. He died April 25, 1936, in Taos, New Mexico. Couse studied at the Nation-

al Academy in New York and at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris under Adolphe Bouguereau, Gabriel Ferrier, and Tony Robert—Fleury. Upon returning to the United States, he established a studio in New York City for a brief period where he won the third Hallgarten prize in 1902. He established a studio in Taos shortly after the turn of the century and remained there until his death. In 1911 he was elected to the National Academy. Couse's work hangs in many museums throughout the world including the Metropolitan Museum and the National Galleries, Washington, D.C. B.W.

1. Bickerstaff, Laura M. **Pioneer Artist of Taos**, 1955.

"THE ARROW MAKER"

Gilcrease Collection

IRVING COUSE



The West Has Passed

W. Herbert Dunton

In appearance and in his actions this man was an outdoorsman—possibly a hunter or a cattleman. If you came upon him in the hills around Taos, lying quietly behind a shelf of rock watching a herd of deer you would automatically anticipate the sound of a rifle disturbing the peaceful scene. Not so with this man, however, for William Herbert Dunton hunted his animals more often with a box of paints than with a gun.

Dunton, painter of animal life and the American West, was born at Augusta, Maine, August 28, 1878. His love of nature led him to travel to Montana in 1896 when he was only eighteen years old. Thereafter he regularly visited the West to hunt, to sketch and to wander about the range country observing the life of the cowboy for which he acquired especial appreciation. During these years of his travels throughout the West—which was still the West of the horse—Dunton spent his winters in the East painting and illustrating books and magazine articles. While studying at the Art Students League in New York his instructor, Ernest Blumen-schein, prevailed upon him to move to Taos, New Mexico. This he did in June of 1912. W. Herbert Dunton thus became the sixth and last of the original founders of the Taos Art Society.

At Taos Dunton's personal interests continued to be focused on the entire Western scene; he made more frequent and longer camping trips into regions away from the hubbub of civilization where he could commune with nature, where he could study and sketch and hunt and enjoy the wilderness, where as he put it: "I have found the secret of contentment, which is in the work you love and the enjoyment of the simple things." It was this dislike for the crowded city and this preference for the simple life that had induced Dunton to leave his Eastern studio after he was already an established and successful artist to settle permanently in the remote village of Taos.

Here Dunton continued to paint the various facets of the Western scene; he specialized in pictures of

wild game, of horses and Indians and he painted many canvases depicting the life of the cattleman. In fact, Dunton's first love was the cattle industry and his sympathy for it is revealed in his own account of his most notable work, "The Cattle Buyer." "The West has passed—more's the pity," he wrote, "In another twenty-five years the old time Westerner will have gone too—gone with the buffalo and the antelope. I'm going to hand down to posterity a bit of the unadulterated real thing if it's the last thing I do—and I am going to do it *muy pronto*."

As an artist Dunton is not so well known today as during his own lifetime when he was illustrating many books, doing murals and winning enviable prizes at art exhibits. But Dunton's work is characterized by authenticity and integrity. He painted that about which he felt strongly and perhaps for this reason his paintings have a notable realism which, when combined with his talent for decorative feeling, gives his canvases a striking and modern effect. Dunton, who died March 18, 1936, has made a permanent contribution to the art of the American West. M.W.



"THE OUTLIER"

Gilcrease Collection

W. HERBERT DUNTON

BLUMENSCHIEIN—Cont. From P. 7
the superb beauty and serenity of the
hills, stirred me deeply.

"I realized I was getting my own
impressions from nature, seeing it for
the first time with my own eyes, unin-
fluenced by the art of any man. Not-
withstanding the painful handicap of
that broken wheel I was carrying, New
Mexico inspired me to a profound de-
gree.

"My grunting horse carried me
down and across the gorges, around
the foothills, over long flat spaces that
were like great lakes of sagebrush
through 20 slow miles of thrilling
sensation. It had to end in the Taos
valley, green with trees and fields of
alfalfa, populated by dark skinned
people who greeted me pleasantly.
Then I saw my first Taos Indians,
picturesque, colorful, dressed in blank-
ets artistically draped. New Mexico
had gripped me—and I was not long
in deciding that if Phillips would agree
with me, if he felt as inspired to
work as I, the Taos valley and its
surrounding magnificent country
would be the end of our wagon trip.
Mexico and other lands unknown
could wait until the future.

"The broken wheel was mended by
the blacksmith and I returned the next
day to Phil. Soon after reaching Taos,
we sold the wagon, team and harness.
Phillips and I pitched into work with
unknown enthusiasm."

After another brief period of study
in Europe, Blumenschein returned to
Taos to make it his home until his
death, at the age of 86, on June 6th
of this year.

Blumenschein's honors over the
years were many. Outstanding awards
included prizes of the National Acade-
my of Design in 1914, 1917, 1921,
1925; medal of the National Arts
Club, 1935; medal of the Salma-
gundi Club, New York, 1935; prizes
from the Art Institute of Chicago,
1917; Grand Central Art School, New
York, 1910; Pennsylvania Academy
of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 1910;
Honorary Master of Fine Arts, Uni-
versity of New Mexico, 1947;
Honorary Fellow in Fine Arts, School
of American Research, Santa Fe,
1948.

Blumenschein was made an As-
sociate of the National Academy in
1910 and a National Academician in
1927. He was a member of the Socie-
ty of Illustrators, New Mexico Paint-
ers 1923, the Taos Society of Arts of
which he was president from 1921-
23; the New York Water Color So-
ciety; the Salmagundi Club; the Na-
tional Arts Club; and the Audubon
Club.

J.T.F.



"MOON, MORNING STAR, EVENING STAR"
Gilcrease Collection

ERNEST BLUMENSCHIEIN

Joseph Sharp on His Childhood

The following are brief excerpts
from a "first draft" biography Joseph
Sharp wrote shortly before his death.

"The American Indian always in-
terested me . . . I saw my first ones
in Bridgeport, Ohio, sometime in the
1860's. They were stopping enroute at
the B & O Railway station, the B & O
being the only railroad west of Wash-
ington and New York in those days.
There were several Indian families
waiting for another train and the
brown skinned boys were shooting at
'chini plasters', stuck in a slitted stick,
with bows and arrows. Sometimes a
silver three cent piece was put up by a
by-stander. These boys usually hit
their mark; I was greatly impressed
with my first contact with Indians—
and it stuck.

"I was kicked out of my first school
for putting sulphur on the hot class
room stove, but this pleased me since
I wanted to go to a school farther
away from home so I could carry my

lunch. At my next school I had two
books and a slate. I got 99 on map
drawing but fell down on all other
subjects. We had speeches every
other Friday. I got mine from the
advanced McGuffey readers, Hamlet's
Soliloquy, and Rienzi's address to his
Roman soldiers. The superintendent
happened in our room just as I was
getting started on Hamlet; I got
flustered, forgot all and was set down.
The professor told me to see him in
his office after school; for one week
he tried to teach me to speak my
piece like Edwin Booth. It didn't take.
The superintendent was a strick and
serious man and years later in Cin-
cinnati I was commissioned to paint
his portrait. He was so glum I hated
to picture him that way so I finally
said, "Mr. Van Dyke, do you remem-
ber the time you licked me with a rat-
tan ruler and I bit you in the leg?"
Well, after that I got a better expres-
sion from him.

(From a Manuscript in the Gilcrease Library.)

Tribute to an Artist...

Editor, American Scene

When I heard of the passing of Mr. Blumenschein, I was saddened. Then remembering the dynamic Taos artist—his vim and vigor, his keen interest in everything about him, I thought, "No, 'Blumey' would not like sadness, he was interested in the happiness and life of the world around him." My REMEMBRANCE of Mr. Blumenschein will not be in an unhappy vein.

I had first seen this painter's paintings on a trip to Taos in 1930, when my wife and I and our big German Shepherd "Yucca" took a trip from our home in the southern "Tip o' Texas" to the mountains of Colorado and New Mexico.

Taos captured us! We returned many times. When Millard Sheets of California was to be visiting instructor in the University of New Mexico field class at Taos, about 1940, we headed for Taos. In addition to Sheets' instruction, several Taos artists were kind enough to donate their services in helping the school. These men would give criticisms in the field and sometimes in their own studios, especially if cornered by a student and asked to do so, as O. E. Berninghaus was often cornered by me.

My wife and young daughter did not attend the final day criticisms at Harwood Foundation that first year. They did when I returned in 1941. I wasn't about to let them miss hearing the criticism of my work. I wanted them to feel proud of the nice things that were about to be said of the art ability of their husband and daddy.

They were there, off to one side. I was sitting next to a lady who was an art instructor somewhere in Connecticut. We sat near the end of the row of students that would get the last criticism. Blumey was IT! They say he was quite a tennis player. The little guy sure looked in the pink of condition. He started in, almost dancing around, like pursuing an elusive ball. He took one picture after another. Nobody was spared ANYTHING! They didn't pull punches in that field school at Taos. A spade was called a SPADE and a poor painting was not called passable. Likewise, good efforts were praised, up to a point.

Blumenschein had seen a few horse sketches I had in the student exhibit before the final criticisms. He had commented favorably on them. I was feeling fairly secure.

Some of the works by different

students were given fair praise when Blumenschein got started on the final criticisms. He danced about, occasionally slamming hard at some fault in a painting, but giving due credit when he considered it was deserved. The BIG thing that struck me was the absolute honesty of the man. If he had been criticizing one of Ike's paintings and he had at that time been President, he would have gotten the same treatment as the rest of us. There were no favorites to the little Taos artist.

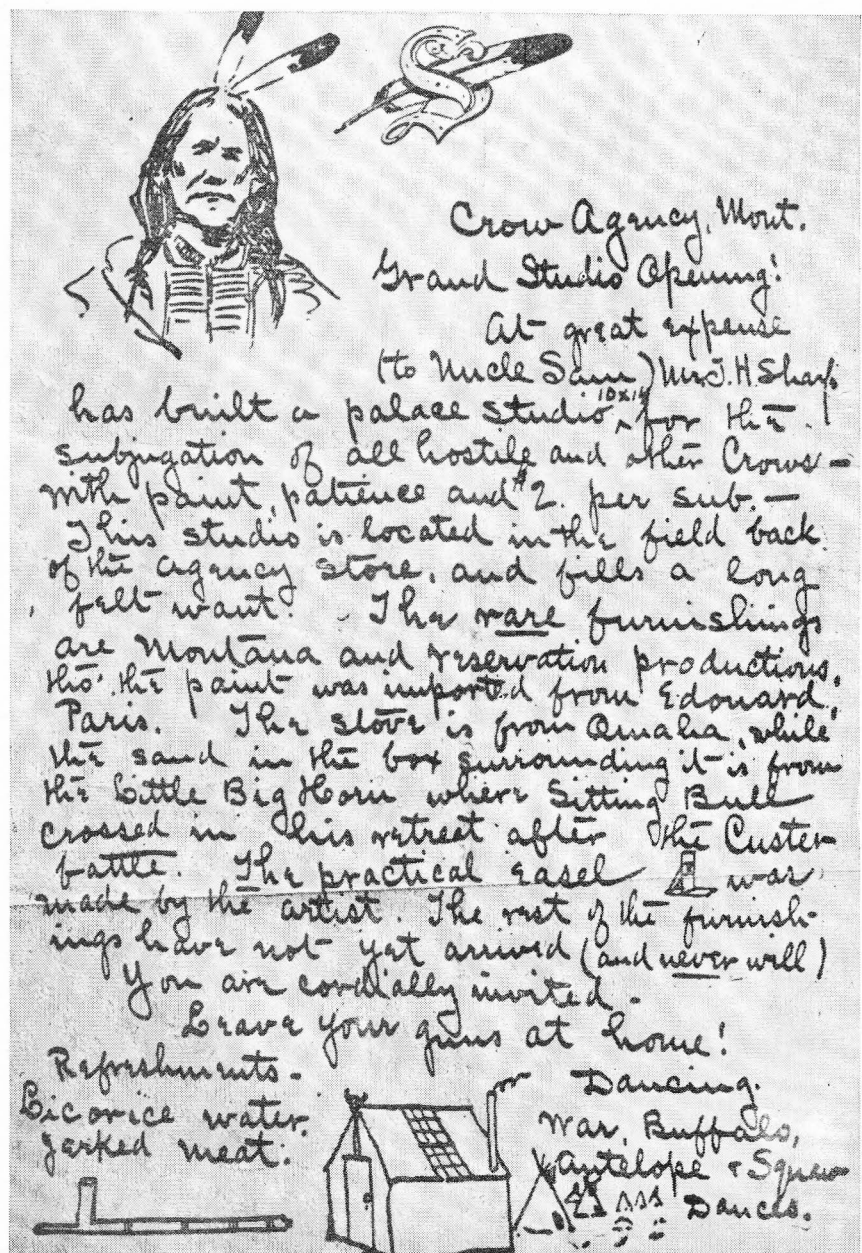
Blumey finally danced his way to the pictures painted by the artist from Connecticut. Some of hers did not appeal to him. He said so in no uncertain terms. After the class, she retired to another room and shed tears. Now he had reached my things.

One or two were so-so. Then he picked up one, glared at it and started in! I was afraid to look at my wife and daughter. Seemed as though I was shrinking up, sort of shriveling, sinking lower and lower in my seat, like oozing down in quick-sand.

No one got the criticism I did that year! Blumey figuratively tore the painting to pieces. I wished he would do it literally. When it was all over and I had crawled out of the quick-sand, I took stock of his remarks, and my one solace was the fact that I knew this man was completely honest. Yes, Blumey sure took the wind out of my sails . . . Probably it was one of the best things that ever happened to me—art-wise.

C. L. PACKER *

*Mr. Packer, artist and writer, is on the staff of the TULSA WORLD.



Book Reviews . . .

Triumph on Fairmount,
George and Mary Roberts,
Lippincott, 1959, \$6.00

In 1925 the Philadelphia museum of Art with its neo-classic structure on Fairmount Parkway, housed only a smattering of art and its two newly completed wings stood as a partly raised Greek temple—the main section had not been built. Today Philadelphia owns one of the nation's finest art museums and much of the credit for this can be attributed to Fiske Kimball, the museum's able director from 1925 to 1955. Even a quarter of a century ago the acquiring of large and valuable collections of art for museums was not a simple matter. Fiske Kimball had to fight the lethargic citizens of Philadelphia: he forced his board of trustees into action and he often browbeat his most generous patrons in his efforts to acquire the best available works of art from all parts of the world for their museum.

This biography was written by people who personally knew the strong-willed, tempestuous Kimball—yet it is neither overly sympathetic nor unduly critical of the man. The most valuable aspect of the book is in its patient unraveling of the role of the museum in the community—its importance, its potential vitality and its great and urgent need for understanding by its patrons and by its public. The trials, hopes, dreams and failures of the tireless Philadelphia director give a clue to more than the museum in America and its experience. The life of Kimball touched, as with all people in public life, the social, political—even financial pulse of the country. (Kimball was able to build the museum's collection even during the dark depression days of the 1930's). He was aided by men like Eli K. Price, George Widener, J. Stoddell Stokes, Edward G. Robinson and he was maligned and hindered at times by the press and always by the art collector, Dr. Albert Barnes. (The latter is the subject of a new biography, **Art and Argyrol**.)

Fiske Kimball was a man of con-

siderable scholarship, having written several books and articles including **The History of Architecture**. This ability to run a large museum, to find time to travel the world over in search of art objects and to do careful research indicate the drive and energy of the man. But suddenly after 30 years as the museum's dynamic director, Kimball's energies collapsed. His wife whom he dearly loved had died and shortly afterwards in 1955 he was forced to resign. That same year touring Europe he suffered a stroke and died.

This biography of a little known man is well written; it has human interest and the times and the people are well drawn. The book can be read with interest by anyone. Patrons of the arts, however, and those having concern for the cultural responsibility of our museums will find **Triumph on Fairmount** important in discerning the complex pattern of these public institutions. They will understand more clearly than ever that museums continue to exist because of and **only** because of the active participation of those who feel that our culture is worth preserving. Perhaps, too, they will recognize, as did Fiske Kimball, that the job being done by our museum cannot and will not be done by any other institution.

James T. Forrest

Architectural Follies in America,
Clay Lancaster, Tuttle, 1960, \$10.00

Clay Lancaster has chosen an unusual aspect of the subject of architecture and given it delightful appeal in his charming book **Architectural Follies In America**. Spanning nearly two and a half centuries from the early eighteenth century through the half of the twentieth century, the author takes the reader through a fascinating profusion of confusion, on an arm chair tour of more than two dozen monumental architectural follies. The author is quick to point out that the unconventional buildings he has chosen to illustrate his point were not meant to be so; in fact, "The thing that characterizes all these works is the seriousness and intensity by which the builders tackled their tasks."

Excellent examples of the human motives are the Corn Palace in Mitchell, South Dakota and the Winchester Mystery House in San Jose, California. Mitchell's spacious Corn Palace was erected as a tribute to agricultural products and was constructed with walls encrusted with grain, mostly corn. The tribute was sincere, if impractical, and when the first Corn Palace was demolished, a second was substituted which is annually redecorated with about three thousand bushels of corn. As for the Winchester Mystery House, it was built in hopes of prolonging the life of the owner. The rambling residence of Sarah L. Winchester, of the Winchester rifle fortune, who believe she would die when the house was completed, kept sixteen carpenters busy adding rooms—for thirty-six years. At the time of her death, the robust Mrs. Winchester was living in a 160 room home—each completely furnished—and the carpenters were still busy.

This book about America's architectural curiosities is illustrated with 78 plates, many of them in color. (The color is not effective in this Japanese-printed book. Ed note.) Mr. Lancaster's serious but humorous narrative of the human follies that resulted in these architectural follies has produced an entertaining and enlightening contribution to architectural literature.

Jane Slocum

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