



# CALIFORNIA ART CLUB NEWSLETTER

*Documenting California's Traditional Arts Heritage Since 1909*

DOUBLE  
ISSUE

## How the San Gabriel Valley Inspired California Impressionism and Lured Artists from across the Nation

### PART I OF III

*by Elaine Adams*

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN outstanding artist requires a process that can be compared to that of nurturing a delicate seedling to full maturity and potential. Cultivation, environment, and faithful caring all have an influence on the final result. Throughout history burgeoning artists have instinctively, and certainly out of financial consideration, opted to live in close communities with fellow artists. In such settings, artists create their own subcultures as they spend their days among like-minded friends who speak their language—a form of communication that is based on their specific brand of artistic discipline and philosophy.

Fellowship among artists becomes an essential source of sustaining encouragement in this lifestyle which can be sporadic in work and income. At times, an artist may travail obliviously over many days and weeks with only occasional breaks for quick meals and minimal sleep. Then, there are dry periods when the flow of inspiration struggles. When such occurs, artists often resort to congregating with other artists to talk *art* for extended hours. This activity becomes part of an artist's nurturing process.

### *Impressionism in California a Century Ago*

At the turn-of-the-twentieth century, California's various communities of artists first developed in San Francisco and the Monterey Peninsula in the north, and then, Pasadena and Laguna Beach in the south. Due largely to the differences in flora, geology, and



John Bond Francisco (1863–1931)

*Out of the Dust*, c. 1918

Oil on canvas 34" × 46"

Private collection

climate, there are distinct characteristics in the artwork created in the north, as compared to those created in the south. Impressionist paintings from San Francisco and Monterey are imbued with cooler light, often veiled in fog, thus creating a softer, tonal interpretation, a style that is known as *Tonalism*. Impressionist paintings from the south are typically more colourful, vibrant, and filled with reflective sunlight, and more identified with the tenets of *Impressionism*.

The basic premise of being an

Impressionist painter, although the early practitioners did not refer to themselves as such, is to create spontaneous "impressions," rendered with loose, immediate, and painterly brushstrokes. Patches of paint are applied in relation to their adjacent colours to optically blend from a distance as singular colour notes in perfect pitch. These colour notes read either as vibrant and *vibrato* or tonal and *legato*. The concept of Impressionism came about in France in the later quarter of the nineteenth century, primarily in opposition to the refined



Claude Monet (1840-1926)  
*Impression, Soleil Levant*, 1872  
 Oil on canvas 18.9" × 24.8"  
 Collection of Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris



Examples of early plein air easels (note the carrying case at lower left)  
 Winslow Homer (1836-1910)  
*Artists Sketching in the White Mountains*, 1863  
 Oil on panel 9.5" × 15.875"  
 Bequest of Charles Shipman Payson  
 Collection of Portland Museum of Art, Maine

academic painting of the period, but also in reaction to the increasing use of photography. It was the French critic and humorist, **Louis Leroy**, who pronounced the 1874 exhibition of thirty artists in the *Salon des Refusés*, as "The Exhibition of

the Impressionists," a sarcastic comment inspired by the title of **Claude Monet's** (1840-1926) painting, *Impression, Soleil Levant* or "Impression, Sunrise."

Leroy wrote that Monet's painting was at best a "sketch" and certainly not

finished. Half-a-century later, a similar pronouncement was made in southern California when the art critic **Merle Armitage** referred to an exhibition of paintings that featured local southern California landscapes as "harmless art" and dubbed it the "Eucalyptus School" (*West Coaster*, September 1, 1928). It was not until the 1982 **Westphal Publication** of *Plein Air Painters of California: The Southland*, followed four years later by *Plein Air Painters of California, the North*, that the term "Plein Air" became the definition for California landscape painting. Today, the terms "California Plein Air" and "California Impressionism" are interchangeably used to describe the same art movement.

### *The Birth of Plein Air*

It is no coincidence that California Impressionism developed at the same time as the **Arts and Crafts Movement**, also known as *Mission Style*, which took place from 1890 to 1920. Creative minds of the time were greatly inspired by an aesthetic philosophy based on skill and craftsmanship, as well as an appreciation for nature as the artistic source. Moreover, the profusion of colour and light in southern California created a particular impetus that energized painters. The artists' intent, then and now, continues to be making something in the spirit of the Movement—*sans* machines and technology—to express the need to create based on personal observations, experiences, and interpretations. In this act is the manifestation of human intellectual achievement—the very definition of *culture*.

The great outdoors was the place to be, and with the mid-nineteenth century innovation of packaging oil paint in aluminum tubes and the invention of portable easels, artists were no longer restricted to the confines of their studios. The portable easel, commonly known as the "French Easel," gave artists the liberty to paint in the open air, that is, *en plein air*. The design of the French Easel has not altered much in the past 150 years. Its primary function is to haul artists' equipment, particularly to the open field. The word "easel" may have been derived from the Dutch term "*schildersezel*," whereby "*schilder*" translates to "painter" and "*ezel*" to "donkey," thus, the "painter's donkey" that carries the artist's supplies. Once opened, the box legs extend to



support the artist's canvas. The great outdoors becomes the artist's studio, one filled with natural light.

The population of Los Angeles in 1900 was 102,479, of which approximately 400 were practicing artists in various fields. Many of these artists had academic pedigrees and personally knew each other from their student days or were at least aware of each other's artwork. The artists who migrated to California typically studied in Paris at the **Académie Julian**, **Académie Delécluse**, and **Académie Colarossi**. Some studied with the muralist **Frank Brangwyn (1867–1956)** at the **London School of Art**, and others studied in New York at the **Art Students League** or with **William Merritt Chase (1849–1916)** at the **Chase School** (later to become **Parsons School of Design**), or in Chicago at the **Chicago Art Institute**. In preparation for their future careers, these artists were rigorously trained in the time-honoured tradition of figure painting.

In southern California it was natural for artists to gather and exchange ideas. The two key creative enclaves existed chiefly along Pasadena's Arroyo Seco and in Laguna Beach, with several artists taking up residences in both locations. The excitement of abundant

and available beauty in nature was overwhelming and provided an inexhaustible supply of subjects to paint. Thrilled with California's natural environment and year-round sunshine, many artists abandoned figure painting altogether or at least decreased the practice in favour of painting the area's still unspoiled landscape. But how did the San Gabriel Valley become an integral influence on art history?

### ***A Mythical Paradise— Spanish Eyes on California***

It is believed that California got its name from *The Adventures of Esplandián*, a Spanish novel written around 1500, in which the author, **Garcí Rodríguez de Montalvo**, described a mythical paradise island named *California*.

**Sebastian Vizcaino** mapped the Pacific Coast in 1602, but soon Spain feared the possibility of losing California to foreign rivals. England's **Sir Francis Drake** sailed the Pacific Ocean in 1579 and landed in California near Point Reyes. Drake named the land "New Albion," the archaic name of Great Britain, and claimed it for **Queen Elizabeth I**. Then in 1725 **Russian Emperor Peter the Great** commanded navigator **Vitus Bering** to explore the North Pacific for potential colonization. Although there



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### DOUBLE ISSUE SUMMER-FALL 2016

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Walter W. Francis (Born 1846)

*March of Portolá to Monterey*

Drawing reproduced in "The March of Portolá and the Discovery of the Bay of San Francisco" by Zoeth S. Eldredge

Published by The California Promotion Committee, San Francisco, 1909



were no immediate subsequent actions by the British or the Russians to colonize California, the Spanish believed there was realistic cause for concern.

New Spain's Viceroy **Carlos Francisco**

**de Croix** and **King Carlos III of Spain** exchanged dispatches on January 23, 1768 urging to colonize California. The Spanish nobleman and military officer **Gaspar de Portolá** was immediately

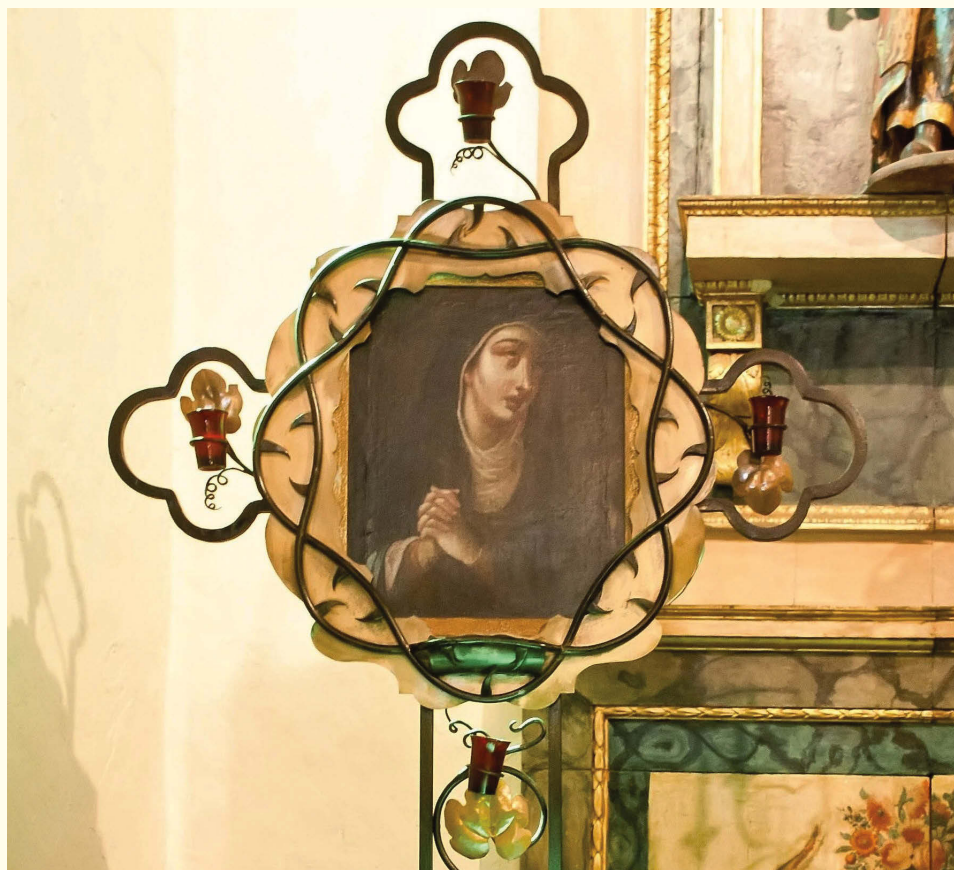
named Governor of the Californias and placed in charge of an overall plan, which called for a joint land and sea exploration up the Pacific Coast. The three ships on the expedition departed from La Paz, Baja California in January of 1769. The land expedition left from Loreto (approximately 150 miles north of La Paz) at around the same time. The land expedition was divided into two groups. In the lead group was **Fr. Juan Crespi** who maintained the journey's diary. In the second group were Portolá and **Fr. Junipero Serra**. Serra was given the responsibility of building the Missionary churches. Both Crespi and Serra were Roman Catholic priests of the Franciscan Order from Majorca, Spain.

### *Discovering the Arroyo Seco*

On August second of 1769, Portolá and his expedition party, consisting of approximately 60 soldiers and Christianized Indians, reached the Los Angeles River and named one of its tributaries *Arroyo Seco*, meaning "dry stream." It is believed that Portolá met **Chief Hahamog-na** near Millard Canyon where there was a settlement of Tongva Indians. These indigenous peoples were baptized as Christians and helped construct the **Mission San Gabriel Arcángel** which was completed in 1771, and henceforth, they became known as Gabrieleño Indians.

Winning over the confidence of the natives required various strategies. There is a legend in which art played a role in peace-making. It is purported that a certain band of hostile native peoples gathered with the intent of driving out Portolá's troupe. But when one of the priests displayed a painting entitled *Our Lady of Sorrows* on the ground for all to see, the natives were immediately struck by her beauty and were calmed. Today, that same painting, now around 300 years old, hangs in front of the old altar in the Mission San Gabriel's sanctuary.

After discovering San Francisco Bay in 1769, Portolá and his soldiers embarked on a second expedition and returned via the Arroyo Seco on Easter Sunday in April of 1770. Upon seeing a blanket of blooming golden poppies they named the area, *La Sabinalla de San Pascual* (The Grand Altar Cloth of Holy Easter). Chief Hahamog-na adapted to his new culture and was baptized under the name of



Artist Unknown, 17th Century

*Our Lady of Sorrows*

Collection of Mission San Gabriel Arcángel



Guy Rose (1867-1925)

*The Hut, Sunny Slope*, c. 1880

Watercolour

Private collection



**Pascual** and married a Spanish woman named **Angela Seise**. It was said that Pascual lived a long and happy life.

The areas of San Pascual in the San Gabriel Valley encompassed what are today the towns of Pasadena, Altadena, Alhambra, South Pasadena, San Marino, and San Gabriel. Ninety-four years after Portolá's expedition and the founding of Mission San Gabriel, the Arroyo Seco attracted a new wave of visitors.

### *Artists-in-Law*

Perhaps the first renowned native California artist was **Guy Orlando Rose (1867–1925)** who, in fact, was born and raised in San Gabriel as one of ten children. Their parents were **Amanda Jones Rose** and Bavarian-born, **Leonard John Rose**. The Rose family was among the earliest settlers in Los Angeles, arriving by wagon train in 1860. Their trip westward, which started in Iowa in 1858, was joined by the Baley wagon train, making a total of twenty wagons, 100 people, and 500 cattle, and became the **Rose-Baley Party**. Their journey was full of hardships including a hostile attack by 300 Mohave Indians that resulted in the deaths of eight from their party including five children. The loss of supplies and ammunition forced them to trail back 500 miles to restock before continuing their journey to California. After reaching Los Angeles, the Rose family purchased a 2000-acre ranch in the San Gabriel Valley and named it *Sunny Slope* where they grew grapes, walnuts, and oranges, and produced thousands of gallons of wine and brandy per year. The Roses then acquired a subsequent ranch which they named *Rose-Meade*. Located just east of Pasadena, this land eventually became part of the City of Rosemead. In 1887 Leonard Rose was elected to represent Los Angeles as a California State Senator.

The Rose's ranch foreman was **John Wachtel** whose younger brother, **Elmer Wachtel (1864–1929)**, moved to San Gabriel from Lanark, Illinois in 1882 to be near his brother. Elmer worked as a ranch hand and later, as a furniture store clerk. In 1879 John Wachtel married a member of the Rose family, Guy Rose's sister, **Nina Rose**. As a result of this union, Elmer Wachtel and Guy Rose became brothers-in-law, permanently linking these two gifted artists who were destined to become



John Bond Francisco (1863–1931)

*The Sick Child*, 1893

Oil on canvas 32" × 48"

Collection of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution



Elmer Wachtel (1864–1929)

*Course of the San Gabriel*, c. 1905–6

Oil on canvas 36" × 48"

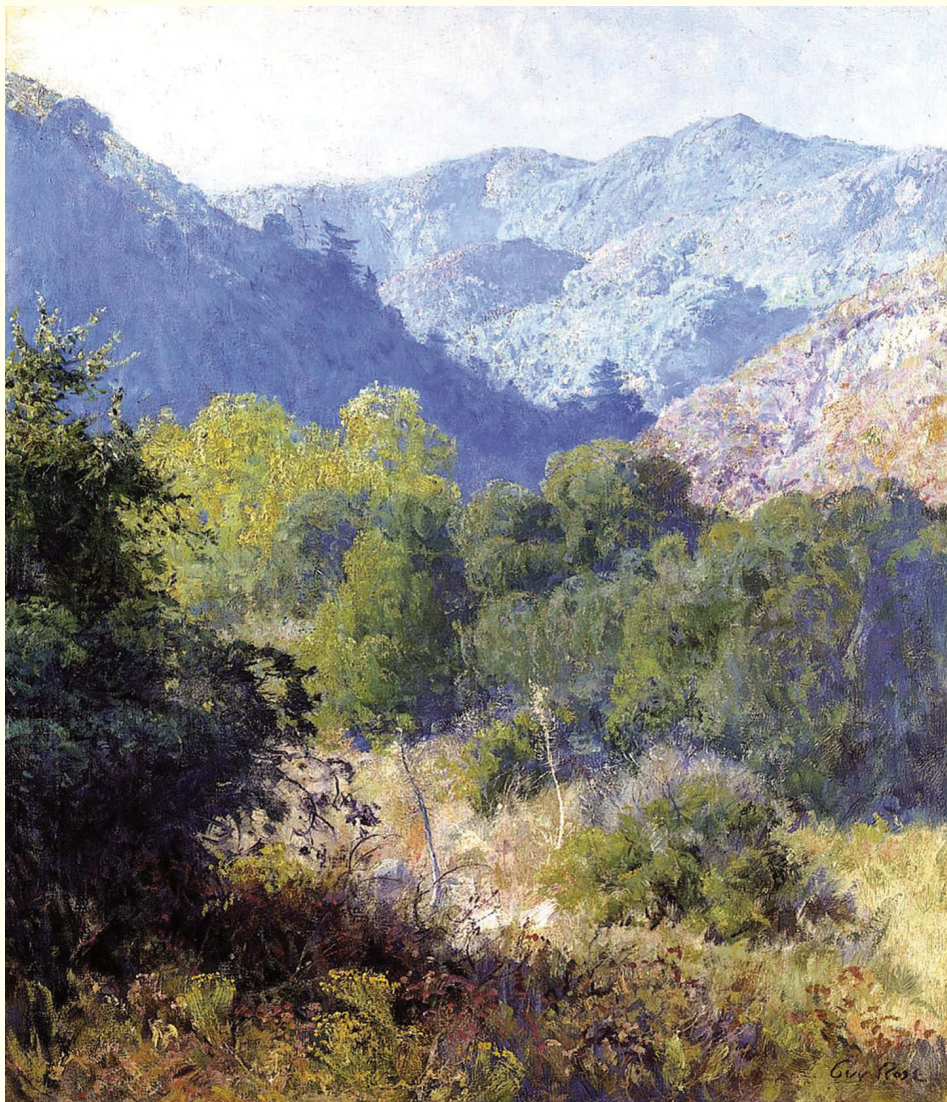
Private collection

luminaries in California art history.

As a boy, Elmer taught himself to play the violin, and by 1888 he became the first violinist in the **Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra**. While Wachtel was engaged in his music career, Guy Rose was pursuing his passion for visual art. From 1885 to 1888 Rose

studied at the **School of Design** in San Francisco under **Virgil Williams (1830–1886)**, **Emil Carlson (1848–1932)**, and **Warren E. Rollins (1861–1962)**. Rollins arrived at the Arroyo Seco in 1910, and the following year built a studio in San Gabriel, which he used on occasion until 1917. He divided his painting time





Guy Rose (1867-1925)  
*In the San Gabriel*  
 Oil  
 Private collection

between San Gabriel, Phoenix, the Grand Canyon, and Santa Fe. Rollins was distinguished for his paintings of desert landscapes and Native Americans, primarily the Southwest tribes of the Hopi, Navajo, and Zuni, and lived with these peoples for months at a time. The artist became respectfully known as the “Dean of the Santa Fe Art Colony.”

Perhaps Guy Rose piqued Elmer Wachtel’s interest in studying art. After artist **John Bond Francisco (1863-1931)** arrived in Los Angeles in 1887, there is conjecture that both Rose and Wachtel studied with him. Francisco was academically-trained at the **Berlin Art Academy** and in the Parisian salons of the Académie Julian under **William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905)** and Académie Colorosi. In Los Angeles he

kept his studio in the Blanchard Building where he taught art and hosted frequent gatherings of painters, musicians, and theatrical celebrities. Francisco held his first exhibition in Los Angeles in 1892, in which he exhibited mainly figure paintings in the academic style, including *The Sick Child*, which received great praise. Like Wachtel, Francisco was a fine violinist, and in 1897, helped form the **Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra** and served as its first concertmaster. In 1889 he opened his art school where he continued figure and portrait painting, and began painting local landscapes. Francisco would hitch up a team of horses and, with his pupil Elmer Wachtel, drive out to the San Gabriel Mountains for a day of painting.

In 1900 Elmer Wachtel decided to

advance his art studies and enrolled at the **Art Students League** in New York. However, the teaching wasn’t to his liking and he quit after two weeks. He continued studying privately for one year with **William Merritt Chase (1849-1916)**, and then left for England to study at the **Lambeth Art School** in London. In that same year, Guy Rose left for Paris to study art at the Académie Julian. These were the times when diligent training was available to those who possessed a spirit of adventure and who were impassioned to learn from the best—and the public was zealous to view their works, and wealthy patrons were eager to collect them. Eventually, both Guy Rose and Elmer Wachtel returned to Pasadena and helped form the burgeoning art movement that would become known as California Plein Air. ■

#### *Part I Notes:*

*Elaine Adams is a published author and public speaker on topics relating to fine arts and aesthetics, and is Editor-in-Chief of the California Art Club Newsletter.*

*Research sources for this article include: The Call to California: The Epic Journey of the Portolá-Serra Expedition in 1769, by **Richard F. Pourade**, published by Copley Publishing, 1968; Published diaries of Fr. Junipero Serra and Fr. Crespi, excerpts from Fray Juan Crespi, Missionary Explorer on the Pacific Coast, 1769-1774, by **Herbert Eugene Bolton**, published by AMS Press, 1971; California Missions and Presidios: The History & Beauty of the Spanish Missions, by **Randy Leffingwell**, published by Voyager Press, 2005; California Art Club Historic Archives, **Eric Merrell**, Club Historian; The Huntington Library Papers of Leonard John Rose; John Bond Francisco; Antiques and Fine Art Magazine, courtesy **Roughton Galleries**; Pasadena, California: Historical and Personal: A Complete History of the Indiana Colony by **John Windell Wood**, published; 1917; History of Pasadena by **Hiram Alvin Reid**, published; 1895; Artists in Santa Catalina Island before 1945, by **Jean Stern**, published online at [tfaoi.com](http://tfaoi.com); Los Angeles Times Archives; Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era by **Kevin Starr**, published by Oxford University Press, 1989; Artists in California, 1786-1940 by **Edan Hughes**; and interviews with **Peter Adams** Additional appreciation to **George Stern** and **Roy Rose**.*





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## How the San Gabriel Valley Inspired California Impressionism and Lured Artists from across the Nation

### PART II OF III

*by Elaine Adams*

**A**MERICA'S MIGRATION WESTWARD DURING THE early-to-mid-nineteenth century was slow to arrive to the California Territory. It took the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848 to fuel an immigration flood to the West. However, the stampede of gold rushers was concentrated around San Francisco where the city experienced a sudden population explosion from 1,000 residents to 25,000 within a year. At the same time, Los Angeles remained a sleepy, small pueblo of only 3,500 inhabitants.

#### *San Pascual and the Beginnings of Pasadena*

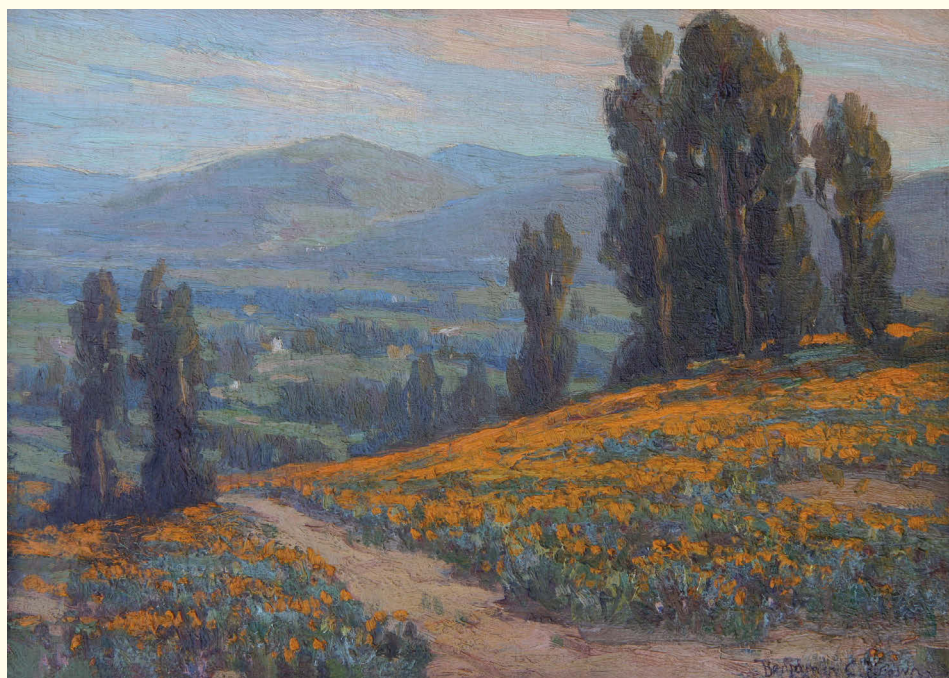
In 1850 California became the thirty-first state of the union. Twenty years later, the Midwest experienced the

harshest winters on record, inspiring a conversation about moving to warmer parts of the country. A few friends, mainly teachers and farmers, gathered at the home of Indianapolis physician,

**Dr. and Mrs. Thomas B. Elliott**, and complained about the cold weather and their ill health, some suffering from tuberculosis. The idea of moving to Florida was discussed, but the thought of living in California had a much more romantic appeal. Adding to the allure, newspapers at the time were heralding California as the "Italy of America."

Additional inspiration to move to California was generated by the popular legends of Kentucky-born frontiersman, **William "Billie" Wolfskill (1798-1866)**. Wolfskill, who became a naturalized Mexican citizen in 1828, made his fortune in the West as a fur trapper in New Mexico. His Mexican citizenship allowed him to own land in California. During the 1840s Wolfskill acquired forty-eight acres in the area that is today Downtown Los Angeles where he planted a vineyard. His ranch expanded to include hundreds of lemon and orange trees propagated from seedlings he acquired from nearby **Mission San Gabriel**. Billie Wolfskill eventually became one of the wealthiest men in Southern California and, in fact, launched California's citrus industry by selling lemons during the California Gold Rush to miners for up to a hefty \$1 per lemon.

To those present at the Elliott's home, upon hearing these rousing tales, it would have seemed evident that financial prospects in California were ripe for citrus! They soon formed a cooperative organization with Dr. Elliott as its president, and elected the group's name to become *The California Colony of Indiana*.



Benjamin Brown (1865-1942)

*Poppies and Eucalyptus*

Oil on canvas 10" x 14"

Courtesy of California Art Company, LLC



The newly-formed *Colony* sent an advance team of three men, including a land surveyor, to Southern California to reconnoitre desirable acreage to purchase. This task proved to be more difficult than expected, as finding available land with good soil and water

was not easy. One of the members of the party, **Daniel M. Berry**, was so frustrated he almost quit. As he complained in a letter to Dr. Elliott, he was “tired out knocking around in canyons, cactus, nettles, jungles, dry river bottoms, etc.” Finally, on

the invitation of **Judge Benjamin S. Eaton**, who owned a 260-acre vineyard named *Fair Oaks*, the committee visited **Rancho San Pascual**, located just west of Eaton’s ranch. San Pascual was owned by **Don Benito (Benjamin) Wilson** and was described as a “choice piece of land.” After inspection, the committee determined that Rancho San Pascual (later named San Pasqual) was indeed perfect for their new Colony!

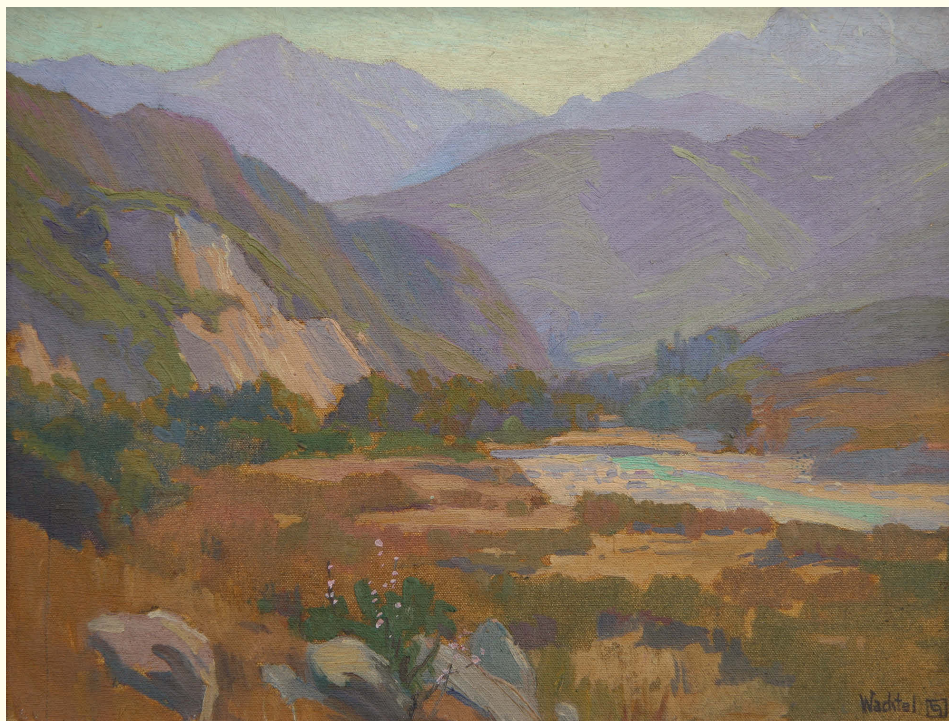
In November of 1873 the Indiana group formed an investment cooperative, which they named the **San Gabriel Orange Grove Association**, for the purpose of buying farmland in Southern California. Article II of their prospectus stated, “Any person, of good moral character, who shall be accepted by the Executive Committee, shall be eligible to membership.” The number of investors soon grew to include families from Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Massachusetts, Missouri, Alabama, Pennsylvania, and Michigan—all eager to move to Southern California’s hospitable sunny climate.

The Association agreed to purchase 4,000 acres in the eastern part of Rancho San Pascual near the Arroyo Seco for an aggregate sum of \$25,000, with ownership restrictions of no more than 160 acres and no less than forty acres per family. The collective land was named *The California Colony of Indiana*. In January of 1874 some 100 families began to settle the area with the intention of growing citrus.

### *Getting There*

When the **Transcontinental Railroad** was laid in 1869, travel to the west became more feasible. One no longer had to journey by wagon train that sometimes took more than a year in transit. However, complete railway connections into the Indiana Colony were not available at the time. Train travel brought passengers as far west as San Francisco, but from there, they would have to board a southbound steamer to San Pedro, and then, hire a wagon to ride rough roads through Los Angeles until they finally reached the Indiana Colony.

Receiving mail in the Indiana Colony was another challenge. Young **Morton Banbury**, son of Colonist **Col. J. Banbury**, rode on horseback to the



Elmer Wachtel (1864–1929)

*Arroyo Seco*

Oil on canvas 13" × 17 1/2"

Courtesy of California Art Company, LLC



John Gutzon Borglum (1867–1941)

*Runnin' Out the Storm*, c. 1890

Oil on canvas 60" × 108 5/8"

San Antonio Museum of Art

Gift of Mrs. Anna Borglum Carter, 77.1101

Image courtesy of San Antonio Museum of Art





*Gutzon Borglum and Elizabeth Putnam Janes painting en plein air at The Old Mill in San Marino in 1887. Today, The California Art Club Gallery is housed in The Old Mill.*

neighbouring town of Los Angeles to attend school, and on his way back home picked up the mail from the post office located on North Spring Street near First Street and delivered it to the Colony. This improvised mail service continued until the young lad contracted a fatal influenza. Left without a mail carrier, the Colony urged to apply for its own post office. However, the Postmaster General refused to recognize the name, "Indiana Colony." In response, a meeting was held on April 22, 1875 at the Colony schoolhouse to determine a new name for their community.

After considering a variety of proposals, including "New Granada," "Muscat" for the local grapes, and "Indianola," the Colony eventually decided to select a name from the Native American language. One of the Association members took action by writing a letter to an East Coast college friend, **Tuttle Smith**, for assistance. Smith's father, **George N. Smith**, who happened to be a missionary among the Minnesota Indians, suggested the Chippewa and Ottawa word, *Pa-sa-den-na*, meaning "Crown of the Valley." The Association voted—with seventeen electing the name of *Pasadena* and four voting against. The new name was adopted and in 1886 the City of Pasadena was incorporated.

### ***The Blossoming of an Artist Colony, Pre-1900***

With the foundation of an actual community taking root and local artists, **Guy Rose (1867–1925)**, **Elmer Wachtel (1864–1929)**, and **John Bond Francisco (1863–1931)** spreading awareness about the area's transcending beauty through their paintings, more families and future artists began finding their way to the San Gabriel Valley. In 1884 the sixteen-year-old **John Gutzon Borglum (1867–1941)**, later to become celebrated for sculpting the **Mount Rushmore National Memorial** in South Dakota, arrived with his family from Omaha, Nebraska to live in Los Angeles. Feeling out of place, the Borglum family soon returned to Nebraska, while Gutzon Borglum chose to stay on and work as an apprentice lithographer and muralist.

Also in 1884, artist **Elizabeth Janes Putnam (1848–1922)** moved to Los Angeles from Racine, Wisconsin. Nineteen years his senior, Putnam became Borglum's teacher and in 1889 they were married. The couple purchased a four-acre ranch, *El Rosario*, on Orange Grove Avenue in Sierra Madre at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains. Soon after their marriage, Borglum spent two years in Paris where he studied at the **École des Beaux-Arts**, **Académie Julian**, and became a disciple of sculptor **Auguste Rodin (1840–1917)**.



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DOUBLE ISSUE  
WINTER 2017

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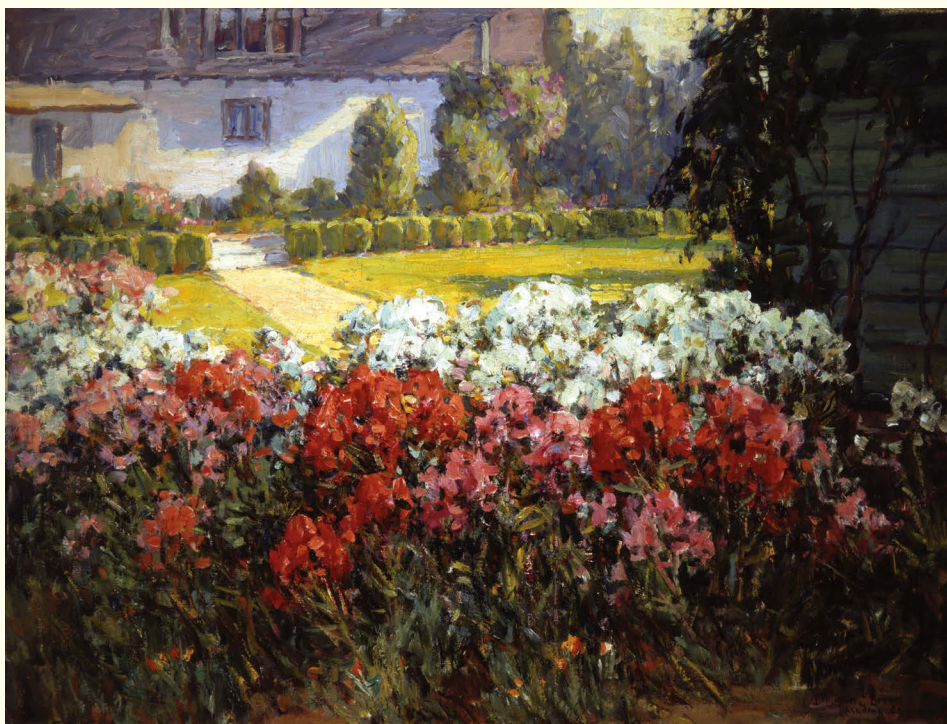
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Benjamin Chambers Brown (1865–1942)  
*The Joyous Garden, Pasadena, c. 1910*  
 Oil on canvas 30" × 40"  
 Private Collection  
 Courtesy of The Irvine Museum



Granville Redmond (1871–1935)  
*Annandale Wildflowers*  
 Oil on board 25" × 30"  
 Private Collection  
 Courtesy of Bonhams

Borglum was to have a strong presence in the formative years of San Gabriel Valley's arts culture.

With artists arriving in the San Gabriel Valley and environs, it wasn't long until various art clubs began to appear. The first organization for practicing artists was the **Los Angeles Art Club**, founded in 1890 by Gutzon Borglum, however, the group soon dissolved when Borglum left for Europe. The same year marked the advent of another art group, the **Sketch Club**, which was affiliated with the **Los Angeles School of Art and Design**. The Sketch Club was restructured in 1895 and became known as **The Art Association** led by Guy Rose who advocated Impressionism. In turn, a rival group of artists led by J. Bond Francisco and Borglum (who had returned from Europe) formed the **Society of Fine Arts of Southern California** that was dedicated to the promotion of Romantic-Realism.

Another Parisian-trained artist from the Académie Julian to arrive in Pasadena was **Benjamin Chambers Brown (1865–1942)**. Brown moved from Little Rock, Arkansas to Pasadena in 1896 and turned his attention from still-life and portrait painting to depicting local landscapes. He became especially known for his scenes of poppy fields. Brown's enthusiasm for painting local scenery *en plein air* won him the respect of his peers, and art critics dubbed him "Dean of Pasadena Painters" and the "Patriarch of Pasadena." In the 1916 book, *Art in California*, the first art editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, **Antony Anderson**, wrote an essay titled "Six Landscape Painters of Southern California," in which he described the inspired paintings of Benjamin Brown:

*"Benjamin Chambers Brown, a prize pupil from St. Louis, was coached in all the [academic] traditions, but his twenty years in Pasadena have induced him to drop all hampering impediments of prejudice, and cling only to the things he found good... You can't live for twenty summers on the hem of the Sierra Madre's [San Gabriel Mountains] magnificent purple garment and still keep up your Parisian ideals of seeing and doing. You're bound to start new fashions of your own that are absolutely*



*in keeping with your environment. For here is nature at its biggest and best, bigger and better than all the ateliers put together, and more needful to art."*

In 1914 Brown began making etchings with his brother, **Howell Brown**, and together they co-found the **Printmakers of Los Angeles**, later known as the **California Society of Printmakers**. (Benjamin Brown became the third president of the California Art Club, holding the office from 1915 to 1916.)

Also a former student of the Académie Julian, **Granville Redmond (1871–1935)** opened a studio in Los Angeles in 1898. He painted throughout the area, including Pasadena, Laguna Beach, Long Beach, Santa Monica, Catalina Island, and San Pedro. Later, in 1917, Redmond decided to try out for the burgeoning motion picture industry. As a deaf-mute since early childhood, he felt that his natural pantomime ability would grant him acting roles in silent movies. He auditioned for **Charlie Chaplin** who over time cast Redmond in seven of his films. The two also became good friends—with Chaplin giving Redmond space for an art studio on his movie lot.

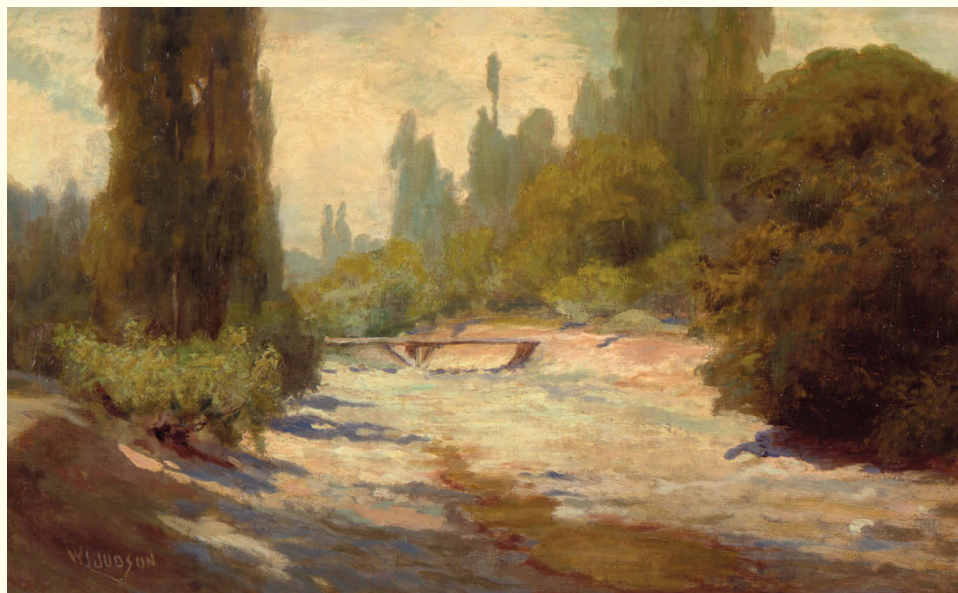
### *The Arroyo Seco Inspires an Arts and Crafts Movement*

In San Gabriel Valley's small town of Garvanza, located next to Pasadena on the banks of the Arroyo Seco, artist **William Lees Judson (1842–1928)** arrived in 1893 to start a new life. Originally from Manchester, England, Judson moved to Chicago where he taught at the **Art Institute of Chicago**. However, poor health forced him to seek a warmer and drier climate, and he was advised to move to the Pasadena area. There, he fell in love with the beauty of the Arroyo Seco and built his home and studio. Years later, he fought to preserve the area from a new gas plant that was built by **Professor Thaddeus Lowe** and was belching out noxious fumes.

Judson was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* (August 1904) as saying, "The Lowe Gas Company has falsified and maligned the citizens of Garvanza. We don't want them here. The Arroyo Seco should be a public park instead of a public nuisance." Due in great part to his leadership, the gas plant was torn down, and soon after, Judson's studio



*Charlie Chaplin giving direction in sign to Granville Redmond on set of "Dog's Life," First National Pictures, 1918. Image courtesy of Jean Stern.*



William Lees Judson (1842–1928)

*The Bridge (Arroyo Seco)*, c. 1895

Oil on canvas 15" × 25"

Image courtesy of Judson Studios

became the **USC College of Fine Arts**. From 1896 to 1901 he served as an art professor at the **University of Southern California**, and in 1901 he became Dean of the College of Fine Arts. He remained Dean until his death in 1928. Judson is also credited as being one of the originators of the Arts and Crafts movement, in the Arroyo Seco, and in

1909, he co-founded **The Arroyo Guild for Fellow Craftsmen**.

The aesthetic philosophy of the international Arts and Crafts movement, which was based on natural beauty, simple forms, and craftsmanship, spread to the Arroyo Seco and inspired another prominent art leader, **Ernest A. Batchelder (1875–1957)**. Batchelder arrived in Pasadena





Joe Duncan Gleason (1881–1959)  
*Sonia Brand, Anaheim Orange & Lemon Association*  
 Lithograph



Herman W. Hansen (1854–1924)  
*Advance Brand, The Producers Fruit Company, c. 1890s*  
 Crocker Lithograph, San Francisco

from Nashua, New Hampshire in 1900 to teach art and was made director of the art department at **Throop Polytechnic Institute**, the predecessor of the **California Institute of Technology (CALTECH)**. In 1909 he and his wife, **Alice Coleman**, an accomplished musician and founder of the **Coleman Chamber Music Association**, designed and built their home on South Arroyo Boulevard. In their backyard, Batchelder constructed a kiln and began the business of creating hand-crafted art tiles inspired by medieval themes and natural flora. In 1910 his business became known as the **Batchelder Tile Co.** and was located on South Broadway in Downtown Los Angeles. Joining the movement in 1905 were architect brothers, **Charles and Henry Greene**, who designed many houses as grand-scale testaments to the philosophy of the Arts and Crafts movement. Most noteworthy is the **Gamble House**.

### *The Business of Farming—and the Need for Artists*

The original plan to make use of portions of Southern California as farmland, as stated in the California Colony of Indiana prospectus, was to irrigate and cultivate the acreage. Although some members of the Colony had been farmers in the Midwest and East Coast, Southern California's alluvial soil and semiarid climate posed agricultural challenges.

Both novice and experienced farmers had to learn how to work this unfamiliar land. Furthermore, the Colony's original idea of harvesting, packing, crating, and shipping produce to East Coast markets for commercial gains proved to be more complicated than expected.

In 1881 **Joseph Wallace**, decided to address these problems and built a cannery and packing plant on his ranch land, (in the area of today's Lincoln and Orange Avenues) which he named the **Pasadena Packing Company**, also known as the **Wallace Cannery**. In the first year, the company packed 10,000 cans of fruit and by 1884 production grew to 50,000 cans per year to be sold across the country. In September of 1885 the cannery burned down, prompting Wallace to build a larger and more productive plant.

Pasadena's burgeoning citrus industry became a catalyst for other farmers in surrounding communities. Soon packing houses cropped up in neighbouring towns. With the growth of market competition, artists were hired by lithography companies in Los Angeles and San Francisco to produce tantalizing labels to be pasted on the sides of crates. The more enticing the image, the more likely wholesalers would choose that brand.

Of the hundreds of artists who

worked on designing labels and the more than 10,000 various images produced for California's citrus industry, only three artists were ever permitted to include their signatures. These were **Duncan Gleason (1881–1959)**, **James G. Swinnerton (1875–1974)**, and **Herman W. Hansen (1854–1924)**, father of artist **Armin C. Hansen (1886–1957)**. Today, original crate labels by these artists are highly sought-after by collectors.

California-born Gleason created a set of citrus labels for the **Anaheim Orange and Lemon Association** depicting beautiful, healthy maidens believed to be the same model as well as his future wife. New York-based "Jimmy" Swinnerton, arguably history's first newspaper comic strip illustrator, (creator of "Little Jimmy"), was diagnosed with tuberculosis at the age of twenty-eight and told he had only two weeks to live. **William Randolph Hearst** was concerned about his favourite cartoonist's health, and put Swinnerton on a train to San Bernardino, California for the dry desert air. Inspired by his new surroundings and renewed health, Swinnerton became a desert landscape painter and associated with the group of western artists residing on "Artists Alley" in Alhambra. He lived an additional seventy years and died at the age of ninety-eight.





Artists Unknown

*Arroyo Brand (with Pasadena's Colorado Street Bridge)*

*Pasadena Orange Growers Association, c. 1920*

Lithograph



Frank Tenney Johnson (1874–1939)

*Summit Brand Orange Crate Label*

Western Lithograph Company

Herman Hansen was popular for his western genre paintings and worked for the **H.S. Crocker Litho Co.** of San Francisco from the mid-1880s through the late-1890s creating scenes that would hearken back to the spirit of the Old West. His subjects were typically of cowboys and horses in action, and he was known as the “Fredric Remington of the West Coast.”

Another recognized western artist was **Frank Tenney Johnson (1874–1939)** who was hired to create iconic images of the Sierra Nevada for fruit crate labels. Johnson had gained recognition as the “Master of Moonlight” for his nocturnal scenes depicting cowboys on horseback. He created several original oil paintings and sold them with their copyrights to **Western Lithograph** for **Summit Brand Oranges** of Redlands, California. (Johnson served as the fifteenth president of the California Art Club from 1935 to 1938.)

Southern California citrus farmers banded together to limit their financial risk and to increase their bargaining power with wholesale distributors. In 1893 the **Citrus Experiment Station** was created as a cooperative for orange growers, and three years later included lemon growers. By 1905 the group had expanded to represent 5,000 citrus farmers and was renamed the **California**

#### **Fruit Growers Exchange (now Sunkist).**

The lithographic process for making crate labels was the same method that was used for fine art printmaking—and resulted in vividly colourful, strong graphic imagery. The classic romantic period, from 1887 to 1920, represented California and the west as an idyllic world in which one could start a new life. Imagery of the sunny, pristine landscape and western way of life was certainly in the minds of East Coast consumers as they enjoyed a sweet, juicy California orange—and dreamed of coming out west. Southern California’s San Gabriel Valley, resting at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains, was soon to change, as its population expanded with maverick entrepreneurs, innovative thinkers, and many more creative artists. ☐

#### *Part II (of III) Notes:*

*For Part I of “How the San Gabriel Valley Inspired California Impressionism,” please refer to the Summer-Fall 2016 issue of the California Art Club Newsletter.*

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*Research sources for this article include: Art in California, Published by R. L. Bernier, San Francisco 1916; Plein Air*

*Painters of California: The Southland by Ruth Lilly Westphal, Published by Westphal, 1982; California Orange Box Labels by Gordon T. McClelland, Published by Hillcrest Press, 1985; Artists of the Era by Tom Spellman, President, Citrus Label Society, Published by Citrus Roots, July-August 2012 and by Voyageur Press, Inc., Stillwater, MN, 2005; The Rising Tide – The History of San Diego by Richard F. Pourade, Published by Union-Tribune Publishing Company, San Diego, 1967; Early Pasadena by Cedar Imboden Phillips and the Pasadena Museum of History, Published by Arcadia Publishing, 2008; Pasadena, California: Historical and Personal: A Complete History of the Indiana Colony (1917) by John Windell Wood, Reprint Published by Wentworth Press, 2016; History of Pasadena by Hiram Alvin Reid, Published by Pasadena History Company, 1895; A Southern California Paradise (in the Suburbs of Los Angeles), Edited and Published by Rev. R.W.C. Farnsworth, 1883; Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era (Americans and the California Dream) by Kevin Starr, Published by Oxford University Press, 1986; and Citrus Roots-Preserving Citrus Heritage Foundation.*





# CALIFORNIA ART CLUB NEWSLETTER

*Documenting California's Traditional Arts Heritage Since 1909*

## How the San Gabriel Valley Inspired California Impressionism and Lured Artists from across the Nation

### PART III OF III

*by Elaine Adams*

**W**HEN **WILLIAM WOLFSKILL (1798–1866)** LAUNCHED CALIFORNIA'S CITRUS INDUSTRY in 1849 from his Los Angeles ranch by selling lemons for a dollar each to gold miners in need of Vitamin C, it became evident that fortunes could grow on trees. Twenty-four years later in 1873, inspired by Wolfskill's success and reports of Southern California's Mediterranean climate, Midwesterners began colonizing the San Gabriel Valley with the intention of starting new lives as citrus growers. These early settlers met the challenges of building ranches, forming a community, learning how to work with alluvial soil, and developing local markets to sell their produce. Soon, the nation demanded citrus throughout the year. In order to satisfy a larger market, there was a need for rapid transportation to get the produce across the country, hence the importance of trains; and there was a need for competitive packaging, hence the importance of artists. Within a few years, trains arrived in Southern California—and with them came the artists.



Marion Kavanagh Wachtel (1876–1954)  
*Cottonwoods*, 1938  
Oil on canvas 30" × 40"  
Private Collection

### ***Railroads, Hotels, and an Economic Boom Come to Pasadena***

Although the **First Transcontinental Railroad** connected the east to the west in 1869 at Sacramento, it took another eight years until a continuous railroad line reached Los Angeles. (There was a small railroad built in 1869 by **Phineas Banning** that connected San Pedro Harbor with Los Angeles.) After tunneling through the Tehachapi Mountains, the **Southern Pacific Railway** was able to run its first train to Los Angeles on September 5, 1876, and thus, linked Southern California to the East Coast. With speedier transportation now possible, the **California Colony of Indiana** (incorporated as Pasadena in 1886) and their business cooperative, **San Gabriel Orange Grove Association**, recognized the advantages of delivering citrus by rail and promptly loaded their initial boxcar of oranges to travel east on that very first train departing from Los Angeles.





*The Raymond Hotel dominated the South Pasadena landscape, c. 1894*

Photo by Truman D. Keith

Courtesy of the South Pasadena Local History Images  
Collection, South Pasadena Public Library

Largely due to the romanticized images created by talented artists hired to help market California's oranges, these idyllic depictions reproduced on crates and sent across the country also succeeded in luring tourists to the Golden State.

With the extended rail system, visitors in search of perpetual sunshine could enter the San Gabriel Valley by first taking the train to Los Angeles and then, boarding

a morning stagecoach into Pasadena. An advertisement promoting the connecting stage appeared in the *Los Angeles Daily Herald* (publication dates, 1873–1876):

*The Pasadena Stage will leave the Cosmopolitan Hotel, North Main Street, Los Angeles, daily at 9 A.M., remaining in Pasadena for four hours, to give visitors an opportunity to see the country before returning.*

By 1880 Los Angeles' population was at 11,200 and nearby Pasadena recorded 391 residents. Word of the San Gabriel Valley's pristine beauty continued to spread, and wealthy Midwesterners and Easterners who were in search of new experiences and warmer winters came west to vacation in the area.

### *From Citrus Ranches to Luxury Hotels*

Pasadena's first hotel, **The Lake Vineyard House**, was built in 1880 and was located in an orange grove on South Marengo Avenue. According to **John Windell Wood**'s eyewitness account detailed in his 1917 publication, *Pasadena, California, Historical and Personal*, the hotel was "...too far away from traffic to encourage business." Consequently, the owner, **Isaac Banta**, purchased land in the hub of Pasadena on the corner of Colorado Street and Fair Oaks Avenue and built a new hotel, **The Los Angeles House**, a three-story frame structure which opened on July 1883. Three years later, The Los Angeles House was moved one block west to make room for the **First National Bank** building.

A civic centre was beginning to develop, and founding members of the Indiana Colony began recognizing the potential for higher profits in selling their land to developers, rather than in



Samuel Colman (1832–1920)

*Mount San Antonio (Mt. Baldy), San Gabriel Valley, c. winter 1887–88*

Oil on canvas 11 3/4" × 26 1/2"

Private collection





George Gardner Symons (1863–1930)

*San Gabriel Valley*

Oil on canvas 24" × 30"

Private collection

selling citrus to grocers. Twelve years after the original 100 families had settled in the San Gabriel Valley, tourists started to stream into Pasadena, soon changing the community's cultural makeup.

The first grand resort built to accommodate visitors was the **Royal Raymond**, better known as the Raymond Hotel or simply as The Raymond, which opened on November 17, 1886 on a hilltop referred to as "Bacon Hill." The location was selected for its magnificent views of the San Gabriel Mountains and seemingly endless valleys of citrus groves and vineyards. The 200-room Empire-style hotel was the vision of **Walter Raymond**, an entrepreneur from Boston who owned **Raymond & Whitcomb Travel Agency**. Walter Raymond was looking to expand his business by offering transcontinental tours to the west. His father, **Emmons Raymond**, a stockholder in Southern Pacific Railway, was happy to fund the project—a venture that also benefited Southern Pacific in terms of ticket sales. The tours were packaged as "Raymond's Vacation Excursions—A Trip to California" and departed by train from

Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

In June of 1886 Pasadena's local weekly paper, *Valley Union* reported that the Raymond Hotel anticipated 75,000 guests during the winter of 1887–1888. One of the most prominent artists to journey out west to the San Gabriel Valley during that winter season was **Samuel Colman (1831–1920)**, a second generation Hudson River School painter, and a full member of the **National Academy of Design**. Colman set out from New York and arrived in Pasadena as a tourist, and likely stayed at The Raymond when he painted his panoramic scene, *View from the Raymond Hotel*, (c. 1888; image not available). As an Easterner and landscape artist, Colman must have delighted in the area's sprawling vistas and moderate climate that were conducive to painting en plein air in the winter. His painting of *Mt. San Antonio, San Gabriel Valley* depicts a snow-capped peak, commonly known as "Mount Baldy," overlooking a dry valley—a contrast that would have certainly intrigued the New Yorker.

To accommodate Pasadena's rapid growth in winter tourism, additional



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SUMMER 2017

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Maynard Dixon (1875–1946)  
*Sunset Magazine*, October 1902  
 Published by Southern Pacific Company  
 Lithograph 23" × 19"  
 Purchase, Leonard A. Lauder Gift, 2015  
 Collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art



Hanson Puthuff (1875–1972)  
*Verdugo Canyon*  
 Oil on canvas 32" × 40"  
 The Irvine Museum Collection at the University of California, Irvine

hotels were built: **Hotel Green** (opened 1894), **La Vista del Arroyo Hotel** (opened 1882), **The Maryland** (opened 1903), and the **Hotel Wentworth** (opened 1907), which later reopened as **The Huntington Hotel** in 1914 after it was purchased by the railroad tycoon **Henry E. Huntington**. Many arrived as tourists and several returned later as new residents.

### *All Aboard!*

With the railways connecting the east to the west, travel across the country had become more convenient and comfortable—and adventure was just a ticket away. In 1890 the U.S. Census Bureau officially declared that the western frontier had come to its end. Although some Easterners may have still considered California as the “Wild West,” the state was attracting an influx of entrepreneurs, innovators, dreamers, and artists—all seeking new lives and exciting possibilities.

In 1898 the **Southern Pacific Transportation Company**, a subsidiary of Southern Pacific Railway, launched a

passenger magazine called *Sunset*, after the railroad’s premier train, *The Sunset Limited*. The publication helped spark a national wanderlust, and ultimately attracted passengers to rail travel. The magazine’s first edition promoted California, and featured an essay about Yosemite and the High Sierra. The copy was filled with glorious images and insightful travel tips and cultural references, such as Pasadena being “...the aristocratic residence town of Southern California...” This was quite an imposing description, given the town’s humble beginnings as the Indiana Colony of citrus ranchers just twenty-five years earlier!

Not to be outdone by the marketing success of Southern Pacific’s *Sunset* magazine, competitor **Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe** also enticed the nation to travel by publishing reproductions of beautiful paintings depicting the Southwest. Fine artists were commissioned to create picturesque, albeit slightly romanticized, images of the West, including scenes of the Grand Canyon, the Mojave Desert, and Arizona’s Petrified Forest, as well as

pueblos, native Indians, and the Pacific coast. These images appeared on train folders, calendars, travel brochures, and dining menus, while the original paintings were displayed at train depots and ticket windows. Thus was launched a competitive campaign to sell tickets for rail passage by promoting the scenic windows on the wonders of the West through visual art.

### *Artists, Westward Ho!*

The railroads were instrumental in promoting many artists’ careers—and in bringing many artists to California. In payment for paintings, artists were occasionally given rail passage, which many gladly accepted as a means to move out West.

Los Angeles in 1900 had grown to a population of 102,500, nearly ten-times the number from a decade earlier. The rapid growth also gave promise to artists of a budding livelihood. The first ten years of the twentieth century brought many artists from the Midwest and East Coast to the Los Angeles area and neighbouring San Gabriel Valley.



Wisconsin artist **Marion Kavanaugh (1870–1954)** accepted a commission from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway in 1903 to paint murals of western landscapes for the company's San Francisco ticket offices. In return, she was offered free train passage and decided to move to San Francisco and study with the renowned artist **William Keith (1838–1911)** who was known as the "Dean of California painters." It is believed that after Keith learned of Kavanaugh's plans to travel to Southern California, he suggested that she meet his friend and former pupil, **Elmer Wachtel (1864–1929)**, who was then living in the San Gabriel Valley. Marion and Elmer met, and the following year the couple were married in Chicago. Upon returning to California the Wachtels built their home in the northeast suburb of Los Angeles known as Mt. Washington, and later moved to Pasadena's Arroyo Seco in 1921.

Landscape artist **Hanson Puthuff (1875–1972)** arrived in 1903 from Denver and settled into the Eagle Rock area, east of Los Angeles and adjacent to

Pasadena. Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe commissioned him in the early 1920s to paint a series of Grand Canyon scenes. With his outgoing personality, Puthuff was instrumental in developing the local art community. Together with his close friends who also painted for the railroads and were likewise inspired by the scenery of the Southwest, they formed an informal association of artists called the **Garvanza Circle**, named after the small town of Garvanza located near the Arroyo Seco where this group of artists lived. The group included Elmer Wachtel who had been living in the area since 1882, **Carl Oscar Borg (1879–1947)** who arrived in 1903, **Fernand Lungren (1857–1932)** who also arrived in 1903, **Granville Redmond (1871–1931)** who arrived earlier in 1898, and **Maynard Dixon (1875–1946)** who, records show, seemed to pop in and out of Los Angeles as early as 1902.

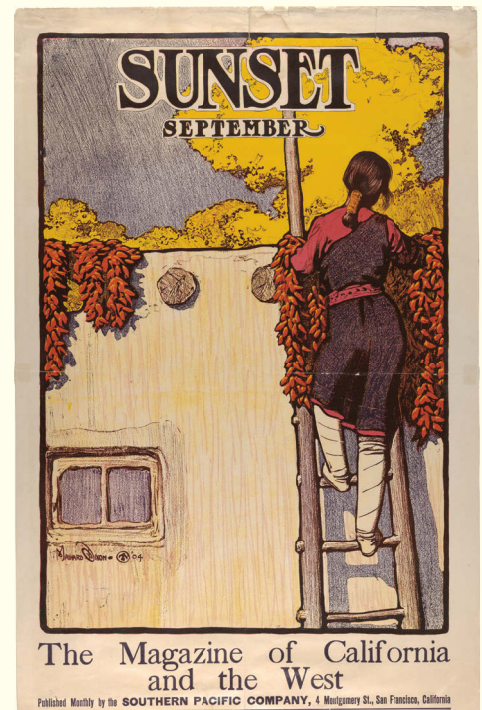
Originally from Fresno, California, Maynard Dixon was living in San Francisco when he accepted a commission from the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1902 to paint scenes of the Southwest,

as well as cover images for their *Sunset* magazine. First, he travelled south to Los Angeles to visit his good friend, the journalist and Indian rights activist, **Charles Fletcher Lummis (1859–1928)**, and then to meet with ethnographic Indian photographer **Frederick I. Monson**. Dixon accompanied Monson who was on his way to remote areas of Arizona to photograph the mesas and Hopi Tribe. Dixon returned to Los Angeles in 1905 to marry artist **Lillian West Tobey** on May 7 at Lummis' stone and adobe hacienda, *El Alisal*, located on the banks of the Arroyo Seco. Dixon was in San Francisco at the time of the great earthquake and fire of April 18, 1906, which destroyed his studio. After several weeks, he moved to Los Angeles for a few months to work as an illustrator for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which had also temporarily relocated its offices to Los Angeles. Here, Dixon lived near Lummis' home and the artists' colony that developed around Pasadena's Arroyo Seco.

An impressive list of other artists of note also found lucrative work thanks to the railroads. In 1916 **Edgar Payne (1833–1947)**



Carl Oscar Borg (1879–1947)  
*Evening Glory; San Gabriel*  
Oil on canvas 20" × 24"  
Private Collection  
Courtesy of Bonham's Auctioneers



Maynard Dixon (1875–1946)  
*Sunset Magazine*, September 1904  
Published by Southern Pacific Company  
Lithograph 26" × 17"  
Purchase, Leonard A. Lauder Gift, 2015  
Collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art





Exterior view of "El Alisal," the home of Charles F. Lummis, c. 1898–1910  
 Photographed by Charles C. Pierce (1861–1946)  
 Collection of California Historical Society



John Frost (1890–1937)  
*San Gabriel Valley*, 1923  
 Oil on canvas 30" × 36"  
 Crocker Art Museum, Melza and Ted Barr Collection, 2011.40

was commissioned by Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe to paint scenes of the Southwest. For the next four months, he and his family, which included his wife, artist **Elsie Palmer Payne (1884–1971)** and their three-year-old daughter, **Evelyn**, travelled to Canyon de Chelly where Payne captured on canvas views of towering spires and cliff walls. In 1920 the family moved to Los Angeles where they settled, and in 1926 Edgar Payne became the eighth president of the **California Art Club**.

With all these talents living in the same area, it was inevitable that art organizations of like-minded interests would form. Hanson Puthuff's home and studio was a popular meeting place for the **Painters' Club** which began in 1906. By 1909 the Painters Club disbanded and re-grouped as the **California Art Club**, in particular to open membership to sculptors and women artists. The California Art Club continues into the 21st century and has grown in stature and significance as a leader in the contemporary-traditional art movement.

### *In Search of the Old West*

The rugged terrain and views of the San Gabriel Mountains inspired a sense of nostalgia for the Old West and attracted an enclave of New York illustrators who were longing for that mythic image of freedom-loving cowboys on the open range. The San Gabriel Valley town of Alhambra with its mountain vistas, quiet streams, and proximity to the Arroyo Seco became an ideal setting for a new western experience that would inspire artists to move to the area, which eventually became known as "Artists' Alley."

The first to move west to a small street named Champion Place in Alhambra was **Victor Clyde Forsythe (1885–1962)** in 1922. Forsythe was followed by **Frank Tenney Johnson (1874–1949)** in 1926, and in the same year **Jack Wilkinson Smith (1873–1949)** arrived. New York sculptor **Eli Harvey** appeared in 1928, and in 1929, **Norman Rockwell (1894–1978)** began traveling from New York to spend his summers on Champion Place.

### *Galleries Emerge onto the Art Scene*

Displaying fine art collections throughout halls and public spaces in the luxury hotels of London, Paris, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco was



a standard practice to underscore the distinctive qualities of these hotels, in addition to delighting guests. Adhering to this model, the early finer hotels of Pasadena and Los Angeles also adorned their halls with beautiful works of art. Art dealers were quick to recognize the business potential of catering to tourists by offering local landscape paintings created by local artists. With the influx of outstanding artists moving to Southern California, dealers in art and antiques soon set up galleries in hotels and surrounding areas to offer one-of-a-kind original paintings espousing the beauty of the local scenery to wealthy tourists who were eager to return home with souvenirs of their trips out West. Paintings depicting images of California scenery made their way into art collections across the country. Among the many establishments in the first quarter of the twentieth century in Southern California's art scene were: **Blanchard Gallery** located in **Hotel Ivins**; **Dalzell Hatfield Gallery** located in the **Ambassador Hotel**; **Hotel Green Gallery** in Pasadena; **Battey Gallery**, **John Bentz Gallery**; **Cannell and Chaffin Galleries**, **Steckel Galleries**; **Kanst Gallery** (opened 1911) on 8th and Hill Streets; **Stendahl Galleries** in Ambassador Hotel (Stendahl continues in operation to this day as a private art gallery in Hollywood).

In 1923 the eleven-story and 1500-room **Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel** opened in downtown Los Angeles across from Pershing Square and was touted as the grandest hotel west of Chicago. At the opening gala, 3,000 guests were in attendance, including luminaries in the burgeoning Hollywood motion picture industry such as **Jack Warner**, **Cecil B. DeMille**, **Mary Pickford**, **Gloria Swanson**, **Theda Bara**, and starlet **Myrna Loy**. The glamorous event was in effect Los Angeles' cultural coming-out party. The ornate Italian/Spanish Renaissance-style hotel was described by the *Los Angeles Times* as "luxury heaped upon luxury" (*LA Times*, October 2, 1923). Accessed from the hotel's Fifth Street entrance was the **Biltmore Art Salon**, which was founded by local western artists, Victor Clyde Forsythe and Frank Tenney Johnson, to promote local artists.



Jean Mannheim (1863–1945)  
*Mt. Lowe from the Foothill Boulevard*, c. 1926  
 Oil on canvas 54" × 42.5"  
 Private collection

### *The Lure of the Arroyo*

Many an artist chose to settle near that shallow canyon filled with native chaparral that cuts through the western edge of Pasadena, the visually rich and rustic Arroyo Seco. Indiana Colony eyewitness, John Windell Wood, mellifluously described the artists' attraction to the Arroyo Seco in his 1917 publication, *Pasadena, California, Historical and Personal*:

*"Sturdy sycamores spread their giant arms and bow in neighbourly greeting*

*to live oak, alder, and willow that form these charming glades. On the rugged arroyo banks opportunity is offered for attractive arboreal effects in the hands of the landscape artist."*

Prussian-born artist **Jean Mannheim (1863–1945)** arrived in Pasadena in 1905 and chose to reside on Arroyo Boulevard. Just a few doors south lived artist **Ernest A. Batchelder (1875–1957)**, a leader in the American Arts and Crafts Movement and maker of the Batchelder Tiles. Mannheim was educated in Paris





William Wendt (1865–1946)

*Quiet Brook*, 1923

Oil on canvas 30" × 36"

Private collection



Franz A. Bischoff (1864–1929)

*The Arroyo Seco, Pasadena*, c. 1918

Oil on canvas 24" × 40"

Crocker Art Museum, Melza and Ted Barr Collection, 2009.19

at the **Académie Delécluse**, **Académie Colorosi**, and at the **Académie Julian** where he studied under **William A. Bouguereau (1825–1905)**. In England, Mannheim also received training from

**Sir Frank Brangwyn (1867–1956)**. In 1912 Mannheim founded the **Stickney Memorial School of Fine Arts** in Pasadena at **Stickney Hall** located on the corner of Fair Oaks and Lincoln

Avenues where he served as the school's first director.

Mannheim's friend and fellow artist **Channel Pickering "C.P." Townsley (1867–1921)** arrived in Pasadena in 1914 and immediately became the director of both the **Stickney Memorial School** and **Otis Art Institute** in downtown Los Angeles. Townsley's experience as an art school administrator was invaluable to the area's formation of fine art education. He had managed the **Shinnecock School** founded by **William Merritt Chase (1849–1916)** on Long Island and, in England, Mannheim founded the **London School of Art** where he served as director and instructor with Frank Brangwyn.

The practice of outdoor landscape painting, now known as "Plein Air," was the main attraction for art studies in Southern California, made additionally enticing due to the moderate winters. An advertisement promoting the Stickney School appeared in the February 1916 issue of the monthly art magazine, *The International Studio*:

*A new School offering exceptional opportunities for Art Study in the West. Special classes in Painting from the Landscape through the winter. For further particulars apply to C. P. Townsley, Director.* (Vol. LVII, published by John Lane Company, New York)

Arriving from Chicago was the German-born artist **William Wendt (1865–1946)** and his friend, artist **George Gardner Symons (1862–1930)**. Together, they travelled on a number of painting trips to California between 1896 and 1904. Soon after Wendt married sculptor **Julia Braken (1870–1942)** in Chicago in 1906, they permanently moved to California and lived just south of the Arroyo Seco on Sichel Street near Pasadena Avenue. The couple quickly became active members of the local art community. Julia taught at the Otis Art Institute, and together with her husband, they were instrumental in the founding of the **California Art Club**. William Wendt served as the second and fourth president of the California Art Club (1911–14 and 1917–18).

In 1908 the Austrian-born **Franz A. Bischoff (1864–1929)** moved to Pasadena and built a grand Italian Renaissance-



style home and studio along the banks of the Arroyo Seco. According to art critic **Antony Anderson's** article that appeared in the December 12, 1909 issue of the *Los Angeles Times*, The California Art Club was founded by former members of the Painters Club, artist **Charles Percy Austin (1883–1948)** as corresponding secretary, and banker and part-time artist **Frank Rensselear Liddell (1864–1923)** as the organization's first president, and the following month, the first recorded meeting was held on Saturday evening, January 5, 1910, at the home and studio of Franz Bischoff. This momentous meeting launched the beginnings of the most influential arts organization to play a role in shaping the cultural face of Los Angeles in the years to come.

Two additional noteworthy artists who chose to reside in the Arroyo Seco colony were **Alson S. Clark (1876–1949)** and **Orrin A. White (1883–1969)**. Alson Clark's home was on Wotkyns Drive overlooking the Arroyo from the east, and Orrin White's home was on Linda Vista Avenue overlooking the opposite side of the Arroyo from the west.

Alson Clark's impressive educational credentials included art studies at the Chicago Art Institute at the age of fourteen, continued with training in New York under William Merritt Chase and at the Art Students League, the Académie Julian and at Académie Carmen with **James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903)** in Paris. Clark served in the U.S.

**Army** during World War I as an aerial photographer, which required him to lean over an open cockpit of an F2A Flying Boat to shoot reconnaissance photos of battlefields. The experience caused him to lose hearing in his left ear. He was advised that if he were to live in a warm climate, he may be able to recover. After the war, he and his wife, **Medora**, decided to move to Pasadena in 1919 where the climate was not only agreeable, but the area was teeming with artists, assuring them an instant social life. Astonishingly, Clark's hearing gradually recovered and his painting life was invigorated. His dear friend, the San Gabriel-born artist **Guy Rose (1867–1925)**, with whom Clark painted in Giverny, France, lived nearby on La Loma Road along the Arroyo Seco. At the time, Rose was director of the



Alson S. Clark (1876–1949)  
*Late Afternoon, Arroyo Seco, 1927*  
 Oil on canvas 36" × 46"  
 Petersen Galleries Archives  
 The Irvine Museum Collection at the University of California, Irvine

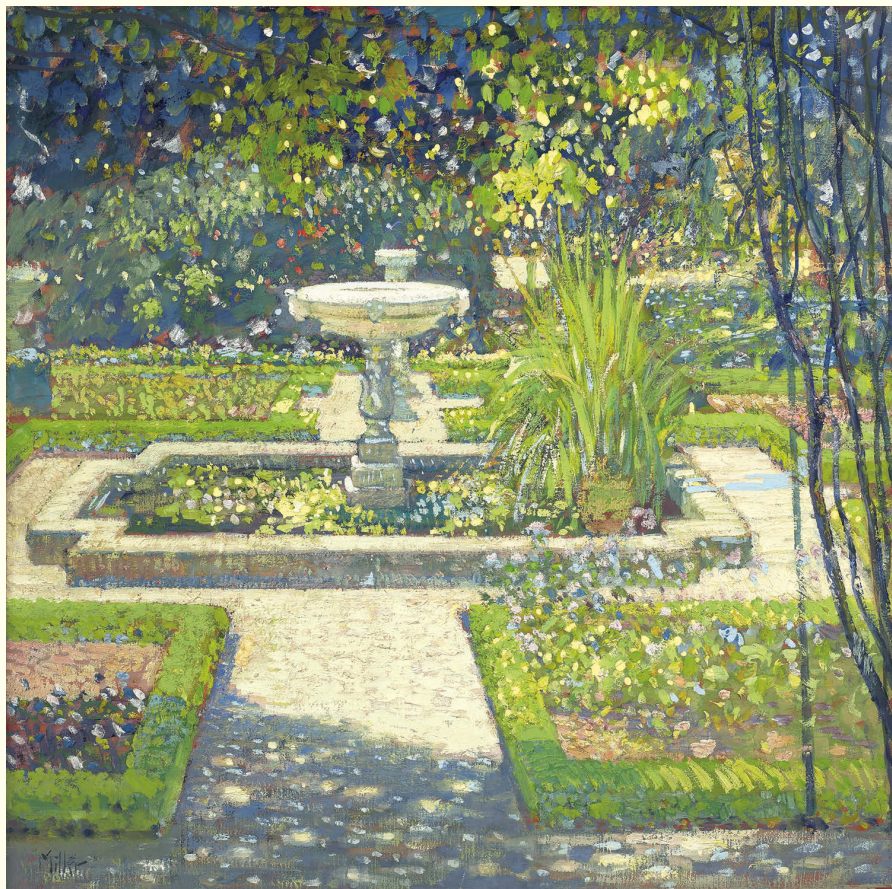


Orrin White (1883–1969)  
*Arroyo Seco, Pasadena, c. 1922*  
 Oil on canvas 25" × 30"  
 Gift of Watkins Family  
 Collection of La Casita del Arroyo, Pasadena





Left to right: Channel Pickering Townsley, Richard E. Miller, and Benjamin C. Brown in the Fenyes Mansion gardens, 1917.  
Courtesy of Pasadena Museum of History, FCP.40.2



Richard E. Miller (1875–1943)  
*Dappled Light (Mrs. Fenyes Garden)*, c. 1917  
Oil on canvas 34" × 33"  
Courtesy of Pasadena Museum of History, PHS3-74

Stickney Memorial School of Art and encouraged Clark to join the faculty. After Rose suffered a debilitating stroke in 1921, Clark took the position as director.

Parisian-trained Impressionist **John Frost (1890–1937)** moved from New York to Pasadena in 1919 seeking a drier climate to help battle his tuberculosis. He lived together with his parents on South Madison Avenue. His renowned artist-father **A. B. Frost (1851–1928)** was good friends with Guy Rose and together the three would often go on painting trips.

Another artist who called the Arroyo home was Orrin White who arrived from Illinois in 1912. During World War I White served in the U.S. Army along with artists **Charles P. Kilgore (1889–1979)** and **Grant Wood (1891–1942)** in the newly created Expeditionary Force Camouflage Division in Washington D.C. As *camoufleurs*, the artists were responsible for camouflaging heavy artillery with painted patterns and colours to blend into the environments of surrounding battlefields. Later, in 1933,

the three held an exhibition together at **Younkers Department Store** in downtown Des Moines, Iowa.

### *Cultivating a Creative Community in Pasadena: Then and Now*

In 1905 New York socialites **Eva Scott Fenyes and Dr. Adalbert Fenyes** moved to their Pasadena Beaux Arts mansion on Orange Grove Boulevard designed by noted architect **Robert D. Farquhar**. Born to wealthy parents, Eva Scott, was their only child and received a formal education that included studying art and architecture on the Grand Tour through Europe and Egypt. With Eva Fenyes' interest in art and culture, the Fenyes Mansion quickly became a lively gathering place for local artists as well as prominent writers, musicians, scientists, and Hollywood film celebrities. She offered her artist-friends month-long stays at

her home and delighted in hosting Friday afternoon salons, to which she invited intellectually-stimulating guests such as Charles Lummis, William Keith, Benjamin Chambers Brown, Carl Oscar Borg, **Richard E. Miller (1875–1943)**, and William Merritt Chase. Eva Fenyes encouraged her wealthy friends to collect works by local artists and support the burgeoning art community. In 1970 the Fenyes Mansion became the **Pasadena Museum of History**, which also houses the **Pasadena Historical Society** (founded in 1924).

Today, through the auspices of the California Art Club and its outreach through its various chapters, fellowship among artists and patrons continues. In the twenty-first century, the organization is able to reap the benefits sown by the founding and early members of the California Art Club and their adherence to academic traditions and appreciation for natural beauty. In addition, with Los Angeles County's undeniable population expansion,



currently more than 4 million people, the Club's artists are compelled to document local urban culture as an important part of the contemporary art language.

Notwithstanding, the California Art Club's contemporary-traditional artists remain inspired by the natural environment and are able to express their feelings through profound and realistic imagery. As the birthplace of the California Art Club and California Impressionism, the Arroyo Seco and the San Gabriel Mountains, as well as surrounding landscapes, the Pacific Ocean, and deserts continue to excite artists and stir their emotions into creating art, which they can do outdoors in sunshine throughout the year.

Antony Anderson regaled in his 1916 essay, *Six Landscape Painters of Southern California*, predicting the future of art in the Los Angeles area:

*California the graveyard of talent? It does not seem so to me. Rather, here lies talent's richest and most nourishing soil, below its brightest sun and its clearest skies. That soil is no longer fallow—it has begun to germinate—and oh, the signs of spring!* ■



Benjamin Chambers Brown (1865-1942)

*Blossom Time; San Gabriels*

Oil on canvas 18" × 24"

Courtesy of California Art Company, LLC

#### *Part III (of III) Notes:*

**Elaine Adams** is an author and public speaker on topics relating to fine arts and aesthetics, and is Editor-in-Chief of the California Art Club Newsletter.

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The author wishes to thank **Jean Stern** and **Joan Irvine Smith** for documenting the history of California Impressionism and preserving magnificent examples of the genre's artwork; **William Horton** for sharing his research and enthusiasm for California art history; **John Hazeltine** for creating the invaluable online art research resource, Traditional Fine Arts Organization for their extensive and available art history research material; and **Eric Merrell** for his work in compiling the historic records of the California Art Club.