

Arthur William Hall

1889-1981



BIOGRAPHY / OBITUARY

Born Oct. 30, 1889 in Bowie, Texas, Arthur William Hall grew up in Oklahoma and Virginia. After attending the Chicago Art Institute in Illinois, he served with the infantry in Southern France during World War I. Following the war, he lived in Kansas, Virginia, and New Mexico. After a long life, he died Feb. 12, 1981 in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the age of 91.

In the early 1920s, Arthur and his new wife, Norma Bassett, lived at 920 ½ W. Central in El Dorado, KS. After a 2-year trip to Europe, the Hall's returned to El Dorado. In the late 1930s, they spent time in Bluemount, Virginia, later returning to Kansas, living in Howard and back to El Dorado, this time living at 1018 S. Denver.

Arthur was a founding member of the Prairie Print Makers, and held memberships in the Society of American Etchers, the Chicago Society of Etchers, the New York Society of Etchers, and the Printmakers Society of California.

CONNECTION TO BUTLER COUNTY

Following World War I, Hall settled in El Dorado, KS, where he worked as a court reporter of the 13th Judicial District, at that time including Butler, Greenwood, Elk, and Chautauqua counties. He had learned stenography as a student; his skill provided a ready means of employment while pursuing his art, especially with the 2-month summer court recess providing time for extended sketching trips.

While in this area, Arthur and his wife, fellow artist Norma Barrett Hall, were active participants in a circle of artists in the Wichita area, forming the Prairie Print Makers on Dec. 28, 1930. Arthur also served as the group's secretary for many years. The group sought to further the interests of both artists and collectors, bringing quality art to the general public; more of their works hung in area homes than any other types of art.

Later after having moved to New Mexico, at the request of Charles Heilman, retired judge and long-time correspondent, Hall held 2 exhibitions in El Dorado. The first featured pastels by his 2nd wife, Glada. Being well received, he held a second show featuring his own work. Both were held at the Butler County Historical Society's museum, at that time in the historic Carnegie library building.

LEAVING THE AREA

The Halls took a 2-year trip to England, Scotland and Southern France from 1925 to 1925. One year of this was spent in Edinburgh, studying with noted British etcher E. S. Lumsden and his wife, Mable Royds, a well-known block print artist. During this period, Hall completed his first etching and dry points. He gained the skill of eliminating the superfluous and arranging compositions in his mind before setting them down on paper. He purchased his etching press on this trip in Paris.

In the late 1930's, they moved to Bluemount, Virginia, building a home near his family. But at the outset of World War II, they decided to return to Kansas, living in Howard and later El Dorado.

In 1944, Arthur and Norma moved from Kansas to Santa Fe, New Mexico, finally able to pursue their artwork full time. First they lived and worked in a 200-year old adobe house. In 1950, they purchased Rancho del Rio, an estate near the village of Alcalde, between Santa Fe and Taos. Here they operated an art school and studio.

Norma died in 1957 after a short illness. Arthur was re-married to Glada Lockhart in 1963, also a graduate of Chicago Art Institute. He sold the school and they moved to Albuquerque after a trip to Spain.

He gave up printmaking, working exclusively in watercolor the remainder of his life. He compiled sketchbooks of detailed pencil drawings, perhaps as studies for future watercolors, which included notations in shorthand, the skill used in his days of court reporting.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Arthur Hall's images reflect the influence of places seen in his life: France, Kansas, and the American Southwest. He was once reported to say that he loved the dramatic and expressive severity of the Great Plains, and found Kansas landscapes a worthy artistic challenge.

Hall achieved a national reputation as an accomplished printmaker; he was first and foremost an etcher. Etchings are printed in what is known as the intaglio process. A metal plate is coated with a thin layer of wax or asphalt into which the design is drawn with a sharp instrument or etching needle. A form of acid is applied to the wax and allowed to seep through the design, etching the design onto the plate; this is then used for printing.

The Printmakers of California in 1930, the Prairie Print Makers in 1932, and the Chicago Society of Etchers in 1944 all selected various works by Hall.

AWARDS, RECOGNITION

Hall won the 1927 Bryan prize for the best group of American prints at the 8th International Exposition of Prints held in Los Angeles, California. He also received gold and bronze medals in 1929 and 1932 from the Kansas City Art Institute. His drypoint work, "Field Hand", earned the Henry B. Shope prize for the best etching in the annual exhibition of the Society of American Etchers in 1937. A copy of this work is in the permanent collection of the Warren Hall Coutts III Memorial Art Gallery.

BIBLIOGRAPHY / SOURCE LIST

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Warren Hall Coutts III Memorial Art Gallery, El Dorado, KS – 1/5/06 visit:

4 related newspaper articles from the El Dorado Times and the Wichita Eagle-Beacon

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