

## **“40 Years of the Prairie Water Color Painters”**

### **Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery**

**February 1 through April 19, 2015**

**essay and checklist by Cori Sherman North, Curator**

American artists of the mid-twentieth century helped to popularize watercolor as a serious art form, with the potential to express a wide range of artistic style and subject. By the time the Great Depression had taken hold from the early 1930s, artists were challenged to find new ways of working and of sharing their work with the public. In the Middle West, transplanted Swedish professor Birger Sandzén (1871-1954) had been an active participant in American watercolor groups around the country from the nineteen-teens, sending his paintings to shows mounted by the New York Water Color Club, the Philadelphia Water Color Club, the California Water Color Society, and the International Water Color Exhibitions organized by the Art Institute of Chicago. Determined to promote the medium close to home, Sandzén invited colleagues around the region to establish a ‘Prairie Water Color Painters’ club. Dues would start at \$1 per year and members would have the opportunity to exhibit in traveling shows circulating throughout the academic year, October through April. The group’s first exhibition was held in January of 1934 at Kansas State College in Manhattan, ushering in a tradition that would last through the early 1980s. Sandzén remained president of the organization until 1950, just a few years before his death in 1954, and was able to see his watercolors sent with twenty-eight other Prairie Water Color Painters’ work to be exhibited in Derby, England, in 1949.

From that first exhibition in 1934, well-known artists from the Midwest and mountain states were happy to claim membership in the neophyte watercolor society. Sandzén asked his friends to join with him to establish a new forum for his favorite medium, including Albert Bloch (1882-1961) at the University of Kansas; Colorado artists Vance Kirkland (1904-1981) and Albert Byron Olson (1885-1940) of Denver and Eve Drewelow (1899-1988) and Muriel Sibell Wolle (1898-1977) in Boulder; Henry Varnum Poor (1887-1970) in New York; and Doel Reed (1895-1985) and Oscar Brousse Jacobson (1882-1966) in Oklahoma. Over the years, talented Bethany College students of Sandzén’s were also invited to show with the long-standing group, including Margaret Sandzén Greenough (1909-1993), Dolores Runbeck (1898-1994), Signe Larson (1908-1993), Carl William Peterson (1919-2009), Charles B. Rogers (1911-1987), and Zona L. Wheeler (1913-1998). Other Kansas artists of note quickly became active members, such as John F. Helm, Jr. (1900-1972) at Kansas State University, Karl Mattern (1892-1969) at the University of Kansas, State Architect Charles L. Marshall (1905-1992) of Topeka, and William Dickerson (1904-1972) of the Wichita Center for the Arts and Clayton Henri Staples (1892-1978) of Wichita State University. Today, only a very few of the younger watercolorists who joined in the latter days of the club are still painting, such as Oscar Larmer of Manhattan and Patric Rowley of Wichita.

This exhibition shares only a small sampling of the hundreds of artists who were involved in the watercolor society over the decades. Most of the forty artists’ paintings in this selection are from the Sandzén Gallery’s permanent collection, but some of the works have been borrowed from other sources around the state: the art collection of Bethany College in Lindsborg, the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, the College of Fine Arts at Wichita State University, the collection of Jon and Lila Levin of Manhattan, and from the James and Virginia Moffett Collection of Kansas City.

### **Beginnings**

Birger Sandzén moved to Lindsborg, Kansas, from Sweden to take up a teaching position at Bethany College in 1894. His first classes were in languages and voice, and the young professor quickly added watercolor painting to his course offerings. By 1899, Sandzén was heading the college’s art department and he began to influence the culture of the region. Training at the Artists’ League (*Konstnärsförbundet*) in Stockholm, Sweden, which had been established in 1891 by progressive, modern artists who believed

that art has an important role in every life, had a strong influence on Sandzén's own philosophy and guiding principles. Determined to see arts education flourish in the American Midwest, in 1913 he began the Smoky Hill Art Club. Its membership paid annual dues for the direct purpose of buying art for Bethany College. The club bought prints and paintings from local exhibitions, which often hosted guest artists from around the country, as well as new art books for the library and art supplies for local members. Albert Bloch's watercolor, *Autumn Evening* of 1928, from the Gallery's collection and included in this exhibition's checklist, was an Art Club purchase in 1929. Sandzén personally oversaw the Smoky Hill Art Club until 1945.

Through the Art Institute of Chicago, Sandzen participated in the "International Water Color Exhibition" which traveled to Paris, France, in 1928 and showed the European salons what innovative work was being produced in the New World. Actively showing in so many other venues around the world over so many years must have spurred the Kansas painter on to attempting his own local organization for the medium.

In the fall of 1933 Birger Sandzén wrote to a list of colleagues suggesting a new cooperative exhibition program, in which each member artist could send in two watercolors which would then all be organized into shows that would travel around the region during the following academic year. At that same time the watercolor group was being called together, Sandzén and John Helm, professor of art at Kansas State, had also conceived of a working plan to promote the arts of Kansas and distribute art shows to underserved communities around the state, at a minimum cost through a 'Kansas State Federation of Art.' Helm became Director of the Federation and served for decades, efficiently collecting and shipping out exhibitions to schools, libraries, and art centers all over state and region. The Prairie Water Color Painters collaborated with the Federation throughout the group's long history. The Federation developed an exhibition "season" of modest shows loosely based on the academic year. Works were returned to artists during the summer, usually in July and with a receipt and note of thanks from Sandzén or Helm. Membership dues of \$1 had to be paid before an artist could participate in the circulating exhibitions, but there was always hope of sales made from any of the ten to twelve scheduled venues.

Sandzén contributed two paintings to the first watercolor exhibition in 1934, *Rocks and Ice* and *Old Pine*. A few of the works in that first show are in the Sandzén Gallery's permanent collection and are displayed in this exhibition. Albert Byron Olson sent two watercolors from Denver, including his stunning piece *Bridge at Ronda, Spain*. Records show that this watercolor was returned to Olson at his Denver residence, and then in 1935 traveled to the University of Oklahoma in Norman for the exhibition, "Southwestern Conference of Higher Education: Artists of the Southwest," before eventually being bought by Margaret Sandzén. Alice Twitchell Whittaker's *Looking Down*, Muriel Sibell Wolle's *Structure*, and Edith K. Woodbury's *Mountain Peaks of New Mexico* were also in the first exhibition and all later given to Dr. Sandzén on the occasion of his 75th birthday in 1946.

Other charter members include Ethel Greenough Holmes (1879-1964), a Kansas City patron of the arts who introduced her nephew Charles Pelham Greenough to young Margaret Sandzén who became a Greenough in 1942, and Dolores Runbeck who was first a student then colleague of Birger Sandzén at Bethany College. Many Sandzén students were active watercolor painters, such as Myra Biggerstaff (1905-1999) who managed in 1934 to organize a dual showing of her and her mentor's work in Uppsala, Sweden, soon after her graduation, and Louis Hafermehl. Both Biggerstaff and Hafermehl's watercolors in this exhibition show scenes from Sandzén's studio, a small building behind the professor's home in Lindsborg. As a Bethany art student in the early 1930s, Zona Wheeler was uniquely placed to be the only Prairie Water Color Painter to be a charter member and exhibit virtually every year from 1934 until 1985. Early on, the Boulder, Colorado, group called "The Prospectors" were also regularly involved with the Kansas watercolor shows. Eve Drewelowe Van Ek, Muriel Sibell Wolle, Gwendolyn Meux Waldrop (1893-1973), and Frances Hoar Trucksess (1898-1985) were connected to the University of

Colorado and maintained long friendships with Sandzén. Drewelowé exhibited over decades, despite the loss of her watercolor, *Cactus Challenger*, that disappeared between venues during the 1944-45 season.<sup>1</sup>

In March of 1936, Birger Sandzén wrote to Charles Marshall, inviting the Topeka architect to send watercolors to Lindsborg for the spring “Midwest Art Exhibition,” along with some biographical notes. Sandzén went on to assert that, “We would like very much to have you join the Prairie Water Color Painters, but naturally, without paying dues (\$1) until next fall.”<sup>2</sup> Marshall proved to be an essential addition to the club, tirelessly promoting the medium and serving on the Federation’s Board of Trustees as well as President in many the final decades of the organization. For the first several years, Sandzén kept all the membership records, oftentimes jotting lists of those members paid up or of exhibition checklists with artist and painting titles in his art register notebooks, which are preserved in the Sandzén Gallery’s archives.

From these personal logbooks, it is known that two David Fredenthal (1914-1958) watercolors collected by Birger Sandzén were both in the 1936-37 Prairie Water Color Painters circulating shows: *Workmen Going Home* and *Old House*, both listed with a \$35.00 selling price. This was the only year the New York-based watercolorist showed with the group, and the pieces were received from Colorado Springs where Fredenthal had spent the summer studying mural painting at the newly-renovated Fine Arts Center with Boardman Robinson (1876-1952).<sup>3</sup> From 1935 through 1938, Fredenthal was on scholarship to the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, where Sandzén's close friend Carl Milles (1875-1955) was a visiting artist from Stockholm, Sweden, in the same time period. It is interesting to speculate which of the influential, established artists introduced the young artist to Sandzén, right before his career path led to Guggenheim Fellowships, *Life Magazine* war correspondent assignments, and solo exhibitions around the world.

Most of the extant records of the watercolor society, however, are found in the papers of Charles L. Marshall, in Hale Library's Special Collections at Kansas State University. Minutes from annual meetings, checklists from some years' traveling exhibitions, and correspondence with Sandzén, John Helm, Zona Wheeler, Sue Jean Covacevich (1905-1998), and other members provide a glimpse into the workings of the art society through the years.

## Decades of Success

The underlying purpose of all the organizations Sandzén helped to found was to promote the arts and artists and to put original art within the reach of all. The democratic guidelines established at the outset ensured that the Prairie organization was membership-driven and a cooperative effort, and directed toward communities all across the state, regardless of population density or cultural venues available. If a Kansas town did not have a museum or art center, watercolors could be displayed in the school or at a local bank or public library. By the 1940s, annual dues had increased to \$2, but the cost for hosting an exhibition remained fairly steady for decades at a \$5 fee (\$8 for non-member institutions) plus shipping costs for one way. Members’ dues and the exhibition fees went towards shipping costs and an annual spring mailing of brochures listing the available shows and timetables for the next academic year. Artists were responsible for matting their watercolors to a standard 22 x 30-inch size and for delivering to Sandzén at Bethany College, and then to John Helm from 1942 at Kansas State.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from John F. Helm, Jr. to Birger Sandzén, June 25, 1945; Sandzén Archives, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Birger Sandzén to Charles L. Marshall, March, 1936; Charles L. Marshall Papers, Hale Library Special Collections, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

<sup>3</sup> Stan Cuba, *Pikes Peak Vision: The Broadmoor Art Academy, 1919-1945* (CO: Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 1989), 117.

The Prairie Water Color Painters present a dynamic cross section of unfolding American history, from the first years of the depression in the 1930s through World War II when many of the membership were serving in the armed forces. Paul Kubitschek (1916-1988) first attracted notice as a youngster of eleven from Salina who entered the local Mid-West Art Contest and was awarded a Sandzén lithograph as a prize by the professor himself. Kubitschek went on to study with Sandzén at Bethany College and joined the ranks of Prairie Water Color Painters for the second exhibition year, 1935-36. The young Kansan served in the army overseas, but even as a responsible Staff Sergeant, he continued to practice his art during off-duty hours, as his 1943 watercolor, *Church of East Durham, Norfolk, England*, attests.

In an October 3, 1942, letter to Charles Marshall, Birger Sandzén describes the general wartime atmosphere as, “Just now very unfavorable for us artists. Very few people have time to think of art. Right here in our little town we are training young men for air service. Only eight miles northwest of Lindsborg there is a cantonment of 50,000 acres with 50,000 soldiers. You can imagine what this village looks like on a Saturday afternoon or evening--.”<sup>4</sup> Californian Wataru Oye (1912-2001) found himself in the middle of that cantonment, based at Camp Phillips outside Salina, Kansas, as a member of the prestigious 442nd Combat Group, 100th Battalion, composed entirely of Japanese-American troops. He was introduced to Sandzén, possibly thru the “Hobby Huts” maintained by the USO and to which the Kansas Federation of Art donated art supplies. A few letters written to Oye’s uncle, Frank Nakata, at the Heart Mountain internment camp in Wyoming, tell the story of the Sandzén family’s warm welcome to the soldier and the invitation extended to return to study at Bethany College as soon as the war was won.<sup>5</sup> Oye served in France and Italy, earning a Purple Heart for injuries sustained, but kept his uncle apprised of his efforts recovering and getting back to Kansas. The veteran arrived in Lindsborg in November of 1945, where he promptly joined Sandzén’s watercolor society and contributed to the February, 1946, portfolio gift for Sandzén’s birthday.

Despite the demands of a wartime economy, the Prairie Water Color Painters were not forced to take a hiatus during those challenging years. Paperwork retained by Zona Wheeler of Wichita reflects an active exhibition schedule kept up by the club during the years 1942 through 1955. In a letter to Charles Marshall dated September 29, 1942, Birger Sandzén is planning the 1942-43 exhibition season, as he tenders the request, “May we have two of your lovely water colors for this season’s exhibition of the Prairie Water Color Painters?” Sandzén went on to explain that, “At this time our friend John F. Helm, Jr. of Manhattan has kindly consented to receive the contributions.”<sup>6</sup> Thereafter, Helm took responsibility for the physical logistics of collecting, packing, and shipping all the traveling works of art each fall, but Sandzén continued to keep the membership rosters and watercolor checklists each year until the late 1940s. By 1949, when the membership planned an exchange program with a gallery in Derby, England, Helm was taking care of all correspondence and member lists.

More artists joined the Prairie Water Color Painters during the 1940s and 1950s. Lindsborg artist Signe Larson moved to Kansas in order to study with Birger Sandzén, refusing to let deafness stand in the way of a successful career. Larson exhibited with the group from the 1940s through the 1960s, garnering many awards and purchase prizes along the way. Her 1980 watercolor included in this exhibition, *New House, Old House*, records colorful local history of some feuding neighbors. Native Kansan Charles Sanderson (1925-1993) influenced many younger watercolorists as he taught in Wichita, exhibiting widely and participating in many of the state’s art associations. Along with the the watercolor shows of the 1966-67, there was an additional exhibition offered by the modernist artist, “Water Colors by

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<sup>4</sup> Letter from Birger Sandzén to Charles L. Marshall, Oct.3, 1942; Charles L. Marshall Papers, Hale Library Special Collections, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

<sup>5</sup> Four letters from Wataru Oye to Frank Nakata; Frank Nakata Collection, MSS 322, Holt-Atherton Special Collections, University of the Pacific Library

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Birger Sandzén to Charles L. Marshall, September 29, 1942; Charles L. Marshall Papers, Hale Library Special Collections, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

Charles Sanderson.” There were seven bookings for the Sanderson show that year, at a charge of \$7.00 rental fee, while the two Prairie Water Color Painters shows “A” and “B” remained at a \$5.00 per venue.<sup>7</sup>

## **The Waning Years**

Although its founder, Birger Sandzén, died in 1954, the 1950s brought further interest in watercolor exhibitions, with art sent out to tour Kansas as well as to other states, such as California, Utah, Oklahoma, Texas, Nebraska, and New York. But the 1960s ushered in new challenges. As early as 1962, Marshall was desperately trying to recruit new watercolor painters. Public appetite for watercolor shows ebbed and flowed over the decade, with expanded offerings in 1966 of young artists’ watercolors along with the usual circulating shows. But, subsequent years saw a decline in interest. 1968’s exhibition of watercolors had to be supplemented with prints, and the minutes of the annual meeting on May 4th report, “Discussion about the Prairie Water Color Painters Show. In the last few years, there has not been much participation. Last year 82 artists were contacted and only 14 artists submitted work.”<sup>8</sup>

The situation worsened in the 1970s, and it appears there were some years that the Federation did not manage to schedule or send out any exhibitions. John Helm died in 1972 and proposals to end the programs began to be exchanged among members. That year Charles Marshall wrote to Kansas State University’s president, Jim McCain: “We are contemplating putting the Federation on ice after this year’s annual meeting in April”... “I have to admit that the change of times, increase in cost of express charges and the change in freight techniques has helped bring us to this decision of folding up.”<sup>9</sup> But, in September later the same year, an announcement was sent out to all members that two sections of Prairie Water Colors were going to be offered again, due to popular demand. Then in 1974 it was decided to skip the entire program series in favor of oil painting shows.

By spring of 1976, Marshall was writing to the Federation’s director Winston Schmidt (architect and amateur watercolorist working in Hutchinson, Kansas) and commented, “I suspect that many of us have lost some of the dedication of years past. This amounts to the fact that times have changed in regard to art needs. There are more places for an artist to exhibit now, than 15 years ago.”<sup>10</sup> By the end of the year, the group had decided to put together only a small show of watercolors and drawings to keep the cost of shipping down. The program limped along, skipping more years here and there until 1985, when Oscar Larmer sent an open letter to the membership reminding of the fact they had been inactive the last four years, that neither a director nor sponsoring institution could be found, so, it should be decided to officially end the exhibition society.

In the minutes of the last annual meeting in 1985, the history of the organizational beginnings were reflected upon: “The Federation of Art was conceived by Birger Sandzen in 1933. Sandzen was an art professor at Bethany College in Lindsborg. He had a characteristic style in his oil and watercolor paintings, and a special interest in block prints and lithography. Some three years earlier, Sandzen, along with C. A. Seward of Wichita, and other printmakers had initiated the Prairie Print Makers, and they needed a way to distribute their art in Kansas. The general art tempo in the state was not very strong in 1934. The number of artists was small and exhibitions of art work were hard to find...There was a need for some organization to generate art exhibitions and make them available to the various schools, local art associations and others needing display of art.”<sup>11</sup> The association of artists and water color painters

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<sup>7</sup> Minutes for 1967 annual meeting of the Kansas State Federation of Art; Charles L. Marshall Papers, Hale Library Special Collections, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

<sup>8</sup> Charles L. Marshall Papers, Hale Library Special Collections, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Charles L. Marshall to James McCain, Mar. 6, 1972; Charles L. Marshall Papers, Hale Library Special Collections, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from Charles L. Marshall to Winston Schmidt, March, 1976; Charles L. Marshall Papers, Hale Library Special Collections, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.

<sup>11</sup> Charles L. Marshall Papers, Hale Library Special Collections, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas

had had great success in creating a dynamic cultural climate in the region. As Zona Wheeler summed up, agreeing the Federation and Prairie Water Color Painters had reached the end of useful service, it “was a wonderful conception and did a magnificent job of for years, benefitting members and artist-contributors as well. The memory of it should never be lost.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Letter from Zona L. Wheeler to Charles L. Marshall, Sept., 1985; Charles L. Marshall Papers, Hale Library Special Collections, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas

## Exhibition Checklist

**John S. Ankeney, 1870-1946**

Untitled landscape, 1931

Watercolor on paper; 16 ¼ x 20 in

Bethany College Art Collection, Lindsborg, Kansas

Born in Ohio, Ankeney was an art professor at the University of Missouri from 1901 through 1935, and then the Louisiana State University, with a concurrent period of serving as director for the Dallas Art Museum, 1929-35. He received a Doctor of Letters from Bethany in 1926, and began summering in Estes Park in Colorado along the Rocky Mountain National Park along with the Sandzén family during the 1920s-30s.



**John Bashor, 1926-2013**

*Spring*

Watercolor on paper

Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

As a high schooler, Bashor was able to take college art classes at Washburn College in Topeka. When he graduated, the artist joined the navy to serve in World War II. After the war, Bashor took advantage of the G.I. Bill and went to graduate school at the University of Iowa. In 1953, Bashor began his dynamic tenure of teaching at Bethany College. He had joined the Prairie Water Color Painter group by 1960, long after its founder was gone.

**Myra Biggerstaff Kvistberg Holiday, 1905-1999**

*The Yellow Chair, 1947*

Watercolor on paper; 11 3/8 x 18 inches

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

This Nebraska native attended Bethany College 1929 through 1933, then spent time a year studying in France at the Ecole Technique de la Peinture. By the time of the first Prairie Water Color Painter exhibition in January 1934, Myra was married and moved to Uppsala, Sweden. She sent two watercolor entries from there, and was active in the group through many moves until the late 1940s. From the 1947 season when the artist resided in San Antonio, Texas, her watercolor earned the Smoky Hill Art Club purchase prize for Bethany College. It is quite likely this watercolor was that purchase, as the scene is of the Sandzén studio in Lindsborg.



**Albert Bloch, 1882-1961**

*Autumn Evening, 1928*

Watercolor on paper; 12 x 14 ¾ in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

St. Louis native Albert Bloch was the only American to be closely associated with the German

Expressionist art association *Der Blaue Reiter* [The Blue Rider] in Berlin.

Returning to the U.S.,

Bloch taught in Chicago (1922-23) and then settled in at the University of Kansas in Lawrence from 1923 to his death in 1961. Lindsborg colleague Birger Sandzén began the Smoky Hill Art Club in 1913 to further art collecting and research at Bethany College. The club membership dues furnished the funds to buy paintings and prints from exhibitions, plus art books for the library, and art supplies for local art students. *Autumn Evening* from the Gallery's collection was an Art Club purchase in 1929. Just a few years later, Bloch was invited to join the Prairie Water Color Painters, to further the medium's profile in the region.





**Ted Butterfield**

*Leadville, Colorado*, 1940

Watercolor on paper; 14 ½ x 20 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Butterfield was a student of Birger Sandzén in the mid-1930s, and was enrolled at Bethany College 1934 through 1936. He participated in the annual Mid-West Art Exhibitions held at the college and was an active member of the Prairie Water Color Painters until the mid-1940s.

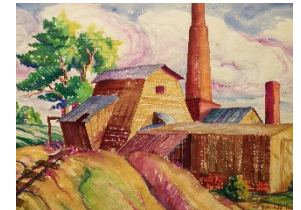
**Ted Butterfield**

*Old Pug Mill*, 1935

Watercolor on paper; 15 ¼ x 22 ½ in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

An inscription on the back of the mat reads, "To Margaret Sandzen in remembrance of a delightful school year 1935." This was the same year Butterfield joined the Prairie Water Color Painters, in its second year of traveling exhibitions. This glimpse of a Colorado mine building shows the great influence of his teacher, Birger Sandzén, in subject matter and color choices.

**Sue Jean Hill Covacevich Boys**, 1905-1998

*Taxco*, ca. 1946

Watercolor on paper; 9 3/8 x 7 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

This Kansas artist began exhibiting at a very young age, and because of early encouragement went to Bethany College in 1927 to study painting with Birger Sandzén. She spent 12 defining years in Mexico, during which time she was in regular contact with the Sandzén family and convinced Birger and daughter Margaret to go out for a visit in 1935. The Sandzéns thoroughly enjoyed exploring Taxco, and this gift watercolor was given on the occasion of Birger's 75th birthday, likely as a fond memory of the shared time a decade earlier.

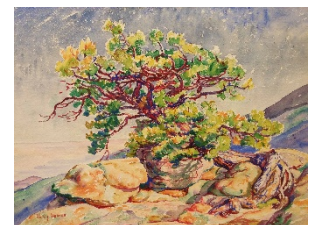
**Pansy Dawes**, 1883-1948

*Twisted Cedars*

Watercolor on paper; 11 ¼ x 15 ½ in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Dawes was an early pupil of Birger Sandzén who went on to be high school art teacher. She settled in Colorado Springs, and remained in close touch with her Kansas mentor. Her students would generally enter the Mid-West Art Contests for grade schoolers that Sandzén organized annually, and awarded impressions of his own prints as prizes for the winning entries.

**Pansy Dawes**, 1883-1948

Untitled (*The Peak, Estes Park*)

Watercolor on paper: 11 x 15 in.

Bethany College Art Collection

Under the direction of Birger Sandzén, Bethany College's Smoky Hill Art Club (founded 1913) bought several of Pansy Dawes's pieces from exhibitions hosted over the years. Her preferred medium was watercolor





painting, and so she was a natural choice to include in the first invitations to join the new Prairie Water Color Painters formed in 1933.

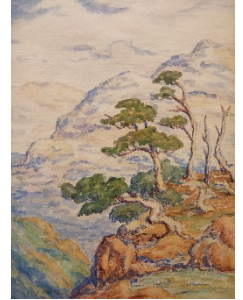
**Lydia Sohlberg Deere, 1873-1943**

Untitled mountain landscape

Watercolor on paper

Gift of the Estate of Arthur and Hazel Nelson, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Lydia Sohlberg was a Lindsborg native, and married Professor Emil Deere, who taught at Bethany College. She was a 1925 graduate of Bethany College, herself, and taught summer sessions of painting and drawing from 1925 until 1931. Sohlberg Deere joined the Prairie Water Color Painters the first year of the association's exhibitions.



**William Dickerson, 1904-1972**

*Sand Pump, Twin Lakes, 1972*

Watercolor on paper; 17 ½ x 29 ½ inches

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Dickerson grew up in Wichita and received his first art training at the Wichita Art Association (now the Wichita Center for the Arts) and went on to study at the prestigious Art Institute of Chicago. There, he learned lithography techniques directly from Bolton Brown, and became Brown's studio assistant. Although he could have stayed on to teach at the Institute, Dickerson chose to return to Wichita in 1930, where he served 41 years as Director of the same art association that had given him his start. Bill Dickerson and his wife, Betty, were both founding members of the Prairie Water Color Painters and were active supporters over decades until the 1960s. The two Wichita artists sent watercolors to England with the club's 1949 special exhibition.

**Eve Drewelowe Van Ek, 1899-1988**

*Mount Moran, 1937*

Watercolor on paper; 18 ¾ x 22 ½ in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Although an Iowa native, Drewelowe is remembered as an important Boulder, Colorado, artist. She was a member of "The Prospectors," a group of five Boulder women associated with the University of Colorado who exhibited together. Drewelowe was also a Prairie Water Color Painter for several decades, regularly submitted paintings to the annual, traveling shows that circulated Kansas and outlying states.



**David Fredenthal, 1912-1958**

*Workers Going Home, circa 1936*

Watercolor on paper,

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas



**Margaret Sandzén Greenough, 1909-1993**

*Eastern Home*, ca. 1942

Watercolor on paper;

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Margaret was Birger and Alfrida's only child, who followed in her father's artistic footsteps. She was a Bethany College graduate (1931), and studied art further at Stephens College in Missouri, Columbia University in New York City, as well as a well-known studio in Paris, France. However, like her father, Margaret chose to settle in Lindsborg, t BC 1933-36, & 1943-47 war years. She married Charles Pelham Greenough the 3rd of Boston in 1942, and the couple built the Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, which opened its doors in 1957.



**Charles Louis Hafermehl, 1916-1989**

*View of the West Wall of Sandzén's Studio*, 1938

Watercolor on paper; 9 ¼ x 13 ½ in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Louis Hafermehl was a Sandzén student at Bethany College from 1937 through 1939, when this watercolor was painted. He went on to study at the Art Institute of Chicago, and then the Art Students League in New York after military service in World War II. Hafermehl returned to Kansas and taught at Kansas State University from 1946 until 1954, maintaining membership in the Prairie Water Color Painters each of those years.



**Ted Hawkins, 1911-1969**

Untitled southwest landscape, ca. 1950

Watercolor on paper

Zona Wheeler Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Hawkins is remembered primarily as a Kansas printmaker, studying first under William Dickerson at the Wichita Art Association and then on a scholarship at the Minneapolis School of Art. After serving in the U.S. Navy in World War II, he eventually settled back in Wichita where he became art director for the McCormick-Armstrong printing company. The artist was a member of both the Prairie Print Makers and the Prairie Water Color Painters, and took part in the watercolor exhibition that was sent to Derby, England, in 1949.

**John F. Helm, Jr., 1900-1972**

Untitled mountain peak and trees

Watercolor on paper; 20 ¾ x 15 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Birger Sandzén and John Helm, professor of art at Kansas State College, conceived of a working plan to promote the arts of Kansas and distribute art shows to underserved communities around the state at a minimum cost through a 'Kansas State Federation of Art.' Helm became Director of the Federation and served for decades, efficiently collecting and shipping out exhibitions to schools, libraries, and art centers all over the state and region. The Prairie Water Color Painters club collaborated with the Federation throughout the group's history. The Federation developed an exhibition schedule of 8 to 12 venues for each academic calendar year. Works on tour from October through April were returned to the participating artists at the beginning of the following summer, complete with a receipt and note of thanks from Sandzén or Helm.



**John F. Helm, Jr., 1900-1972**  
Landscape with Blue trees  
Watercolor on paper; 9 x 12 in.  
Collection of Jon and Lila Levin

John Helm was professor of painting at Kansas State College (now Kansas State University) in Manhattan for 47 years. During his tenure he founded the Friends of Art in order to purchase art for the college that became the core of the Beach Museum of Art collection, as well as establishing the college art festivals. While participating as a working artist, Helm also served as Director of the Kansas Federation of Art and the Prairie Water Color Painters from 1933, organizing the club's 1949 special exhibition sent to Derby, England.



**Frances D. Hoar Trucksess, 1898-1985**  
Untitled still life with vegetables, 1932  
Watercolor on paper: 16 ½ x 20 in.  
Bethany College Art Collection

Frances Hoar studied at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art, then in 1927 settled in Boulder, Colorado, with her new husband, F. Clement Trucksess. The two taught at the University of Colorado, and Frances exhibited with 'The Prospectors,' a group of five Boulder women artists, including Muriel Sibell Wolle and Eve Drewelow Van Ek, also fellow Prairie Water Color Painters participating from the first invitation issued in 1933.

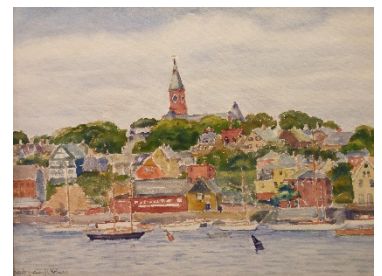


**Ethel Greenough Holmes, 1879-1964**  
*A Gay Morning*, circa 1946  
Watercolor on paper; 7 x 10 in.  
Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas



**Ethel Greenough Holmes, 1879-1964**  
*Harbor Scene*  
Watercolor on paper; 14 x 20 in.  
Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Ethel Holmes was aunt to Pelham Greenough, who married Margaret Sandzén in 1942. She was a dedicated amateur artist in her own right and served on the boards of the Kansas City Art Institute and the Nelson Gallery. She admired Birger Sandzén very much and wrote several articles about his work, such as the 1921 piece, "The Painter Birger Sandzen," published in the Kansas City Weekly Review. Holmes was invited to exhibit with the new Prairie Water Color Painters in 1933, and continued with the group for another decade.





**Paul L. Kubitschek, 1916-1988**

*Farmhouse, 1937*

Watercolor on paper;

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Kubitschek first attracted notice as a youngster of eleven from Salina who entered the local Mid-West Art Contest and was awarded a Sandzén lithograph as a prize by the art professor himself.

Kubitschek went on to study with Sandzen at Bethany College from 1934 through 1938, and joined the ranks of Prairie Water Color Painters during the club's early years.



**Paul L. Kubitschek, 1916-1988**

*Church of East Durham, Norfolk, England, 1943*

Watercolor on paper; 9 x 12 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

This watercolor painting was part of the gift portfolio collected by John Helm as a surprise for

Birger Sandzén's 75th birthday in February of 1946. An inscription on the back of the paper reads, "January 1942, S/Sgt Paul L. Kubitschek. 37015145, 66th Bomb Sq. 44th Bomb Group, APO 634, U.S. Army. Church of East Durham, Norf. Eng." In World War II, the young Kansan served overseas but even as a responsible Staff Sergeant continued to practice his art during off-duty hours in England. Kubitschek looked forward to the return to his family in Salina, where he did take up Prairie Water Color Painters membership again, remaining active through 1947.



**Oscar Vance Larmer, born 1924**

*Grainfield, 2004*

Watercolor on paper

Gift of Oscar Larmer, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Retired art professor Oscar Larmer served with the army in World War II and then attended the Minneapolis School of Art before returning to his hometown of Wichita in 1947. While he furthered his education at Kansas institutions, he also joined the Prairie Water Color Painters and exhibited with the group for the first time that same year. During tenure at Kansas State University, Larmer continued his membership and served with its organizing association, the Kansas State Federation of Art, until the official end of both in 1985.

**Signe Larson, 1908-1993**

*New House, Old House, 1980*

Watercolor on paper; 15 x 21 ½ inches

Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Lindsborg artist Signe Larson moved to the town in 1927 in order to study art with Birger Sandzén. She graduated from Bethany College in 1933, refusing to let deafness stand in the way of a successful career. She was an exhibiting member of the Prairie Water Color Painters from the 1940s through the 1960s, and her prize-winning 1947 watercolor painting *At the Wharf* was included in the 1949 show sent to England.



**Alba Malm Dahlquist Almquist, 1897-1986**

*Winter Study*, ca. 1946

Watercolor on paper; 8 1/8 x 10 1/2 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas



Malm was a prolific watercolor painter, and her small landscape paintings can be found in many homes throughout the region. Her father, G.N. Malm (1869 -1928), was one of Birger Sandzén's oldest friends in Lindsborg and the two families were always close. Alba Malm was in the first group of artists invited to form the Prairie Water Color Painters in 1933, and exhibited with the group well into the 1940s. *Winter Study* was Malm's contribution to Sandzén's 75th birthday gift portfolio in 1946.

**Charles L. Marshall, 1905-1992**

*Watchman's Shanty at the 10th Street Crossing*, 1988

Watercolor on paper; 22 1/8 x 30 1/16 inches

Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Gift of Charles L. Marshall 1992.0127

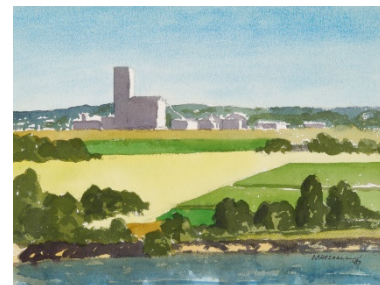
In March of 1936, Birger Sandzén wrote to Charles Marshall, inviting the Topeka architect to send watercolors to Lindsborg for the Spring Festival show, along with some biographical notes. Sandzén went on to assert that, "We would like very much to have you join the Prairie Water Color Painters, but naturally, without paying dues (\$1) until next fall." Marshall proved to be an essential addition to the club, tirelessly promoting the medium and serving on the Board and often as President in most of the final decades of the organization.

**Charles L. Marshall, 1905-1992**

*Clear Morning*, 1987

Watercolor on paper; 12 3/16 x 16 1/8 inches, framed

Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Gift of Charles L. Marshall 1992.0128



For the first several years, Sandzén kept the membership records, oftentimes jotting lists of those paid up or exhibition checklists with artist and painting titles in his "art register" books, which are preserved in the Sandzén Gallery's archives. Most of the extant records of the watercolor society, however, are found in the papers of Charles L. Marshall, in Hale Library's Special Collections at Kansas State University. Minutes from annual meetings, checklists from some years' traveling exhibitions, and correspondence with Sandzén, John Helm, Zona Wheeler, Sue Jean Covacevich and other members provide a glimpse into the workings of the art society.

**Leona Haskell McDaniel, 1909-1993**

*Snowy December*, ca. 1946

Watercolor on paper; 14 x 20 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas



McDaniel was a lifelong Topeka resident, and studied there with artists Mary Huntoon (1896-1970) and muralist David Overmyer (1889-1973), as well as with Maude Leach (1870-1927) in Manitou Springs. McDaniel supported the Topeka Art Guild, but also exhibited in Lindsborg at the Midwest Art Exhibitions from the latter 1930s. She joined the Prairie Water Color Painters by the end of that decade, and regularly submitted watercolors to the traveling season through the 1961-62 schedule. This work, *Snowy December*, was the artist's gift to Birger Sandzén as part of the portfolio collected for his 75th birthday.

**Gwendolyn Duffill Meux Waldrop, 1893-1973**

Untitled mountain landscape

Watercolor on paper; 12 x 10 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Although born a Canadian, Meux settled in Boulder, Colorado, and became one of the internationally-known association of five women artists there known as 'The Prospectors' (working 1931-1939). The artist was a member of the Prairie Water Color Painters from 1946 through 1948, though some of the other Prospectors participated far longer. The Sandzén Gallery collection holds five watercolor sketches by the artist, most obviously torn from a spiral-bound notebook, including this piece.



**Albert Byron Olson, 1885-1940**

*Bridge at Ronda, Spain*, ca. 1933

Watercolor on paper; 21 x 16 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

A few of the works in that first show are in the Sandzén Gallery's permanent collection and are displayed in this exhibition. Olson sent two watercolors from Denver for that show, including his stunning *Bridge at Ronda, Spain*. Records show that this watercolor was returned to Olson at his Denver residence, and then in 1935 traveled to the University of Oklahoma at Norman for the exhibition, "Southwestern Conference of Higher Education: Artists of the Southwest," before eventually being collected by Margaret Sandzén.



**Wataru Oye, 1912-2001**

*Flowers*, 1946

Watercolor on paper; 14 ½ x 11 ½ in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

By October of 1942, military bases were flourishing around the country, and the Salina-Lindsborg area hosted Camp Phillips training center. Californian Wataru Oye found himself there as a member of the prestigious 442nd Combat Group, 100th Battalion, which was composed entirely of Japanese-American troops. A few letters written to Oye's uncle, Frank Nakata, at the Heart Mountain internment camp in Wyoming, tell the story of Sandzén's warm welcome to the soldier, and the invitation extended to come back to study at Bethany College as soon as the war was won. Oye served in France and Italy, earning a Purple Heart for injuries sustained, but kept his uncle apprised of his efforts recovering and getting back to Kansas. The veteran arrived in Lindsborg in November of 1945, where he promptly joined Sandzén's watercolor society. *Flowers* was one of the 1946 portfolio collected for Birger Sandzén's 75th birthday surprise.

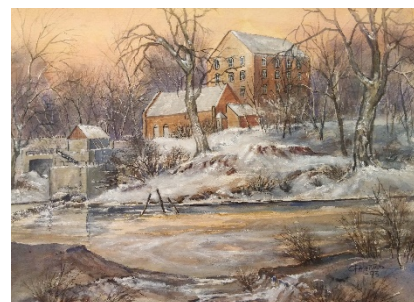


**Carl William Peterson, 1919-2009**

*The Old Mill in Winter*, 1993

Watercolor on paper; 24 x 28 inches

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Emory J. Carlson in memory of Ester Levin and the Levin Family of Lindsborg, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas





Peterson's early watercolor compositions look much like Birger Sandzén's scenes of Kansas landscapes, as the young Kansas artist learned the professor's painting techniques as he attended Bethany College, graduating in 1942. Moving to Boulder, Colorado, Peterson earned an MFA from the university in 1951, but seems to have been an active member of the Kansas-based Prairie Water Color Painters during that time away in the latter half of the 1940s. In 1963, the artist began assisting and later co-directing the Sandzén Gallery, and lectured at Bethany College from 1964 through 1981.

**Henry Varnum Poor, 1887-1970**

*La Moselle, 1918*

Watercolor on paper; 6 x 8 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Born in Chapman, Kansas, Poor had wide-ranging interests. The course of his career navigated the law, diplomacy and politics, academia, and the art world. During World War I, he served as a camofleur and then as a war artist, recording scenes he witnessed, such as this glimpse of the Moselle River, which flows through the town of Metz in northeastern France. Birger Sandzén wrote to invite the artist in 1933 to join with him and start the Prairie Water Color Painters exhibiting group. Poor was a member for several years, but the Sandzén Gallery has only the one watercolor example of the artist's work.



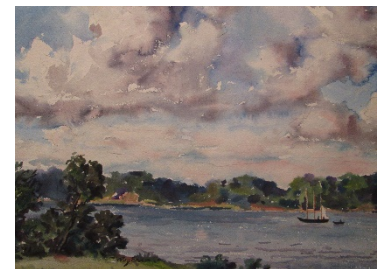
**Charles B. Rogers, 1911-1987**

*Summer Afternoon*

Watercolor on paper; 15 ½ x 22 ¾ in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Growing up in Great Bend, Kansas, Rogers always knew he was an artist. He earned a BFA degree from Bethany College in 1942, and after serving four years in the Coast Guard during World War II, he earned a masters from the California College of Arts and Crafts in 1947. From there, he returned to Bethany College to take over teaching duties from Lester Raymer (1907-1991) who had been teaching art at the school since Sandzén's retirement the year before, in 1946.



**Charles B. Rogers, 1911-1987**

Untitled landscape, 1939

Watercolor on paper; 11 ¼ x 15 in.

Strom Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Rogers was invited to join the newly-forming Prairie Water Color Painters membership while he was still in high school in Great Bend, Kansas. He remained an active member through the early 1970s, after he had retired to Ellsworth, Kansas (1968), and opened the Rogers Museum and Gallery.



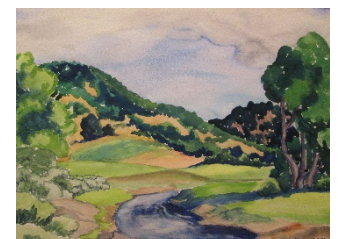
**Annie Lee Ross, 1909-1978**

Untitled Kansas landscape

Watercolor on paper; 13 ¼ x 19 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

As a high school student in Colorado under art teacher Pansy Dawes, Ross entered Birger Sandzén's Mid-West Art Contests and determined to attend Bethany College in order to study with the famed artist. Graduating in 1934, Ross sent her watercolors for the first few years' exhibitions of Prairie Water Color Painters from a variety of places around the country. It was not until 1946 when Sandzén retired from teaching that Ross returned to Lindsborg and





taught art classes at Bethany until 1948. After that time, the artist moved to New York and ceased exhibiting with the Kansas group.

**Dolores Gaston Runbeck, 1898-1994**

*Petunias*, ca.1946

Watercolor on paper; 15 ¼ x 12 in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Runbeck was a student of Birger Sandzén at Bethany College, before training at the Art Institute of Chicago. After returning to Lindsborg, she set up a home studio, and began teaching at her alma mater alongside Sandzén, 1926 through 1929. In 1946, John Helm organized a surprise for Sandzén's 75th birthday, collecting a portfolio of artwork given by the artist's closest friends and colleagues. *Petunias* was Runbeck's gift to her mentor that was included in the portfolio.



**Charles H. Sanderson, 1925-1993**

*Metropolitan Scramble*, ca.1957

Watercolor on paper; 21 x 29 inches

Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Sanderson was known for his scenes of Kansas landscapes, but he did pick different sorts of views than trees and wheat fields. The artist influenced many young watercolor artists as he taught in Wichita, exhibiting widely and participating in the Kansas art associations of the time.



**Birger Sandzén, 1871-1954**

Untitled Smoky Hill River, ca. 1945

Watercolor on paper; 11 x 12 in.

Gift of Mrs. Ralph H. Read in memory of Rev. R. H. Read, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

Sandzén is credited with being the first artist of note to focus on capturing the beauty of Kansas scenery on canvas and paper. Arriving in Lindsborg in 1894 after honing his craft in Stockholm and Paris, the young artist believed he would return to his homeland after a few years' experience teaching and exploring the American Midwest. However, the natural setting of central Kansas took hold of his imagination and his heart, and never let go.



**Birger Sandzén, 1871-1954**

*Leadville Mine, Colorado*, 1941

Watercolor on paper; 21 ½ x 29 ¾ inches

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Although Sandzén never moved from Lindsborg, he enjoyed traveling to new places and summering in Colorado's Rocky Mountains. Even when the artist was secured to teach summer workshops at other art schools and universities around the nation, the Sandzén family tried to finish their summer break in Estes Park, enjoying the cooler temperatures and breathtaking scenery.



**Winston A. Schmidt, 1918-1977**

*Rest in Peace*, 1948

Watercolor on paper: 15 x 20 in.

Bethany College Art Collection

This watercolor painting traveled around the state during the 1948-49 exhibition season of the Prairie Water Color Painters, under the auspices of the Kansas Federation of Arts, which organized low cost art shows for underserved communities. Schmidt earned a degree in architecture from Kansas State, and settled to practice in Hutchinson. He had the experience of studying art at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture which had been established in 1946 by Henry Varnum Poor and others. Schmidt got involved with the Prairie Water Color Painters and the Federation as he settled down, and collaborated with the 1949 exhibition sent to Derby, England. In later years he also served in various executive positions for the Kansas State Federation of Arts in assisting the watercolorists.



**Muriel Sibell Wolle, 1898-1977**

*Structures*, 1932

Watercolor on paper; 13 ¾ x 17 ½ in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

This watercolor painter and printmaker is best known for her illustrated books on ghost towns of the American Southwest, such as *Stampede to Timberline* and *The Bonanza Trail*. This painting of picturesque mountain architecture was shown in the first exhibition of the Prairie Water Color Painters displayed at Kansas State College in January of 1934.



**Muriel Sibell Wolle, 1898-1977**

Untitled mountain landscape, 1940

Watercolor on paper; 18 x 24 inches

Collection of James and Virginia Moffett

Muriel Sibell was a dynamic artist who developed the Fine Arts department at the University of Colorado at Boulder. While keeping up a rigorous exhibition schedule in shows around the nation, Sibell found time to promote the arts at home in Boulder through collaboration with four other women associated with the university, in the group they named “The Prospectors.”

**Clayton Henri Staples, 1892-1978**

*Winter Landscape, Colorado*

Watercolor on paper; 19 ½ x 25 ½ in.

Courtesy College of Fine Arts, Wichita State University

After training at the Art Institute of Chicago and garnering his first teaching experience in Illinois, Staples came to Kansas in 1930 to develop an art program for the Municipal University of Wichita (now Wichita State University). Known as a watercolorist, Staples was one of the first artists Birger Sandzén wrote and invited to join a new Prairie Water Color Painters exhibiting group. This painting was recently donated to Wichita State University, as a marvelous example of the artist’s style and proficiency in the medium, along with the hand-built frame Staples was known for crafting.





**Ray V. Stapp, 1913-2000**

*Washday--Normandy, 1946*

Watercolor on paper; 10 x 19 inches

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Dr. Stapp was a student of Birger Sandzén, graduating from Bethany College in 1937. He served in the U.S. Army from 1942 until 1945, when the war was over and this scene of French laundry was likely captured in his sketchbooks when overseas. Stapp gave this expressive watercolor to his teacher as part of the 1946 birthday portfolio gathered for Sandzén's 75th.



**Zona Lorraine Wheeler, 1913-1998**

*Coronado Heights (as seen from the Wheeler Farm), 1947*

Watercolor on paper; 12 x 17 ¾ inches

Gift to the Gallery from the Artist, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

As a Bethany College art student in the early 1930s, Wheeler was uniquely placed to become the only artist who saw the Prairie Water Color Painters and the Kansas Federation of Art through inception in 1933 all the way to official demise in 1985. Her resignation letter of 1985 seems to have summed up participating artists' feelings, all agreeing the Federation and Water Color Painters had reached the end of useful service. Wheeler looked back on the history of the associations, and declared that it "...was a wonderful conception and did a magnificent job of for years, benefitting members and artist-contributors as well. The memory of it should never be lost."



**Alice Twitchell Whittaker Smith, born ca. 1909**

*Looking Down, ca.1946*

Watercolor on paper; 8 ½ x 9 ½ in.

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Alice Whittaker was invited by Birger Sandzén to join the new Prairie Water Color Painters art club he had conceived of in 1933. The recent Bethany College instructor had just married Charles La Rue Smith in 1934 and moved away to his home town of Pasadena, California. But, Whittaker contributed to the first exhibition of the Prairie Water Color Painters in 1934 and continued for several years. *Looking Down* was part of the gift portfolio presented to Birger Sandzén on his 75th birthday.



**Edith K. Woodbury, 1869-1965**

*Mountain Peaks of New Mexico, ca. 1946*

Watercolor on paper;

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, Kansas

Woodbury was a "non-traditional" Bethany College student from Newton, Kansas, who periodically took art classes from Birger Sandzén along with her daughter Alleen in the years 1926 through 1933. Both Woodburys remained close to the Sandzén family over the next decades, and Edith was an active member of Sandzén's watercolor from the first exhibition in January, 1934, at Kansas State. This painting of New Mexico landscape was her birthday gift to Dr. Sandzén collected in the portfolio presented to him on his 75th.

