

History in Art Collection

Frontier Community College's History in Art is an extraordinary collection of art displaying eight oil paintings each with its own audio recording. Dedicated on August 17, 2006, in collaboration with FCC's 30th anniversary, the History in Art: A Frontier Collection is housed in lobby of the Learning Resource Center.

Four years ago when FCC's Learning Resource Center was completed, the late Bob Robinson entertained an idea of adding an inspiring art display in the lobby through a grant from the B. Earl Puckett Foundation. Former FCC President Dr. Mike Dreith was elated with the idea and began planning. Judith Puckett, Wayne County's local historian and FCC's humanities instructor, was asked to do the research for significant periods of local history. Freelance artist Eric Bryant of Carmi, Illinois, was chosen to do the illustration through oil painting.

The public is invited to stop by and see for themselves the outstanding collection of history in art. The Learning Resource Center is open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and on Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



B. Earl Puckett: Born in 1897, this native of Wayne County left teaching and banking for retail merchandising. His innovative management and promotional techniques at the Allied Corporation brought national recognition and personal wealth by the 1930s. Major oil investments in Wayne County added to a prosperity he generously shared by supporting numerous local improvements. The Puckett Foundation continues his legacy through significant donations for scholarships and community and county civic projects.



Bradley #1 Oil Well: The Pure Oil Company produced the first successful oil well north of Geff on March, 1937, ushering in an unprecedented "boom" of risk and success that pulled the local economy through the Great Depression. Joining manufacturing and agriculture, oil became the third key industry and brought increased population, business growth, residential expansion, and pivotal civic improvements during next thirty years. Independent producers or "wildcatters" played a dominant role in the long-term production.



William E. Borah: Born to a pioneering family on a farm in Jasper township, Wayne County, in 1865, young Borah left at age 18 to practice law in Kansas. He settled in Idaho, married the governor's daughter, and was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1906, the first of five terms. A strong isolationist and one of the U.S. Senate's greatest orators, he was known for his political independence and leadership. The "Lion of Idaho" and "the conscience of the Republic," Borah is memorialized in a statue in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.



Southern Railroad Depot, Fairfield, Illinois:

The arrival of the railroad in southeastern Illinois in 1870 was a social, cultural, and economic turning point. Farming and manufacturing grew from expanded markets, passenger service increased cultural contacts and lessened isolation, and area businesses expanded for increasingly diverse customers. Railroad service, symbolized by the depots, remained a key factor in community progress until the 1950s.



Julia Maria White and Jacquilineh Q.

Rapp: Born in Ohio, Julia White began teaching in Wayne County in 1853. When her husband was critically injured in the Civil War, she braved a lone journey to Mississippi to save him. She taught school for 60 years. In 1950 the Illinois State Historical Society honored her dedication and pioneering contributions to Illinois history. A young widow with an infant, Jacquilineh Rapp in 1865 became the first woman in Southern Illinois to operate her own business independently. Through her devotion and business sense, the Rapp general store in Jeffersonville became the financial and moral center of the community.



Olive Branch School: This "Little Red Schoolhouse" was donated and moved from its original site on the Burnt Prairie road to the Fairfield City Park in 1966 where it was restored. Built in 1931, Olive Branch is the best remaining example of the more than 150 one-room schools that from the 1850s onward provided the "three R's" of early education. Economic changes, the school bus, and improved roads supported school consolidation, ending a century of country school experiences.



George Flower and Morris Birkbeck:

These native Englishmen arrived in the Illinois territory in 1817 and settled in Edwards County, founding Albion and Wanborough. Birkbeck's writings, published widely, encouraged immigrants to come to the prairie lands of the "Middle West". Their English settlement provided an early cultural and social influence throughout the region. Both men created farming techniques suitable to the prairie soil and vital to economic success. Flower was pivotal in the successful campaign to keep Illinois free of slavery.



George Rogers Clark: In February, 1779, as the colonists fought for independence from England, Clark and his band of Kentuckians marched across the wilderness of Illinois in horrific weather conditions. Crossing flooded land by a still-disputed route that included Wayne or Clay counties, the small band surprised and defeated the larger British forces at Vincennes. Clark's legendary leadership qualities and his men's fierce loyalty and fighting skills drove the British from the Ohio Valley, paving the way for the future settling of the western territories.



FCC's History in Art

Dedicated August 17, 2006

Housed in the Learning Resource Center