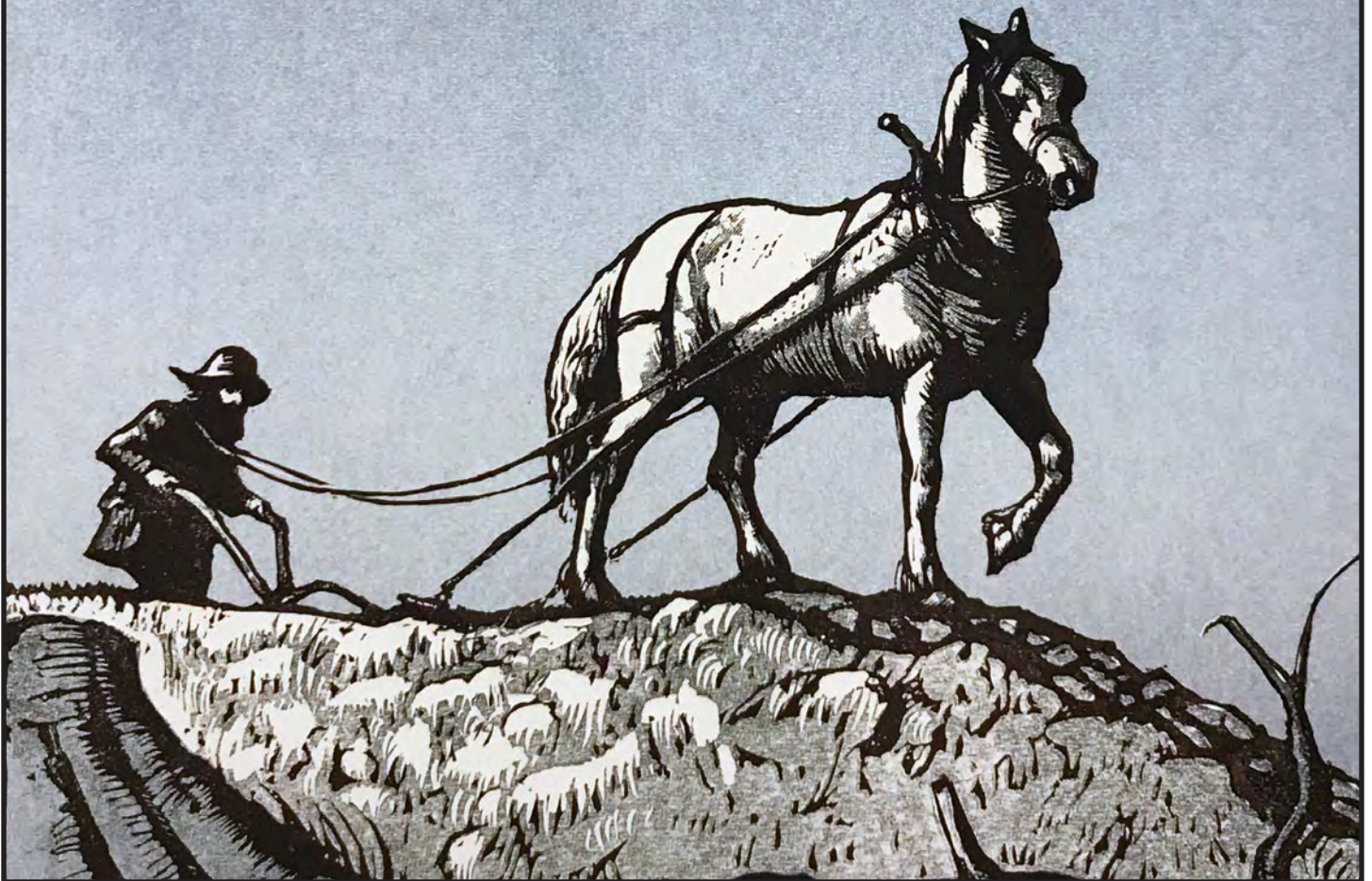


With the Grain: Presentation Prints of the Woodcut Society 1932-1954

**by Cori Sherman North
with transcriptions by
John R. Mallery**



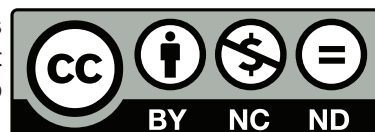
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A digital publication printed in conjunction
with an exhibition held
at the Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery
from March 31 through June 2, 2019

The show included a complete set of the
44 prints in their original letterpress folders

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On the cover: *Twilight Toil* by Allen Lewis, 1943, color woodcut and linoleum cut

The Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery in Lindsborg, Kansas, is exhibiting its complete set of Woodcut Society membership prints in their original presentation folders, March 22 through June 2, 2019. The 44 blockprints—wood engravings, woodcuts, and linocuts—were created by an international cast of 32 artists and reveal a wide variety of subject matter and technique. Of the printmakers, Asa Cheffetz (1897-1965), Paul Landacre (1893-1963), Clare Leighton (1898-1989), and Thomas Nason (1889-1971) each completed three membership prints, while Allen Lewis (1873-1957), Lionel Lindsay (1874-1961), Walter J. Phillips (1884-1963), and Lynd Ward (1905-1985) created two. Most of the participating artists were American, but many of the presentation prints were commissioned from printmakers in Australia, Canada, and Europe.

The Woodcut Society, 1932 - 1954

Stemming from an interest in collecting hand-printed bookplates, in 1932 Kansas City Board of Trade grain merchant Alfred Fowler (1889-1959) established the Woodcut Society with the sole aim of increasing “interest in fine woodcuts as a medium of artistic expression.”¹ He planned to commission and publish two new woodcut prints each year, proposing a subscription-based organization limited to 200 members who, for \$10 in dues per year, would receive two original woodcuts mounted in a presentation folder letterpressed with a short essay about the printmaker. The inaugural print distributed in 1932 was the woodcut *Southern Scene*, by New Englander J. J. Lankes (1884–1960), accompanied by the essay “The Woodcuts of J.J. Lankes” written by American poet Genevieve Taggard (1894-1948). The very last two prints, Paul Landacre’s *Some Ingredients* and Lynd Ward’s *Corral: Trés Cumbres*, were issued for the doubled years 1953 and 1954 and marked the end of the society. Membership in the Woodcut Society was also international in scope and over the years attracted both institutional members, such as the Metropolitan Museum and the Kansas City Public Library, along with individuals including Campbell Dodgson (1867-1948), Keeper of Prints at the British Museum, the Swedish-American artist in Kansas, Birger Sandzén (1871-1954), as well as many of the

participating printmakers.

The Woodcut Society was primarily geared toward print collectors, with the publications “intended to be savored in the intimate setting of one’s private library.”² The membership print commissions were “all selected by one man, unencumbered by juries or trustees, H.A. [Harry Alfred] Fowler, Director of the Society.”³ Artists were instructed to pull 200 impressions in one edition, but the subject matter and edition paper choice were left entirely to the printmaker. The impressions (and blocks) were sent to Fowler in Kansas City and inserted into handsomely-designed folders of handmade paper (each sheet around 32 x 25 inches,) which were printed by the Torch Press of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Printed sheets were folded quarto fashion, with a cover design that included print title, artist, foreword author, and the Woodcut Society name with date. The inside left-hand leaf would have an essay text written either by the artist or a noted print authority, and the right leaf would hold the print affixed behind a cut out window opening, with the colophon on the back cover. All but one presentation print were constructed with the artist’s print and the letterpress folder created separately. The third Society offering, Allen Lewis’ chiaroscuro color woodcut *St. Francis Preaching to the Birds* of 1933, “is thoroughly satisfying but the whole signature still remains more important to the world of bibliophiles because it is entirely the handwork of Allen Lewis. He cut the block for the print, wrote the essay called “Personal Thoughts on Picture Analysis,” set the type by hand, made the ornaments and printed the entire signature himself on an old hand-press.”⁴

London resident Clare Leighton created the wood engraving *The Net Menders* as the society’s fourth print for the membership in 1933, as well as *Winnowers*, *Majorca* as the fifteenth for 1939 and *Clam Diggers*, *Cape Cod* as the thirtieth presentation print for 1946. Leighton’s 1932 manual on her technique, *Wood-engravings and Woodcuts*, would have been well known in printmaking circles of the time.⁵ Popular enough to be reprinted several times, Leighton’s manual reproduces other artists’ work as examples, including Birger Sandzén’s nailcut *River Nocturne*

of 1928.

The fifth presentation print was commissioned from Thomas W. Nason, *Upland Pastures* (1934) with the essay "The Woodcuts of Thomas W. Nason" written by etcher and long-time president of the American Society of Graphic Arts, John Taylor Arms (1887-1953). Arms describes the Vermont scene as "one of the artist's most personal and complete expressions. The luxuriousness and massed shade of foliage is here, the peace and grandeur of open spaces, and the sun-touched humanity of a distant farmhouse." Nason also created the twenty-eighth print for 1945. *Near Lyme, Sunset* (1944) came with a foreword by Carl Zigrosser (1891-1975), Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, who wrote "Nason is, one might say, a pastoral or elegiac poet" and that "this engraving is, as it were, a sonnet in pictorial form." In May, 1945, Wilma Hall Fowler wrote a letter to Lionel Lindsay in Sydney, Australia, feeling that "I know you will be interested to hear that the Nason print, NEAR LYME, SUNSET, has been awarded the top purchase prize (one of five equal awards) at the Library of Congress' Pennell Show, one of the most important annual print exhibitions in our country. It was chosen as a top prize winner from 1,800 entries and we are naturally much gratified."⁶

Sir Lionel Lindsay created two Society prints. *Pheasant and Wistaria* was published in 1935 as the seventh, with the foreword "The Wood-Engravings of Lionel Lindsay" by Campbell Dodgson, Keeper of Prints at the British Museum and print collector himself. Dodgson wrote, "I would call attention to the way in which the technique is subtly varied in rendering the different kinds of feathers...and to the extremely accurate and beautiful drawing of every separate flower in the clusters of wistaria blossoms." The thirteenth Society offering was Lindsay's *Repose*, done for 1938 with a foreword by the artist. Describing how he came to like bird subjects so much, Lindsay stated "The peacocks in the present cut were drawn in the gardens of the Villa Wurtz at Rome, where they are tame as the Italian domestic fowl, and I was enabled

to make studies at close range." At the age of fifteen, Lindsay had begun as pupil-assistant at Melbourne Observatory but soon found art more attractive than mathematics. He worked as a cartoonist for the *Sydney Evening News*, contributed to the *Sydney Bulletin* and etched and painted in all of his spare time. The artist was knighted in 1941 for his services to Australian art and for extending through his work, the influence of Australian art in the United Kingdom and in the United States in such high profile endeavors as the Woodcut Society.

The ninth presentation print, wood engraving *The Lost Anchor* for 1936, was commissioned from Robert Gibbings (1889-1958) who also designed the typography for the folder in which it was mounted and cut the blocks for the ornaments appearing in the title and colophon. Born in Ireland, Gibbings spent most of his career working in London, and is best remembered for directing the Golden Cockerel Press during the 1920s after surviving being wounded at Gallipoli in World War I.

Ukrainian Boris Artzybasheff (1899-1965) was conscripted as a machine gunner by the Russian army during World War I, but afterwards found his way to an engraving shop in New York City. Becoming very well known as an illustrator, Artzybasheff was asked to create a wood engraving as the Society's twelfth offering. His 1937 *The Last Trumpet* was accompanied by a biographical foreword by Carl Carmer, who commented on the artist's scene of an avenging angel and falling metropolitan towers: "In its power and dignity it calls attention to his gift for truth-bearing fantasy, his skillful precision, his remarkable feeling for design."

The nineteenth Society presentation print was delayed from its original 1940 commission date as the artist worked through the Battle of Britain in her London studio. Wood engraver Agnes Miller Parker (1895-1980) created *Fox* for the 1941 membership, which was accompanied by the essay "The Art of Agnes Miller Parker" written by her spouse William McCance (1894-1970). McCance was a noted Scottish artist and critic, who worked as second controller for

the Gregynog Press in Wales at the time. In a letter to the Society membership, Alfred Fowler explained that "Through a misunderstanding, Miss Parker printed 250 copies of FOX... we decided simply to publish that many extra copies of this one print, making the extra copies available at a reasonable price to members who may want them for gifts."⁷

Ernest W. Watson's (1884-1969) color blockprint, *Once Upon a Midnight Dreary* of 1942, was the twenty-second Woodcut Society offering, and depicted author Edgar Allen Poe's rural Baltimore home before the city grew around it. The print required ten colors applied to five blocks, as described in the unattributed essay, and used Rembrandt oil colors for pigment. The blockprint was the second presentation print of 1942, issued after the Fowlers had relocated to the US Army Air Corps base in San Angelo, Texas. Wilma Fowler wrote to inform the membership of the move and newest print: "Recognizing the unfailing popularity of the several color prints in our portfolio, we have prevailed upon Ernest Watson to give us one of his remarkable color block-prints. The subject he has chosen, to be printed from five blocks, is an intensely dramatic rendering of the old Edgar Allen Poe house, where "The Raven" was written in 1844."⁸

Gustave Baumann's (1881-1971) color woodcut *Cordova Plaza* was the twenty-fourth presentation print, for 1943. Lithographer George William Eggers (1883-1958) wrote the foreword, "Gustave Baumann and his Woodcut, Cordova Plaza," and described the powerful nature of Baumann's New Mexico scene of adobe structures that "draw their sap and fibre straight from the earth itself."

Walter J. Phillips created his second presentation print, *Above Lake Louise* (1945), as the twenty-seventh in the series. In his foreword, the artist describes his color woodcut techniques in the Japanese manner. For this print, Phillips hand carved cherrywood blocks for seven colors, and his "pigments used were powders ground in water and bound with paste." Although the printmaker was born in England, he emigrated to Canada and spent his career appreciating

untamed beauties of nature, including the sparkling Lake Louise in Canadian Rockies.

Fritz Eichenberg (1901-1990) created the thirty-fifth members' print, his wood engraving *Saint Christopher* of 1949. The artist provided his own text for the letterpressed foreword, noting the subject of the print was the patron saint of all travelers, a Christian symbol of man serving God. Eichenberg also reported being filmed: "...as I started on the engraving, the Pathé Newsreel sent a crew to my studio to "shoot" its production with a new close-up camera. As I began to work on the boxwood on Christopher's head with my No. 2 graver, the cameras started to whirl and hours of toil on the block was boiled down to about a minute on the screen."

The thirty-sixth Woodcut Society commission was *Shy Veery* from James D. Havens (1900-1960), a three-color woodcut of 1949, with a foreword by Elizabeth Whitmore. The New York printmaker was known for promoting the art of color woodblock printing and was a founding member of the Print Club of Rochester. Havens created a similar composition, *Cinnamon Fern and Veery*, as the 1948 gift print for the Prairie Print Makers, another print society that Birger Sandzén and ten other Kansas artists had established in 1930.

Contemporary Woodcut exhibitions

Alfred Fowler was so encouraged by positive response in the first year of his new organization that he immediately followed up with a plan to show brand-new blockprints to a wider audience. In the modest catalogue of the *First Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Woodcuts 1933* Fowler wrote, "In the announcement of the Exhibition it was stated there would be no system of prizes or awards in connection with the event; its primary purpose being to inform the public concerning the accomplishments of modern woodcut artists...it travels and is shown wherever wanted."⁹ The first exhibition was on the road a year and a half, hosted by the Brooklyn Museum, Yale University, the Smithsonian Institution, the Wadsworth Atheneum, Davenport College, the Springfield Art Museum, and the Currier Gallery in New York City, all under the auspices of the College Art Association. Artists who participated

in the Woodcut Society's contemporary shows include Provincetown printmakers Blanche Lazzell, Ted Lindenmuth, and Mabel Hewitt; British and Australian artists Clare Leighton, Eric Slater, and Lionel Lindsay; as well as Midwestern favorites Helen West Heller of Chicago, Birger Sandzén and Zona Wheeler of Lindsborg, Josie Eresch of Beloit, Kansas; and E. Hubert Deines and Fred Geary of Kansas City. Thomas Nason and J.J. Lankes from New England participated, as did Betty Waldo Parish of New York City, Richardson Rome of Estes Park, Colorado, and Frances Gearhart of Pasadena, California.

In his day books, Sandzén jotted down on March 6, 1933: "Sent to Alfred Fowler, Director, The Woodcut Society, 1234 Board of Trade, Kansas City, Mo. Wood Cuts: Two proofs each: 1. *Blue Valley Farm* 2. *Creekbank* 3. *Old Reservoir, Central City* 4. *Coxcombs* 5. *Kansas Sunflowers* 6. *Brook with Poplars*"¹⁰ The next year, on March 1, 1934, Sandzén sent in two proofs each of three prints: *Poplars at Moonrise*, *Rhythm of the Wilderness*, and *Willow and Cottonwood*. He also noted that "The permanent collection of The Woodcut Society will be given to the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art."¹¹ The only stipulation that Fowler made to exhibition entrants was that artists would have to supply two impressions of each print in the exhibition—one to travel and one to donate to the Woodcut Society to be given to the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery (now Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art) permanent collection. No entry fees were charged and print sale inquiries were referred directly to the artist, with no commissions taken.

War Bonds and Army Air Corps

Alfred Fowler, who in the spring of 1942 was still directing the Woodcut Society from his Board of Trade business address in Kansas City, proposed a "War Savings Bond Plan" to the membership. In a May 1942 letter to members, Fowler wrote that in the spirit of patriotism, members could buy a war bond registered in his name as the managing director, and use it at the full, matured value to buy prints left over from the past decade's editions of members-only prints. War Savings Stamps could be used as well.¹²

Soon after establishing the new society guidelines, Fowler accepted a captain's commission into the US Army Air Corps and relocated to San Angelo, Texas. For the duration, Wilma Hall Fowler ran the Woodcut Society as Assistant Director, corresponding with artists and organizing all printing, mailing, and finances. Just as the Fowlers were getting used to living in the Lone Star State, Alfred was promoted and reassigned to the Office of Technical Information at the Pentagon. Given forty-eight hours to pack their household, the Fowlers moved to Alexandria, Virginia in December, 1943, where Wilma continued to direct the Woodcut Society solo until Alfred rejoined the administration at the war's end in 1945. By 1948, the Fowlers had taken on other projects and turned the Woodcut Society over to Irvin Haas of Hicksville, New York. The Society continued operating and publishing prints through 1954, when Haas issued the last two presentation prints for the dual years 1953-54 and stopped responding to inquiries.

Collection of Birger Sandzén and Charles Pelham Greenough, 3rd

Although Bethany College professor Birger Sandzén had acquired many of the Woodcut Society's presentation prints as they were published for his personal collection, there were gaps to be filled for a complete set. Sandzén's son-in-law and fellow print collector Charles Pelham Greenough, 3rd (1908-1983), completed a catalogue raisonné of Sandzén's 328 print designs in 1952 and soon after resolved to track down impressions of all the missing presentation folders. Birger Sandzén died in June of 1954 but the family was determined to forge ahead with plans to build a museum to showcase the art of Sandzén and the region. Waiting for the building to go up and open in October of 1957, Pelham Greenough began the search, writing letters to Haas and to Fowler trying to find and purchase impressions. An invoice from Alfred Fowler in Virginia dated March 1955 shows Greenough recovered most of the missing Society prints from the former director, but Fowler was unable to provide Treva Wheete's (1890-1963) color woodcut, *Manuel of Tesuque*, the eighth in the series of 1935.

Greenough advertised in the Kansas City Star several times, and his persistence was rewarded when William Lowrance responded in February of 1957 with an offer to donate the piece to the museum, but only if it was to be a permanent institution. Pelham Greenough assured him it would be so: "Yes, the Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery is going to be a permanent and integral part of Bethany College. It is now being built on the campus south of Presser Hall. I expect the gallery to be dedicated this coming Commencement. However the gallery will not be open to the public until some time this coming fall. I plan to exhibit the entire series of the Woodcut Society in the original folders and in chronological order in the Contemporary Gallery...It should be a very handsome exhibit in every way."¹³

- Cori Sherman North

The BSMG website www.sandzen.org is providing downloadable, supporting material to accompany the Woodcut Society exhibition, which includes images of each of the (44) Woodcut Society prints, plus transcriptions of the presentation folders' foreword essay texts. The task of transcribing was undertaken by John R. Mallery of Overland Park, recent Program Director for the Nelson-Atkins Print Society.

Australia.

7. Alfred Fowler letter to Membership, [undated, ca. 1941]; Print Division of the New York Public Library, 1800-1954; microfilmed by Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; MDONZ, Roll N119, frame 489.
8. Wilma Hall Fowler to Woodcut Society membership, Nov 1942; Print Division of the New York Public Library, 1800-1954; microfilmed by Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; MDONZ, Roll N119, frame 455.
9. Alfred Fowler, "The First Annual Exhibition," Catalogue of the *First Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Woodcuts, 1933: n.p.*
10. Birger Sandzén Art Register, 1933, p.412; Sandzén Archives, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, KS (hereafter "BSMG").
11. Birger Sandzén Art Register, 1934, p.479; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
12. Alfred Fowler to Woodcut Society membership, May 1942 Print Division of the New York Public Library, 1800-1954; microfilmed by Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; MDONZ, Roll N119, frame 452.
13. Charles Pelham Greenough, 3rd, to William H. Lowrance, 21 Feb 1957; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.

(Endnotes)

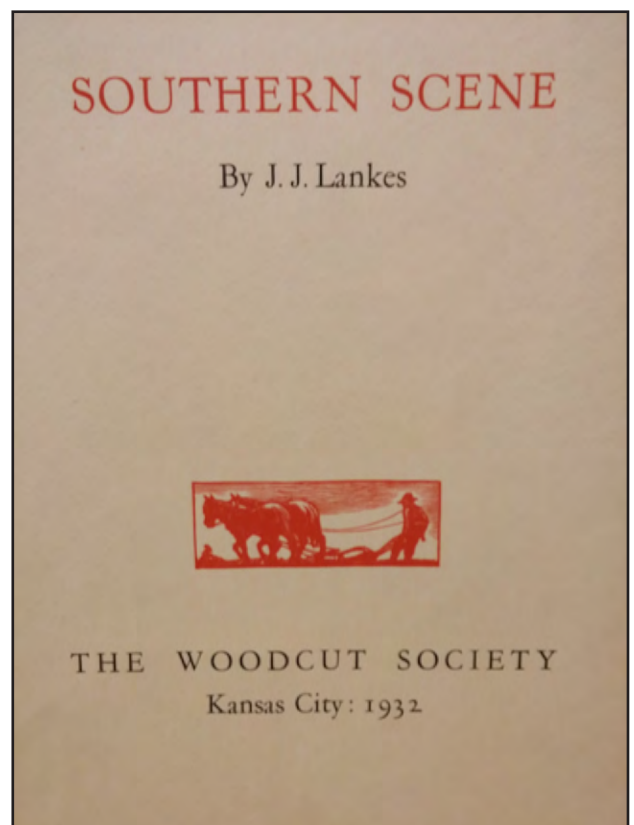
1. J.H. Bender, "The Woodcut Society," *Fine Prints* v. 1, no. 9 (Nov 1932): 28.
2. Bill North, unpublished paper given at Midwest Art History Society annual conference, "Alfred Fowler and the Romance of Fine Prints," (ca. 1993): 4.
3. "Four Years of Woodcuts," *American Magazine of Art* v. 29 (March 1936): 210.
4. J. H. Bender, "The Story of the Woodcut Society," *Fine Prints*, (Oct 1934): 6.
5. Clare Leighton, *Wood-engravings and Woodcuts*, series *How to Do It* 2 (New York: The Studio, 1932).
6. Wilma Hall Fowler to Sir Lionel Lindsay, Sydney, Australia, 9 May 1945; Archives of the Lionel Lindsay Art Gallery and Library at Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Queensland,



1. J.J. Lankes (United States, 1884-1960)
Southern Scene, 1932
 Woodcut; edition of 200
 Greenough Collection,
 Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

THE WOODCUTS OF J.J. LANKES By Genevieve Taggard

In 1918 I opened a magazine and saw Lankes' famous winter scene at the bottom of the page. Since then Lankes has grown as an artist and I have grown too, in the act of seeing through his eyes. I have been his admirer ever since opening that magazine. There is something flavored, shrewd, fond, racy, and independent about the man that made his New England pieces as necessary to the lover of the land as Thoreau's *Walden* and Robert Frost's poems are necessary. His barns, meadows, scythes, deserted houses, ploughing teams, snow-deep barrels are reproduced in a proportion that contrives to make them intimate – to make them our own, really, for the



first time. Lankes seemed destined to this Yankee view of life. I trembled when he went South. What would he do without his touch of snow for the lyricism of his happiest work, I wondered. Wasn't the tenacity and the reserve of the woodcut best fitted to the smallness, the tidy loneliness of New England? And I remembered Elinor Wylie's wonderful declaration:

Down to the Puritan marrow of my
bones
There's something in this richness that I
hate;
I like the look, austere, immaculate
Of pearly hill-sides drawn in monotones

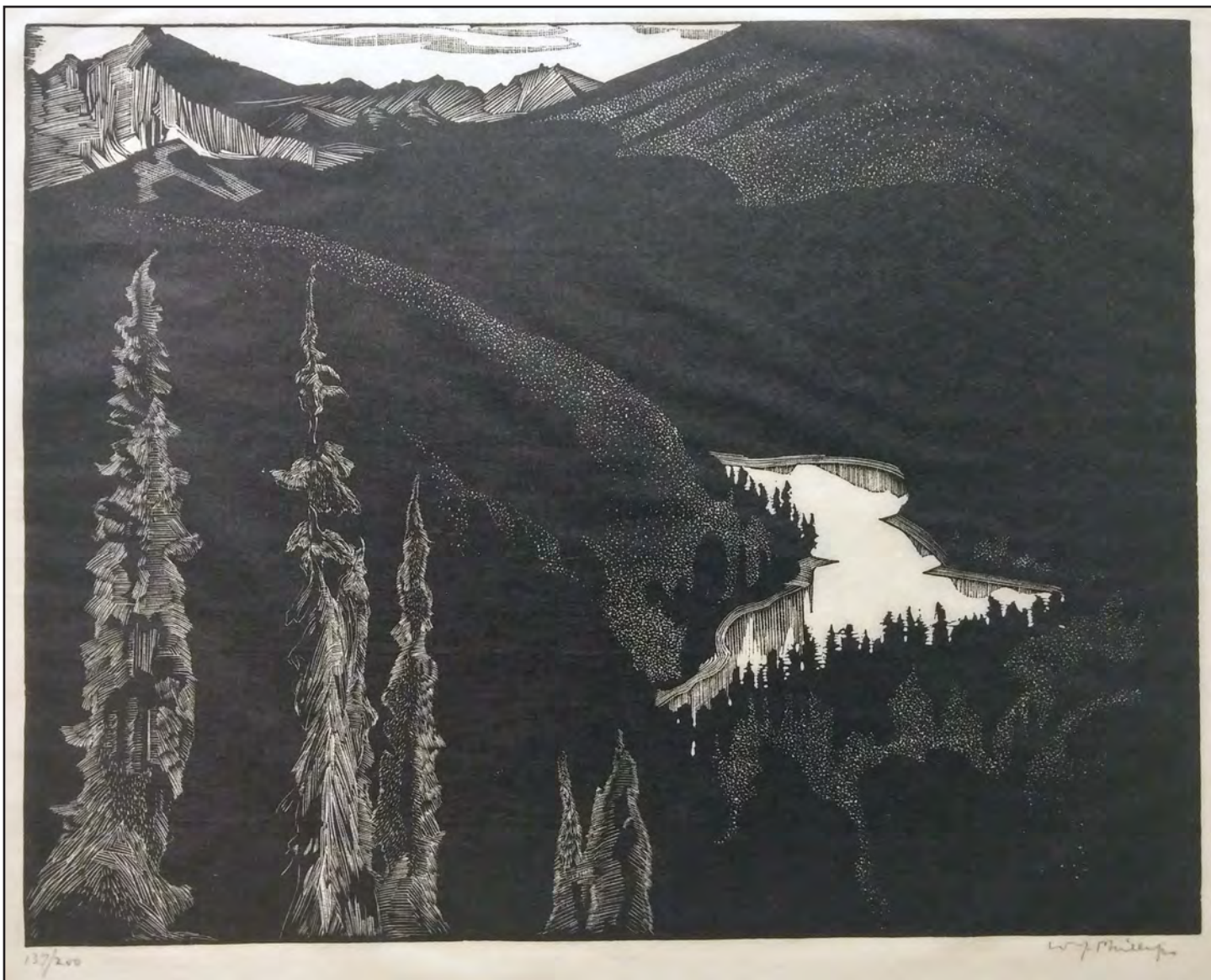
Well, I said to myself, he must come back, and with sentiments corresponding.

I had forgotten that on previous trips to Europe, Lankes had produced three or four excellent cuts of old German and French towns – cobbled streets, overhanging houses. After *Virginia Woodcuts* I ceased abruptly to wish him back in York state. He is native to what he does. He does not make a woodblock until he is close to his subject. The nigger shanties, blasted mulberry trees and gloomy aristocratic dwellings of the South he has seen, are as appropriate to his manner as the Yankee pastures were.

Has caught the South – children swinging in old gardens, washing flapping, hound dogs scratching, horses drooping; and none too soon; just in time in fact, before it passes imperceptibly, and is quite gone. When it is really gone (except for the bones of it rebuilt into the future), it will be the Romantic Past, and an artist's view of it will be priceless. Oh, the scurrying of the patrons and the collectors and the cultured, earnest pious souls who want the past the minute it has ceased to be the vulgar present! How wonderful to possess a Lankes then! Think of the stories and the small idolatry! Now, it is only part of the work-a-day world where every man is put to cast about him for a living.

Lankes is a leap ahead. He has for years and years refused to live as if the work-a-day world were the only concern of his life. Pictures of the present are important to him. He keeps seeing something compelling in the plain live around him. He sees it before we do. If he did not see it, we should not see it. Thanks to Lankes. He has been amply paid by his art for this tenacity and skill and the power to see; skimpily paid in hard cash. He has found much loose admiration and very little intelligent or genuine scrutiny of his work. But do not imagine, any of you who buy his prints, that Lankes made these pictures for you or for any audience, however well disposed. And Fame, don't be hasty or condescending to this man; he is not very much concerned with your caprices on way or another.

People who cherish his work in the future will feel very close to his objects. Stranger yet, they will feel very close to Lankes, himself, in spite of the fact that he shows no concern whatsoever for self-expression. That is the little twist art always takes.



2. Walter J. Phillips (Canada, 1884-1963)

Vista Lake, 1932

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

THE WOODCUTS OF W.J. PHILLIPS

By Campell Dodgson, C.B.E.

English by birth (at Boston, Lincolnshire, 25th October 1884), Canadian since 1912 by domicile, Walter J. Phillips has not lost touch with the Home Country, where his colour prints have many admirers. They have often figured in exhibitions of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour, and are well represented in the British Museum and the collection of the Contemporary Art Society. They illustrate a great variety of subjects and show fertility in the invention of colour schemes, brilliant as in *Zinnias*, subdued as in *Winter*, delicate and charming in the use of a considerable variety of skillfully blended tints, in *Norman Bay* and *Gloaming*.

Conspicuous in all of them is a loyal respect for the conditions that the technique imposes. They are true *prints*, with clear outlines well cut, never sacrificing their graphic character to become imitations of wash or smudge in

water-colour. They are among the most successful adaptations of a process, originally oriental, to the treatment of Western motives.

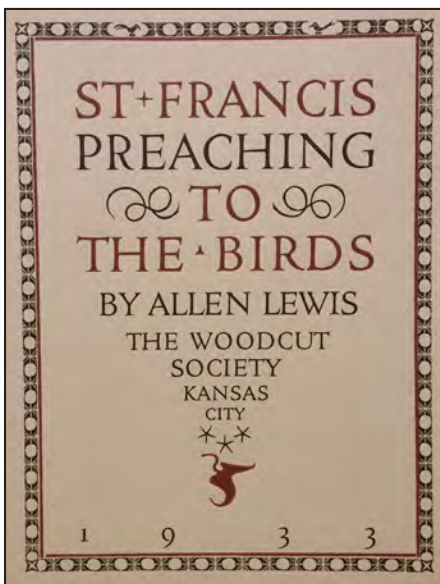
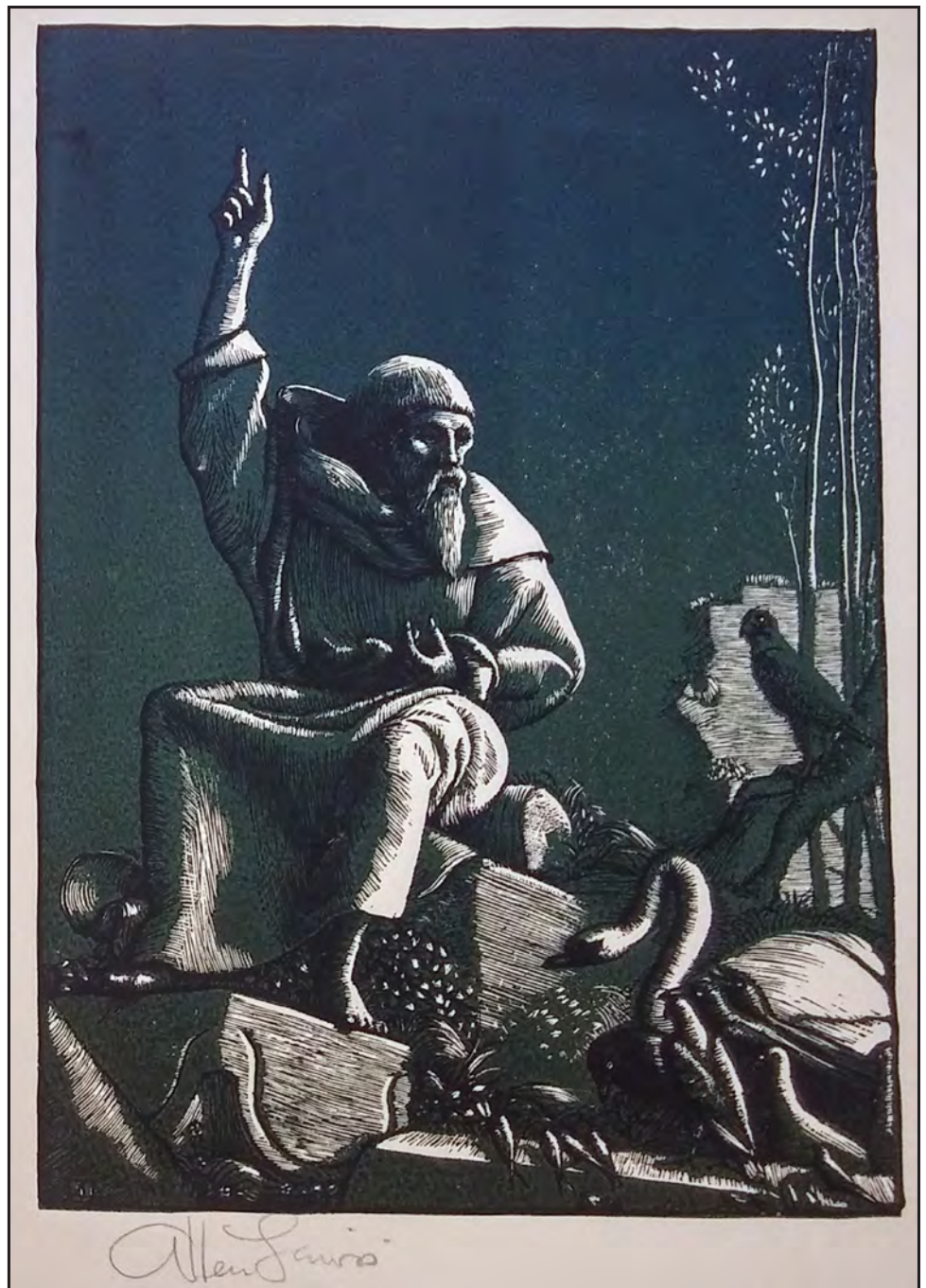
Knowing, as I had hitherto done, only this side of Walter Phillips' work, I was not a little surprised to receive, last July, a parcel of proofs of a totally different kind. Surprised, but not disappointed. It is an interesting experience to witness an interesting experiment. One can only commend an engraver for breaking away from the beaten track and proving his ability to excel in a different process.

Let us see what Phillips can achieve when he restricts himself to pure black and white – the richest black that printers' ink can make on the very purest of white paper – in an austere harmony which would suffer by the contiguity of any but a pure white mount. I think that he shows fine taste in rejecting the cream or yellow of Japanese paper so popular with most of the modern wood engravers.

His prints are engravings: to name them cuts would do them wrong. Technically, they are white line work of extreme refinement, and of the kind that has been carried to perfection by Timothy Cole and others in America, whereas in England it has fallen into disuse since the "eighties" or "nineties" and in the modern revival of wood engraving has been much less in favour than a method which employs bolder and more obvious white lines, though recently this delicate technique, interposing every shade of grey between white and black, has been skillfully used by E. F. Daghish, in his illustrations of natural history and by Blair Hughes-Stanton in his *Comus* set.

In subject they are purely Canadian, inspired by river, lake, mountain and forest. W.J. Phillips has ever been a lover of water and trees, of boats and planks. How well he has engraved the third and fourth of these objects in *Snake Island*, *Lake Winnipeg*; how well the first and second in *Lake of the Woods* and *Rushing River*. The foliage of the fir is rendered with great ability in *Hanging Rock Island*, and in the same print minute white dots model to perfection the bodies of the deer. Attention to details, however must not divert the eye from the rhythm in the whole design of this beautiful engraving, than which I know only one that seems yet more complete in its wide range of "colour" and technical resources: *Vista Lake*, *Canadian Rockies*.

3. Arthur Allen Lewis
 (United States, 1873-1969)
*St. Francis Preaching to
 the Birds*, 1933
 Color woodcut;
 edition of 200
 Greenough Collection,
 Birger Sandzén
 Memorial Gallery



PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON PICTURE ANALYSIS

ALL ART IS
The SAME
BASICLY.

Seeming differences are: style and the emphasis put upon form, line, rhythm et cetera at divers times by different people. But there's only one art. — Cezanne followed the same laws of construction followed by such men as Millet, Degas, Rembrandt, Velasquez & a host of others. He had a mannerism and this started an avalanche. — Our trouble is we look at a picture, with its complicated over-play of style etc., & are bewildered by superficials. Glibly we speak of 'rhythmic design' & 'repeating the motive' as if that's all there was to it. — The many strange forms of plant life all start with one or two leaves: so, in like manner, we'll start simply.

In practice the diagonal line is erratic; like a tree branch or mountain top. Most often it is a compound curve. —

To illustrate: take three straight lines 1, 2, 3 and rearrange them until they have given you the most variation possible. With this end in view two things will result, namely; a right-angle and, in relation to this form, a diagonal, as follows: 2, 3, 1. Or better: 4, 5, 6, because another variation has been gained. For more variety a curve is added, and put in place of the diagonal. The right-angle is retained; for, in spite of foolish rules, art would be a sickly matter without it. — I am not saying artists have

used this method consciously; which, as far as I know, is wholly personal. What these basic forms do, is to establish two extremes & all lines, angles or curves, come between. This is Millet's "Goose Girl". Turn it this way and it's a view of Fuji Yama by Hokusai. In reverse "The Concert" by Ter Borch, fine master of composition. Dependent upon; growing from this form are the radiating; the staggered; the opposed; the upright & horizontal—, lines. Curves follow a similar order in close relation to curve in the form. — Balance is of different kinds, but I will speak only



of one, because it explains a number of things found in the Great Masters ~ not overlooking M. Paul Cézanne. Quite simply put: for each direction an opposing line is drawn at right-angles to it. This diagram of Rembrandt's "Descent from the Cross" shows how this principle was used. The outlines of the bier oppose or counteract, and so balance, the diagonal lines above. See how all curves are opposed likewise, and that all lines are in relationship to the key shown in white line. — This is a long subject and a very short page. Maybe I have tried to say too much.

Use a parallel line with care; it takes action & force from its fellow. For that end it is useful —

A · L ·



4. Clare Leighton (England-U.S., 1898-1989)

The Net Menders, 1933

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

The Woodcuts of Clare Leighton By Martin Hardie, R.I., R.E.

About eight years ago I came upon a wood-engraving, *Dawn in the Train to Mostar*, by Clare Leighton. It struck me at once that here was a young artist (she was still in her twenties) who had something to say and from whom much might be expected. This picture of tired and drowsy peasants herded in a sort of cattle-truck was at once modern and traditional in outlook and imagination; it was impressive as a study of types and of character. *Dawn in Train* was no mere flash-in-the-pan. The qualities found in this, and in still earlier prints such as *Barges*, *The Crinoline*, and *Turning the Plough*, have been strengthened and consolidated in much thoughtful work in later years. Her woodcut illustrations to Thomas Hardy's "Return of the Native" (1929), to Thornton Wilder's "Bridge of San Luis Rey" (1930) and the more recent series of subjects found in a Canadian Lumber Camp have established her reputation. Some three years ago she became one of a small group of wood-engravers elected to

membership of the Royal Society of Painter-Engravers and Engravers. For her volume of woodcuts, a calendar of English husbandry published this autumn under the title of "The Farmer's Year," she has written her own text, as finished and delicate in craftsmanship as the illustrations which it accompanies.

A wood-engraving, much more than a painting, must, from its very nature, consist of abstract formulae. What it represents must be suggested by means of lines, flecks, strokes, patches of black upon white or white upon black. Indeed, all work done with a point, whether of knife, grave, etching-needle, pen or pencil, must be built up by a series of conventional symbols. Except by symbols how could an artist convey in black-and-white on a few inches of paper the suggestion of a tree, with its intricate foliage, its multitudinous leaves, its light and shade, its relation to the surrounding air? And no method more exacting in its choice of symbols than the woodcut, which depends for its expressiveness on lines, shapes, dots, cut or chiseled out on a hard polished surface of wood with a number of small sharp tools. For myself, it is always fascinating to study the new symbols which an artist like Clare Leighton creates, to note her "infinite variety," and to study the personal ways she has evolved for rendering, as in *The Net Menders*, of trees and sky, hillsides and the surface of water, human beings intent upon their work. I put it to members of the Woodcut Society that they can find absorbing interest in the purely technical aspects of the different prints which they so fortunately possess.

Though we may rejoice in the play and interplay of technical changes and refinements, the movement of light and shade, in Clare Leighton's work, it is the large structure, the essential ideas of the theme, which makes the lasting impression. With subtle skill of improvisation in matters of technique she weaves the conventional and the naturalistic into a harmonious whole. You have only to look at any of her prints – or at this *Net Menders* in particular – to see that formal design is the framework upon which it is built and that the structure of line and curve is as important as the steel girders which support a modern building.

Clare Leighton, then, has schooled herself to select and skim from nature those forms and proportions those spaces and shapes, which make for stability and firmness of design. She never seeks the easy charm of associated sentiment, but none the less, she is clearly a keen lover of Nature's infinite moods and aspects. *Net Menders* is no literal portrait of Collioure, but, to all those who know this little village where the Pyrenees slope down to the Mediterranean Sea, it gives the essence of Collioure. It is astonishing, I feel, that without the aid of pigments, Clare Leighton can suggest the very life and colour and seasonal qualities of the landscape she depicts. It is the triumph of her art that beneath beauty and strength of formal design the presence of Nature's beauty is always felt. Shapes of reality, shapes of a dream, fused and controlled by a hand skilled to contrive, a brain quick to direct – that is Clare Leighton's art.

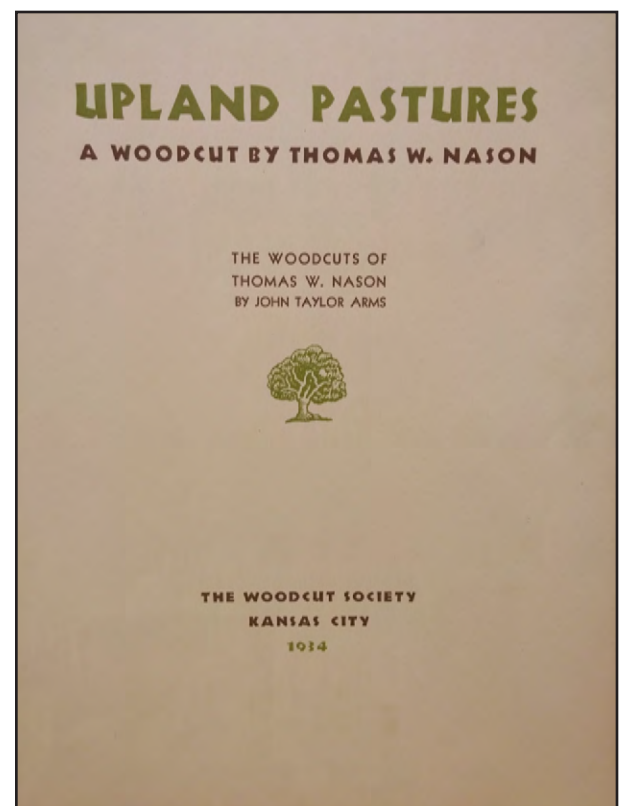


5. Thomas W. Nason (United States, 1889-1971)
Upland Pastures, 1933/published 1934
 Woodcut; edition of 200
 Greenough Collection,
 Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

THE WOODCUTS OF THOMAS W. NASON By John Taylor Arms

Properly to evaluate the work of present day wood-engravers one should glance back upon the development of this medium of expression. In the time of Dürer and Holbein it was customary for the artist to draw the design, which was then cut by a craftsman working under him. This has been a common procedure in the history of the art, followed also by Doré, though Blake, Calvert, and sometimes Bewick both drew and executed their masterpieces. In the nineteenth century illustration rose to a high point in England, the artists' designs on the wood being cut by such master craftsman as the Dalziels, but the medium had ceased to be an original one and had become almost entirely reproductive. Highly finished drawings penned and washed on the block were reproduced with amazing fidelity by some of the most technically accomplished engravers in the whole history of the art, but the intrinsic quality and beauty offered by the wood was largely ignored by the artist.

A new school has arisen to-day that numbers among its members men capable of conceiving beautifully and executing their conceptions with a skill equal to that of the best craftsman of the last century. Moreover they utilize to the utmost the specialized character of the block and, by preserving the true feeling of wood in their designs and by making the material serve the ends of original rather than reproductive expression, they are



restoring to its rightful place among the graphic arts this very beautiful and sensitive medium. Among the foremost of these stands the American, Thomas W. Nason.

Biographical data is of secondary importance; that Nason is both sensitive artist and expert technician is eloquently expressed by that most significant index to the man – his work. A thorough New Englander, there is a felicitous relation between the restraint, almost austerity, of his cutting and the mellow sternness of his subjects. In his *Home on the Marshes*, with its low threatening sky, we feel an utter loneliness and the desolate expanse of nature surrounding the little, rude house which is a veritable achievement in consideration of the smallness of the print. Contrast with this, in the larger *New Hampshire*, the sunny spaciousness of the distant patterned fields and the soft, rounded forms of the nearby trees with their convincing suggestion of rich, flickering foliage obtained by the minute white areas let into the dark masses. The little *Nova Scotia Landscape* displays boldly contrasting areas of black and white and is a telling instance of the brilliant clarity possible in wood-engraving, while *Factory Village*, to my mind the artist's masterpiece, is an outstanding example of the wide range and soft gradations of tones which it is capable of yielding. From the deepest black of the distant chimneys, through the tender grays of the nearby buildings to the dazzling pallor of the snow-covered roofs and branches, the eye travels easily and pleasantly, so cunningly disposed are these values and so perfect in their inter-relation. There is a largeness and simplicity to this print, for all the exquisite refinement of its craftsmanship, that proclaims in the work of an artist of rare sensibility and skill.

Nason is, to me, essentially a landscapist for, though he has engraved many purely architectural subjects, even in these there is an aura about the buildings suggesting the significance of their setting. This is very true in the splendid *Deserted Farm*, with its time-worn timbered building sagging into ruin. Here too is a silo, as monumental and characteristic a feature of our New England scene as the much painted and engraved windmill of foreign lands. Nason often avails himself of the majestic and beautiful roundness of this distinctively American structure, not alone for its charm of mass and curve, but very subtly as a landmark of a phase of our civilization – and never more aptly than here.

Upland Pastures is one of the artist's most personal and complete expressions. The luxuriousness and massed shade of foliage is here, the peace and grandeur of open spaces, and the sun-touched humanity of a distant farmhouse. Nason sees nature with beauty-seeking and beauty-finding eyes and, by his spiritual sensitiveness and great skill of hand in a difficult yet rewarding medium, he gives back to the world what he finds in it of loveliness, of dignity, and of repose.



6. Norbertine Bresslern-Roth (Austria, 1891-1978)

Phantoms, 1934

Color woodcut; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

PHANTOMS: A COLOUR-WOODCUT

By Martin Hardie, R.I., R.E.

The Woodcut Society is fortunate in procuring for its sixth publication the colour woodcut by Madame von Bresslern-Roth. With pride and pleasure I act as its sponsor, for I have seen many prints by this artist but never one that seemed so successful or that combined so happily all her powers of imagination and technique.

To a public who may not previously have known her work, it may be said that Norbertine Roth, who married George, Ritter von Bresslern, was born at Graz in Styria, studied for five years from 1912 to 1916 under professor Schmutzer at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, and at an early stage of her career began to devote all of her energy and insight to themes dealing with the animal world. About fifteen years ago she addressed

herself to the colour-print as a means of expressing her artistic interests, wisely following the old Japanese prints with their superb craftsmanship, their inherent skill in selection of line and form, and their unfailing beauty of a muted colour-scheme. There is, I feel, no other kind of colour-print in which colour and material work in such a happy relation or which gives quite the same inevitable and lasting satisfaction. Mastering what is not an easy craft, she has used it for a long series of prints in which animals and their movements have been portrayed not only with subtle knowledge of their nature but with an artistic inspiration which has woven pictorial suggestions into a fabric of ordered pattern and fluent rhythm.

Phantoms is a picture not only of animals but of the eerie crepuscular mystery of moonlight. The moon in this print is no sentimental lantern in the sky, no lover's planet, but something wild and primitive like the eye of a great other-world monster even more deadly than the three black panthers night-roaming in the solitude of vast spaces. Now nearly all painters of night scenes have used a convention for moonlight, just as there are conventions for so many other effects of Nature, repeated and repeated until all sincerity of vision has been lost. They have concocted a romantic studio product of cold and glittering blues and green. Nearly all have forced and theatrical because they have been painted, in daylight, a dramatic effect from recollection. But go out into a moonlit village street or under the trees of a moonlit lane, ridding your mind of preconceived ideas, and you will find that the shadows are *warm* in colour, warmer than in sunlight. In the moonlit shadows of this print, just as in the structure of bone and muscle under the loose and rippling skin of the prowling beasts, there is simple truth underlying all the phantasy. We recognize that in Madame von Bresslern-Roth's work there is not only poetry, but the sincerity which rises from a store of knowledge, slowly amassed, carefully matured.

That Madame von Bresslern-Roth is not only a fine artist and observer, with a poet's mind, but a designer and craftsman as well, is amply demonstrated by this brilliant print. The diagonal lines, the forward thrust, the swinging curves, make it the embodiment of motion. The formidable beasts advance on soft-padded silent feet with a stealthy sinuous grace, the whole rhythm of the composition explaining and enhancing a movement which seems at once inevitable and irresistible. The beasts not only embody rhythmical motion; they inspire fear; the haunting dream-terror of pursuit and impending doom. They are phantoms, but they are as real to the artist and to ourselves, as the Hound of Heaven was to Francis Thompson when he wrote:

“Still with unhurrying chase
And with unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet.”

7. Lionel Lindsay
 (Australia, 1874-1961)
Pheasant and Wistaria,
 1934/published 1935
 Wood engraving;
 edition of 200
 Greenough Collection,
 Birger Sandzén Memorial
 Gallery



THE WOOD ENGRAVING OF LIONEL LINDSAY By Campbell Dodgson

Pheasant and Wistaria is a capital example of the art of the foremost wood-engraver of Australia. To name him thus is to tell the truth, but not the whole of it. Mr. Lionel Lindsay is not only a wood-engraver and not only an Australian. In London, at least, we of the little world – one little world among many – that cares for prints, have come to look on Mr. Lindsay rather as one of ourselves, not at all as a rare and passing visitor from the Antipodes, and his brilliant water-colours, etchings, and drypoints of Spain bear witness that there is at least one

more country to whose heart he has found the key, and more than one kind of engraving in which he is skilled. Nor is his enthusiasm restricted to the arts which he practices himself and to his own practice in those arts. To a keen zest for good talk, good food and wine, for politics, literature and travel, and all that adds embellishment and stimulus to life as we find or make in our day, he adds a fervent admiration for great engravers and draughtsman of the past, especially Dürer and Charles Keene.

But it is of Mr. Lindsay the wood-engraver that I am expected on this occasion to say a few words. An article full of this information on this subject by Mr. James S. Macdonald, published in "The Print Collectors Quarterly," April 1934, to which I must refer readers who desire more complete instruction, tells us our artist began to publish his engravings, then immature, in 1922. *The White Cock* and *The Pelican* which are mentioned as the pick of the woodcuts produced in 1923 and 1924, can certainly not be accused of immaturity. I count myself fortunate that both are included in the little selection of Mr. Lindsay's work that I possess; it is, by the way, much more largely represented in the Print Room of the British Museum. Mr. Lindsay had by this time developed almost completely the technique which is now to be recognized as characteristically his, though in a renewed examination of *The White Cock*, the eye may detect a certain roughness in the engraving of the feathers, and a less close attention to the purpose and direction of every slight line that marks the fibres and veins of the foliage, than it discerns in the engraving now before the reader, or in *The Clipped Wing*, a subject suggested by a depressed captive at the zoo, and not without an allusion to the economic situation in Australia in 1930.

It will be noticed, in looking through a set of Mr. Lindsay's engravings, that he has adopted almost invariably the convention of dead black background, against which the objects, nearly always birds or flowers, on which the eye is intended to rest, stand out in strong relief and with the utmost clearness of definition. The majority of these objects, moreover, are in nature actually white, as they appear to be in the engravings. So it is with the cock and the pelican, so with the somewhat later *White Goats*, *White Peacock*, and the *Philosophy*, a skillful combination of large pendent flowers and a standing stork. In *Pheasant and Wistaria* the flowers supply the usual brilliant high lights. "I always strike my accents first," Mr. Lindsay is quoted as saying, "for there is no working forward to the lights in wood-engraving."

One of his most remarkable achievements, and a departure in the way of subject from that he generally chooses, is the large and detailed *Crab* of 1931. The carapace and claws of this rugged crustacean moving in strong sunlight over rock are rendered with extreme virtuosity.

Pheasant and Wistaria, engraved on a block of larger dimensions than Mr. Lindsay generally employs, matches in its upright proportions *The White Peacock*, but is considerably bigger. It appears to me to mark the climax of Mr. Lindsay's accomplishments up to now in wood-engraving. I would call attention to the way in which the technique is subtly varied in rendering the different kinds of feathers on the pheasant's head, breast, back and tail, and to the extremely accurate and beautiful drawing of every separate flower in the clusters of wistaria blossoms. Very subtle, moreover, is the suggestion of colour in these blossoms which from the brilliance of their white accents are not supposed to be actually white. Those who know wistaria will remember how the as yet unopened buds at the lower end of the cluster are of a rather deep mauve, which becomes gradually paler as the flowers expand and fades to white in the other blooms, doomed before long to wither, that are found at the base of the cluster. This gradation of colour is suggested with great skill in the engraving, in which the attentive eye will also notice the elasticity of the curving tendrils and the truth to nature of the bare stems of a cluster, here and there, which has already shed its flowers.

8. Treva Wheete
 (United States, 1890-1963)
Manuel of Tesuque, 1935
 Color woodcut;
 edition of 200
 Greenough Collection,
 Birger Sandzén Memorial
 Gallery



THE COLOR PRINTS OF TREVA WHEETE

By Gardner Teall

The relief-block color print designed, cut and printed by Treva Wheete are a distinct contribution to the progress of American art. That wise and perceptive Sixth century Chinese student of aesthetics, Hsieh Ho, set forth the Six Canons of a work of art these requirements; Rhythmic vitality; True anatomical structure; Conformity with nature; Suitability in color choice; Artistic composition, and that Proper degree of finish demanded for proper expression, requirements which are as valid today as they were over fourteen hundred years ago when Hsieh Ho wandered through Bamboo Groves. We have only to examine Mrs Wheete's color prints to discover how vitally they maintain these very canons, and to see at once that her originality and creative power are sustained in expression by her mastery of material and processes.

In discussing the technique of art, Ingres once said that the simpler its lines and forms are, the stronger and more beautiful a work of art will be, and whenever forms are broken up they are weakened: "To draw does not mean only to reproduce an outline," said he, "drawing is more than this; it is expression, it is the inner form, the

structure, the modeling.” Treva Wheete’s relief-block color prints present us immediately full evidence of this probity, of which we have an outstanding example in her *Manuel of Tesuque* before us, which is both a work of art and a true portrait, that of one of the prominent tribesman in the Pueblo of Tesuque, New Mexico, some ten miles or so north of Santa Fe. This Manuel, I am told, led the ceremonial dances of his tribe. Here is shown wearing the costume of that picturesque type which his own people patterned after the Navajos. This same quality of the close relationship of art and portraiture is to be found in all of the artist’s figure subjects, whether they are depicted singly, as in this present print, in her well known *Vincente of Taos*, and in others, or in groups such as are portrayed in *Making Tortillas*, and in *Minstrels of Mexico*, in which latter print eleven figures are introduced, each single figure having been given the true semblance of a striking individuality, yet each figure has been kept in complete harmony with every other part of this fine composition.

The landscape color prints of this artist are not less interesting than her figure subjects, and like them they strike a distinctly American note. *Mission Ruins – Pecos*, for instance, is a little masterpiece whose flat planes of color suggest more to the eye than just a collection of pattern units. In all these color prints one notes a deft placing of color, of white, black, and a handling of light and shade that are admirable. Treva Wheete *understands* color with the depth of perception which marked old Hokusai’s color mastery when he wrote: “There is the black which is old and the black which is fresh; lustrous black and dull black; black in sunlight and black in shadow.” I think Hokusai would have liked this *Manuel of Tesuque* print.

The color print method employed in this composition differs from that of the Japanese color print artists, and also from that of most color print artists of other countries in that the artist does not make use of key-blocks for registering her colors in the course of printing. Here original drawings are made with pastel in the full color-scheme directly upon the same sort of tough paper which she employs in making her transfers to the various blocks, these blocks being of linoleum which she prefers to wood. After cutting the blocks to conform to the requirements of the transfers, they receive a thin coat of shellac, and after this is dry, the blocks are then ready to receive the oil color-pigments which she uses in place of water-color or colored printing inks. The impressions are printed by the artist herself, by means of a hand-press, and on various sorts of Japanese papers selected with great care for the precise effects she wishes to obtain in tone and in texture in the finished print. Five blocks were required for the printing of *Manuel of Tesuque*, several different colors being applied to each of the blocks, a process requiring delicate precision and care.

Treva Wheete’s art finds inspiration in the scenes familiar to her from her earliest years. *Manuel of Tesuque*, combines an insight into the racial characteristics of the sitter with unusual ability on the part of the artist to create an effect thoroughly in keeping with the subject in hand.



9. Robert Gibbings (Ireland, 1889-1958)

The Lost Anchor, 1936

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

FOREWARD

“Every picture tells a story!” So, many people would have us believe, but seldom *is* the artist concerned with *story*. His business is with forms and colours, not words, and his work becomes the more excellent according as he expresses those qualities which can only be proclaimed by his particular medium

Then as to subject; it is invariably the critic who supplies the inspiration.

THE LOST ANCHOR

A WOOD ENGRAVING BY
ROBERT GIBBINGS

WITH
A FOREWORD BY THE ARTIST



THE WOODCUT SOCIETY
KANSAS CITY
1936

Rodin's "John the Baptist" was not a mystic revelation of "the forerunner," it was simply a professional model, out of temper, striding across the studio floor. A friend of the artist suggested the title.

A similar incident happened in my own experience; a sculptor friend set out to carve a torso. His main idea was to make as large a figure as the stone would allow excluding head, arms, and legs below the knee, but as the work progressed it became obvious that two amputated thighs were an awkward "join" for this monumental figure and its base. I happened to be in his studio when the problem arose and noticing that his assistant had left a goodly share of unhewn stone behind the knees, I suggested that this should be carved to represent the figure as kneeling. This idea was carried out, and the finished work was eventually exhibited in London; the proprietor of the gallery found a suitable title, the artist having no ideas on that subject, and in due course the newspapers endowed the work with religious fervor "a symbol of the human race kneeling to God!"

Are these remarks puncturing to our ideas of Art with a capital A? They need not be, Art has more than enough to concern itself with the beauty of lines, forms and colours for their own sake and their own significance. It is those particular qualities which express attributes inexpressible in any other way.

In my orchard garden is a wheelbarrow filled with bricks. "What are you building?" asks the writer within me. "Never mind," says the artist, "look at those sharp angles of bricks opposed to the sweeping curve of the barrow; look at the cool green of the painted wood silhouetted against the bright spring grass. Look at the scarlet facets of the bricks with their contiguous mauve shadows, all singing in the sunlight."

A chaffinch perches on the bricks, look at his delicate forms against the solid clay on which he stands. The black on his wing harmonizing the crimson of his breast with the scarlet under his feet and how the white feathers on his wing sparkle.

But what has this to do with coral reefs? Nothing much except to prove that when I drew the lost anchor I was not thinking of the ship to which it once belonged, nor of the accident by which the cable was severed; I had no visions of sudden storms and shattered ships and drowned seamen. My only thoughts at the time were of the contrast between the rigid metal and the free growing forms of the coral. I liked the violence of the hammered iron opposed to the fragile composites of the reef. I saw too the helpless immobility of this dead weight while all around it played a thousand sprightly gaily coloured fish. And fish! Oh Lord what shapes and colours, each small creature such a perfect entity, such a perfect mechanism; how they control their fins and sweep in and out of the coral crevices; not one of them has the faintest notion of a world beyond its own small pool, and yet within each tiny body is a system of life more complex and more marvelous than anything man has ever created.

Am I beginning to tell a story after all? It's mighty difficult this business of Art, there *are* so many side tracks!

Finally as to technique; there are schools which tell you that *all* wood-engraving should be white on black, there are others who teach that a black line on white, in the style of Burne-Jones, is alone permissible. Neither is right. It is for the artist to decide which quality of line is most suited to the work in hand. When engraving decorations to be printed with type it will perhaps seem most apposite that the lines should be embossed on the wood as the characters are embossed on type-metal, but when working independently and there are no technical restrictions on the manner of printing, that is the time to develop the brilliance and spontaneity of the white line. The proof of the artist is in the results achieved. Let him seek first the mastery of his medium and all the rest will be added unto him.

Robert Gibbings



10. Asa Cheffetz (United States, 1897-1965)

Midsummer Vermont, 1936

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

ASA CHEFFETZ, ENGRAVER

By John Taylor Arms

The current revival of interest in wood-engraving or original rather than reproductive expression has resulted in much work, both here and abroad, conspicuous for the enthusiasm rather than the inspiration and knowledge which went into its production. The ancient art of wood-engraving is difficult and an exacting one, demonstrating in its best examples that intensity of feeling and power of imagination which are essential to all true artistic expression, combined with a clarity of vision and precision of statement peculiarly characteristic of the medium. Granted the emotional content of a wood-engraving by Blake, Dürer, or Calvert, there remains a certain dignity and restraint wholly intellectual, as well as a completeness of statement which presupposes a thorough command of the craft.

Self-taught in the art, Asa Cheffetz has achieved a signal success in the comparatively short period of time since he turned to the wood as his life work. A list of the permanent collections in which he is represented, and of

the awards one, testifies to the recognition that has come to him, but is, like the biographical data available to anyone interested, of very secondary importance as compared to the beauty and significance of his work.

Cheffetz's prints evince a happy union of technical skill with poetry and nobility of feeling. He composes well, seeming to know how so to coordinate the elements of his composition as to relate them not only to each other but to the character and meaning of his picture as a whole; his draughtsmanship is impeccable; and his cutting fluent, crisp and incisive. Essentially a landscapist, he has penetrated to the inner meaning of his subjects and interpreted nature with a sympathetic understanding of her moods that is poignantly felt as the expression of it is lucid and complete. Yet the result is never labored and, in spite of the fullness of his statement, he always seems to have something in reserve. It is as if he spread the scene before us, conceived in terms of mass and structure yet with loving attention to every detail, hinted at his own mood, and then withdrew to allow our own imaginations full sway.

Cheffetz's handling of light is masterly and is largely responsible for the feeling of space which pervades his tiniest print. He likes strong, deep blacks, but uses them with discretion and restraint and with a wise appreciation of the importance of grey. There seems to be a craving for heavy blacks in contemporary wood-engraving, probably because they are easily obtained and to achieve a fine, transparent grey requires much patience and skill. Yet would those singing blacks of distant hills and foreground trees in *Over the Line* count for half their value were it not for the subtle greys of clouds, fields and nearer mountains, and that single flashing white note supplied by the farmhouse?

Two physical characteristics appear in these prints with a regularity definitely associating them with everything the artist has done – a certain jewel-like quality arising from a free use of tiny white dots or flicks, and a remarkable plastic feeling due not only to Cheffetz's fine sense of form and spatial relation but to his frequent practice, particularly in his snow scenes, of employing a soft paper forced into the depressions in the block and resulting in an embossed effect. From the spiritual point of view, the dominant note can best be described as an austerity of beauty. Replete with sentiment but not sentimental, dignified but never dry, complete without being fulsome, these prints speak with an authority which proclaims their author an accomplished leader in his field.

Midsummer Vermont combines those qualities which pervade all the artist's work. From the simple material furnished by a group of farm buildings silhouetted against a high-piled summer sky, with a long, dusty road leading eye and thought to the focal point of the composition, Cheffetz has created a bit of a beauty both subtle and provocative. The feeling of approaching storm in the dark strip of cloud and creeping foreground shadow, the sense of hush, and the all pervading essence of the soil – these are the threads with which the artist's sensitive spirit has woven his pattern. And for all that it has in common with the fine prints of all time, it is of today and of America; the stuff from which a national tradition is made.



11. Thomas W. Nason (United States, 1889-1971)

Morning, 1937

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

FOREWARD

The editor of the Woodcut Society series has posed a somewhat difficult problem in asking me to write about myself and my own prints. I suppose that I should begin by saying that I was born in 1889 in the village of Dracut, Massachusetts. Shortly after my birth, my father, who was a Congregational minister, moved to a home near Billerica, but my early life was all spent in rural environment. As a youth there was no formal thought of my going in for art in any form as a profession, although I had early shown a certain ability to draw.

I am always perplexed by the question, so often asked, as to how I happened to take up wood-engraving. It is difficult to give a satisfying answer. In the early twenties, I became aware of an increasing interest in wood-engravings, based mainly on seeing them used as book decorations and magazine illustrations. These prints done for the most part in bold and effective manner with rich blacks and sparkling whites, appealed to me very strongly. I seemed to see great possibilities in the medium for personal art expression. In 1922, I made my first wood-engraving, which was more of a laboratory experiment than anything else.

The decision was soon reached that I would never find it particularly thrilling to cut away the wood around the lines on the block simply to reproduce my drawing. But I was interested in engraving extemporaneously directly on the block with a smooth-cutting engraver's tool which would go in any direction with equal freedom and

which would cut a fine line or a broad one with much the same movement. I found this kind of engraving on wood a creative process within itself. As I became familiar with the use of the burin on boxwood and perfected my knowledge of printing from engraved blocks, the fascination of the process really got a hold of me.

But my progress was slow. I produced a few blocks each year but continued to engrave them purely as an avocation; constantly experimenting, and striving to improve both my technique and composition. It has now been some fifteen years since the first block came into my hands. I do not know exactly how many have succeeded it but I do know that each one has presented an individual problem and that the final result is always a matter of conjecture. The first trial proof always brings a moment of keen anticipation and excitement – and often brings disappointment.

In the present print, *Morning*, I have made use of three blocks. First, the so-called key block, which comprises the darkest portion of the work and which is really the framework of the print. The second block covers the same area, and, in addition supplies the darker accents in the clouds. The third is used for the light tint over the sky. The second and third blocks are also used over the lower part of the composition and over the tree to assist in the modeling and to gain the effect of transparency. This is the order in which the blocks were engraved; they were printed in reverse order, the lightest tint first and the succeeding blocks on top of that. There has been no attempt to use color for its own sake: the three blocks being employed to achieve a wider range in tonal values as well as to lend the effect of luminosity and the illusion of space. I have called the print *Morning*, not only because it is supposed to be cast at the particular time of day but also because I had in mind the Morning of Life – the boy's outlook and freshness of nature.

12. Boris
Artzybasheff (Russia-U.S.,
1899-1965)
The Last Trumpet, 1937
Wood engraving; edition of
200
Greenough Collection,
Birger Sandzén Memorial
Gallery



THE LAST TRUMPET
By Carl Carmer

Boris Artzybasheff may well have inherited from his distinguished father, Michael Artzybasheff, his literary fancy, his painstaking craftsmanship, his artistic integrity. The author of "Sanine" and "The Breaking Point" doubtless left much that was within him to his son. But the son has not allowed his inherent talent to lie fallow. Though circumstance made him, and eighteen-year-old art student at Prince Tenisheff's school in St. Petersburg, into a machine-gunner in a Ukrainian regiment, Boris Artzybasheff did not lack the courage to turn his experience into account.

Chance landed him, months later, penniless and friendless on American shores. It was not chance but gallantry and intelligence and the spirit of the artist that have establish him in the place he occupies in America to-day.

Many a volume has been raised to the elect category of collector's items by its Artzybasheff's illustrations. And the works which emerge from the modern and very functional studio of his Greenwich Village home in New York City not only keep to the high standard of their predecessors but improve in breadth of fancy and quality achievement.

The combination of technical excellence, poetic imagination, and the uniquely personal which has made Artzybasheff one of the best known and most admired of American illustrators is characteristically evident in the strongly conceived and strongly executed print, *The Last Trumpet*. This work might be an illustration for a great modern epic, a contemporary "Paradise Lost." Literary in its implications, it does not lack the qualities of pure art. So strong and comprehensive are its meanings, it needs no words to set the imagination afire. Like all great fables, it concentrates on making its supernatural concepts real and on understating the things that are within usual experience. The angel trumpeter is the one reality of the picture. He is a figure of tragedy, noble and impressive, a super-being "moving about in worlds not realized," but nevertheless real. The toppling metropolitan towers, as Artzybasheff has drawn them, are suggestions, symbols of the unreal world in which men live. The exquisite detail in the tracery of the angel's wings, the firm moulding of his muscular body, the photographic realism of the left foot made emphatic by the blank white top of the cracking cornice on which it rests, are not only evidence of the artist's technical ability but also proof of the strength and variety of his artistic genius.

I am glad that Artzybasheff chose this particular print for The Woodcut Society collection. In its power and dignity it calls attention to his gift for truth-bearing fantasy, his skillful precision, his remarkable feeling for design. All of these the layman is likely to overlook in many of his book illustrations through sheer joy in their humor and charm. As Padraic Colum has said of another of Artzybasheff's works, I say of this, "It suggests and escape into vision." There will be few who look upon it who will not be lost awhile in wonder.

13. Lionel Lindsay (Australia,
1874-1961)
Repose, 1938
Wood engraving; edition of
200
Greenough Collection,
Birger Sandzén Memorial
Gallery



FOREWARD

I was born in Creswick, a small mining town in Victoria, Australia, in 1874, and the life of my childhood was rather like that described by Mark Twain in "Tom Sawyer." Exactly opposite to my home stood the pretentious dwelling of a retired Indian Officer, one of those Dundreary Swells Charles Keene drew so perfectly. He recognized no one in trade and condescended to know only the Doctor (my father), the Banker, the Solicitor and a few station owners. A close high fence surrounded his demesne, and he click of croquet balls, the splashing of a fountain, the anguished cry of peacocks, and the chatter of the parrot tribe could be heard across the way. One day a providential knot-hole in the fence gave my long pent of curiosity its opportunity. Superb macaws in blue and yellow and red, pheasants and lordly peacocks greeted my enchanted sight. I think my love of birds dated from that moment.

At the age of fifteen I became a pupil-assistant at the Melbourne Observatory. I spent my nights reading at the Public Library and copying reproductions of the old masters in outline. One day the Astronomer-Royal saw these on my table and said, "You will never be an astronomer. I think this is your line." So I drifted into journalism. At the ripe age of nineteen, I owned a fifth share in a weekly paper that actually lived for seven months. On its demise I went to the gold fields, and in 1902 to Spain for a year to live with the folk. My cash running out, I took a tramp passage to London, was hard up in Fleet Street, and returned the following year to Sydney to draw for a living and etch for pleasure.

In 1926 Mr. Harold Wright, who had seen some of my prints at the Academy, wrote me an encouraging letter, and offered to put my work before English collectors. I wrote to say that I was leaving almost immediately for Europe, and in the fullness of time, after working in Spain and Italy, I printed my plates and was fortunate enough to win the approval of the English and American public at Colnaghi's Galleries in 1927.

But the woodcut, to which this is all by way of prelude. How did I become involved? In reality by the chance purchase of a set of old gravers. The lay forgotten in my studio for a couple of years. One day I picked up an old wood-block at the office of my paper and tried my hand on the back of it. I achieved the worst wood-cut on record.

Realising that this was not a business to undertaken lightly, I cast about for a guide. By chance I came upon a second-hand copy of a manual of instruction by W. J. Linton, that great old man to whom American engraving owes so much, and the uncompromising champion of first principles. As I pondered over the examples in this book I saw quickly that woodcut quality was involved with the line cut, that the graver was an instrument to draw with at will, and freed from the tyranny of reproducing, that the white line cut on a black ground, though apparently a negative approach to form, produced when logically employed, a positive effect. Another enormous advantage in direct engraving was the immediate establishment of drawing, no cutting around a line already drawn, but creating one – a *premier coup*. There was also the excitement of gambling with results, which kept interest alive and continuing. So, with old Linton's dictum in mind, "Cut a line with meaning," I deserted copperplate - (for a season) – for the pale charms of boxwood.

White on black. Black on white. Which is to play lead? That is the question the artist-engraver must put to his design. The comes the arrangement of the blacks, greys, whites, the problems of accents, of open and closed tones. At least that is the way I approach my work, and I imagine that the problems involved are the same for all of us who use the graver as an instrument to draw with.

At first I completely blackened the block and drew my design in pencil outline, which shows clearly on the fine matt surface. I prefer now, after placing everything carefully to a pen outline, to blacken the space about to be engraved, and work on, piecemeal, until the pleasurably anxious moment arrives for proving.

The peacocks in the present cut were drawn in the gardens of the Villa Wurtz at Rome, where they are tame as the Italian domestic fowl, and I was enabled to make studies at close range. From these studies I selected two, linked them by the bough, and balanced the fall of the near bird's tail with the upward curve of the tree, stopping the line with the upper bird, and anchoring the design below with the poppies. My aim being to achieve unity of impression through rhythm. *Repose* is in reality a black on white design, though it was cut throughout on the black.

Lionel Lindsay

Wahroonga, November, 1937



14. Eric Slater (United States, 1896-1963)

The Stack Yard, 1938

Color woodcut; edition of 200

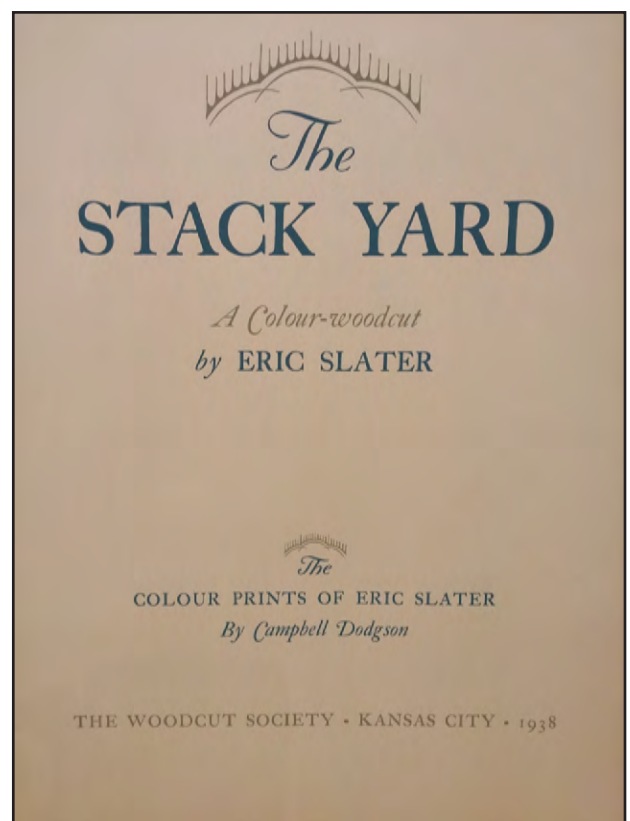
Greenough Collection,

Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

THE COLOUR PRINTS OF ERIC SLATER

Though a Londoner by his birth in 1896, Mr. Slater belongs by his whole career to the county of Sussex, whose downs and lanes, villages, seaports, cliffs and martello towers have furnished motives for the majority of his coloured-woodcuts.

As a boy he lived at St. Leonard's-on-Sea and afterwards at Winchelsea. This little town, one of the ancient Cinque Ports but standing now at some distance from the sea, is remarkable for its fine mediaeval gates and church, but is less a favorite haunt of artists than its neighbor, Rye. For the last nine years Mr. Slater has resided at Seaford.



Till the age of twenty-one his health did not permit him to take up any career, but he was interested in art. He studied for three years at the Hastings School of Art, and had private instructions from a neighbor at Winchelsea. He became in April, 1928, a member of the Society of Graver-Printers in Colour, and his first colour print was published in 1929. He has exhibited at other galleries, and in 1930 obtained the gold medal of the International Print Makers Society of California. Two of his best prints are in the British Museum.

His work is characterized by a simple and harmonious colour scheme, with broad surfaces of rather flat tints, resembling water-colour in effect; but not the kind of water-colour that is meticulously finished, rather that kind, more true to the best traditions of the art, in which the colour remains thin and transparent. He is much addicted to the use of grey, pale brown and lilac tints, with a quiet, dull green for turf on the top of a chalk cliff (*Seaford Head*), or a pale tint, greenish or bluish, for the sea itself. Such a scheme of colour is generally accompanied by a cloudy sky. A favorite of mine is the small print, *A Misty Day*, in which the whole landscape, obviously composed, is rendered in shades of dull blue (even the trees are blue), a pale and dark lilac, a slightly pinkish grey, and a little dull green, light and dark, when, as in this case, a figure is introduced, we just see that there is a figure; any attempt to give it precision would be inconsistent with the broad, generalizing style of Mr. Slater's prints.

Rather brighter colours and sharper outlines appear in *Fishing Boats*, one of his best woodcuts and especially in the rendering of sea water; but brighter and also deeper colours, with more contrast, are appropriately introduced in subjects where there is sunshine. *Clayton Mills*, *Rottingdean Mill*, *the Martello Towers*, and the new colour print, *The Stack Yard*, which Mr. Slater has produced for the Woodcut Society, exhibit this gayer side of his art. In *The Stack Yard* I am sure, though Mr. Slater has not told me, that I recognize a motive from the charming and unspoilt Cuckmere Valley, where the little river of that name, after flowing through Alfriston, loses itself in a bank of shifting shingle where it meets the sea.

A word must be said, finally, of the excellence of certain flower pieces by Mr. Slater: *Japanese Bush Lanterns* and *An Autumn Posy*. These are among the most skillful productions of the English School of colour prints in the Japanese technique which derives its existence from the initiative of two pioneers, Frank Morley Fletcher and John Dickson Batsen, about 1895.

- Campbell Dodgson

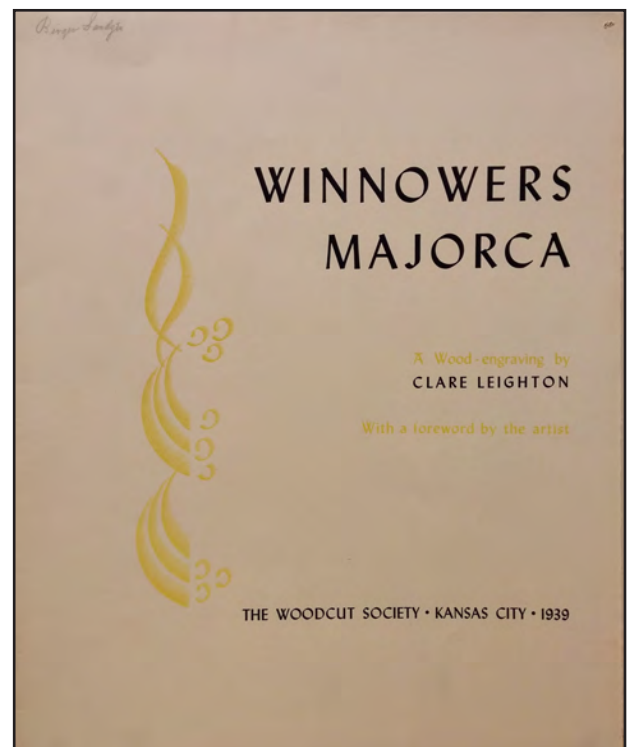


15. Clare Leighton (England-U.S., 1898-1989)
Winnowers, Majorca, 1937/published 1939
 Wood engraving; edition of 200
 Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial

WINNOWERS, MAJORCA

It is not easy for the artist to talk about his own work. While it is being done he seeks isolation; once it is finished he loses interest in it, reserving excitement for his next creation. It is the outside critic who is better able to analyse and appreciate the work of art. Realising this, I propose to talk about the actual making of this print. Here the artist alone can speak.

I remember the moment of its conception. As always, this moment came on unsought. I am walking in the country and, at a twist in the path, past the olive field, I hear the creak of a well as blindfolded pony endlessly turns the wheel. Into



this pattern of sound is woven the songs of Majorcan peasants; they are winnowing beans upon a circular stone threshing floor. It has been happening thus throughout the ages, but this particular morning something within me is ready, and in a moment of time I experience the ecstasy of conception and the design is stamped within me.

With luck I have a drawing book handy; but even the smallest scrap of torn paper will be enough. For all that matters at this minute is the contrasting rhythm of circular threshing floor against figures of winnowers, balanced by curve of well at the top left-hand corner. The sweep of six lines serves to secure this embryonic design against the inevitable decline of creative excitement. This particular time, I remember, I had no paper with me. I had to keep my excitement until I could borrow a pencil from the waiter and scribble my curved lines on the back of a menu card at the midday meal. It is a wonderful moment, this, for the pencil seems to work beyond one's conscious control. These are the happy times for the artist, before he is faced with the struggle to keep the spirit of his work alive throughout the tedium of execution.

The next step is to make careful studies of the various elements in the design. The old stone well must be drawn; the winnowing forks must be looked at; the blinkers and apron of the pony remembered; and elaborate study made of prickly pears. All these things must be secured before one leaves Majorca for England, beyond the reach of cactus or Mediterranean farm implement.

At this stage I forget my design until I am back in London. Now, for the first time, the conscious brain is called upon. A design of curved lines must be transformed into a design of solid forms. While retaining the pattern of lines I must add the pattern of black and white and grey, till the initial two-dimensional conception has been turned into a three-dimensional one and there is as much intricate design from horizon to foreground as there is from left to right.

This is probably the most difficult phase and certainly the most important. It involves work on many "roughs," till the super-imposed white and black paint is often so thick as to crack. It is during this phase that the artist must keep sight of the first ideas, lest the design should grow fatigued.

If it is convenient to do so, the design should now be put into cold storage for several months, for by this time I am blind to it and my judgment is unsure. After this pause I am sure that I know my mind and I borrow an emphasis for this version, a simplification from that, till the final pattern satisfies me.

Nothing would seem now to remain but to engrave the design upon the wood. But here I find myself up against the medium, and, unlike most engravers, I take trial proofs from the start, in order that I may be controlled by the wood itself. Until I have done this, I am uncertain of my aim. Proof follows proof, worked on with white paint, until that magical moment arrives when I know that I can do no more and that every tone and line takes its place like the instruments in an orchestra. With this realization my excitement dies. I am ready now to create my next engraving. This one belongs to me no more.

- Clare Leighton



16. John Buckland Wright (England, 1897-1954)

The Forest Pool, 1939

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

JOHN BUCKLAND WRIGHT

By Campbell Dodgson

Among many excellent wood-engravers of our time, none, I venture to say surpasses John Buckland Wright in the beauty and finish of his work in the kind of engraving which he has chosen to practise; the minute and delicate white-line patter on a black ground, of which *Forrest Pool* is a favourable example. This composition is enlarged and elaborated, in reverse, from a much smaller engraving which he did in 1936 as an illustration to "Love Night," by Powys Mathers (Golden Cockerel Press). The new version, while retaining many features of the old one - the trees with great roots forcing their way upwards to the air, the big leaves, the pool with rings and reflections on its surface - is now much enriched with exquisite detail. Two women, standing and kneeling, replace very happily a single seated figure. Between and beneath the forest trees grow palms and tropical plants of varied and attractive forms, and the curved surface of the open forest glade is enriched with infinitely delicate stippling and hatching in white dots and lines.

Born in New Zealand in 1897, the future artist came to Europe in 1908 and was educated in England. In 1924 he abandoned architecture for painting and engraving, and has lived since then in Brussels and in Paris, where he is now

domiciled. He is a member of *La Gravure Originale Belge* and exhibits with various groups of artists in Paris, with the Society of Wood-Engravers in London, where, however, his work was little known until a comprehensive and beautifully arranged exhibition of his engravings, both on wood and on copper, and of his illustrated books, was held at Dulau's bookshop in Dover Street in 1937. The catalogue of that exhibition was printed and illustrated with the perfection and taste which characterize everything produced under the eye of Buckland Wright, who, in addition to his single prints, is responsible for a number of rare books commissioned for bibliophile societies in Holland, in addition to the countries already named. One of his most perfect engravings on wood, illustrating the sonnet by Keats, "Bright star, would I were as steadfast as thou art" (reproduced in "Fine Prints of the Year," 1937) was intended for a German translation of Keats which has not yet appeared. His earliest engravings date from 1925. An important work projected and begun about 1930, a series of woodcuts illustrating the Apocalypse, was never completed.

Buckland Wright is also an accomplished engraver with the burin on copper. His line-engravings, however, are generally simpler in design than his work on wood, and consist largely of carefully calculated outlines with a white background. As a rule, they have appeared as illustrations in books. In recent years he has produced, both on wood and on copper, a number of interesting and technically perfect abstract designs, in which forms which are obviously parts of the human body taper away and disappear in the shape of long, winding and convoluted ribbons. An ingenuity is displayed in these compositions which is likely to appeal more to fellow artists than to the average man, but no lover of prints whose eye has been trained to appreciate the niceties of beautiful execution can fail to recognize the perfection of their technique.



17. Paul Landacre (United States, 1893-1963)

Black Stallion, 1940

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

PAUL LANDACRE

By Carl Zigrosser

Paul Landacre is the outstanding wood-engraver of the West Coast of the United States. To a consummate mastery of technique he adds the imagination and deep feeling of the artist. This facility of craftsmanship and fruition of power did not come easily; they are the result of a long and arduous apprenticeship and of the most ruthless self criticism.

Born in 1893, in Ohio, of a family of scientists and teachers, he did not find his true vocation until he came to California, where he has lived for the past seventeen years. H always had a liking for drawing. When he decided to become an artist, and specifically a wood-engraver, he chose the hard way of producing and destroying – ever

producing and destroying – until the work approximated his own rigorous standard. His artistry was apparent in his capacity for self-development. Recognition came slowly, but now his reputation is both solid and secure. His technical mastery is beyond question: there is no problem he cannot solve if he wants to. His hand is sure in the rendering of textures. His feeling for composition and design renders his prints truly distinguished. His cutting is a perpetual delight to the eye. But beyond these matters of technique shine the qualities of the man himself, his integrity and passion for perfection, the intensity of his feeling for nature, for life, and for beauty. His love for music, too, has been a strong influence upon his art.

His identification with the forces of nature is manifest in such prints as *Rima*, *Tuonela*, *Storm*, and *Death of a Forest*. His mastery of the human figure is shown in *Anna*, *A Woman*, and *Counterpoint*. His strong feeling for design, verging at times almost upon the abstract, give distinction to such blocks as *Growing Corn*, *Iris*, *Allegro* and *The Press*. That he is not without a sense of humor and an interest in everyday things is proved by *Sultry Day*, *Amateurs*, *Monday*, and *Lot Cleaning*. He also illustrated, with a rare combination of naturalism and abstract pattern, various books, notably Edward Doro's "The Boar and Shibboleth" and Donald Culross Peattie's "Flowering Earth." He has recently been appointed "artist in residence" at Pomona College.

In *Black Stallion*, his most recent wood-engraving, Mr. Landacre represents in symbolic fashion some of the elemental forces of nature – the exulting strength of the stallion and the glory of the woman. The scene is cast in the timeless realm of the imagination. The forms are rendered with freedom and great stylistic beauty and with due regard for plastic values. This picture, with its dynamic composition and rippling rhythms, is moving and memorable. One somehow is reminded of the Voice out of the whirlwind answering Job:

"Hast thou given the horse his might?
Hast thou clothed his neck with the quivering
mane?
Hast thou made him to leap as a Locust?
The glory of his snorting is terrible,
He paweth in the valley, rejoiceth in his
strength:"



18. Asa Cheffetz (United States, 1897-1965)
Down Montgomery Way, Vermont, 1940
 Wood engraving; edition of 200
 Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

FOREWARD

By Asa Cheffetz

I must protest, first of all, that the assignment to write my autobiography, however brief, is a source of embarrassment to me, in the sense that writing an autobiography is an act of self-searching confession. I would prefer, therefore, to take refuge here in that form of autobiography which is nothing more than a chronological report of certain factual incidents in the life of the author.

Hence, the bare facts, beginning with the incident of my birth to immigrant parents in the city of Buffalo, New York, on the sixteenth of August, 1896. I was the youngest of three children. My parents were poor, and when I was three years old, the family moved to the city of New York, where we lived for two years, in the heart of the lower East Side. When I was five the family moved to New England, where its fortunes improved, and we have since remained, more or less permanently.

I attended primary and high school in a Massachusetts town, and during that period I displayed little evidence of any extraordinary ability in drawing. Like many youngsters my own age in primary school, I tried my hand at sketching. But my interest in that form was usually confined to one subject; a cavalry horse, tricked out in all the trappings of the Napoleonic period, invariably drinking at the invariable farmyard watering trough. In high school I varied this subject somewhat with sketches of some of my schoolmates and of certain members of the school faculty with whom I was not, at the moment, on the best of terms.

On the strength of that meager promise of success, I prevailed upon my parents, against their better judgment, to let me try to make an artist of myself. With that objective in view, following my graduation from high school, I entered the Boston Art Museum School, where for two years, I studied drawing from life, under Philip Hale. In the following year I went to the National Academy of Design in New York City, and studied drawing with Ivan Olinsky and etching with Mielatz and Auerbach-Levy. The first World War then intervening, I left the Academy to enlist in the U.S. Navy. Following my discharge from the service, I returned to the Academy for a second year of study. In the year 1919, however, I was forced by circumstances to give up my studies, and went back to my home in Massachusetts, where I was engaged in the routine of business until 1927. As for my work in the arts, these were barren years indeed. But in 1927, when the opportunity presented itself, I severed my connections with business and hastened to give myself up to the insistent call of the arts.

I say hastened, advisedly. For I was then first overcome with a sudden fascination for the medium of the woodblock. I had devoted my studies at school to drawing and etching, but on a visit to the village of Old Deerfield in the late fall of the year, I was beset with a passion to translate my sentiments of old New England in wood – a passion which would not be denied.

I began to cut wood feverishly, my first attempt was literally slashed out of sappy soft pine. As I recall it, the effect was somewhat weird. But in good time I acquired practice, a better knowledge of my materials, and some degree of restraint. The passion for the New England scene remains undiminished to this day. I have since continued to cut wood, and continue to be fascinated by the spell of my own countryside. By lifelong association and influence, I am a New Englander. And I am consciously sensitive to that influence in much that I have tried to express through the medium of my chosen craft.

I love this fertile land, and the simple way of life of its rugged people. I love the very temperament of the land in all its moods. If I have succeeded at all, it is in the deep sense of the all-pervading mood of the land and sky which possesses me, and which I seek to express in my own medium of interpretation.

And, it is the quality of the inner mood of the scene which beguiled me and waylaid me in my summer wandering “down Montgomery way” in old Vermont.



19. Agnes Miller Parker (England, 1895-1980)

Fox, 1940/published 1941

Wood engraving; edition of 250

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

THE ART OF AGNES MILLER PARKER

By William McCance

Part of the beauty of a wood-engraving is its organic completeness, not only of execution but also of conception. A piece of hard box-wood is not something that can be hurriedly scribbled upon. Each millimeter of the surface has to be treated with respect and reverence; each stroke of the graver or spitsticker is grooved into the wood for good or ill; each stage in the process of execution must be seen ahead. In consequence, the artist is compelled by the medium itself, to have in mind the full conception and unity of the finished work before the surface is touched.

The craftsman who cannot sustain this conception with patience gets over the demand so the hard box-wood by cutting vigorously with coarse tools and produces a cut with broad contrasts of black and white, which is more akin to the nature of the linoleum than to the smooth, hard, yet sympathetic surface of the box-wood block.

But the engraver who loves the very nature and feel of the block will exploit every possibility of the surface to the utmost, composing on it a symphony of tones and textures, which are almost a hymn of praise in honour of the slow, hard growth of the tree itself. This box is no tree whose sap rushes upward to bring a quick maturity and a rapid decay, but one that draws its sap from the earth calmly and slowly in order to build a fibre, tough and hard as ivory, permanent, and sympathetic to the finest line and texture that the artist can engrave on its polished surface.

It is perhaps the synthesis of graduated tones and textures, the appropriateness of technique to its medium, the infallible rightness and relation of the forms, and the organic quality of the design, that distinguishes the work of Agnes Miller Parker from that of those other engravers who merely use the wood-block as a handy method through which may be obtained a number of reproductions of the original design. She is a true engraver insomuch as she thinks of her subject, conceives her design and executes every stroke of the graver in tune to the medium. So that, while there is precision in every form, in every line and in every texture, there is at the same time no hard metallic quality in her engravings, but rather that curious hard softness and warmth which we associate with the feel of the box-wood. Even in the black and white of the print there seems to be a glow of colour beneath the surface, like the underlying richness we feel in a good old-fashioned sealskin fur.

These are the qualities which Agnes Miller Parker is striving to achieve and I think it is generally acknowledged that she has succeeded admirably in her aim. The present example of her work speaks for itself. There it is, and carried out (if further proof is required that the artist is not the incasement of a mass of hysteria that some would have us believe) in what has been called the *front line* of the Battle of Britain, not only within earshot of bombers overhead but even closer to their destructive droppings.

Perhaps it may be as well to place on record how the artists of Britain, as a whole, have not been content to follow the advice of the Minister of Home Security, Mr. Herbert Morrison, and merely "stay put." They have marched on, building up an edifice of culture amid the destruction taking place around them, so that a world, exhausted and battered after battle is finished, may know that there are certain permanent values, which neither bombs, bullets, shells, nor propaganda can destroy.

When you look at this engraving of a fox, then look upon it also as a symbol of the attitude of the British artists during the war: a little winded perhaps, but, thank Heaven, not driven to earth.



20. Paul Landacre (United States, 1893-1963)

Laguna Cove, 1941

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

LAGUNA COVE

By Paul Landacre

My desire to make wood-engravings developed about fourteen years ago, after a brief and rather unsuccessful attempt to earn my living as a commercial artist. Having had no art education except a few intermittent life class sketchings, I took advantage of a credulous advertising agency, and by the time they found out I knew practically nothing, I had learned just a little and had developed a distinct distaste for all types of commercial art.

Learning by trial and error takes time, and it was perhaps an instinctive desire for a medium that appreciated my one virtue, patience, that made me turn to gravers and boxwood. It was also my delight in the inherent richness and color of black and white. Subsequent explorations into etching, dry-point, aquatint, even lithography, only served to heighten my interest in the strength and versatility of the wood-engraving medium. Unsolved problems were a challenge and the belief that anything was possible was the will-o'-the-wisp that led me over

and around piles of boxwood shavings.

Some control of the tools of engraving came about naturally after many attempts to express a graphic point of view about one thing or another, though I am not one who thinks that technique has any intrinsic value in itself; its only worth is to clarify a worthy statement that might otherwise obscure.

My choice of subject matter has been influenced considerably by the conviction that there is a definite line between literary and graphic expression – a belief that there can be as much truth in the lively drama of nature or common happenings as in involved story-telling better expressed in words. Another influence is the fact that we live a rather simple life on a wooded hillside in California which overlooks miles of a valley and a distant mountain range. It is not a hermitage, by any means, but a place where the milkman, coming by at an opportune moment, stops to help me move my press; where the ice man (who reads the art news) seeing me hoeing in my corn patch, stops to ask if I sold anything in that last exhibition; and where good friends assembled for a roofing party, when that was our problem.

I printed my first engravings by the primitive method of rubbing with a bone folder. This took a great deal of futile energy and too much time, so I borrowed the use of a small hand press, though this involved carrying the block, moist paper, ink and other paraphernalia many miles distant. It was several years before there was a hand press in my own studio where I could turn immediately to the press for a trial proof to see the results of the engraving. It very soon became apparent that the results depended as much upon my facility as a printer as upon my ability as an engraver, so I gave greater attention to the quality of the ink, the amount rolled on the block in relation to the moisture content of the paper, and the degree of pressure used. This was an interesting study and a laborious one.

Happy accidents in any creative steps of a design are stimulating and part of the fun, but I want none of that in the printing. The requirements are so simple: the blacks should be black, the whites white, and every line or dot engraved on the block should show clean in the proof. No more, no less. The problem varies with each new block and seems infinite, and I am still finding answers that one would think any child of average intelligence could have seen in the beginning!

The subject of this present engraving, *Laguna Cove* is a favorite spot near Laguna Beach, California. One summer night the moon seemed to illuminate this particular scene and create a pattern of light and shadow that had to be recorded. That's all there is to it – there is no story and no profound significance, unless one realizes that there is more significance in any aspect of nature than mere words can impart.

21. Howard Cook
 (United States, 1901-1980)
Eagle Dance, 1942
 Wood engraving;
 edition of 200
 Greenough Collection,
 Birger Sandzén Memorial
 Gallery



EAGLE DANCE

By Paul Horgan

Like any work of art worthy of the name, *Eagle Dance*, by Howard Cook, means a great deal more than it says. This print has graphic charms which, of course, answer the medium in which they are set forth: the delightful contrast between the big masses, the broad lights of the triangle of figures in the foreground, and the delicate figures so lightly touched alive in the middle distance; the rich silhouette of the pueblo in the background, enclosing the all the rest of the design in a peaceful limitation, like a border in architecture wisely used; the certainty of the burin, whose strokes make such satisfying cleavage between the blind wood and the artist's vision.

But it seems to me that the artist has tried to do more than satisfy us with handsomely disposed blacks and whites. He has accomplished more than this by the very symbols he has taken from the life of the Southwest. There is much pleasant learning to be had from taking a work of art farther than its abstract values. Let us be done with that blighting snobbery of the last few years, which held that any "literary" values in graphic were to be dismissed. Many of the greatest pictures in the world would be halved of their excellence if we denied

ourselves the fun, the reward, of speculating about character, milieu, or any reference to the subject matter.

Here you may see three faces of the Southwest. They are set forth in the strong, pouring light of the decline of the day. Their faces are like the earth itself, marked and eroded with canyons, gullies, cliff-like brows – the courses of life. Resembling their land, they understand it, too, in their souls. It is in their spirits that these three men achieve final ownership of the place on earth where they dwell. For if men commune with each other, and learn to live together, they must first have found expression in nature of a system of belief, a holy explanation, a means of tribute and thanksgiving – religion. To know and to tell; these are the impulses behind symbols. Men like these have a way of making symbols live in the dance: how it is with the land, the sky, the corn growing with a noise of cracking earth and falling rain; the animals of the plains; the gods of the clouds, the birds of the air.

Beyond them you may see the figures of the Eagle Dance. With their eagle wings fastened to their sun-clayed bodies, they bring the kingdom of air to earth, at the same time that they take man's powers aloft, riding the winds like the white-headed eagle himself, over the canyons, over the crags, out, out, over the plains, in shadow that skims the dry gold face of the grassy earth. How to own the creatures of the world: by knowing them, by *doing* them in a mime of life. Earth-bound the bodies may be; the idea, the intention and the prayer are set free. Behind them the pueblo rises like a mesa, a form so natural to the southwestern land and subject to the same erosions as the earth. There is a parable of life's cycle in the Indian dwelling; earth tending to earth, and ever renewed and lofted into walls by men and women.

The American Southwest is a land of tremendous contrasts and strong moods which invite the grand simplifications at which black and white is particularly effective. Howard Cook's beautiful new print gives us serene evidence of his growth in skill and thought.

Howard Cook was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, July 16, 1901. He studied in New York and made many trips abroad. His prints have been honored with many prizes and mentions, and his later career has brought him recognition as a muralist of power and eloquence. He has held two Guggenheim Fellowships. Since 1928, Mr. Cook has spent much time in New Mexico.



22. Ernest W. Watson (United States, 1884-1969)

Once Upon a Midnight Dreary, 1942

Color blockprint; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

ONCE UPON A MIDNIGHT DREARY

Ernest W. Watson is one of those rare persons whose leisure hours are filled with creative work. That he considers the making of his famed color prints a relaxation from his busy life as an editor and publisher attests to the man's tireless energy and affirms the realness of his love for the subjects he fashions with his gravure.

His charming farm scenes and landscapes of the New England countryside are plainly a reflection of the happy hours spent at his summer home at Monterey in Massachusetts. This attractive dwelling bears little resemblance to the hay barn which Ernest Watson and his wife found there twenty years ago. Perhaps it was the beauty of the surrounding countryside, perhaps the soundness of the ancient timbers, the sturdy beams, or the fragrant smell of innumerable harvests of new-mown hay that had been stored there. Whatever the appeal, the old hay barn became the framework for the Watson's summer home. It is here that Ernest Watson spends his summers and the occasional days which can be spared from his busy life for the work he loves best to do. It is possible that even his well equipped New York studio is not more important to him than this secluded workshop in rural

Massachusetts.

Let us imagine a visit to the studio when the Watsons are busily engaged in printing, for Eva Auld Watson also is an artist, well known in the graphic arts field. She adds her skill to that of her husband in the complicated task of printing the several blocks which are required for even the simplest color print.

With the several relief blocks ready for printing, the *order* of printing is tremendously important. Several different colors may be applied to the same block and an entirely different effect will be achieved by reversing the order of overlaying the colors. This particular print required ten colors, applied variously to five different blocks.

But to the layman, even more mysterious than the subtle blending of color is the problems of “registry,” that difficult task of placing the successive blocks on the paper so that the partial design and color from each block will fit perfectly into the whole pattern. If you will look closely, you will find on the margin of the present print two tiny pencil dots, which serve as a guide to the placing of the successive blocks in the unique printing process the Watsons use.

Those who have seen other examples of Ernest Watson’s recent work will realize what an important part color plays in his prints. This is particularly well shown by the modeling of the sails in *The Winner*, by the shimmering sunlight in *Clovelly*, by the wintry sky in *Christmas Morning*, and eloquent lighting of *Homeward Bound*.

This same skill in transmitting feeling and meaning to his subjects by the use of ingeniously chosen color is evident in *Once Upon a Midnight Dreary*, with its somber tones, the well considered splash of light in the background, at the solitary window over the transom. Of the many who have been deeply touched by the tragic life of Edgar Allan Poe, few have been given the vision of Ernest Watson in recording his feeling for the humble surroundings in which Poe found himself in 1844. It is interesting to note how carefully his interpretation adheres to Hervey Allen’s authentic description in “Israfel, the Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe.” The old farm house, to which Poe moved his ailing wife, was located on “a rather conspicuous and rocky knoll” several miles out of town. Indeed, it was located a few hundred feet from what is now Eighty-fourth Street and Broadway, with its present-day blaze of neon signs – a far cry from the lonely, rural retreat in which Poe and his wife found shelter almost a hundred years ago! The old house, according to Allen’s report, was of common Colonial architecture, a main building with a lower-roofed annex, chimneys placed at either end, squarish windows and doors.

We can visualize the interior with sturdy Colonial furnishings, the poet sitting in solitary meditation, struggling over those difficult lines which emerged in immortal verse, just beyond the window from which the light streams into the dark night. Indeed, there is little doubt that *The Raven* took its description from this eerie old house.

Contemplating that isolated, wind-swept structure where Poe dwelt in the shadows of his great loneliness, we can the more appreciate those memorable lines from *The Raven*:

“Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore —”

23. Arthur Allen Lewis (United States, 1873-1969)
Twilight Toil, 1943
 Color woodcut and linocut;
 edition of 200
 Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery



TWILIGHT TOIL
 By Allen Lewis

I cannot say that this picture expresses my soul, or that I had a “reaction” (whatever that means) but I can explain something of the mental process of its creation. It all grew out of the attitude of the horse. What interested me was his two ends differed. His legs were not so $\wedge \wedge$ or so $|||$ but so $\wedge |$. His back and tail swing in an oblique curve, while his front goes zigzagging upward.

Differences in an object or picture, make for salience; and repetitions or similarities create rivalry; and much repetition ends in monotony. Keep this in mind, like the rules in a game, and you will have no trouble in playing the game with me.

As I have said, this picture grew about this attitude, because everything else in the picture was placed so as not to rival or repeat, but by differences and appositions to make salient.

If I had wished to kill the importance of any part, a rivaling parallel movement in any place in the picture would have done it. In place of the parallel I used direct apposition = what the dictionary speaks of as “discord.” The oblique curve of the horse’s back and tail is apposed by the curve of the stump on the lower left, and the horse’s traces by the apposing obliques in the same stump. Besides giving salience, this balances the design without the obviousness of the symmetrical repetition.

If I had placed a tree or other object in front of the horse, like a mirrored reflection of the the man, this part of the design would have become static, and would have lost its sense of free movement.

Because there is only empty sky, there is nothing to take away from the man’s importance.

While everything is different and apposed as I can make it, nothing is allowed to become dominant above the horse. The sloping ground in front of the horse leads to him, while the curve of the stump has a framing effect. While this same stump leads the eye to the man (second in importance) you will then follow the reins to the horse.

To give the subject all the foil possible, the sky is clear of even a cloud; and to give more reason for this great expanse is the crescent moon. This suggested the southern mountains and their doing things by “the right time of the moon.”

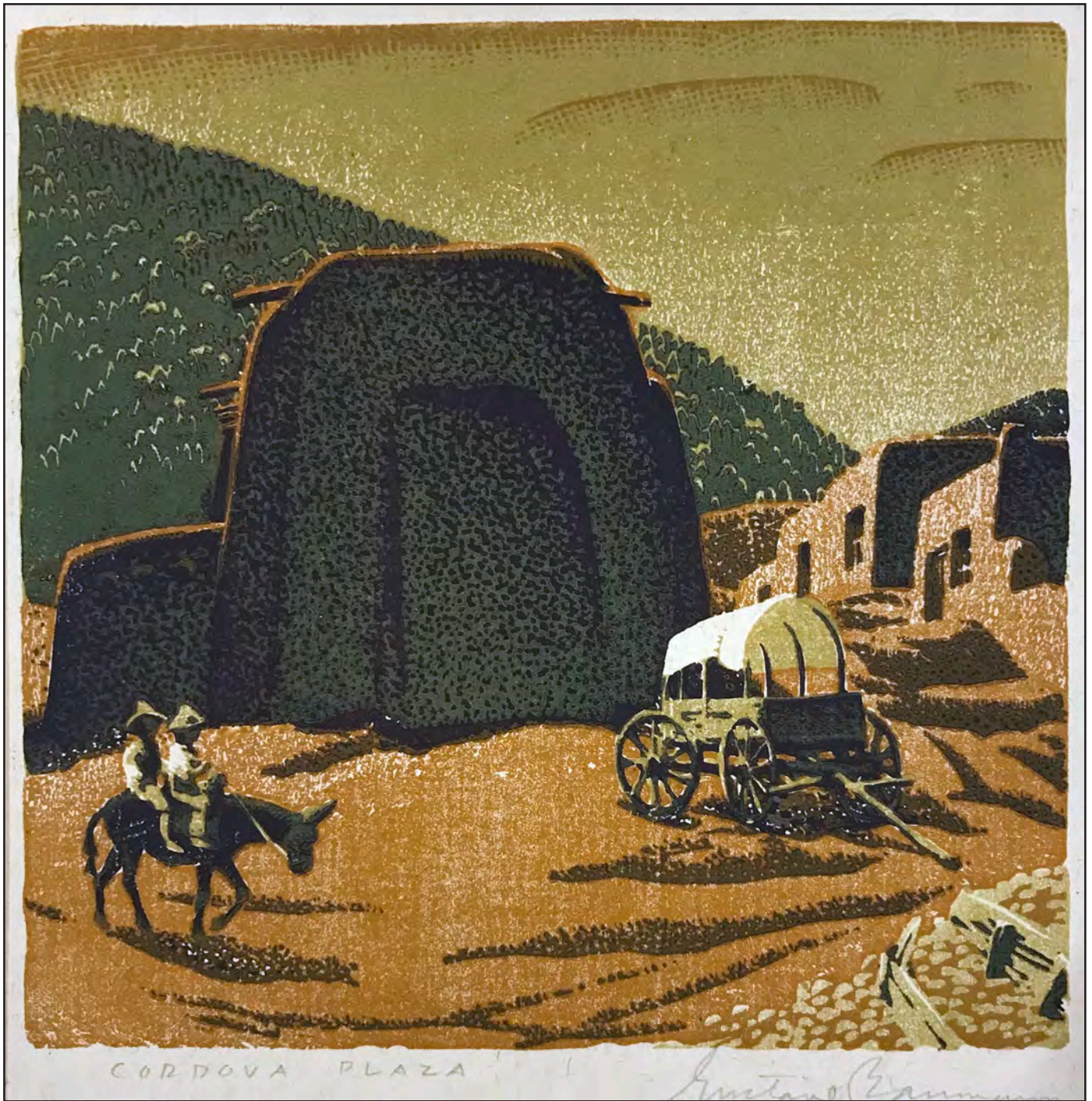
The design was cut in three blocks: two end-grain maple and one, the grey tone over ground and horse, on linoleum. The gradation of tone in the sky was one printing, the blue put on one end of the roller and the less blue on the other. And by a small movement from side to side the tints became blended on the roller before being transferred to the block.

Allen Lewis began his formal education as an artist at the Buffalo Art Student’s League under George Bridgman. He later studied under Gérôme at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. After various exhibitions at Paris salons, he returned to the United States to teach wood-engraving and color printing, etching and illustration. For eight years he was an instructor at the Art Students’ League, New York, and later was connected with the New School for Social Research in New York.

His work has won wide acclaim, being awarded the Logan Prize by the Chicago Society of Etchers, the Noyes prize by the Brooklyn Society of Etchers, a bronze medal at the St. Louis Exposition, a gold medal at the Sesquicentennial Exposition in Philadelphia, the Bijur prize by the Society of American Etchers, and the Agar prize by the National Arts Club.

He is represented in the collections of many of the most important institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum, the British museum and Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris.

Besides his many wood-engravings, chiaroscuros, etchings and other prints, he has illustrated numerous books, among them *Undine*, *Journeys to Bagdad*, *Paul Bunyan*, Walt Whitman’s *Short Stories*, *Petronius* and *Ivanhoe*.



24. Gustave Baumann, 1881-1971

Cordova Plaza, 1943

Color woodcut; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

GUSTAVE BAUMANN AND HIS WOODCUT

CORDOVA PLAZA

By George William Eggers

Gustave Baumann was of the first Americans to address himself to the art of the woodcut as the art is now generally practiced. He was likewise one of the very first in our generation to paint the "American Scene," a field which has been fruitfully tilled by Grant Wood, Stuart Curry, Charles Burchfield and many others. That early work of Baumann's

included several series of unusually large wood-block prints in color – now more rare than Currier & Ives' lithographs and far more distinguished in design – depicting life on farms and in villages of the Middle West, the inspiration for which he derived from a six year's residence in Brown County, Indiana.

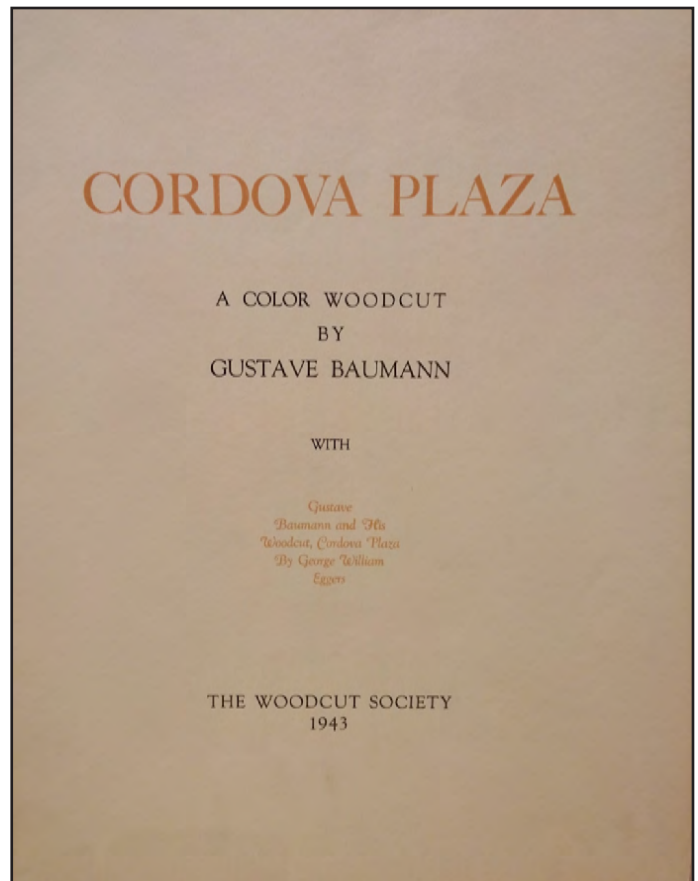
Baumann was well ahead of his time in portrayals of these themes and moods which have now become classic. This Arcadia of his was pretty much the Arcadia of James Whitcomb Riley and Eugene Field, and his early work was indeed the pictorial expression of interests paralleling theirs. The importance in American folk-lore of this work of Baumann's has not yet been appraised, and the prints of those early series are now so securely placed in private collections that they are simply not to be had in the open market. Some time they will be rediscovered, as were the paintings, of that other pioneer, Caleb Bingham, and new footnotes will have to be written into the art histories.

Brought to this country when he was nine years old, Baumann grew into a rich warmth of feeling for things American – a result of no mere accident of birth. Returning to Europe for study, he made his way to that early home of the fine woodcut, the land of Albrecht Dürer, and there perfected his chosen art at the source. He had already been well grounded in drawing at the Art Institute of Chicago, and his work from the start was practically impervious to superficial European influences. It was thoroughly American at a time when that was not yet so much the fashion. After his Brown County period he moved westward, headed for the California, but a stop in New Mexico on the way proved of such interest that the California trip was not completed until years afterward when he had become firmly settled in Santa Fe where he now lives.

Even as early as in his Brown County days, Baumann was perfectly aware of the dramatic values in the thrust and surge of the great earth-forms, a conviction which he has not only exemplified in his work but formulated in his words. To him the surface of a meadow was no mere fact but a resultant; it was the shape of things at work: obscure, majestic forces in motion. The frosts of winter and the swelling roots of spring had been pushing the earth out into these more recent forms; under them and through them were to be felt the upheavals of remoter times. All of these things were real to him and they figured actively in the vitality of his design.

Now the adobe buildings of our southwestern villages are a human extension of these same dynamic ways of elemental nature. The adobe church in *Cordova Plaza* in both its material and its spiritual aspects – in a figurative sense, but also in the most literal of senses – is likewise an inspiring expression of the earth itself, surging toward the sky, “pressed out” of the red ground, indeed, by the hands of its builders. Actually such a building is sculpture rather than architecture, a sculpture vibrantly alive in the quality of its forms. These forms are both big and intimate. They are big like the sky toward which they reach and the earth of which they rise; they are intimate like the palms of the human hands which have moulded them little by little into shape. And through the folk-impulse which has stirred those hands and lifted these forms into the light, there is also ceaselessly at work the dim, essential compulsion of the Power that has bent the sky itself into a dome.

For, unlike the rest of us, the native of the Southwest is altogether the child of his environment. He bows to it, he moves with it, he survives only by its consent. All his images and conceptions are realized with the span of its Alpha and Omega. The mood that goes with this could not have failed to stamp itself upon the whole region. But Gustave Baumann's print, *Cordova Plaza*, may well be seen as something more than a symbol of these epic and primitive things. The largeness and simplicity of this design of his, the inevitable reiteration of its organic rhythms, the laconic terseness with which its message is conveyed – all these like the very wood in which his blocs are wrought, also draw up their sap and fibre straight from the earth itself.





25. Dorothy Lathrop (United States, 1891-1980)

Kou Hsiung, 1944

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

KOU HSIUNG
By Dorothy P. Lathrop

A book, to intelligible to the world over, must be translated into many different languages, but its accompanying illustrations need undergo no metamorphoses from Maine to Timbuktu. A picture speaks for itself and needs no words of explanation; there is only the lesser story of its inspiration and facture to add interest.

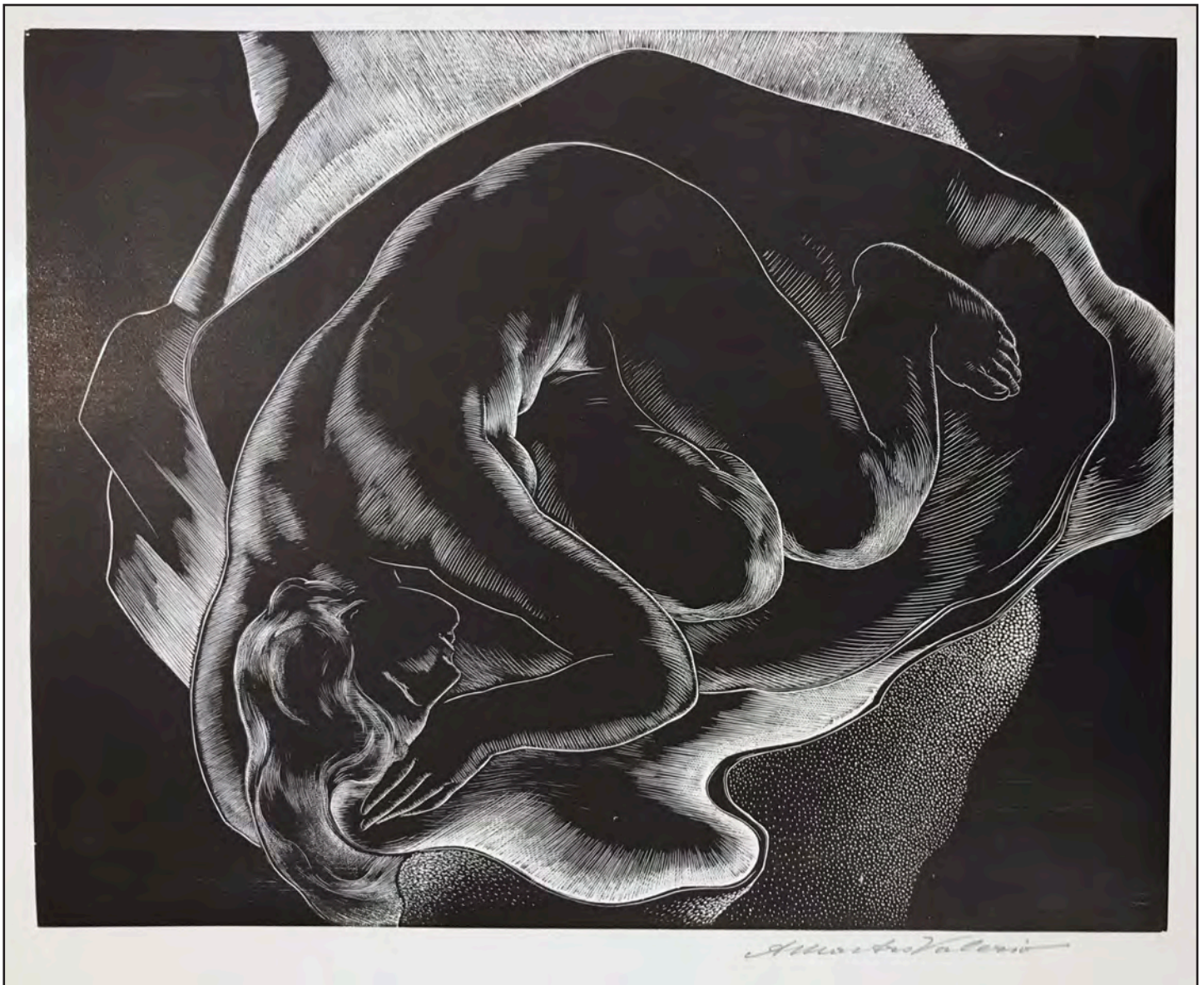
From childhood there was no doubt in my mind what I wanted to do. I longed to illustrate books and, if possible to write them. It was inevitable that my drawings should be for children's books, since I was always most interested in those things which appeal to the very young – creatures of all sorts, both real and imaginary, and those green shoots which push up through the earth against the soles of children's feet to bloom so much closer to their faces than to ours.

At that time (after the vogue of halftones and before the days of offset) most such books were illustrated in pen and ink. It was, I suppose, the training of my eye in such clear-cut black and white as this medium enforced that gave me a feeling of kinship with woodcuts. Disappointment at seeing hair-thin lines thicken through photographic reproduction and the non-stop printing of large editions gave me the desire to engrave an actual printing surface and to be the master as well of its printing. It was also the freedom of being answerable to no one – not to author, publisher nor public – the luxury of working not for bread and butter but just for fun which set me to engraving a few blocks in spare moments between books or in time stolen from them.

There is no symbolism in this print of little Kou Hsiung. It could equally been of several accessible creatures about the house and studio. Those who come as pets sooner or later become models; and those who come as models are apt to stay as pets to the end of their days.

The subject is just a small black Pekingese puppy in a garden. The first drawing was made simply to arrest time and to hold in suspension and memory a moment of puppyhood so fleeting that it vanished even as the sketch was completed, in a few brief days. Whether the subject is trivial or important depends upon one's angle of vision. It depends upon whether one considers a puppy of no more account than a pebble under a man's lordly feet or a unique fragment of an interrelated creation – a universe so marvelously designed and so lavishly decorated, from the bold pattern of the giant sequoia's bark to the intricate web of lace which, under a microscope, springs from the seemingly plain surface of a flower petal. And who knows what lies beyond even such sight.

When I hold a new-born puppy in my cupped hands, I marvel that the soles of its feet are no bigger than one of my fingernails and its tiny pads no larger than mustard seeds. Even in that first moment, the pattern of hair is clearly marked out over its small body, little swirls presaging the locks to come, each hair lying sleekly in its appointed direction. Poring over that exquisitely wrought atom, I feel no urge to express my thoughts or emotions in angular abstractions. I want only to catch and to hold for a time some faintest hint of a beauty of construction and design beyond my power to create or imagine.



26. Alessandro Mastro-Valerio (Italy-U.S., 1887-1953)

In the Space, 1944

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

IN THE SPACE

To those few collectors whose privilege it is to know and perhaps own some of Alessandro Mastro-Valerio's prints, *In the Space*, his first wood engraving, will perhaps be something of a surprise and a further proof of his versatility. Although his work embraces virtually every other fine print medium, he is probably best known for his mezzotints, a medium which affords an opportunity for combining his great talent as a painter and his mastery of graphic processes. Because of the fragility of mezzotint plates, his editions in that medium have necessarily been extremely small, and his new venture with the engraved wood-block, which is less fugitive, may well enable more people to know and enjoy his prints.

This first of his wood-engravings was not conceived and produced by a sudden whim. Despite his recognized proficiency in other media, Mastro-Valerio studied extensively with wood blocks for several years before he

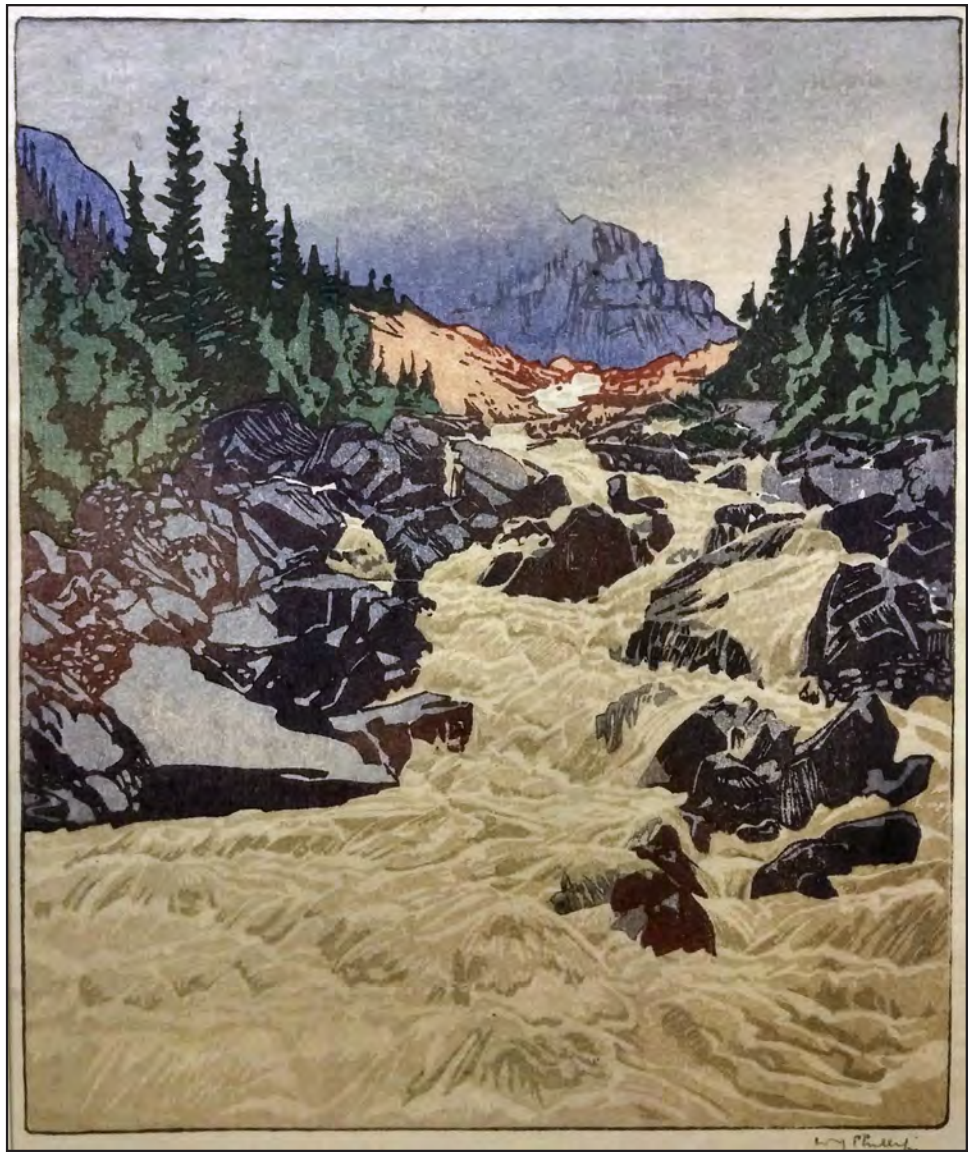
achieved the effect he wanted and released this first example for publication. It reflects his mastery of design, of tone values, so well known in his other work, together with a thorough grasp of the possibilities of the wood block medium.

Much of Mastro-Valerio's work has been in figure studies, and few artists are as skilled in good figure drawing. Collectors seemingly are divided into two camps on the subject of undraped figures – those who like nudes and those who do not! There is seldom a middle ground. Whatever one's feeling about nude subjects, none can deny a talent for good figure drawing is a rare thing, and the delicacy with which Mastro-Valerio handles his subjects is such that it often overcomes prejudice. Certainly there is about his nudes a sheer beauty, and excellence of design and technique, which transcends the matter of subject.

Alessandro Mastro-Valerio was born in Italy and was educated in Naples and Rome. He came to America in 1914 and a few years later had firmly established himself in Chicago as a portrait painter. Since 1926, he has been teaching art at the University of Michigan and conducting summer art classes in addition to his regular schedule at the University. His professional duties have left all too little time for his own creative work, but he has produced a fair number of plates, and a comprehensive collection of his prints would indeed be a prized possession.

Reticent and modest, Mastro-Valerio has been indifferent to exhibitions and personal publicity, although his work has elicited enthusiastic interest and praise wherever it has been shown. As the years go by he is gaining widespread distinction despite his retiring nature, and his prints are being eagerly acquired for many public and private collections. Judging from the success of this first achievement in wood-engraving, print connoisseurs may reasonably expect many another pleasant surprise from this artist's future essays in the medium.

27. Walter J. Phillips
(Canada, 1884-1963)
Above Lake Louise, 1945
Color woodcut;
edition of 200
Greenough Collection,
Birger Sandzén Memorial
Gallery



ABOVE LAKE LOUISE
By Walter J. Phillips, R.C.A.

The long process of converting a sketch into a colour-print cannot be described here. I wrote a book about it years ago. It is sufficient to say that *Above Lake Louise* was printed from seven cherry-wood blocks in seven colours, and that the pigments used were powders ground in water and bound with paste.

The art of print-making is a distinct responsibility. A poor painting may be a crime, but only one: a poor print is a crime multiplied by the size of the edition. But once the artist has come to terms with his conscience there is a certain amount of fun in the craft, especially when the medium is wood.

Wood must be humoured. It seems to be a sentient thing. It warps and twists, expands and contracts, it cracks and splits as if it is protesting its mutilation.

Chromoxylography is hard work. I was asked recently why I didn't paint replicas of the original sketch instead of going to all the trouble. This led me to marshal mentally the niceties that make a woodcut in colour both charming and unique.

There is its surface-texture – an egg-shell sheen comparable only with that of fresco painting. If the paper is poorly sized, if it is too damp or too dry, or if the pigment is mixed with too much or too little paste, this desirable finish is not attained.

There are its smooth and true tone-gradations. In this print all the colours but one (the darker shadows in the water) are gradated, and in two cases two colours are fused on the one block, notably the light blue of the boulders with the ochre-tinted earth near the top of the cascade, and, secondly, the gray cloud with the tawny colour beneath it, which is also the colour of the silt laden water. To print gradations, pigment is picked up with one corner of the brush and water and paste with the other; where two colours are fused, two brushes are used. The upper edges of the blue mountain, softened by an overhanging cloud, was beveled on the wood. This is the only method of printing, mechanical or otherwise, by which true gradations can be made, excepting only monotype.

There are the sharply defined edges and the variable lines confessing their origins in the knife. Equally characteristic is the pleasant impression of the wood's grain, though in this print there was no chance of utilizing the wood's grain for expression either of form or texture. I sometimes use a block of fir, which if printed in a flat tone, will suggest such forms as clouds in the sky or ripples on the water.

The mountain stream depicted in the chromoxlograph *Above Lake Louise* feeds Lake Louise in the Canadian Rockies. Being in spate, due to rain amongst the seven glaciers, or to warm weather, it displays none of the gorgeous hues for which Lake Louise is famous. Instead of turquoise, violet and emerald, here is the hue of mud – to some an unromantic substitute, though the key to the subtler chromatic harmony that led me to make a picture of it.

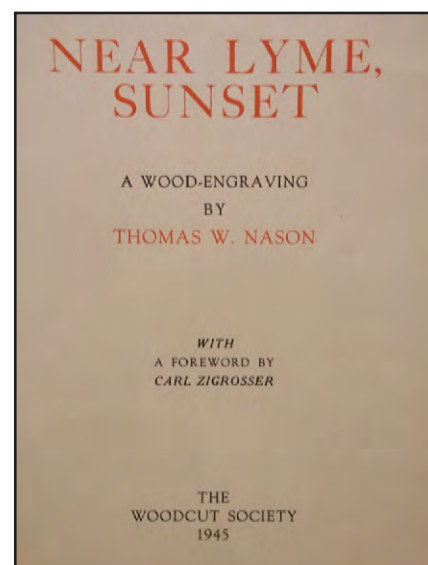
The tumbling water had a faint luminosity in that somewhat gloomy setting. I walked to the southern end of the lake to make my sketches, climbed a little way up the rough course of the stream, and, as I left the protection of the cliffs that encompass the lake, I encountered cold blasts from the vast fields of ice above. I stopped when Mount Lefroy came into view – its snow-capped peak hidden by a cloud, and felt inspired to make a note of what I saw. The cold draughts from the glaciers were forgotten for an hour, but when I had finished I stood up and shivered so violently that I startled the young mountain sheep that had been looking over my shoulder to see what I was doing.



28. Thomas W. Nason (United States, 1889-1971)
Near Lyme, Sunset, 1944/published 1945
 Wood engraving; edition of 200
 Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

NEAR LYME, SUNSET
 By Carl Zigrosser

“He applied himself with great earnestness and industry to perfect himself in his art and learn the secrets of nature. Day after day he would spend in the Campagna, from sunset until long after nightfall, noting the tints of the dawn and the splendor of the setting sun...”



In looking at Thomas W. Nason's new wood-engraving, *Near Lyme, Sunset*, one is reminded of Joachim Sandrart's tribute to his friend and fellow artist, Claude Lorrain. It sums up both the artist's intention and his achievement, the unswerving direction of his interest. Nason is, one might say, a pastoral or elegiac poet. He has certain intuitions and emotions in the face of nature, certain feelings of beauty, ecstasy or brooding reverie – and these he communicates to the beholder in his engraving. To call him a poet is not to say that his work has literary allusions or connotations. It is merely to stress the quality of his approach, the intense and exalted communion with nature which the poet and artist share alike. As the poet works with words, with sound and rhythm, to achieve his aim, so the artist works within the conventions of his craft, in this instance with subtle gradations of luminous colour, with linear rhythms in growth-forms and rolling hills. The engraving is, as it were, a sonnet in picture form.

Indeed, one may look at many a print of the past or present as a poem issued on a single broadsheet, and gain thereby in insight and understanding. The same intensity and unity of mood, the same appeal to timeless beauty are apparent in both. Prints and books are closely allied, and serve many aims, some of them didactic and utilitarian, but others intrinsic and aesthetic. Among those of intrinsic appeal, the tributes to nature and its many moods play a considerable part.

The unfolding of the idea of landscape in prints and paintings, makes a fascinating study. In the beginning, landscape was merely the background for the human figure or religious drama. We see this in the works of Dürer, Mantegna, and their contemporaries. In the Sixteenth Century there were tentative beginnings in the print of Altdorfer, Titian, and Brueghel; but it was not until the Seventeenth Century that the appreciation of pure landscape came into its own with such artists as Claude, Rembrandt, van de Velde, Ruysdael and many others. Since then the tally has grown steadily in richness and variety. In this great tradition of the pure landscape print, Thomas W. Nason takes his place with charm and integrity.

29. Asa Cheffetz (United States, 1897-1965)
Reflection in Crystal, 1946
 Wood engraving;
 edition of 200
 Greenough Collection,
 Birger Sandzén Memorial
 Gallery



REFLECTION IN CRYSTAL

It is a pleasure to present *Reflection in Crystal*, a wood-engraving by Asa Cheffetz, N.A., as the twenty ninth print distributed by The Woodcut Society to its members. The brilliant handling of this unusual subject brings refreshing variety to The Woodcut Society portfolio and to many it will open a new vista of the artist's versatility.

Wood-engraving is Asa Cheffetz's self-chosen life work. As a youngster he began his art studies at the Boston Art Museum School and, after two years, attended the National Academy of design in New York. Then came World War I and young Cheffetz left the Natinal Academy to enlist in the Navy. Following his discharge from the service at the end of the war, he again resumed his studies at the Academy, but circumstances soon forced him to go into business and it was eight years before he was able to resume his art work.

Of this period of postponement, Cheffetz wrote, in his modest autobiographical notes accompanying *Down Montgomery Way* (The Woodcut Society's eighteenth presentation print, 1940): "As for my work in the arts, these were barren years indeed. But in 1927, when the opportunity presented itself, I severed my connections

with business and hastened to give myself up to the insistent call of the arts... For I was then overcome with a sudden fascination for the medium of the woodblock. I had devoted my studies at school to drawing and etching, but on a visit to the village of Old Deerfield in the late fall of the year, I was beset with a passion to translate my sentiments of old New England in wood – a passion that would not be denied.

The fruit of that passion has been a series of delightful engravings too numerous to mention in detail in this limited space. In his foreword which accompanied *Midsummer Vermont* (The Woodcut Society's tenth presentation print, 1936) John Taylor Arms wrote: "Cheffetz's handling of light is masterly and is largely responsible for the feeling of space which pervades his tiniest print. He likes strong, deep blacks, but uses them with discretion and restraint." *Reflection in Crystal* is a good example in illustration of the points Mr. Arms makes.

Diversions from his favorite subject, the New England scene, are rare, but like *Reflection in Crystal*, are eminently noteworthy. Seldom has his artistry in handling light been given freer rein than in this print. The engraving is much more than a picture of a vase. One feels the very fragility of the glass. The play of light from a nearby window, mirrored in the bowl, deftly accentuates its graceful lines with a delicacy which would almost seem almost too much to ask of a woodblock in the hands of any but a master like Cheffetz.

This print, which so effectively captures the sheer, clear and fragile quality of delicate crystal in a medium on usually associates with the broader treatment of bolder subjects, writes a new chapter in the artist's versatility. His ability to engrave finely on end-grain wood has enabled him to grasp and delineate the essential attributes of this bit of luminous, brittle material in an engraving which will be admired and appreciated by print enthusiasts for a long time to come.

It is interesting to observe that Cheffetz was awarded the Eyre gold medal (Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts) in 1928, only a year after he turned to wood-engraving. Since that time he has received many other awards and honors, and his work has been acquired by virtually all of the important art museums.

The artist's love of the New England scene remains undiminished, but it must have given him a great deal of satisfaction and pleasant diversion to engrave a block so different and so thoroughly charming as *Reflection in Crystal*.



30. Clare Leighton (England-U.S., 1898-1989)
Clam Diggers, Cape Cod, 1946
 Wood engraving; edition of 200
 Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

FOREWORD

Everytime an artist is sufficiently stimulated by something he sees to to (sic) make it into a design, there must be a particular element in it which holds the power to excite him. It may be the sense of color or light, or the rhythm of shape or line; it may be the drama of the factual scene, or an interest in characterization. But although it might be argued that each artist, according to his individual make-up, is quickened mainly by some specific attitude, yet, in a thoroughly healthy artist who has the courage, not to court popularity by repeating himself, there is (or should be) a different emphasis in each one of his designs. For the thing seen should hold the power to control the artist every bit as much as the artist in his creativity should be strong enough to distil from the

thing seen the essential quality of its design.

And so the actual character of a design will be determined by its subject matter, whether, as he shapes his design, the artist be consciously thinking of this subject matter or not. A solemn, static subject demands noble, solemn structure; a quiet subject must have quiet rhythm, while one that is filled with movement must have lines and shapes that accentuate this sense of movement.

In the wood-engraving, *Clam Diggers*, the predominant thing that excited me was the whirl of the water and gulls. Here there is none of the repose found in the labors of the earth. Rather it is a scene imbued with the spirit of motion. For this reason I have given great emphasis to the circling gulls, placing each bird in its position with exact care so that it shall help the eye of the spectator to follow the swirling pattern.

But this is not all. I have used the swirl as a unit in my design, which means that I have repeated it, with slight variations, on other parts of the picture plane. And so, as the clam diggers move in the little dark pools of water, they ruffle this water into white-line ellipses that are similar to the curves made by the flight of the gulls. I have repeated it again in the tops and bottoms of the buckets that the men carry. For this purpose I chose to design the engraving with the round bucket that is used at low tide on the flats of the Pamet River at Truro, rather than with the rectangular wooden clam hods that are more frequently used by professional clam diggers further up the Cape at Barstable. I considered it necessary to carry this unit of design all the way up across the picture plane, instead of placing it only in sky and water.

The background landscape was in itself a great help, for the sensuous curves of the hills carried the eye across the picture and down into the design in the middle distance.

While I am thinking still of the linear pattern, I would like to point out the necessity, in a design filled with so many curves, of having a certain number of strong straight lines at different angles upon the picture plane. Were there not these lines, the engraving would lack strength, and the design would fail in conviction. Even the curves themselves would appear blowsy and weak. And so it was that I satisfied the need for straight lines by emphasizing the sturdy handles of the clam diggers' forks, and the masts of the little boats.

But I aimed at something other than a mere linear design in *Clam Diggers*. Upon this flat paper I wanted to make a solid three dimensional composition which would be interesting and satisfying if it were to be looked down upon from above, as though it were a bird's eye view of it. I wanted to have a second pattern, of the landscape itself, lying behind the foreground design, and complete in itself, even while it is interconnected with this foreground design of men and buckets, like a contrapuntal composition in music.

With all this conscious awareness of design, though, I still found myself excited with the factual scene that had first quickened me to creating this engraving. And so, as I look now at the completed print, I can hear the cry of the gulls and the voices of the clam diggers in their waterproof hip boots, and I can smell the sea that lies behind the rounded hills. What I hope I have done is successfully to convey these sensations to the spectator.

Clare Leighton



31. Warren Mack (United States, 1896-1952)

Queen Anne's Lace, 1947

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

QUEEN ANNE'S LACE

While driving along a quiet country road in eastern Pennsylvania, only a few miles from his boyhood home, Warren Mack was strongly attracted by an unusual beautiful panorama which suddenly unfolded itself – an interesting pattern of small fields and a background of low, rolling hills, the whole natural composition accented by a rhythmic arrangement of masses of Queen Anne's Lace. A quick sketch was made on the spot and the artist was soon enthusiastically at work preserving the scene in an almost literal rendition on a wood-block. In *Queen Anne's Lace*, we see that he has succeeded admirably in capturing the tranquil beauty of a landscape which is typical of much of the American scene.

It is quite natural that an artist-professor of horticulture should see unusual beauty in the humble wild carrot plant – Nature's lace apron which she wears so becomingly each summer. Warren Mack has a practiced eye for all plants and finds them an interesting aspect of landscapes. He is intrigued by their individual structures, their varying textures and the way they are arranged by nature in rhythmic masses and groups.

He prefers to engrave landscapes with broad vistas and most of his blocks are of this character. Another

attractive example of his work in this manner is *Colorado Landscape*, a charming view of a valley in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. But not all of his prints are of this type. In *Spring Snow*, for instance, he has handled a woodland scene in quite another manner, with its interesting pattern of interlaced boughs and an over-all play of varied textures. In producing his prints, Mack chooses his paper carefully to make sure of its finest quality. He prints all of his proofs on a small hand press, using a hand brayer and taking great pains to see that each impression gives just the effect he desires. Born in Pennsylvania in 1896, the artist inherited his love of fields and flora from a long line of ancestors who had been engaged in agricultural pursuits. He holds four degrees in horticulture and plant physiology and is now head of the Department of Horticulture at Pennsylvania State College.

It was not until after his service in World War I that he turned to wood-engraving as his principal avocation, after a great deal of experimentation in other graphic media. Although his time has necessarily been taken up largely by professorial duties, he has found time to engrave a good many blocks. His wood-engravings have become well known in the intervening years and have been shown in many exhibitions. His *Spring in the Old Orchard* was awarded one of the coveted purchase prizes in the Fourth National Exhibition of Prints (the annual Pennell exhibition) held in 1946 at the Library of Congress in Washington. In this exhibition, the prints shown are first chosen by a Jury of Admission and purchase prizes are awarded by another jury. Mack was elected an Associate Member of the National Academy of Design in 1944. In addition to his duties at Pennsylvania State College, he lectures extensively on the Arts Program of the Association of American Colleges.

In *Queen Anne's Lace*, as in most of his wood-engravings, Warren Mack has achieved a quiet, restful landscape largely by a skilful (*sic*) play of textures, wrought with infinite care and patience, without losing the effect of airy spaciousness. The lovely scene invites us to linger and gives us a nostalgic desire to relax and enjoy the freedom it affords from the intricacies and worries of life as it is lived in the nearby cities.



32. Hans Alexander Mueller (Germany-U.S., 1888-1962)
Abandoned Farm, 1947
 Color linocut; edition of 200
 Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

ABANDONED FARM

Although Hans Alexander Mueller has been a resident of the United States for little more than a decade, his influence on American graphic art extends over a much greater period. Many of our artists were aware of Mueller's work, and a few fortunate ones had journeyed to Germany to study under the professor at the State Academy for Graphic Arts in Leipzig. Here were students gathered from all over Germany and also from foreign lands to benefit from the instruction and criticism of a recognized master of the relief techniques.

Mueller was born at Nordhausen, Germany, March 12, 1888 and taught at the Leipzig Academy for seventeen years up to 1937, interrupted only by World War I. Since coming to America, Mueller, in addition to conducting classes at Columbia University, has made illustrations for a number of books and has published two editions of a treatise on the making of woodcuts and wood-engravings.

The addition of another material to supplement wood for the making of relief blocks should receive more notice

than is usually given. In the history of the relief surface of more than five hundred years, linoleum is practically the only material that has been added to wood for use by the creative artist. Linoleum, developed with a linseed oil combination, was perfected about 1860 and now is in common use both for elementary instruction and for more skilled expression. Its inked surface gives a toned impression that adds to the quality and interest in a linoleum print.

The linoleum cut frequently is classified with the woodcut, and rightly so, especially as executed by Mr. Mueller. For when working in either of these techniques, he uses both the knife and the gouge to develop the surface. A main difference in the two lies in the characteristic of the wood plank compared with the piece of linoleum. In the linoleum, the material is homogenous and unresisting, permitting the tools to glide smoothly in any direction, while the grained plank used for the making of woodcuts tends to discourage the artist from cutting against the grain, and somewhat limits the design.

The wood-engraving worked with engraving tools on the end of a piece of wood, instead of on the plank side, makes it possible to develop tonal effects. These tones range from the full dark areas down to the very lightest, almost white.

The usual planning of a relief color print is based on the chiaroscuro print with a key block or all over design, combined with one or more flat color tint blocks. Mr. Mueller, however, prefers to develop his design without a key block, and in his print *Abandoned Farm* each of the three color blocks, cut in solid areas with no attempt at middle tones, contributes almost equally to the composition. None of the blocks by itself makes an adequate pictorial design, but as in a musical composition, the result is achieved by a harmonious blending. For a preliminary study, the artist made a watercolor sketch during the summer of 1946, of an abandoned farm near Stormville, N.Y. Mr. Mueller prefers to print his proofs on a smooth surface paper and he does his own press work.

The freedom displayed in *Abandoned Farm* demonstrates the great advance from the photomechanical era and expresses convincingly an unhampered creative artist of our day. The possessor of this print is conscious of the emotion that contributed to its development, and it is such consciousness that brings vitality to a work of art.

Elmer Adler
Research Associate in Graphic Arts
Princeton University



33. Howard Simon (United States, 1902-1979)
Rhythms of Men in the Wilderness, 1948
Wood engraving; edition of 200
Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

RHYTHMS OF MEN IN THE WILDERNESS
By Howard Simon

In the graphic interpretation of the wilderness I am particularly fond of the wood-engraving medium where direct and simplified effect seems wholly appropriate. And, indeed, there is for me the special quality inherent in the woodcut that forces a simplification of design. Further, it demands abstracting and synthesizing of essential elements to produce rhythmic pattern. Its rewards are great. Strength and vitality are the virtues of good wood-engraving technique and the line, once incised, is irrevocable and a challenge and a discipline to the craftsman.

My earliest experiments in the woodcut as a medium of creative expression began in the 1920's. In 1925 a portfolio of my work was published in Paris and titled *La Rive Gauche*. It contained about fifteen prints. These were cut, simply, with the knife on cherry wood after the Oriental fashion. Though the third dimension is an integral part of their design, they are highly simplified and contain few grays.

In 1927 I live in California. The Windsor Press of San Francisco collected a group of my woodcuts of Telegraph Hill and issued these under the title of *West Wind*. These, too, were cut with a knife on soft wood. In about 1928 I began to use the gravers instead of the knife in a set of illustrations for "Rabelais," later published by Ives Washburn of New York. These represent a transitional period in my own style. They were engraved on hard-wood blocks and contained some grays. One of the prints in this set of illustrations, the *Friar John*, was chosen for "Fifty Prints of the Year," in 1934. In that year I made the engravings in two colors for the "Lyrics of François Villon," which was published by the Limited Editions Club.

I turned to engraving because I sought to achieve a closer harmony between the light type faces, in general use, and illustration. This, I believe, cannot be realized in the freer, loose techniques of the cut where black is predominant.

In 1932 I left the life of the cities to homestead in the Ozarks. So far my work in the woodcut is concerned, the result was a portfolio of mountain people and landscapes. Many of these and some of the earlier prints were included in a one-man show at the Smithsonian National Museum in 1935.

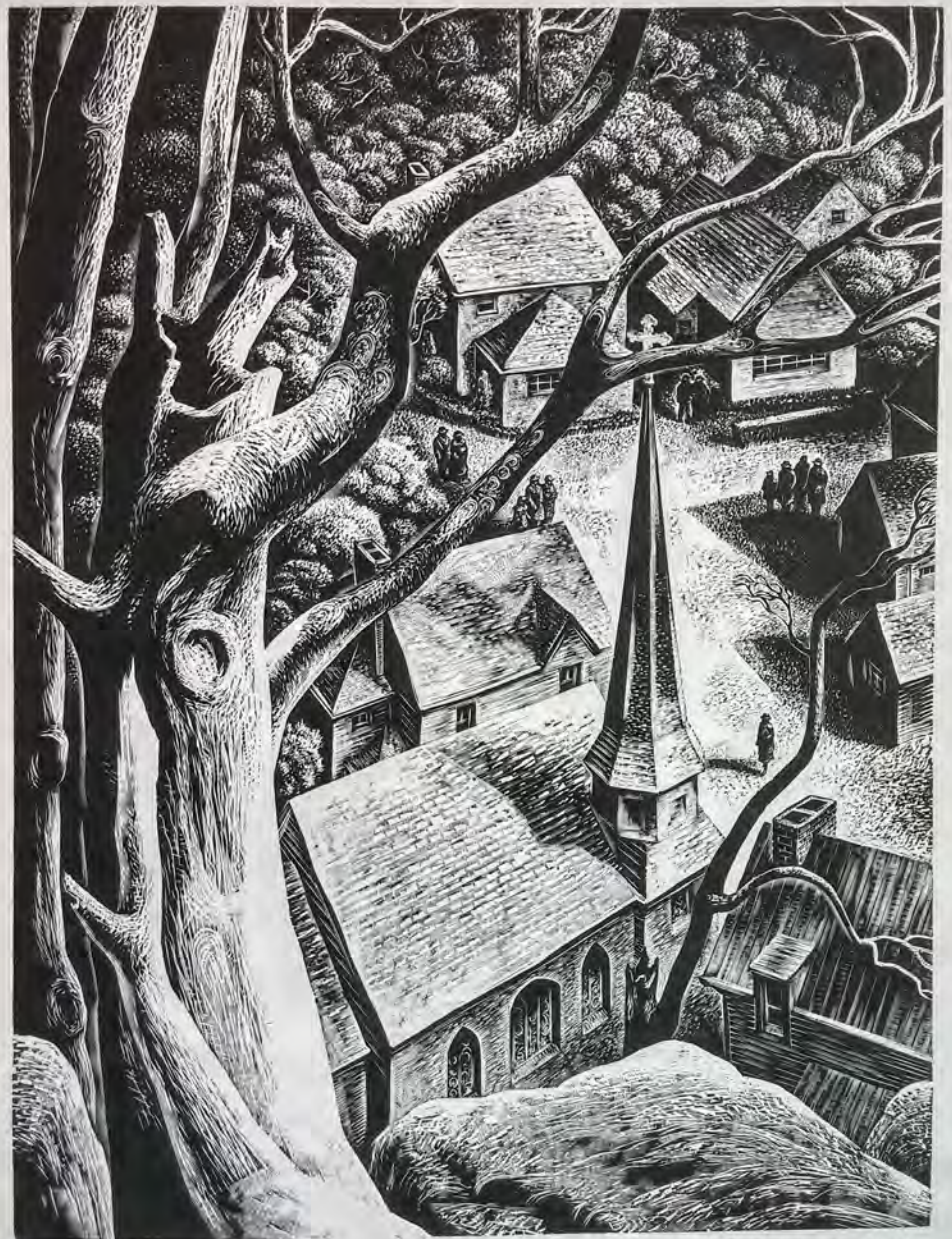
Among my books illustrated with woodcuts are "Jews without Money," "Candide," "Back Yonder," "The Vanished Land," and the "Rabelais," already mentioned.

In retrospect I find my woodcuts themselves furnish a travel record, a biography, and a notation of my own interests and hopes.

I was born in New York and lived in Paris. Again, in America, I lived on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco, and in the Ozarks of Arkansas, and in the cities of the South. Today I divide my time between New York City and Stanfordville in Dutchess County, New York.

H.S.

34. Lynd Ward (United States, 1905-1985)
Undercliff, 1948
Wood engraving;
edition of 200
Greenough Collection,
Birger Sandzén Memorial
Gallery



UNDERCLIFF – A WOOD ENGRAVING
By Lynd Ward

For some fifteen years I lived in a small town whose many rural qualities, such as part-time mayor and volunteer fire department, still belie its proximity to the big city. It stands atop the Palisades across from upper Manhattan, and a favorite walk of its residents who like walking, has for years been along paths that twist through trees and rocks close to the edge of the cliff. The primary visual stimulation of this pedestrian activity has been in looking out across the mile-wide Hudson to the jumbled parapets of New York, a view that in combining as it does so many elements of natural and man-made phenomena will, even after many years, still give a push to your basic metabolism.

The magnitude of what lies in the far field of vision tends to overshadow what lies closer at hand, and many who have walked along the Palisades at this point may scarcely have noticed what has lain literally at their feet. But for me, the tiny community that crowds the foot of the cliff has always been a focal point of many-

sided interest, and I have made many drawings of its houses and streets, its scattering of trees, its few public buildings, and its human inhabitants who, seen from the height above, take on the proportion and neatness of disposition of figures in a museum model.

To look down on a landscape from above seems to have been something that people have enjoyed for quite a long time, and I suppose that one of the elements of that enjoyment has been the opportunity to see familiar objects and scenes in a new and visually-different position. What gave me the most emotional push in the experiences that accumulated, through several different drawings, to produce the block "Undercliff" was the parallel between the functional, in terms of social activities, and the pictorial, in terms of the organization of the picture. The houses, existing mainly as rectangular roof forms, are scattered in a kind of overall pattern, through which the streets run as lines of communication and connection, giving direction to the sprinkling of human forms and leading, both in fact and compositionally, to a focal point, the church.

Technically, the chief problem was the achievement of a landscape without a sky area. In the great majority of renderings of landscape subjects the sky is utilized as a major initial statement of space, against which solid forms are thrown, in either near or far field, and achieve an immediate existence by virtue of contrast...the strongest contrast, in substance, that the artist can utilize. Against this initial contrast, subsequent contrasts between other solid objects are rendered with greater ease. This has been a principle of pictorial language that has been particularly useful...and particularly widely used...by those who work with the woodblock, probably because of the nature of its fundamental technique of expression...strong black against strong white. To do a woodblock, then, without that primary point of contrast...the sky-posed difficulties. I tried to resolve the problem through utilizing as much variety in textures as possible without letting texture as such obtrude...and through a somewhat arbitrary approach to the factor of cast shadows.

35. Fritz Eichenberg
 (Germany-U.S., 1901-1960)
Saint Christopher, 1949
 Wood engraving; edition of
 200
 Greenough Collection,
 Birger Sandzén Memorial
 Gallery



ST. CHRISTOPHER
By Fritz Eichenberg

When I was a lithographer's apprentice in Cologne some thirty years ago, I was allowed to design some labels for wine bottles, after a proper interval of rubbing touche and grinding stones or getting breakfast for the boss. It didn't quite satisfy my youthful artistic ambitions, so I smuggled home some small stones and began to realize my dream to become a minor Daumier. I made lithographs with social content (the first World War had ended and freedom was just around the corner). They weren't worth much but I could pull my own proofs and I distributed them among friends and family. I believe that I even sold one! Anyhow, it started me on my own career as a printmaker and I never got this bug out of my system. The excitement of working on stone or wood, with crayon or metal tools, the pulling of a crisp proof, the smell of rich black ink, are experiences too satisfying and exciting to resist.

A few years later as a student in Leipzig, I was intrigued by medieval woodcuts, of which I had seen and studied many. I started to cut a few illustrations for “Till Ulenspiegel” on small squares of boxwood. Inflation had just started and one had millions in one’s purse and a vacuum in one’s stomach. Lo and behold, a publisher became interested in those woodcuts, bought them, published them, but could not pay for them! Inflation had caught up with him too. I shall never forget my forays to his home. Sometimes I could extricate five marks out of his pocket, but was usually invited to coffee and cake in lieu of currency.

This got me started as an illustrator and I never got over that fine infection! Sure, there were some deviations from the straight but thorny path. Ten years of work as a rather popular cartoonist and reporter; commercial stuff that paid well but was oh so low-brow and uninspiring that one’s better self cried out for a change at all costs.

So back to books and good company, and catching up with a neglected formal education in world literature. My first intriguing assignment was Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* for the Heritage Press, and meant living the tortuous life of a Raskalnikov until it yielded a crop of dramatic wood engravings. Many other challenging books followed: Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, Shakespeare, Poe, Turgenev and Swift. If they were successfully illustrated it was because the illustrations were done on wood or stone and because I struggled with the matter and substance until a crisp proof was pulled that could stand scrutiny.

As my books went out into the world, poorly, indifferently, and sometimes, but rarely, well printed, my prints went out into print exhibitions, proof positive of what I had actually put down, engraved or lithographed.

A unique feature about the production of “Saint Christopher” is that as I started on the engraving, the Pathé Newsreel sent a crew to my studio to “shoot” its production with a close-up camera. As I began to work on the boxwood on Christopher’s head with my No. 2 graver, the cameras started to whirl and hours of toil on the block was boiled down to about a minute on the screen. Collectors from Peru to Munich could see my graver, enlarged to plow-share proportions, dig through the Saint’s wooden beard, with huge shavings curling out of the furrow.

Christopher is still considered the patron saint of all the wayfarers by land, sea and air. He is the symbol of man serving God. Many printmakers have taken him as their theme and Dürer’s print of the same name is the most famous of all Saint Christophers.

FRITZ EICHENBERG

36. James D. Havens
(United States, 1900-1960)
Shy Veery, 1949
Color woodcut;
edition of 200
Greenough Collection,
Birger Sandzén Memorial
Gallery



SHY VEERY BY JAMES D. HAVENS

A new woodcut by James Havens is never a routine performance. Whether it brings fresh light on his beloved fields and woodlands, or a new experiment in his exquisite technique, it will be sensitive, intelligent and highly individual, and it calls for a recipient flexible and sensitive enough to meet the challenge of the unexpected. *SHY VEERY* is typical of Havens' oeuvre. In it is autumn dusk in the glen, damp and windless so that even the twigs seem to drip from the firm saplings to the dead leaves below. All the fading light is gathered onto the slender bird poised with watchful eyes as it scurries up the slope, ready at the slightest sound to vanish silently, and leave forlorn and empty, the motionless tress and unstirred leaves. Only his melancholy call remains, faint in the distance. It is a glimpse of nature rarely vouchsafed even to the most faithful bird-lover.

How has he done it? Partly by the line pattern that contrasts verticals (hinted or uncompromising) and broken horizontals. The stream-lined, upward-converging silhouette of the bird suggests smooth, silent flight accomplished by palpitating color and Havens' almost unique handling of his blocks. A relief print in color uses several blocks. Each carries part of the design and its own color, and, in the final impression, where the blacks cross, new tints arise. There are other ways of color printing but Havens' twenty years of experimenting have taught him to remain faithful to the purist ideal – one color to one block. By engraving on each block a more

complicated design, Havens achieves his vibrancy by small spaces of unbroken hues that shine through like the fine touches of an impressionist painter's brush. In SHY VEERY it is fascinating to trace the parts played by the three colors (clay-green, warm-brown and cold slate-blue) which orchestrate and work together to create that lonely November twilight.

But while the technical resources apparent in the print reveal Havens as a consummate craftsman, and are delightful and interesting in themselves, they are a means and not an end. What of the artist himself and of his message? His own house is at the lip of that wooded glen and his garden and orchard, stretching out in the sunlight or under the night sky, sets him in the very midst of nature's manifold drama of life. The sweep of the stars; the upward coil of smoke and sparks from his bonfire; the secret things in his glen (a scarlet throated humming bird flashing down into the cool shade to rifle a scarlet columbine, the seedling Jack in the Pulpits encircling the grown Jack and Flock; a bee bending a flower stalk low under his fierce attack) all of these and many others he notes for us with a tender and quizzical delight. An hour spent with his work whets out [sic] own perceptions and stretches our imaginative sympathy with God's creatures until we agree with the friend who commented, "your prints are gem-like; you do with the knife what the Psalmist exhorts man to do with the spirit, Praise the Lord!"

ELIZABETH WHITMORE

37. Robert von Neumann
 (Germany-U.S., 1888-1976)
The Four Net Menders,
 1934/published 1950
 Woodcut; edition of 200
 Greenough Collection,
 Birger Sandzén Memorial
 Gallery



THE FOUR NET MENDERS
By Robert von Neumann

I cut "The Four Net Members [sic]" into a pearwood plank with knife and gouges. It is the favorite of my woods, possessing a beautiful dense grain that allows freedom as well as precision in cutting. This wood has been used throughout the long history of the Woodcut. Durer, Holbein, Hans Baldung Green and many other famous graphic artists preferred it to any other wood. At present it is not available in this hemisphere and I was delighted to be able to use it for this print.

The paper I have used is a soft but strong Japanese "Goga." It has a strong fibre and keeps its whiteness very well. It takes the impression of the block beautifully and really enhances the entire woodcut.

The print represents men repairing their nets and was sketched at St. Ignac, a harbor near the Straits of Mackinaw, where Lake Huron enters Lake Michigan. It is practically the Gloucester of the Great Lakes

for its location allows for fishing on Lake Superior, Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. It makes an ideal harbor for the industrial fishermen.

When the sea is rough, the fishermen repair their boats or nets. I found constant activity in the harbor. At other times I was on board and sailed to far off places, staying over in shanties located in inaccessible coves. It was in these places also that the nets were lifted, repaired and reset. I took part in all of these activities to gain a true understanding of the men of the Lakes and their never-ending toil.

I found that the medium of the woodcut was the most suitable for these subjects, even more than painting or drawing. It is an expressive form and allows representation without being imitative in describing the subject. The artist is compelled to simplify and statement retains strength and veracity in its simple black and white quality.

ROBERT VON NEUMANN

The artist was born in Rostock on the Sea, Germany, in 1888 and graduated from the Real School at Rostock. He received a scholarship that enabled him to enter the Royal Academy in Berlin from 1910-1914. After the first World War he taught Art at the Lewin Funke School of Art in Berlin from 1923-1925.

He came to the United States in January of 1926 and almost immediately was awarded an Honorable Mention by the Wisconsin Painters and Sculptors. Since that time he has been on the staff of the Layton School of Art, a teacher of painting at the State Teachers College in Milwaukee and a visiting teacher at the Chicago Art Institute. He has received more than twenty-six major art awards and is represented in collections of the Milwaukee Art Institute, the Chicago Art Institute, the Syracuse Art Institute, the University of Wisconsin and others. He is a member of the Society of American Etchers, Gravers., the Chicago Society of Etchers, the Milwaukee Printmakers and is President of the Wisconsin Painters and Sculptors.



38. Roderick Mead (United States, 1900-1971)

Bird of Prey, 1950

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

BIRD OF PREY
BY Roderick Mead

The forceful symbolism of this dynamic engraving is particularly apt for our predatory times, but its genesis was a purely technical and aesthetic one. Mr. Mead wished to render, in his favorite medium, the fascinating textures of feathers and his native western foliage. The forms also suggested certain rhythms which he has emphasized by means of a linear arabesque.

The artist has accomplished all that he set out to do in the creation of this print: the dramatic massing of bold blacks enlivened by flecks and small areas of pure white – the graceful circular rhythm moving from the sweep of one bird's wing to the other – and finally the exquisitely clean tool work that marks a master of the wood-engraving medium. The textures of the birds' feathers and the foliage that fills the foreground have been successfully rendered in pure line, with no elaborate multiple tool effects – a temptation that would lure any

artist in love with his craft.

Mr. Mead printed each proof on his own press with the aid of his son. He used one of the best papers obtainable today, Basinwerk Parchment, which has the ideal surface and weight for the crisp tonal values and the fine line work of the print.

Roderick Mead was born in South Orange, New Jersey in 1900 and began his formal art training at the Yale School of Fine Arts. He studied painting with the late George Luks and attended the Art Students League and the Grand Central School of Art. He studied water color with the late George Ennis and engraving at Stanly William Hayter's "Atelier 17." He is represented in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and in other institutions.

He has had one-man shows in the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, Museum of the University of New Mexico, Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts and the Louisville Art Center. He has also exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum, National Academy of Design, Society of American Etchers, Philadelphia Print Club, Library of Congress, Pennsylvania Academy, Carnegie Institute, Art Institute of Chicago, Oakland Art Gallery, Denver Art Museum, Seattle Museum, in London and Paris salons and at the Hague, Warsaw and Prague.

39. Emil Ganso (Germany-U.S.,
1895-1941)
The Bathers, ca. 1932/published
1951
Wood engraving; edition of 200
Greenough Collection,
Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery



THE BATHERS BY EMIL GANSO

Emil Ganso, of mixed German, French and Spanish ancestry, was born in Halberstadt in the Harz Mountains, Germany, in 1895. In 1912 he came to America where for a few weeks he attended night school of the National Academy. This was the only formal art training he ever received. He was self-taught.

The life of Emil Ganso can be divided into three distinct parts. The first fifteen years were spent in his native Halberstadt, where with little schooling, he was forced to earn his living at an early age. A sympathetic and understanding mother bought him some crayons and in his spare time he would draw. Later on he would say, "If one can draw well everything else is comparatively simple."

Ganso came to America at the age of 16, a penniless immigrant, but with high hopes for the future. During the next fifteen years he had to work at various trades with little or no time for painting. But he sought the company of artists, haunted the public library for art books, picked up information wherever he could and began to experiment with the graphic arts. With his first savings he bought an etching press, woodcut blocks and tools. This was the bulwark of his voluminous graphic contributions.

It was during the last fifteen years of his life that Ganso became one of the America's foremost printmakers, a thorough draftsman and an outstanding painter. Carl Zigrosser, Curator of Prints at the Philadelphia Museum, has characterized Ganso as "the master technician among artists." A tireless worker, Emil Ganso showed his brilliant competence in many different mediums. His etchings, woodcuts and lithographs are distinguished by their technical mastery as well as by their warm painterly qualities. In the last ten years of his life he made over fifty wood-engravings, more than one hundred etchings and aquatints and more than one hundred lithographs. He believed in making a work of art entirely his own creation and not only made the blocks and plates, but printed them all himself.

Ganso had profound respect for his art. This gift of expression which he attained through infinite labor, was not to be treated lightly. His complete control of form and color produced prints of unusual richness and solidity. There is nothing crude or careless about a Ganso print. His still-lives have a beauty that shows amazing skill. But the joy of drawing is best exemplified in his nudes. The figures are healthy and alive and he has often been called the American Renoir.

In 1932 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and went abroad to make a special study of the graphic arts. In 1938 Ganso was appointed artist-in-residence at Lawrence College, Wisconsin and the following year was appointed artist-in-residence at the State University of Iowa. In 1941, on the eve of receiving a full professorship from Iowa, Emil Ganso died of a heart attack. Carl Zigrosser wrote, "Emil Ganso's death was a real loss to American graphic art." The first New York retrospective exhibition of his prints was held at the Brooklyn Museum in 1944. His prints are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, The Whitney Museum, The Los Angeles Museum and numerous other museums and libraries throughout the country. He has been awarded many prizes and medals for his prints.

The Bathers is a block he finished, ran a few proofs from it, and then put it aside in the press of other work. It is characteristic of his best work and I am happy that it should be presented to the members of the Woodcut Society

MRS. EMIL GANSO

40. Norman Kent
(United States, 1903-1972)
Queer House, 1951
Woodcut; edition of 200
Greenough Collection,
Birger Sandzén Memorial
Gallery



THE WOODCUTS OF NORMAN KENT, N.A.

Norman Kent has found time to engage in many activities, but a large share of his abundant energies has gone into the practice and promotion of two media: watercolor and the woodcut. Though watercolor is a favored and natural medium in this country, the relief print still speaks to a relatively small audience. It owes what success it has enjoyed to the determined efforts of a few artists such as Mr. Kent, and to the present publisher.

The printmaker has not only been a consistent cutter of blocks for more than a generation, exhibiting in the important National exhibitions and having numerous one-man shows throughout the country, but he has written, lectured, and taught about his favorite medium. "The Relief Print," which he wrote in collaboration with Ernest W. Watson, is a standard work in the field. In addition, he has spread the gospel through many articles in *American Artist* and other publications. He was instrumental in founding the Print Club of Rochester in 1930 and the Society of American Wood Engravers in 1947.

He learned the fundamentals of his medium under the dean of American Wood Engravers, Allen Lewis, at the Art Students League in 1925-1926. That teacher and student relation ripened into a lasting friendship. From

Lewis comes Kent's concern for sincere craftsmanship, and the desire for an organized communication in the creation of a straight-forward pictorial statement.

Kent is seldom interested in indoor subject matter. He loves the hills and valleys of the Eastern seaboard, weather beaten barns, the mellowed streets of small towns, houses with their histories written on their faces, stone and wooden bridges, and old mills.

"Queer House" is a typical Kent subject. The building is an individual; it has an independent shape and dimensions; its life is recorded in its stains and textures; it had a biography waiting to be revealed by an artist. Kent always searches for these things. Recording the mystery of the old house in its night patterns and doubling its image in the wet street, he has allowed it to tell its own story. Here, the cutting is direct and economical, the composition simple, the message clear.

Kent's woodcuts are created from his drawings, of which he has literally made thousands. On selecting one for a print, he works over the original drawing on successive sheets of tracing paper until he evolves a satisfactory design. For blocks, he prefers plank-wise wood, and for cutting tools, the knife and gouges. This combination gives his woodcuts that glyptic quality which he clings to so tenaciously in all his graven work. Although many of his prints have been reproduced photo-mechanically in books and brochures, Kent pulls his original proofs for limited editions on a hand press.

Over the years, Norman Kent has been gradually adding to his technique and his reputation. He has advanced slowly, but naturally. His white spaces have become more varied in shape and direction; his prints have become increasingly luminous. Many of them are in important collections such as the Carnegie Institute, The New York Public Library, The Library of Congress, and the National Gallery of Canada. The sum total of his new woodcuts now represents an important document on numerous phases of vanishing America.

HENRY C. PITZ
Plymouth Meeting, Penna., October, 1951



41. Nora S. Unwin (United States, 1907-1982)

Warm Afternoon, 1952

Wood engraving; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

WARM AFTERNOON

By Nora S. Unwin, R.E.

Nora S. Unwin is one of the gifted English Engravers who have left their own country to live and work here in the United States. Not unlike her own distinguished country-woman Clare Leighton in technical approach to the block, Nora Unwin has won an enviable reputation in the short time she has been here.

She received eight years of art training in England, including four years at the Royal College of Art and then specializing in wood-engraving with Leon Underwood. She also achieved the distinguished position of being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers. She exhibited her blocks at the Royal Academy and the Society of Woodengravers.

In America, she has had one man shows of her wood-engravings in Albany, New York, Boston and Manchester. Here prints were shown at the Worcester Art Museum, Library of Congress, Buffalo Print Club, Philadelphia Print Club and Williams College. She has received four major print awards since 1951.

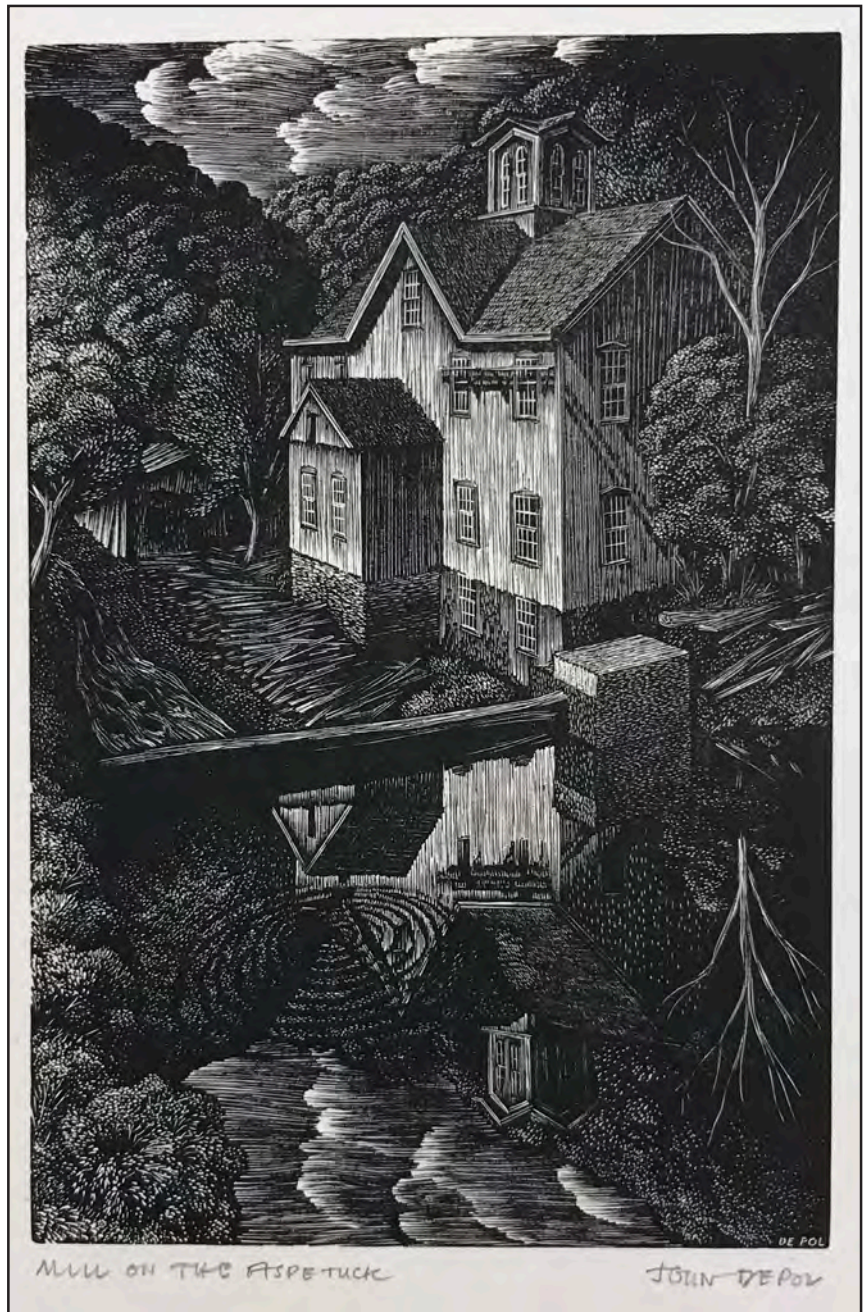
The Bibliotheque Nationale and the Salon de Mai in Paris have frequently shown her work which has also appeared in various European capitals. Her prints are in the permanent collections of the British Museum, the

Library of Congress, New York Public Library, Boston Public Library and other institutions.

Warm afternoon, a delightful atmospheric block is typical of her meticulous and imaginative use of the graver and other tools. She created circular light patterns that frame the two reclining figures dramatically and has delineated the figures with a plasticity unique in wood-engraving. The endgrain boxwood has given clear crisp textures that are suggested with smart firm strokes and an ingenious use of the white Japanese vellum used in the printing. The idea for the idyllic scene was evolved from a sketch made during an afternoon spent in the Arnold Arboretum in Boston where the artist watched a young mother lying under a chestnut tree with her child.

It is an honor to add Miss Unwin's WARM AFTERNOON to the work of that distinguished roster of English wood-engravers who have contributed to the WOODCUT SOCIETY in the past; Agnes Miller Parker, Robert Gibbings, John Buckland Wright, Clare Leighton, Eric Slater and now – Nora S. Unwin, R. E.

42. John H. De Pol
 (United States, 1913-2004)
Mill on the Aspetuck, 1952
 Wood engraving; edition of 200
 Greenough Collection, Birger
 Sandzén Memorial Gallery



THE WOOD ENGRAVINGS OF JOHN DE POL

By Norman Kent, N.A.

Through historians of the graphic arts have frequently pointed out that Thomas Bewick (1753-1828) was not the first engraver to work on the end-grain, it can be safely stated that he gave impetus and high to the beautiful medium of *creative* wood engraving.

However, there is one thing that should be cleared up about Bewick's contribution. He did not, as has so often been repeated, work exclusively in "white line." In the production of his delightful textures, he *combined* white and black line so dexterously that the end result ran the tonal gamut, while at the same time acknowledging the *artistic* compromise of the linear tradition of the older woodcut.

In America, the craft of *reproductive* wood-engraving reached its zenith at the turn of the century, finally giving way to the photomechanical line cut and halftone. It was in only in the comparatively short period between

World Wars I and II that the relief media – woodcut, wood engraving and linoleum cut – began attracting the talents of American printmakers. Artists like J.J. Lankes, Allen Lewis, Rudolph Ruzicka and Thomas W. Nason engraved their independent way into the affection of print collectors, most of who discovered the wood engraving of these men in book decoration.

Gradually the artistic stigma against relief prints competing with intaglio and planographic media in exhibitions was broken down. A renaissance of the woodcut, which had taken place in Europe more than fifty years ago, reached a flood tide in the United States by the nineteen thirties. And today, in spite of the marked accent on color that dominates every aspect of the creative arts, the monochromatic wood engraving has found numerous practitioners among our printmakers.

Among the younger artists who are devoted passionately to its practice is John De Pol. Born in Greenwich Village in New York City in 1913, he began his commercial career as a statistical clerk in Wall Street, and attended classes in lithography at the Art Students League in New York. It was during his service in the U.S. Air Force (1943-1945) and while stationed in Ireland that De Pol had a brief opportunity to continue studying lithography at the College of Art in Belfast. In between his army duties and his classes at the college, he spent his waking hours sketching. These European drawings have formed the basis of many of his subsequent etchings and wood engravings.

Following his discharge from the army, De Pol began independent work on copper plate and boxwood. As he gained facility and confidence, his wood engraving became his major pursuit.

Finally, a few years ago, he left Wall street and associated himself with Lewis White, a New York printer of distinction whose printing office engages in quality productions. Here, De Pol has gained wide experience in the art of printing and typography in the sympathetic atmosphere of a shop that finds constant use for his talents as a designer and wood engraver.

Besides his book decoration for other publishers John De Pol has contributed distinguished engravings to the limited editions of hand-printed private-press items. At the same time, his independent prints have been exhibited in our major print exhibitions. Among his awards is the coveted *Richard Comyn Eames Purchase Prize* at the Society of American Graphic Artists and the purchase by the Library of Congress of seven of his wood engravings for its permanent collection.

In the present print, *Mill on the Aspetuck*, John De Pol exhibits his finest sense of design. The silver values found in this engraving set the mood and the whole surface contributes to the quietude. In keeping with his subject, the artist has disciplined his graver work, foiling lights against darks with notable restraint. And in contrast to many more sculptural xylographers who are at work among us, the delicate and subtle prints of John De Pol find place and appreciation.



43. Paul Landacre (United States, 1893-1963)

Some Ingredients, 1953-54

Woodcut; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

SOME INGREDIENTS

By Paul Landacre

Paul Landacre is one of the outstanding wood-engravers of the world. He has that rare capacity to project the intensity of his feelings into each subject that his graver brings to life. His technical mastery of the medium is absolute. He can create and command an entire range of textures. His line is sure, vital and one of the most rhythmic in the art today. His cutting is clean and crisp and a delight to the eye. All of the superb qualities can be seen in this splendid still life.

He was born in Columbus, Ohio of a family of scientists and teachers and he attended Ohio State University specializing in entomology. In 1922 he went to California and never left it. A job in commercial art led to an interest in the graphic arts. He tried lithography and etching but reached the conclusion that he had an affinity for the wood block. He learned his craft by cutting block after block until he was sure of his technical facility. Soon after that collectors began to recognize his work and to acquire it. Museum collections started to acquire his engravings and some galleries gave him one-man shows. Today his work is recognized all over the world. The list of collectors and museums who possess his work would fill this entire page area.

Some years ago he created a wood-engraving for The Woodcut Society entitled *The Black Stallion*. This superb print became a favorite of Society members and quickly went out-of-print. Now, years later, requests are still received for the print. Mr. Landacre was asked to create another print for the Society more than a year ago. Out of the many sketches he submitted, the one for SOME INGREDIENTS seemed the most interesting and exciting. The artist has cast an intense emotional aura about the simple homely objects. Each seems invested with a dramatic life of its own. Notice how superbly the deep blacks are used to frame the composition, weaving through the design with a rhythmic pattern among the greys and white. Notice too, the variety of lines he achieves with his tools and the textures he creates. He has graded his white with fine cross-hatching and his blacks with fine white lines. His feeling for light comes through perfectly in this print. From the left background and the center foreground, he has lighted his areas to project the expression and chiaroscuro that his subject demanded. Some time ago, Mr. Landacre wrote, "To me the most important elements in a work of art are imagination first, and simplicity, and of course design." Here in this splendid print, are these elements superbly demonstrated.



44. Lynd Ward (United States, 1905-1985)

Corral: Trés Cumbres, 1953-54

Woodcut; edition of 200

Greenough Collection, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

CORRAL: TRÉS CUMBRES

By Lynd Ward

There is a narrative element in all of Lynd Ward's work that fascinates his admirers. He cannot touch his graver to the block without investing that block with intriguing political interest. Pure design for its own sake does not satisfy Mr. Ward. Things must happen, people must move and landscape must serve as a stage or background for events in his work. Perhaps it is this quality, the dramatist in the artist, that inspired him to create his novels in woodcuts. He was the first to introduce this art form in America. In **CORRAL: TRES CUMBRES**, a rather pastoral scene inspired by a recent Mexican trip, all seems serene. But in the next breath, we may expect the grazing mules to rear and bolt, a wolf to dart out and attack the sheep and a violent storm to attack the peaceful farm. It is this ability to invest his subjects with an air of suppressed drama, that has made Lynd Ward one of the most popular wood-engravers today.

He was born in Chicago in 1905 and moved east as a boy. He lived in Boston and later in New Jersey. He attended Teacher's College at Columbia majoring in fine arts and spent a year in Leipzig at the National Academy for the Graphic Arts where he studied etching under Alois Kolb, lithography under George Mathey and wood-engraving under Hans Alexander Mueller. Back in this country, he became one of the busiest and best book illustrators. He has a long list of books to his credit, including several collections of his own graphic art. In recent years he and his wife have written and illustrated a charming and popular series of juveniles. He is also President of the Society of American Graphic Artists and is represented in every major print collection in the country.

CORRAL: TRES CUMBRES is projected from an aerial perspective that is favorite with the artist. Members of The Woodcut Society will remember the perspective of his previous Society print *Undercliff* in which this same perspective was used. We look down on a scene that is enclosed by a circular design so that the eye keeps sweeping around the elements, lighting only long enough to observe the white of the thatched roofs. This seems the main focal point of the composition. The white areas are skillfully interwoven throughout the design, highlighting some details and throwing others into dramatic silhouette. The deep black background is enlivened by small patches of white which lead the eye back into the foreground, the fulcrum of all interest and action. It is Lynd Ward at his dramatic best.