

# How Utah Artists Are Winning Their Way.



ART like poetry needs an audience as much as it needs an artist to fulfill its purpose. Pioneer life in Utah has been a struggle, and true to the prototype that it reflects, the same struggle has characterized pioneer art.

It is good cheer to Utah's artists that the men of brawn are flocking into Utah to build railroads, smelters, and factories. It increases the audience, and that makes it easier to work, and to build up Utah as an art center.

Utah has grown this year in her art field as she has grown in her athletic prestige and in her commercial activity. It is now 43 years since the first art association was formed in Utah, and the closing year finds four down town studios in Salt Lake, four artists regularly engaged in professional teaching in the university, the high school, and in the city schools, while there is one night class in pure art under the direction of Mahonri M. Young, the well known sculptor and painter.

Outside of Salt Lake, there is distinct activity at Logan, where A. B. Wright is at work in the Brigham Young college, and at Park City, where William Adams is doing some excellent things in landscape and water colors.

Of special concern to Utah art interests one item has happened this year without the borders of the state. It was in the loss to Will Clawson of his San Francisco studio. Mr. Clawson was one of the first artists to come back to Utah from Paris, and gain standing abroad. In his studio were many paintings that had acquired some fame, and many that had been turned out in his Salt Lake home, before he went to the coast. The earthquake wrecked the building in which his studio was located, and the fire finished a devastation that was a distinct blow keenly felt by all Utah artists and lovers of art.

In the illustrative world which caters more than pure art to present needs and the moment's demand, a signal success has been won by Clyde Squiles. The young Utah artist has been studying in New York for four years and he has turned out work enough already to class him with the best of the magazine illustrators.

At home the little colony of artists have been working through the year, each in his chosen line, and many with the ambition of getting away to larger fields and a more ready clientele, such as is found in only the big centers of population.

## J. LEO FAIRBANKS.

The art recruit of the year is J. Leo Fairbanks. He is the son of J. B. Fairbanks, who was also one of the first artists to come home from Paris studies, and in the exhibit this fall his paintings made a distinct impression of merit and careful technique. Mr. Fairbanks takes to out doors by inheritance, and his most happy subjects are those dealing with landscape and moody weathers. He has performed a distinct service to historical art, which is one of the privileges of all workers in the field, to feel their inspiration in the life around them rather than in the suggestions of their masters. On the way home from a summer's work at the University of

Chicago, he stopped off at Nauvoo, and sketched many of the historical spots, where relics of the old Mormon settlement still remain.

Among them are the houses of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Heber C. Kimball, and the Carthage jail, where the founder of Mormonism was shot to death in cold blood. Mr. Fairbanks has been very busy this year with his work in the city schools in which he acts as art supervisor. His work has been very satisfactory, as was testified to by a raise in salary which was granted him only a short time ago.

At Chicago this summer Mr. Fairbanks was offered a faculty position, but declined it to fulfill a previously made engagement with the city school board. Among his hangings in the autumn exhibition were a sketch of Chicago, from the lakes, and two of the university. With his father and John Hafen, he occupies a studio in suite 10 of the Hooper-Eldredge block.

## YOUNG WON STATE PRIZE.

The annual exhibit of the Utah Art Institute was held this year in the Social hall in October. Mahonri M. Young was winner of the state prize, his picture being a powerful representation of the pride of being strong. It was a blacksmith scene in which muscle and power were the foremost qualities. The strength of men who labor is a topic on which Mr. Young promises to do his best work, and his state prize this year is distinctly suggestive of his peculiar power with the brush and in sculpture.

This was the eighth annual exhibit. There were twenty artists exhibiting, of whom ten had paintings enough to class them as professional workers in the field. They are J. Leo Fairbanks, Mahonri M. Young, G. Wesley Brown, J. T. Harwood, Lu Dean Christensen, Lee Greene Richards, Miss Myra Sawyer, John Hafen, A. B. Wright, and J. B. Fairbanks. Besides those who exhibit, must be reckoned as artists the good old pioneers, who work away without trying to bring their paintings to public notice, and Harry Culmer, who does not choose to exhibit his work with the society. Of the pioneers must be named George M. Ottinger, who is doing some good things on ancient American history, Alfred Lambourn, who has made Great Salt Lake peculiarly his own theme both for paintings and verse as well as poetic prose, and Dan Weggeand, who is represented this year as in so many previous exhibits, by one offering—a view from Pelican point.

## GEORGE M. OTTINGER.

George M. Ottinger is the man to whom the reporters know they can go for accurate bits of ancient history, especially in matters of art. When asked the other day how art in Utah had its organized beginning, he said that the first artist who ever came here was William Major. He came with the pioneer movement, and returned to Europe in 1833 on a mission. He died while on this service for his religion. Next came Cavalli in 1836, to remain only a month while making some sketches. About this time, too, Mrs. J. V. Long began to work, and turned out a number of portraits, including a group of church leaders, entitled "Brigham Young and His Friends." In 1861 Ottinger himself came, and Dan Weggeand followed in 1862. These were the first artists to stick it out, and stay by their profession, sink or swim. Ottinger through all the years

since then, has turned out work on a varied plan. There are sailor pictures, rock cover pictures, Japanese pictures, war pictures, illustrating legends, landscapes, and especially the pictures of the southern Utah and Mexican ancient civilizations. This year he has made a large one entitled "Reclining the Rock River's Record," on the same plan as a smaller one turned out last year. Other pictures of the year in this field are "Queen Savee," a query of an ancient temple at which a modern Indian girl is doing worship, and "The Chief Dwellers' Daughter," a sketch of a young Indian girl wandering about in the ruins of the mountain masonry.

Mr. Ottinger says that the first art organization was formed in August, 1862. It was an association to teach art, and its members, according to a call issued in the Deseret News of Aug. 8, 1863, were the following: Geo. M. Ottinger, Wm. V. Morris, E. L. T. Harrison, Henry Mathen, Martin Lamb, D. A. Weggeand, C. R. Savara, Ralph Ramsey, and William J. Silver. All but Weggeand, Ramsey, Silver and Ottinger are now dead.

## THE OLD DAYS.

The first governmental encouragement for Utah artists came from the territorial fairs. They always included an art department. In 1861, Mr. Ottinger was a lone exhibitor. Next year Mrs. Long added a few paintings, and Mr. Beck of the Nineteenth ward put in a contribution. Then in a few years William Morris began to exhibit, and from this beginning sprang the art work of Utah. Mr. Ottinger has a silver medal, given in 1890 for his painting entitled "Cavalli de Yaca in the Land of the Chola," a painting dealing with the Spanish invasion of Mexico.

## LEE GREENE RICHARDS.

To a reporter working all year on the routine of politics, fires and robberies, there is a good deal of pure joy in an

autumnal round of the various art studios of Salt Lake for a glimpse into worlds where the routine man seldom has a chance to enter. Lee Greene Richards was found at his quarters in the Templeton block, at work on a portrait of a well known Salt Lake woman. When asked what he thought his chief effort of the year, he gave the credit to a portrait of Dr. Park, executed this spring for the University of Utah Alumni association, and now hanging at the university. Besides that, Mr. Richards has done a number of portraits and sketches in oil. Portraits are, however, his vogue, and a hopeful sign for the future of Utah art is that there are orders enough beginning to come to keep a portrait painter busy.

## MAHONRI M. YOUNG.

Mahonri M. Young's studio spells readily the interest of its owner in labor, the fruit of labor. As one enters the bronzes and plaster casts of

statuary are figures at work, and there is something powerful about them. This year the series of figures are on the wall, and this series, too, speaks the power of muscles. One is called "The Middle Weight," another "End of the Seventeenth," and another "At the Top of the Gong." All show the same interest in physical man that shows through so many of Mr. Young's works, even to his "Blacksmiths," which dignifies the strength of arm used in shoeing a horse to the point of winning a state prize.

Mr. Young was found finishing a bust of Miss Emma Lucy Gates, a relative of Mr. Young, who is talented in another way, just as his own brother Waldemar is still in another. Besides his statuary, which includes a bust of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and a medallion to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Prophet, Mr. Young has this year worked up a number of water colors and oil sketches. His unfinished work seems to indicate a future in all three of these lines, rather than a settling down into one of them. It was no surprise to the interviewer to see him pull out, in answer to a question as to whether he considered the Four Bards perfectly physically, a note book of sketches made during their performance at the Orpheum, which he planned to work up into sketches of muscular gymnasts.

## J. T. HARWOOD.

J. T. Harwood is a man of gentle feelings. His paintings show it as well as his voice. Near his home on Eleventh South street his studio is located, following the example of other artists who have built buildings specially adapted to their work.

It is an affair of glass and boards, arranged for top and side lights as desired, with a cosy interior, even including a fire place in checker brick, and an equipment of ancient furniture, tapestries, spinning wheels, and other

art "properties," traces of which can be found in the paintings which stand about on easels and the walls. Mr. Harwood teaches half a day at the High school. The other half day he paints at his home, and when he was found there, he was finishing a picture which promises to be his best thing to date. It is of a girl seated at a spinning wheel, her hand listlessly idle, while she is gazing into the fireplace, and listening to music from a piano being played in the gloom behind her, there being no light but that from the fire, only the glow of which is shown. The mood on the girl's face is the thing that gives the picture its character, and it could well be styled "Memories" or "An Old Love Song." The artist has selected "A Spinning Song" as the title.

Mr. Harwood has in his studio the picture which won him a membership in the Society of Western Artists. It was exhibited at Chicago and other cities last year, and was exhibited here this year for the first time. Beside it is the original composition sketch of "The Adoration of the Ages," which won Mr. Harwood much recognition last year, and a reproduction of which has appeared in the "News."

The sales department, in one artist like to hear from Mr. Harwood sold to an exhibitor recently eight paintings. They are "An Old Homestead," really a picture of the mill in Liberty park, but labelled by the purchaser in this manner, "Woods," a "Pastel sketch," "Mourning at Sunset," "Morning on the Mountains," a painting for which the Wasatch range was model, as it has been for so many other of Mr. Harwood's paintings; "Harvesting a Cabbage Leaf," a still life picture of strong colors and reality; "Cows Coming Home," in which a Liberty park path formed the background for the animals; and "Great Salt Lake," a sketch along the shore near Black Rock.

## J. B. FAIRBANKS.

J. B. Fairbanks is the farmer artist. To him the field where man labors is well as that where nature works out fanciful designs with stream and underbrush, is a ready subject. His studio is filled with pictures of harvest scenes, grain stacks, wheat fields, out fields and farm houses, but not these only, for he is now at work on stream vistas sketched near Murray and morning mists seen in the valley towards the Wasatch. Mr. Fairbanks takes naturally to outdoors, and entered the art field from the farm, which he says may account for his interest in agricultural topics.

## JOHN HAFEN.

He was found at work in his studio at suite 10, Hooper-Eldredge block. When asked where Mr. Hafen was, who shares the studio with him, Mr. Fairbanks said he had just returned from Brighton, where he had gone to sketch the snow banks, and the trees in their winter barrenness. Hafen is the modest of the Utah artists, and the one who gets the most poetry into his art efforts. His exhibits this year were 13 in number, and 12 of them were sketches of scenery or of still life while one was a portrait. Some of Mr. Hafen's friends have urged him to go into portrait work exclusively, but he has had too much of a love for the sketching, in which he always catches nature in one of her more intense moods.

Mr. Fairbanks exhibited 16 paintings, and six were harvest scenes. One of them was of the sunlight on a harvest field which was much praised. Sunset glows and twilight pictures are favorites with Mr. Fairbanks, and he spent many weeks this summer in the mountains making sketches, which are yet to be finished, and which are scheduled to fill up the coming winter hours.

## HARRY CULMER.

Harry Culmer works at home, and sometimes at his office on east First South street. Over a year ago he entered his interest, which had already

run largely in that direction, and the reproduction of great natural wonders in western scenery. His masterpiece in this line was produced this year and it is entitled "Mystery of the Desert." In this painting he has demonstrated that the desert is beautiful and not bleak, and that its peculiar spirit can be caught to shine forth in canvas. The scene is in central Utah, where the rocks are large, and the desert is at its best.

Besides this painting there is another of Utah rocks. It is entitled "Temple of the Rio Virgin" and pictures the huge rock monoliths of the south, that are duplicated nowhere else on earth. The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone is made to do duty for a painting in which the peculiar mass of color, so marked in that region, is duplicated faithfully, and to an extent that would almost excite the artist, and the picture is almost exclusively of the south, that are duplicated nowhere else on earth. The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone is made to do duty for a painting in which the peculiar mass of color, so marked in that region, is duplicated faithfully, and to an extent that would almost excite the artist, and the picture is almost exclusively of the south, that are duplicated nowhere else on earth.

## EDWIN EVANS.

Edwin Evans has made or less raised this year from the field of art work into painting, to become a teacher almost exclusively. He is engaged at the university, where he has 300 normal school students, and a class of it is advanced art work. He is president of the society of Utah artists, and is therefore most interested in the future of Utah art as a community product.

He says that he hopes a central home for a permanent exhibit may be located, and established by the society, and that it is still at work on the Social hall proposition. John Hafen and G. Wesley Brown are associated with Mr. Evans in this work as vice president and secretary respectively of the committee. Mr. Evans held the center of interest in the exhibit of two years ago when his picture of cattle at rest near the Jordan, captured the state prize. Since then he has worked on a number of little things, but has not turned out a large canvas.

Assisting Mr. Evans at the university is Miss Myra Sawyer, a young artist of prominence, who has studied two years in Paris.

## FUTURE PLAN.

A plan for the future will bring Utah art, that should be overlooking is that of the State Fair association, to hang all of the state prize pictures, in its permanent home on Third South street. The paintings are now at the Alice Art collection, where they are the property of the general public. A suitable hall ground with lights to match will be furnished by the Fair association.

## STATE PRIZE PICTURES.

The prize won this year by Mr. Young is the seventh state prize to be won by a Utah artist. There have been eight competitions, but one year a prize was not awarded owing to a dispute in the committee. The pictures winning prizes go to the state, and the seven winners are:

J. T. Harwood, 1899, "Salt Crusted Rocks"; John Hafen, 1900, "Quakagoga"; Mary Tensdale, 1901, "Woman and Child"; George Taggart, 1902, "Old People in Church"; A. B. Wright, 1904, "Portrait of Mrs. R."; Edwin Evans, 1905, "Cows in the Shade"; Mahonri M. Young, 1906, "The Blacksmiths." Early next year this group of paintings, together with others of the Association, should be hanging in the State Fair association home, where all visitors to the city may see them, and all local people nucleus of a general permanent exhibition, a thing for which the artists have been working for some time.