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Perspective on Art and Community A Personal Odyssey

by Clara Wolfard





Clara Wolfard. (collection of the author)

Author's note: This article is extracted from a larger manuscript of Clara Wolfard's reminiscences of the art world, Corn Hill and the neighborhood around North Goodman Street where she and her husband Teddy maintained an art gallery. Ms. Wolfard lives at Valley Manor in Rochester.

Front Cover:

The old building that once housed Humphrey's Bookstore from 1902, then the Wolfard Gallery. Next door is the Bicknell House, then the oldest house in the city. Woodcut by Norman Kent. (collection of the author)

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A Perspective On Art and Community

Clara Louise Trowbridge was taken almost immediately with Trijinko “Teddy” Wolfard, a Dutch immigrant, when she was introduced by a friend in 1934. A senior English major at the University of Chicago, she fell in love and married him in 1934. She worked writing promotional letters for Scott Foresman Company while Teddy worked in a Dutch-owned furniture store. Together they saved \$2,000 in two years. Despite the Depression, living two years in an apartment fashioned from the second floor of her parents home allowed the couple to save \$2,000 for their dream to own a business of their own.

Putting a \$100 downpayment on a brand new ruby red, silver-trimmed Chevrolet, the two set out on a trip eastward through Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and into New York. Clara took careful notes. She writes, I “saw no city of particular promise, until we reached Rochester, New York which I noted had a viable downtown Main Street, some well-known industries such as Eastman Kodak Company, and a long handsome street lined with deep lawns, a canopy of trees, and impressive houses. A possibility,” she noted.

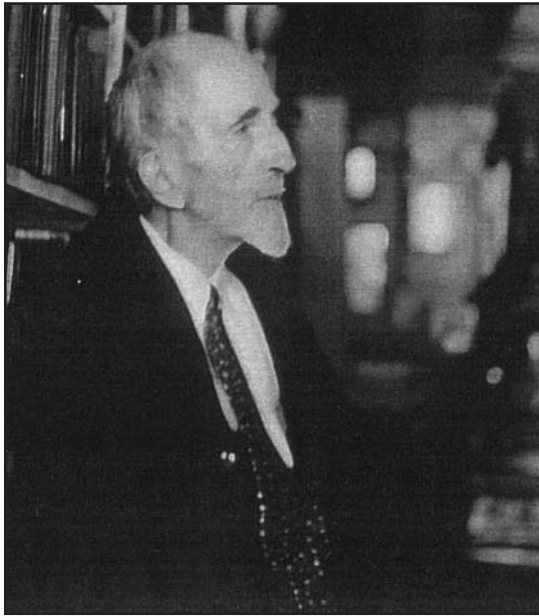
Then the couple traveled on to Vermont where they fell in love with Montpelier. Query letters to the Chamber of Commerce there, however, were discouraging as they learned the town was seasonal and dependent on granite-mining and skiing. Besides, a friend told Teddy the smug New England town would never accept a foreigner as a permanent resident. And so, Clara noted, “Only one possibility was left, Rochester, New York.”

The couple’s best man put them in touch with the friend of a friend of a friend who put them in the hands of Fritz Haupt of Case-Hoyt Printing Company. Guided by Haupt, Teddy met George P. Humphrey, described by Teddy as an old bookman who wanted to sell his entire store full of books for a flat \$400. The rent on the store was only \$40 a month and here the reminiscence of two neighborhoods and the art gallery through which they are viewed, begins.

I [Clara] initiated a correspondence with the retiring bookman which resulted in a firm agreement that we would buy out the books and come to claim our ownership in the fall. Our decision to take this step was rash indeed. Not only was our collateral only a shoestring, but we were devoid of business experience and naive to the extreme. Rochester knew nothing of us and we nothing of it.

In the fall of 1940 we took over the bookstore and moved from

Chicago to Rochester in an open moving truck covered with a blanket that flapped in the wind as the Chevrolet swayed this way and that along the highway. We made our way along Route 33 into the city, under the railroad bridge down West Main Street to Broad Street and on to number 67 Spring Street in Corn Hill. Tired and irritated with a trailer that would not easily park on the narrow street, we climbed out of the car and stared at their new business site. Before us flush with the walk was a flat-faced, three-storied 1821 frame building of worn green color with shallow shingled roof. On the lowest floor two smudgy picture windows a foot above the pavement balanced each other on either side of a set-back sunken entrance, dark-shadowed under its protecting canopy. We descended the two cement stairs to the door.



George P. Humphrey in the natural light of his bookstore in Corn Hill. (collection of the author)

The Bookman

We pushed open the loose-hinged rust-colored door and were almost blinded by the contrast between the outdoor brightness and this dark, seemingly empty, space within. The silence was eerie. Gradually, how-

ever, as our eyes became adjusted to the dark, I saw that the space was so overfilled with books and bookcases and the weight and odor of must and dust that the sun could have found little empty space into which to penetrate. But wait! A bit of light over in a far corner at the front of the shop directed our eyes to a small partially-blocked clearing beside a cluttered unlit fireplace where two men sat genially sipping from squat mugs. Upon our entry the older of the two men arose slowly to greet us while the dark-haired man slipped silently around us and out the door.

The old man was George Humphrey, who was about to sell us his stock of used books and release to us for rental the ground floor of this historic building. 'Ol Humphrey', was a tradition in Rochester, and, indeed, in the bibliophile world. Forty years in business had established him as an astute expert in rare books. And his picturesqueness that Teddy had told me about, I now saw, was an integral part of his renown.

The old gentleman came towards us slowly. He was lean and straight-backed, but his feet clad in soft loafers shuffled along the bare floor. He leaned lightly on a slender cane made from a gnarled tree limb. He had an aesthetic-looking British face, long large-eared, thin-lipped, and brought to a distinctive point at the chin by a long slim nose and a neat grey goatee matching in color the spare hair on the back of his head. There was a black patch over his left eye which we learned later hid an increasingly blinding dropped eyelid present at birth. He looked comfortably at home in his shop, dressed informally in a grey wool cardigan over loose trousers, rendered sedate by a white shirt and neat print tie.

He extended a long-fingered almost unveined pale hand to each of us in turn. His good eye seemed to penetrate into the depth of our characters. The next day we paid \$400 and George Humphrey, represented by his lawyer brother, signed over the bookstore, and tucking his trademark green canvas satchel under his arm, he left with his brother.

Enthusiastically, we opened the door of the store wide, letting in a breath of fresh air and a sliver of sun, and began to tackle the job of gradually disposing of the formidable accumulation of books. Clearing two oblong tables from the front of the store, we set them out on the sidewalk in front of the picture windows. On these we placed some selected books which we priced on the one table at ten cents each and on the second at 25 cents. The drinking mugs of the two cronies were used as coin receivers.

A few workers from the area out on their noon hour were the first to spot our tables and when they had passed we were pleased to find coins totaling one dollar in the mugs. Encouraged by this attention, we continued the sidewalk sale day after day, replacing sold volumes with new selections.

Housewives kept coming in with market baskets of unwanted books which they hoped to sell and thereby gain some pocket money. Sensing the length of Mr. Humphrey's largess in accommodating these vendors, we too filled their pockets with fifty cents or a dollar and added the purchased books to the tables. On one occasion a woman was exiting the door empty handed when old George came by on his habitual daily stroll carrying his green canvas bag, half full with treasures from the Salvation Army.

"How much did you pay for the lot?" he asked.

"One dollar," we replied.

Presenting us with a dollar bill from his pocket, he extracted one book from the basket.

"Do you know how much this one book is worth?" he announced rhetorically. "At least \$25.00- a first edition!"

As he left he warned, "Don't clean too much. You'll spoil the atmosphere."

We moved from our Mt. Hope Avenue guest house to a \$35 a month apartment in an old Victorian home. The old living room was converted by the landlord into a kitchen with a small stove and a row of cupboards. A worn maple bed held a sagging mattress and a few overstuffed chairs passed for a living room. A single window looked out on the back alley.

We continued with our upheaval, freeing section after section of book shelving. The task, however, was becoming ever more gruesome as we reached farther into the mass of decades-untouched shelving. The release of a book from its hibernation brought with it a penetration of dust, which we tried to unleash by clapping book against book with resounding vigor before carrying the books outdoors for sale.

Before the end of October we had cleared all of the ceiling-high, shoulder-to shoulder bookcases. Teddy got out his brushes and set to work painting the walls and bookshelves. It was time also to obtain needed utilities, equipment, and supplies. We were utterly unschooled in Rochester's resources. Our friend Fritz Haupt recommended Siebert's for a new oil heater. The Rochester Gas & Electric Company installed some new electrical outlets and sold us more up-to-date ceiling lighting, Rochester Telephone obliged with yellow and white page listings. Fritz recommended Bournes for office supplies, Sibley's for window display cloths, and Sloan's for hardware.

The setup of our store was progressing. The picture windows scrubbed down inside and out, the bookcases weeded to a minimum, there was now a clear view to the very back of the store. The heirloom marble fireplace gleamed, naked, behind its left-front picture window. Workmen had come to install new light fixtures and plugs. Gift items we

had ordered in Chicago at the huge Merchandise Mart to supplement the goods we had brought with us had arrived.

A student at Mechanics Institute [now Rochester Institute of Technology] down the street built us a triple-decked island display counter for the middle of the store and fashioned a board sign on which Teddy boldly lettered WOLFARD'S BOOKS/FINE ARTS to hang outside the door. The Levine Brothers were delighted to find a new client and cut us a ream of stationery bearing as letterhead our trade name in Old English script and a woodcut impression of our ancient building from the original block cut by Norman Kent in 1933 which we had inherited.

How light-heartedly all this was done, for we had gotten out our record player and filled the room with the rhythm of symphonic recordings as we worked. Apparently passers-by could also hear the sound, for many a nose was pressed against our newly washed windows to see what was going on in our bright empty space.

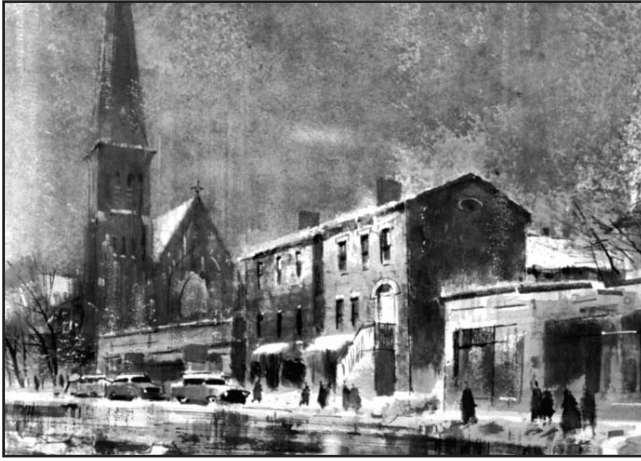
None of the nose-pressers ventured inside to meet us or disturb our concentrated occupation, until one morning a young man, seemingly in his twenties, unhesitatingly descended the cement stairs and came through the door carrying a flat parcel. He introduced himself as Tom McMillan. He lived with his mother, a social service worker, at the west end of Spring Street. He was a personable young man whose brown hair had partially receded from his forehead, but whose amiable face made us take to him immediately. With a smile and a bit of light-hearted but frank self-deprecation, he explained that he had heard our classical records from outdoors and, noting our love of music, he had had a brain storm that he could make some needed money for the struggling family by thinning his collection of famous-singer records. So engaging was Tom's jovial 'openness' that we bought the records under his arm. From then on variety flavored our daily concert.

By Thanksgiving almost everything was in readiness of our public debut. We filled the central island with goods ordered and shipped from Chicago, the front tables with art books from publishers in New York City, and the repainted shelves with choice books we had retained.

The downtown stores were already dressing their windows for the Christmas season. Having no experience in this current business practice, this jump into commercialism a full month before the actual holiday- and a holy one at that- seemed inordinate to us. However 'when in Rome... do as the Jones' do.' We decided to create a window display reminiscent of the Olde Curiosity Shoppe of Dickens' lore.

We transformed the picture windows into paned squares with cross-strips of black tape and drifted each pane with fluffed-cotton snow.

Behind this Dickens effect we displayed, on red-velvet carpeted window shelves, our best ceramics, glass, shining copper, and pictures. As a background we played another of Tom McMillan's records of Christmas carols and songs from other countries.



Spring Street by Ralph Avery. (collection of the author)

Spring Street

Our opening right after Thanksgiving was no great shakes monetarily- after all, our unadvertised specialized merchandise displayed on a back street could hardly compete with the festively-displayed clothes and toys in the downtown department stores so eagerly being grabbed up by the Christmas gift-givers.

However, our display was the most cheerful spot on Spring Street, and it did attract some interested followers.

One of these was a middle-aged woman named Rose Posner who owned and operated a residential hotel on Fitzhugh Street not far from our store. She was tall and bouncy and carried with her a chatty, ironic cheerfulness which was refreshing. Our store seemed to be one of her favorite topics of gossip and many of the sojourners at her hotel were referred our way as a 'must see' in Rochester.

Another customer was a distinguished-looking man in a business suit who, noting our musical concert and the aura of culture emanating from the store, stopped one bright morning outside our door behind which

Teddy stood contentedly viewing his domain. The gentleman drew forth a small book from under his armpit and, motioning Teddy to step outside, read aloud a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson. Both my husband and the reader who, we learned later, was a lawyer living in the neighborhood whose name was Henry Buell, were so pleased with this first encounter that many a morning thereafter on his way to court Teddy's new friend continued his delightful readings.

Fortunately the local newspapers gave us some complementary publicity. Howard Hosmer wrote up a story about our new enterprise in the *Democrat & Chronicle*, and the art critic for the *Times Union*, Virginia Jeffrey Smith, commended us for our artistry.

In this, our semi-busy first Christmas-shopping season, Teddy and I had time to become better acquainted with our fellow tradesmen who were conducting private businesses on this back street two blocks south of Main Street.

Spring Street reached from Exchange Street to Clarissa, but all the businesses of the area were located in this one block on both sides of the street from Fitzhugh to South Plymouth. They were all small businesses whose owners, we learned as time went on, were a mixed bag of 'characters' as, no doubt, Teddy and I were too.

Our building, No. 67, and the one on our right at No. 63 were twins built in 1821 by the early settler Bicknell family. Though identical in architecture, No. 63 was the most elegant sibling. Its upper floor windows were crowned with key-stones and an outdoor staircase led to a grand fan-topped door on the second floor. Instead of our dark green color the building was painted a rosy pink. No.63 Spring Street was taken over in Prohibition days, in the early 1930s, by a young entrepreneur named Jack Foran who defied the law to take advantage of the bonanza offered by die-hard drinkers and rebellious youth for forbidden liquor. Jack smuggled the beer and other stronger contraband from unprohibited Canada across Lake Ontario to Rochester and set up his bar in the first floor (exactly like ours at No. 67) of the building. Apparently his surreptitious business flourished on this back-street business block, fairly immune from Federal vigilance, for when we arrived at No. 67 after the repeal of Prohibition the "House of Foran" not only still had enthusiastic patronage in its bar, but a full-scale bistro-like restaurant had been opened on the more respectable second floor. Many local politicians who patronized the intimate and handy stores on Spring Street, and many of the students from Mechanics Institute a block away were its night-time customers in both bistro and bar.

Above location and ambiance, the principal drawing card to the 'House of Foran' was the proprietor- Jack Foran himself. Over six feet

tall, muscular and handsome, dandily-groomed, florid of speech, full of bonhomie, political savvy, and wise-cracks, Jack was the talk of the press, the entertainment of the evening, and the killer of the ladies.

To the East of Jack Foran, another 'character' popular with the politicians reigned in Bohemian informality. He was Louis Jacobson, the owner of one of Rochester's best quality meat markets. Louis was short and stocky, always smiling and enthusiastically on hand at his door to greet his customers. He was a hail-fellow-well-met who wanted to please everyone and get a name for himself and his superior product in order to surpass even 'Andrews,' the rich-man's meat market on Front Street whose rent he could not afford. Thus, he was particularly 'well met' with 'big shots' whose voices would be heard, such as politicians and policemen, who could be enticed by Louis' warm welcome, plus an offer of a generous discount, to treat their families almost daily to prime steaks and ribs.

We also found Jacobson's meat to be succulent and within our reach at one dollar for a well-loined Porterhouse steak on a Saturday night. It was quite plain to us, however, that Louis would sooner or later ingratiate himself into bankruptcy if it had not been for his partner, his wife Rose. Rose ruled the cashier's station and the books. She demanded cash- no credit. Perhaps this was why years later, with not only Rose, but their son, Seymour as partners, Jacobsons did advance to Front Street and besides established a flourishing wholesale business at the Farmers' Market in Henrietta.

Contiguous to the west wall of Wolfard's Books/Fine Arts was Art Manara's Barber Shop, which occupied only a tiny space in the long barracklike building which stretched to the end of the block at Plymouth Avenue. There was room in the shop for only one professional barber chair, a mirror and work counter, the necessary implements, a customer's waiting bench, and a spittoon on the floor used as an ash tray. Art Mandara's shop was probably the most popular place on the block during the day from eight in the morning until six in the evening. A small group of men was almost always there. Art ministered to all, either messily dropping hairs and whiskers and shaving suds in a growing mat around him or egging on the bench-waiters and standers to ever more bombastic political harangue.

His customers, were mainly the 'city fathers' who, it seemed, were always on the move, if not buying meat or drinking and eating, at least with mouths flapping. Not that Art knew or cared anything about politics, but he loved notoriety. He was the type of first-generation Italian who exposed in his pockets sheaves of important looking papers and letters signifying his American business status. Mandara was actually more

of a family man than a businessman. He had a wife, three daughters, and a son. The family somehow took a liking to us and thought our greatest delight must be, or should be, Italian food. So Art Mandara would occasionally bring us one of his wife Marie's special home-baked pizzas. We had never tasted this ethnic favorite before and found it too spicy for our taste, but of course, thanked our generous new friends warmly.

Most of the rest of this jerry-built building to the west of us was occupied by Dollinger's Lunch Counter whose fare consisted mainly of roast meat, mashed potatoes and gravy. The restaurant seemed to be patronized with time to recline and read the day's papers, or by an occasional Mechanics Institute (now Rochester Institute of Technology) student who apparently eschewed the school's own cafeteria. Convenience, informality and reasonable price appeared to be Dollinger's drawing card.

The end store at Spring Street and Plymouth Avenue was the most conventional business on the block: Al Rudner's neat, efficient, well-stocked pharmacy. Al was no 'character' like the rest of us, and therefore, somewhat dull, but he was cordial and attentive and, since there were few drugstores downtown other than in the Department stores, Rudner's was constantly busy. Unlike later-day 'drug stores' which offered a myriad of gadgets, this was simply a dispensary for medical drugs, ointments and comforts.

The rest of the commerce on the block was on the North side of the street that boasted of only one store. Here in yet another cement shed was stationed the electrical appliance store of Arthur Granger, another 'character' for the block.

Never have I seen a neater working place than Granger's Electrical Appliances. Nothing was ever out of place. If disturbed by a customer it would again appear back where it belonged as if by magic.

I never could figure out where this precision originated; from Arthur or his Dutch wife Betty. For, at the Granger home in Virginia Colony neatness and cleanliness reached extremes. Arthur had a private workroom at home featuring commercial art and sign painting and his paints and brushes were always saluting in immaculate attention when not in use. And Betty was the archtypical Dutch housewife who thoroughly cleaned house every day and washed down the walls three times a year.

Anyway, we bought our first radio in Rochester at Granger Appliances around 1943.

Resolve

We celebrated Christmas by having dinner at the homey Colony Restaurant on Exchange and Broad Streets, and at the end of the year I sat down to pay our bills. We had taken in enough cash to buy our groceries, incidentals, heating oil, and pay our apartment rent, but when I had made out checks for utilities and merchandise we had purchased, I found that there was not enough left to pay the installment on our car and our store rent. Our checking account was down to ten dollars.

Something had to be done. I went to our bank, the Genesee Valley Trust Company, that handsome skyscraper with the winged finial [Wings of Progress] on Exchange and Broad streets, to try to get a loan of \$100 to tide us over. John Jardine, the President, turned me down. "Sorry, young lady," he said, "you have no collateral, credit, or references." But I had no sooner returned to the store, my eyes raining tears, than the phone rang. It was the kind voice of Mr. Jardine: "There is a secretarial position I know of open at Bausch & Lomb which I think you would fit. Ask for George Tschume."

I was hired but I had to wait two weeks for my first salary of \$20 a week. The Chevrolet dealer in Chicago readily agreed to skipping one month's installment on the car, but it was a little more difficult with our landlord, Mr. Slade, who seemed to own all the decrepit buildings in the inner city, many of them vacant. Grumpily he finally conceded that it would be to his advantage to accommodate a tenant who was improving the property. Soon Bausch & Lomb was deeply engaged in the efforts of World War Two.

I had been working only a week at my new job when we received a telegram from Chicago saying that my mother had died. Mr. Tschume generously agreed to a week's leave to attend the funeral, and I borrowed from our next-door neighbor at the Stoneham enough cash to pay my railroad fare to Chicago.

When I returned I had with me the family dog, a ten-year-old wire-haired terrier whom we called "Tatters"-ragged because one of my sisters had rescued him in a destitute condition on a lonely deserted Chicago street.

Teddy had ideas of his own on how to keep our fledgling business going. He set up his sturdy wooden easel in the most sunny window next to the fireplace and every morning in a dapper French beret and smock drew attention to the vigor of his enterprise. Besides proving his prowess in oil landscapes, he found some white ceramic tiles upon which he started painting scenes of Rochester landmarks such as our winged bank, the Mercury figure on top of the lawyer's Cooperative



*Teddy attracted attention to the Gallery by painting.
(Collection of the author)*

Publishing Company building, our own Bicknell Building and other architectural relics, or street scenes of Paris and Amsterdam. He also offered to antique-paint a piano, belonging to a young beautiful woman newly married to an older well-to-do man, embellishing it with scrolls and flowers.

Soon he had an ongoing business in all these lines. Discoverers of the tiles found their painted keepsakes an inexpensive nostalgic gift. Patronage for the antiqued furniture spread to include chairs, tables, cabinets painted in any design desired.

These offerings, plus my salary, carried us through, but it was Teddy himself, not only his innovative stop-gaps, who was drawing increasing attention our way. He was fast supplanting George Humphrey, Jack Foran, and Louis Jacobson as the most colorful merchant on the street. Just being foreign-born with intriguing forms of speech, an admixture of Dutch with English, spiced by fantastic tales of his youth, set him apart. His quick eye and knowledge of art was gaining him the title of Professor. Also he was known by a more plebeian name, as the 'man with the dog,' for Tatters and Teddy were constantly together, the dog carrying the mail or the daily newspaper in his mouth as the chums

walked along together, or lying on the store floor by the door, handsome and alert, sharing Teddy's day.

In the meantime we had a stroke of luck. Tom McMillan and his social worker mother Georgene, alerted us to the vacancy of an unfurnished apartment on the third and top floor of a house with two entries at the west end of Spring Street. The vacancy was at entry No. 171 and the apartment was next-walled to the McMillan's third floor apartment at entry 169. We did not hesitate to immediately send for our furniture stored in Chicago and were soon happily ensconced in this pleasant, airy three-room apartment at the rent of \$40 a month, including garage space out back.

It turned out that the close juxtaposition of our two families proved to be most convenient since we had discovered many common interests, in art, music, literature and especially in nature. Our next-walled proximity provided two quick means of communication and communion. The first was a knock on the trap door of the trash chute between the two sections of the building, as garbage, perhaps, crashed downward. The second was a contorted crawl through neighboring back windows via the third floor landing of the building's fire escape.

It is doubtful whether either the black families or the Livingstoners whose roofs were seen from our fire escape, paid much attention to our presence in this squeeze, but in time we did become acquainted with a few of the black residents and some of the old-family Livingston Park aristocrats.

However, Teddy's extracurricular services combined with his charm did attract some unusual new contacts from various directions.

One was a Dr. Adrian Trivelli, a research physicist at Eastman Kodak, who wanted some of his furniture relacquered but discovered the further mutuality of also being a Dutchman and also of having adventures of his own as a native of the Transvaal Dutch Colony in Africa. Trivelli introduced Teddy to another Kodak man, a true eccentric, Dr. Max Hertzberger, a friend and follower of Albert Einstein. Max was the leader of an erudite group of men who met to discuss bizarre and intellectual subjects. Teddy was inveigled to join them when the topic was art.

Another eccentric person who was attracted was Arthur Cromwell, a local architect who lived with his wife and two daughters in an Italian-style stone house on Plymouth Circle built by the Republican 'king-maker' George Aldrich in 1900 and restored by the Cromwells in 1924. Cromwell and his family were agnostics, or what they called Free Thinkers, and they hosted a group of like-minded thinkers once a month in their home. Though Teddy and I were neither atheists nor regular

church goers, we felt that religious beliefs of any kind were personal and all should be respected. We sometimes attended these informal, frank gatherings and found them stimulating.

Another philosophical gathering that Teddy attended once in a while was of Hindu belief, honoring Krishna as the incarnation of Vishnu, sponsored in Rochester by his customer, Mrs. Chester Carlson in her own home.

It was through Mrs. Chester Carlson that Chester Carlson came into our store in 1948 and tried to sell Teddy on Haloid stock, which Chester said was just being created to produce an electronic photo copying machine he invented ten years earlier and it was about to take off to big earnings. Of course, the opportunity was lost. We had no money to invest. We were never one of the millionaires created by early investment in Haloid which later became Xerox.

Unique was the word for one of the customers: a mystery of a man, tall and loose-limbed, who slid in so noiselessly that it took a minute or two to spot him sampling the books which were displayed near the entrance. Though his attention was on the books, he seemed to be aware not only of Teddy watching him from a distance but to be sensing all sights and sounds encircling him. In unhurried composure, without speaking a word, he examined the books for half an hour or more and then, showing a book or two to Teddy before placing them in his under-arm briefcase, he paid the sum due in cash and, like a fading shadow, was gone. The books he selected could be on any subject from crafts and art history and science- apparently seeking knowledge on anything which piqued his interest. His silent presence in the store was frequent, but since he never paid by check, his name remained an intriguing mystery. It was not until we had departed Spring Street with changing times that we learned how large was his stature and what bonds would be cemented between him and Teddy.

Another early arriver of catholic taste beckoned by Mr. Humphrey was Dr. George P. Heckel, a young obstetrician/gynecologist. He bought the first of Teddy's paintings sold in Rochester, a fall landscape reminiscent of the Bristol Hills of the Finger Lakes. We went to the Heckel home on Westland Avenue to hand the picture and found that we had so many interests in common that he, his wife Bobbie, and three children became our best friends for life. We became counted in the Heckel household as 'family.'

There was also Carl Schmidt, an architect and writer who lived in Scottsville, an enthusiast for cobblestone houses and other gems of unusual construction. He had already produced several layman-oriented books describing the artistic and architectural details of these structures

and had sold copies to George Humphrey. Through the years we too acquired and easily sold his succeeding productions.

Another early settler was George Clark whose Italianate manor at the corner of Plymouth Avenue and Atkinson Street was built in 1844. Aside from the Buells, the Hallocks, the Cheneys and the Wilds whose houses were built in Livingston Park during the same period, George Clark was one of the last die-hard elite's not to have succumbed to the steady exodus from the deteriorating Third Ward. And he himself was wavering. He visited our store frequently and one day came in to announce that he was on his way to give a grant of a million dollars to Mechanics Institute, and wanted Teddy's help in sorting the valuables in his pioneer home anticipatory to moving to a lakefront estate on Rock Beach Road.

The War Years

I always think of the first winter 1940-41 as existing in darkness. Bausch & Lomb's work week was extended from 40 hours to 46, which meant my leaving for and coming home from work for five 8 1/2 hour days, catching up on personal chores on half-day Saturdays, and using Sunday mornings to thoroughly wipe and mop out at 67 Spring Street the week's accumulation of street dust.

I found my Saturdays to be the most frustrating of the week. Returning from work on Saturday afternoons, I first stopped at 67 Spring Street to relieve Teddy for a quick lunch at No. 171. When the two pals, Teddy and Tatters, the family dog, returned again to take over the store, I too had lunch at home, prepared a shopping list, and stashing the weekly spending limit of five dollars in my purse, I walked the two blocks to the A&P on Main Street.

In those days we didn't have shopping carts or unlimited plastic bags in which to bring home our purchases. The grocer allowed just one or two, or maybe three, not-too-sturdy brown paper containers for this purpose. Five dollars went a long way but getting the provisions home was a hazard. Likely as not one of the overloaded bags would burst at the seams en route, leaving my purchases scattered on the sidewalk. All I could do was to stuff them into various nooks and pockets on my person.

On clear Sundays during the winter months November through March or April, we enjoyed walking downtown and seeing the clever window displays of our fellow merchants. For two summers, before Tom McMillan, about to be drafted, signed up for the Merchant Marines, we

and our friends cooked up a scheme whereby nature and all its joys would be ours every Sunday afternoon and evening without being nabbed, we hoped, by road patrol or police, for personal use of restricted gasoline.

We jointly rented a primitive cottage in the drumlin/pond/swamp area around Bushnell's Basin, Fishers, and Powder Mill Park, about a seven mile drive from central Rochester. Using saved-up coupons from our gasoline rations, we plumped ourselves and a few supplies into Tom's high mileage used car and boldly meandered the back roads to our cottage on the hill above swimable, frog-croaking Crosman's Pond.

At that time these outskirts of Rochester were full countryside, with only scattering of residences here and there. It had everything for us to revel in: the wildflowers climbing the low hills, swamplands tittering with birds, the boysenberries and elderberries lining the dirt roads, especially the fresh produce, available in these war times, from the area farmers: eggs fresh from the nest; whole milk with cream an inch thick on top; honeycombs designed by the bees. Add to this the crystal spring found on the cottage property, stars unblanked by citylights; and the fresh air and freedom of these long Sunday afternoons and evenings.

Whether or not, by entering the war abroad, we would help save the world for democracy, there was no disputing the fact that the 'defense' effort was boosting the economy at home. Everyone high or low, self-sufficient or a beggar could find, and was expected to find, a job. All had money to spend as they wished within reasonable war limitations. Most wanted to improve their standard of living after the long depression. They put money down on a new home, invested in stocks and bonds, or bought the luxuries they craved. The latter was where Wolfard's Books/Fine Arts came in.

Whereas many American homes had nary a painting on their walls, some of the new generation of young workers, with cash in their pockets, had different priorities than their elders. They wanted not merely the necessities of their Puritan antecedents but some beauty and adornment thrown in.

Thus it was that the war started to increase our patronage. Not that it was any landslide. People were just beginning to take an interest in art, especially the middle-class which forever had been and would remain America's principle economic stability. They could not afford to buy expensive oil paintings at this stage as new or potential homeowners but, under Teddy's beckoning tutelage, they could at least satisfy their awakening awareness with good art prints and not-too-costly art objects.

Art Scene

The war was ended and Mechanics Institute was looking forward, reconstituting to attract some of the returning young people many of them education- subsidized by the government to train them to energize a burgeoning peacetime industry. A modern addition was made, state-of-the-art new technological courses were added, and the Art School of the Claude Bragdon Bevier Building upgraded its studios and exhibit hall. Gentle Clifford Ulp, long-time Director, retired, and young over six-footer Stanley Witmeyer, vigorous and open-minded, took over as director.

Also a vacant property close to the end of Spring Street, previously a library, was used to establish an innovative School for American Crafts. This school had been transported from Alfred University at Alfred, New York.

Teddy and I were discovering other area artists connected either with the Art School of Mechanics Institute, the Memorial Art Gallery shows, or the three major art clubs of the city.

The Rochester art scene was becoming more open to various genres of artistic expression, Teddy Wolfard was encouraged to extend Rochester art education further, to bring to attention the works of talented artists from outside the community, artists whom he hand picked, whose renown might grow alongside the growth of his reputation as the dealer he expected for himself.

The period was ripe for such extension. Gasoline was no longer rationed and we could travel afield as far as time and finances permitted. On Cape Ann in Gloucester and Rockport, Mass., we found Emile Gruppe, a painter of sea and village scenes in oil; Doris Hall in enamels; Iver Rose, a genre portrait artist using marvelous color; Umberto Romano who tended toward the abstract.

Closer to home in Batavia we found another group of artists; all the offspring of Frank E. Mason, the founder of a label-embossing firm. We had seen a fine example of this family's artistry in a jewelry store window on fifth Avenue in New York City. It was a small glowing oil painting of a vase of graceful flowers. Wanting to see the painting close-up and to find out where the artist lived so that we could visit her and perhaps buy some of her works directly from her on a wholesale basis, we entered the store. Thus we began a tricky technique for locating our gallery artists. Assuming the role of casual curious art lovers from off the street, we began our ruse.

"The painting of flowers in your window is lovely. The artist is? Oh,

Nina Mason Booth? Is she a New Yorker?"

"No," the reply, "she lives in Batavia, New York."

Nothing easier! A telephone directory guided us and, upon arriving in this upstate small town, we were surprised to locate not just one flower painter but two other artists of the same family painting in different genres. Roy Mason loved nature and wildlife. He used watercolors to paint scenes of sportsmen engaged in fishing and fowling. Max, who managed the family business with his sons, found time to paint landscapes in oil.

Of the three Masons, Roy was the most prolific and the most well-known. He not only exhibited and sold his watercolors widely, but his appealing, placid scenes, always with understated red-capped sportsmen somewhere in the picture flushing the ducks or wielding the fishing rods, appeared often on magazine covers or calendars and were popular as prints. We bought the work of all three Masons, but it was Roy's compositions that remained on our roster for many years.

Changing Times

In the early 1950s there was talk of tearing down some of the buildings in the pioneer Third Ward, starting, in particular, with our block on Spring Street and perhaps taking a few of the broken-up, run-down mansions, to make room for a close-to-downtown Civic Center and a drive-in garage. Some people protested against the destruction of the historic Corn Hill buildings. Others saw it as an opportunity for bargain investment. The 19th century mansions could be renovated and resold to enterprising future residents of an upgraded neighborhood, crediting the investors with saving a portion of history. If, by chance, any of these heritage houses should be condemned so that 'progress' could proceed, nothing would be lost; the city would reimburse owners with a 'fair' settlement.

Eventually the Civic Center complex built facing Exchange Street became an immensity of poured cement forming a flat, empty plaza behind which loomed the stark rectangular buildings of the Civic Center. The only buildings left standing in sight of our former area were Rose Posner's Fitzhugh Hotel, the handsome First Presbyterian Church on Plymouth Avenue, a few mansions in elegant Livingston Park, the Campbell-Whittlesey House owned by Landmark Society and the unique 1824 St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

But the changes in the old Third Ward were to continue, though not until over a decade after the Civic Center complex was completed.

The 1960s was the era of increasing use of ground transportation. For the individual, private cars meant independence. To commerce, huge, roaring, smoke-spewing trucks meant door-to-door convenience. To speed this traffic along, thruways, interconnecting expressways, and outer and inner loops were constructed.

The encircling city loops enveloped the old Third Ward like a cocoon. The encircled area could be reached only by circuitously entered side streets. The archaic 'Ruffled Shirt Ward' was renamed Corn Hill, the original name given by the early settlers.



The new Wolfard Gallery on South Goodman was transformed from the carriage house of Karl Lomb. (collection of the author)

Leaving Our Third Ward

In 1953, although the wrecking ball was still nowhere in sight, Teddy and I began looking for new quarters. We did not regret having to leave Spring Street- the run-down neighborhood, the grime seeping into our sunken store, the distance between shop and home. This mandatory shove the city fathers were giving us was an opportunity, after fourteen years of apprenticeship, to actually realize Teddy's dream of owning a true, spacious art gallery with living quarters on the premises.

Looking back on Rochester's early pioneers, a history which had become increasingly fascinating to us in the old Third Ward, we set our

sights on following the second generation of settlers to the east side of the Genesee River. This section of the city, we had discovered in curious wanderings on many a Sunday afternoon, had streets and mansions even grander than in Livingston Park. On elm-canopied East Avenue some old families still occupied the spacious-lawned homes. On side streets there were also well-kept homes, and Park Avenue offered pockets of small stores and houses for sale or for rent.

A realtor took us in hand and steered us to some likely locations. Nothing seemed just right. We hesitated between yes and no on one picture-windowed house on Park Avenue. We dismissed as impractical-unoccupied, possibly not even available- the tempting little 1903 library wing, called the Petit Trianon, adjoining a house on Prince Street.

Then our agent heard there was an unlisted carriage house at Goodman Street near East Avenue. The avenue was already losing many of its majestic elm trees. Within another decade none would be left. The rows of elms on both sides of the Avenue were infected by Dutch Elm Disease. It would be decades before the trees were large enough to again shade East Avenue.

We gained permission to inspect the yellow-brick carriage house formerly owned by Karl Lomb, a relative of the Bausch & Lomb co-founder, Henry Lomb. This East Avenue estate ran from Goodman Street to Arnold Park and included a mansion, statues, sunken gardens, and a green house. When Karl Lomb died the mansion was razed. The Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word was built on this site.

The carriage house originally sheltered horses and buggies for the mansion. When automobiles arrived, the turntable and grease pit were installed and it became a garage. The chauffeur lived in the upstairs which was divided down the middle by a long hallway into front and back areas. The front was windowed, but the back was dark because the building backed up to a tall structure, topped by a dovecote, which proved to be an abandoned stable at the rear of an Arnold Park estate. The rooms were small: a dining room next to the kitchen, a parlor, and a bedroom. There were no closets in the bedroom or anyplace else, except for the bead board cupboards across one wall of the kitchen.

I was conjuring up a lot of housewifely alterations, but the owner, Walter Malone said,

“You can have the place for \$18,000.

“We’ll consider it,” I said as Teddy and I headed for the fresh air.

“What a junk pile! A gallery in that?” Teddy exploded when we were on the driveway outside again.

I took my husband’s arm. “It’ll be perfect,” I said. “Imagine that large open space downstairs with the turntable and greasepit covered over,

walls knocked out upstairs to make larger rooms, the pool filled in, the front yard cleared so that the carriage house can be seen from the street. It will be your dream. I think we can afford it too,”

Many times we went back to 9 South Goodman Street to view the prospect from various perspectives, and finally agreed to Mr. Malone's offered figure. But there were complications.

The area was zoned semi-residential. Although there were several public buildings in the vicinity and home doctor's offices were condoned, commercial businesses were forbidden. We would have to get a zoning variance.

We needed the support of our future neighbors. Dr. T. B. Jones and his wife Josephine at 11 South Goodman, welcomed “some gentility” next door. Down the street at No. 15 Mrs. Annie Comstock, of jam and jelly fame lived in a red brick semi-mansion. Dr. Earl Jetty next door called from an upstairs window that he had no objection.

On the east side of the street was the Museum of Science & Industry (now Rochester Museum & Science Center) at the corner of East Avenue and South Goodman. It occupied property given by its former East Avenue neighbor, Edward Bausch, in 1946. Also on that side of Goodman was the exclusive Columbia School for girls (Columbia School became Allendale Columbia School when it merged with Allendale School for boys on Allens Creek Road after Columbia School was destroyed by fire).

Between these two cultural institutions- the museum and the school- was the handsome French-style villa and property owned by Kathleen Cunningham, widow and inheritor of the Cunningham & Son Carriage Works, makers of horse-drawn vehicles and later cars and trucks. The formal Mrs. Cunningham was prudish in her engagement-making, but after several telephone calls her white-aproned maid admitted us into the Cunningham formal living room where silk-robed Kathleen reigned over a wine and biscuit table.

“Just what will you do with that sloppy property?” she demanded abruptly upon our being seated. “Impossible to restore it, I suppose, to the Karl Lomb period. As an artist myself I would hope that it would be in good taste.”

After further tart opinions, our wine sipped, she imperiously dismissed us, saying, “I won't contest it.”

A few months later zoning was approved. Further luck brought a \$10,000 ten year loan at 4% from Union Trust Company, successor to Genesee Valley Trust. Contractors were hired to renovate the carriage house for another \$5,000 and the dream of an art gallery was on its way.

The contractors started in with the emptied-out garage. When the

whole downstairs space had been covered over with solid wood flooring, burying turntable and grease pit and eliminating the cold cement; when the wide garage entrance and walk-in front door had been turned into a large picture window and a three-paneled doorway, partitions were built to form exhibit space in one-quarter of the area.

Next came the upstairs which posed some problems in our plans for an enlarged living room due to the fact that the whole building was hung from the roof rafters with diagonal crucks and upright stantions to hold the interior walls. When Ron chipped away the wall board dividing the two rooms without disturbing the supports, we were left with a slanting beam, a steel post and an enlarged space combining living and dining areas. The effect seemed a sort of continuation of the strange diverse angles made by the pitched main roof, its two end dormers, and capped central gambrel with its three-paned dormer.

By spring while the builder was filling in the swimming pool with construction trash, we inscribed in gold leaf on our picture window our logo, WOLFARD'S GALLERIES OF FINE ARTS, planted young Douglas fir trees along the 75-foot driveway, spruced up the existing scalloped flower borders, dug out the wild shrubbery by the front fence, leaving an unimpeded view from street to the oblong garden plot, planted two shaped yew trees near the brick patio, trimmed the rose climbers on the south fence to the quick. The viburnum trees, a Double Feulle and a Cailesi, were beginning to bud beside the north fence. Also the first tree to flower in the Spring, a towering Cornelian Cherry, was splashing the house roof and north patio with golden yellow filigree-like blooms. Charles, young son of our friends, Peggy and Chuck Gowen of Pittsford, came to paint white the faded yellow bricks which the carriage house had worn since its construction in 1906.

We scheduled the grand opening of our gallery for June 20, 1954, featuring an exhibit by Roy Mason. A cateress set up on the patio her table of drinks and canapés served by white-tailed waiters. Everyone we knew in Rochester and a few crashers showed up to fill the patio and garden, to chatter and exclaim over the beauty of everything outside and in, including Roy Mason's watercolors. This was the beginning of the permanent success of my husband's career. From then on we began to make a good profit and new customers came from Brighton and Pittsford, Irondequoit, Rock Beach and Edgemere to become lasting supporters and friends.

About the first thing we did when we felt completely at home on Goodman Street was to get a dog. Our lovely old Tatters had to be put to sleep some years before. Frank Disano, a friend and customer who bred poodles, gave us the pick of five silver-grey puppies which we

named Dufy after the French painter, Raoul Dufy. The puppy became the gallery's official mascot and greeter and a drawing card to the business.

Dufy was popular with almost all of our customers. He loved everyone, especially teenagers. Some of the girls from Columbia School formed a habit of enhancing their noon hour at Wolfard's Galleries of Fine Arts. They sat on the Kirman rug in the Exhibit Room with Dufy cavorting around them or snuggling against them while they enticed Teddy to talk to them about art. These young women never forgot these delightful hours, nor Teddy, and carried their enthusiasm over to their mothers who became devotees with their daughters for all our years in business.

There was one person who could not stand Dufy. That was Margaret Woodbury Strong. As an inheritor of early Kodak stock, she was one of the wealthiest women in Rochester with an enormous house above Allen's Creek Road. Her childhood fascination for spontaneous acquisition did not end with adulthood, marriage, and child bearing. Over the years her continued spending resulted in her multi-roomed mansion being crammed tight with her collections on a scale to dwarf George Humphrey's over-stacked bookstore a thousandfold. One threaded precariously through the rooms containing an assortment of collectibles from buttons and bookplates to doll houses, trolley cars, and paintings. Generally, however, Dufy was considered a public relations asset.

The Mysterious Bookman

At long last we learned the identity of the distinguished gentleman who had appeared nearly every day for years at Wolfard's Books/Fine Arts on Spring Street, shuffling silently in to peruse the old books, paying cash for a purchase or two, then soundlessly disappearing- Dr. James Sibley Watson, Jr.

Dr. Watson lived with his wife Hildegard in a big house on Sibley Place, a one-block dead-end street off of East Avenue only two blocks from our gallery. Not only was he a millionaire, we learned, as an inheritor of initial stock owned by his grandparents, Don Alonzo Watson and Hiram Sibley, founder of Western Union Telegraph Company, his personal accomplishments were myriad. Not that we learned about the latter all at once. Many of the revelations had to wait until after Dr. Watson's death, but they included such diverse fields as publishing, cinematography, radiology and literature. He was also a determined advocate for civic betterment in culture, art, environment. Dr. and Mrs.



James Sibley Watson, Jr. shopped at Wolfard Gallery for years before he became Teddy's close friend. (collection of the author)

Watson also carried on devotedly the philanthropy begun by Sibley's mother, Emily, who founded the Memorial Art Gallery in honor of a deceased son by her first marriage.

We learned of Dr. Watson's general identity through his almost daily visits, his habits from Spring Street now transferred to South Goodman Street. Sibley Watson was still somewhat of a recluse, going through life timid and rarely speaking, so Teddy was astonished when Sibley began to sit down on his visits in a gallery chair and carry on discussions with Teddy about art, philosophy, or some idea of mutual interest.

It seemed that throughout his life, Sibley had confined his confidential friendships to a handful of fellow spirits. His wife, Hildegarde was far from a recluse. In fact, she was known, among her other attributes and generousities, for her famous soirees, which were held in Hildegarde's separate artist studio behind the mansion. Mrs. Watson's soiree guest list was not gathered from the social register of the wealthy. It was comprised solely of Hildegard's personal friends and of persons she admired and found interesting from the standpoint of their cultural activities or unique personalities.

At these events there was a core of long-time friends of the Watson's generation who were almost always present.

Among these were her long-time friends Mrs. Hawley (Clayla) Ward, buyer for Sibley, Lindsey and Curr department store and descendant of

an old Rochester family; Mrs. George Selden, whose father-in-law preceded Henry Ford in inventing the first practical gasoline-driven automobile engine; Sibley's relative by marriage Mrs. Harper Sibley; the sisters Devine, also from an old family. Always included was Elizabeth Holihan, Hildegard's co-director of the Rochester Historical Society whose impressive Greek Revival headquarters, called Woodside, formerly the Smith-Willard House built in 1838, lay on East Avenue at Sibley Place directly adjacent to the Watson residence.

Ms Holihan was a prominent interior designer known for her restoration of historic Rochester Landmarks in impeccable authentic detail. Masterpieces of Ms Holihan's expertise were her own 1816 Federal-style frame house with upper ballroom on East Blvd; Woodside itself, and the Century Club.

Other unusual guests who always attended Hildegard Watson's soirees were Mr. and Mrs. Hans and Charlotte Krause. At this time Hans Erik Krause had the City Parks Department job of tending the landmark sunken gardens at the 1854 Warner Castle on Mt. Hope Avenue built by Horatio Gates Warner. The castle itself, built of hand-hewn limestone modeled after a Scottish crenellated princely retreat, was therefore the

Krause's administrative home. Here the stone walls and three-sectioned battlemented rooftops of the castle echoed with the laughter and frisking romp of the Krause's enthusiastic guests. What joyful times we had during the Krause's tenure in this mysteriously intriguing setting, later willed to the City of Rochester.

One day a strange encounter led to our acquiring a type of art we had not handled before. The Malones, the former owners of our property, had invited us to Ashantee to see their new home and antique business. Walter and Bess could hardly have picked a more picturesque spot in which to attract business. The old mill house on Honeoye Creek, complete with mill run and waterwheel, was as quaintly nostalgic as any house 'by the old mill stream.' The spot the Malones occupied had an advantage picturesquely over all the others on the busy highway; not only for their mill house and waterfall, but for an impressive old structure facing them across the road. It was an imposing, eye-catching relic of upstate New York history, a high abandoned bridge with five Romanesque arches which once was a part of a rail route between Avon, north of Ashantee, to Mt. Morris, the site of the Mt. Morris dam that controlled the flow of the Genesee River.

The beauty of their property was not the reason Walter Malone had asked us to drive out to Ashantee, it was Bess' little antique shop. There it lay on the central table of the cramped little shop, an incomplete set of regal dinnerware which Walter said came from the royal palace of

Czar Nicholas in St. Petersburg. If we liked he could take us to see more of the same ware which was now on the pioneer Wadsworth estate that once stretched along the Genesee River in the 1800s from Geneseo to Rochester.

The estate in the Geneseo horse country in the river Valley, we found, was not what it used to be, though it still included some of the old horse stables, hay bins, hunting courses, and riding fields, plus a large country gentleman's house.

These remains of Colonel Wadsworth's estate had been inherited by the last of his heirs, a niece who had been living in Russia and had become a personal maid of the Czarina. In time, Miss Wadsworth had married the Czar's Royal Cavalier by the name of Mahanov, who was the son of the Czarina's Lady in Waiting, a woman only slightly older than Miss Wadsworth herself. So when the heiress came to Geneseo to claim her inheritance, the cavalier was the one who was the head of the family with the charge of the two old women.

The two ladies, tall, prim and erect and speaking alternately French and English, greeted the three of us solemnly at the manor door and ushered us into a large room whose chairs were threadbare and spring-sunken. Teddy was invited to go upstairs to see the Russian icons blessing the over-doors throughout the upper floor while Walter and I went into a side dining room to view the Imperial royal-blue and gold-crested china there. Some of the Imperial service was intact, stored in closed cabinets, but on wall shelves displaying a few pieces, irreplaceable banquet china became chipped.


When Teddy came down the stairs he had two splendid Icons in his hands. "Make out a check Claara," he said to me. Thus began our interest in collecting Russian Icons for our gallery.

I had help in learning about Icons. There was a Russian Orthodox Church on East Avenue at Prince Street. Its cordial priest taught me much about Iconography and authenticity.

Although these special items added greatly to the breadth of Wolfard Galleries' fine art and to its growing reputation as an all-around art source, the gallery's principle attraction was its pictorial exhibits. There was always some special exhibit hanging in the gallery.

For special one-man shows invitations were sent to all of our customers and prospects. The openings were usually scheduled for a Sunday afternoon when both men and women were apt to be at home and eager for a special social outing. Simple refreshments were served and everyone was well dressed and milled around getting acquainted, or inspecting the paintings for possible purchase. We often sold-out on these occasions; Teddy making the sale and I running after him to place

12/6/79



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the 'sold' marker and to record the name of the buyer.

One of these exhibits was particularly successful and amusing. We invited Emile Gruppe to come to Rochester from Gloucester, Massachusetts, for a one-man show and, for the same time period, the Rochester Historical Society invited Emile to give a demonstration at their quarters at nearby Woodside. Gruppe was very popular in Rochester and his lively personal presence at our Opening made for a number of sales.

However, it was at the Woodside demonstration that Emile really shone. Emile Gruppe was a born entertainer. His dramatic flourishes with his brush, his running light-hearted comment and explanation of the action, kept everyone attentive to the final completion and laying down of his brush.

Then spoke up a loud voice from the rear of the audience. The unmistakable command of Maggie Strong. "The demonstration painting is mine!"

She demanded that Teddy and Emile deliver the vibrant painting to her home. The two men had no choice but to do so and the next day they went adventurously, for Emile was aware that Mrs. Strong had other paintings of his, but he had never seen her fabulous house about which he had heard so many rumors.

Emile was given the full tour of the house. There in the doll house vil-

lage Maggie made her further demand: "Emile, make me a small painting for one of my doll houses."

About a month later Teddy received an urgent call from Mrs. Strong; "Teddy, come over right away and tell me what this big carton is that I have just received from Gloucester." Teddy unsealed the huge box and started eliminating from it all manner of stuffing, shaking out each glob and weighing it for content. At the very bottom of the carton was a small flat wrapped package: an oil painting of the Atlantic shore, about an inch by an inch and a half in size, framed and ready for hanging in one of her doll houses.

At Home in Rochester

Teddy bought most of his artwork wholesale in New York City, including paintings from Paris and the Cote d'Azur in France, until 1959 when we began to go abroad every year to track down these artists and others in their studios and homes, dealing directly with the artists and always taking back to Rochester with us many of these artists' works. Paintings by such artists as Girod de Lain, Toppi Eitel, Mendose, Ellis, Aoyama, Ambrogiani, Bezombes imported to America by us, became popular with our clients.

Some years we included in our travels other countries such as Holland, Italy and Spain, and the Scandinavian fingers in the search for their various types of objects d'art.

The time we spent in Europe buying art was only two weeks out of each year. Yet, we came to know some of its cities as well as New York, and many of its villages became more familiar to us than middle-sized cities of New York state. We made many friends in our travels and were welcomed into private homes and lives.

But what of the rest of the year?

For the greater part of our adult lives Rochester had been our home. Its streets, advantages, and detriments were as familiar to us as though we had been born to them. We had many friends, and here too we were invited into private homes.

We liked upstate New York's change of seasons, its variation in landscape from lakes to open lands, to mountains. Its beauty abounded.

The history of Rochester, established in the 1810s, was fascinating. Having lived in its original ward and into the thrust of its expansion into the Park Avenue area, we felt an integral part of its growth. Though Teddy favored European art, having been imbued with its virtues in the heady days of his youth during the European art explosion of the 1920s,

the United States was his true love. There was no lack of activity in Rochester. Wolfard Gallery was joined by Oxford Gallery which showcased innovative modern artists, and the Hare and Tortoise.

During the post-war prosperity of the late 1950s and early 60s, the maturing young adults ready to buy or rent their first homes were eager to decorate with the best they could afford. Teddy realized that Wolfard Gallery started as a small business, and even in the more commodious space on Goodman Street, their customers would remain middle-class people of modest means. Teddy wanted to carry affordable merchandise, not the masterpieces of high-stake investors.

Interior designers were also significant clients, particularly Beverly Luchs Hafner. She first came to the Gallery when she was fresh out of Syracuse University School of Design and was gaining experience in her field through the Rochester Stationery Company, creating luxury offices for major commercial companies. Later established in her own business, Ms. Hafner continued to draw on the Wolfard Gallery.

On Saturday afternoons the Gallery became the gathering place for pleasure seekers as well as buyers who shared friendship and the love of art. Hyman Kreitzman purchased so much of his art from Wolfard's that he referred to his home as Wolfard's Annex. The trust Teddy placed in his friends extended to his clients as well. One day an authoritative-looking stranger entered the door and asked to see the collection of Nierman paintings from Mexico City. He was frank, informal, and amicable and Teddy intuitively respected him. The stranger quickly selected two of the best large Niermans, then informed Teddy that he had stopped on an impulse, did not have his checkbook or his credit card, he would have to send payment when he reached his office in Detroit. Without a record of his ownership, however, he was concerned that on his route to Detroit through Canada, customs would consider the paintings to be stolen. Without hesitation Teddy directed me to type out an invoice on Wolfard Gallery letterhead and mark it "paid in full."

The following day we received a substantial check for the full amount. The stranger was revealed to be Wallace Wilson, vice-president of General Motors and the man under whose direction the General Motors headquarters in New York City was built. He later bought a Cotswold mansion and land on Lake Ontario and continued to buy from the Gallery to enhance the "cottage."

Nearly Half a Century of Art Business Ends

At the age of 79 Teddy mentioned that he would sell the business if a suitable buyer could be found. Though we still shoveled snow, planted gardens, washed windows and traveled on art buying trips, we were slowing down. One day Beverly Hafner who had become a friend over the years, came to the Gallery frustrated. "I'm looking for an empty warehouse, some big quarters," she said.

"How about this place?" I said taking even myself by surprise.

"You mean it?" Ms. Hafner responded.

"Ask Teddy," I replied.

Teddy's answer was immediate, specific and without hesitation. "Yes."

By January 1980 we had signed papers and by February we were having a close-out sale. The Gallery which began in the city's old Ruffled Shirt Ward grew into the museum neighborhood.

With the sale of the gallery, we moved to 1400 East Avenue after Teddy insisted on staying in the city. When a few years later the apartment building became condominiums, we moved to nearby 1570 East Avenue. Nine years later, Teddy, the colorful artist and gallery owner, half of the Wolfard dream, passed away.



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