

Eanger Irving Couse Papers

New Mexico Museum of Art Library and Archives

Box 171

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Preface

Eanger [E.] Irving Couse [herein EIC] was born in the logging town of Saginaw, Michigan on ,1866. He received his first formal art education at the Chicago Art Institute at the age of 17 years. Later, he studied at the National Academy of design in New York, winning awards at its student exhibitions.

He went to Paris in 1887 where he studied at the Academie Julian under Adolphe Bouguereau. His training there followed strict academic traditions, and never left him. While in Paris he met Joseph Sharp and Ernest Blumenschein, who encouraged him to seek American subject matter.

Couse went to Taos in 1902 where he began his Indian painting. His two most constant models were Native Americans Ben Lujan and Geronimo Gomez. In 1912, when the Taos Society of Artists was formed, he became its president.

Among his most notable - and popular - achievements was a series of paintings he produced on a commission from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company for its annual calendars.

He died on April 25, 1936

[Papers in Box 171.]

Section I : Biographic Material

1. Magazine. Catalog references.
 - El Palacio. Vol. VIII, Nos. 5,6. May and June 1920, p. 129.
Article. Heralding Taos Art; refers to article in "The Designer" about Taos Art Colony.
 - El Palacio. Vol. X, No. 10. April 15, 1921. Pgs. 2-7.
Article. Couse. By Rose Henderson.
 - El Palacio. Vol. XIII, July 1, 1922. Pg. 8.
Refers to 21st International Exhibition at Carnegie Institute which closed on June 17
17 pictures sold, including *An Offering to the Rain God*, by EIC.
2. Journal. Panhandle -Plains Historical Review. Vol. XI.JI. 1969. Article.
[EIC], Painter of Indians. Pgs. 1-19. Illustrated.

Also: Extracts. 3 pp.
3. Book. Harmsen's Western Americana. By Dorothy Harmsen. Pg. 52. Article. [EIC]
NA 1866-1936.
4. Book. [EIC] 1866-1936. By Nicholas Woloshuk. (See Preface.) Foreword; pages 81-
94. S.F. Railroad calendars. Photocopy.
5. Paper. By Virginia Couse Leavitt.*(Granddaughter of E C.) Read at N.M. Art
History Conference, Harwood Foundation. June 1986. Titled Taos and the
American Art Colony Movement. Typewritten. 11pp.

Attached: Memo lists corrections; with transmittal letter to Sandra D'Emilio .
6. Essay. Ennobled Craftsmen. The Paintings of [EIC]. Unident.; n.d. Typewritten. 2 pp.
7. Selection from Masterpieces of the American West. The Anschutz Collection. 1983.
Biographic sketch.
8. Magazine. Southwest Profile. Vol. IX, No. 2. March/April 1986. Article. Taos Society
of Artists. [EIC]. Pgs. 13-15.
Lists six of earliest Taos painters, including EIC.
Box photo [poor] of EIC.
9. Essay. EIC, 1866-1936. Unident; n.d. Typewritten. 1 pg.
10. Encyclopedic sketch. EIC. Unident; n.d. Typewritten. 1 pg.
11. Interview of EIC by unidentified person. March 11, 1927. Typewritten. 29 pp. Lists of
prizes and awards (pp. 28-29); best known works by titles, dates, owners (p. 29).

Section II : Catalogs

1. Catalog. A Retrospective Showing. Panhandle Plains Historical Museum. Canyon, TX. EiC. Illustrated. Cover: *Decorating the War Shirt*. Color. February 5 –28, 1967.

Lists 148 works. Titles; year painted; sizes; prices.
Awards; memberships; club; biography.
2. Catalog. Ten Photographs by [EIC]. Published by Couse Enterprises, Ltd.; Taos, N.M. 1990. Contains 10 photos, black and white, with explanatory comments.
3. Catalog. The American Indian. By EIC. The Saginaw Art Museum. Saginaw, Michigan. November 1-30, 1980. [Poor photocopy.] Illustrated.

Family reminiscences. [Partly illegible.] By Elizabeth Couse Fielding.
4. Invitation. Wadle Galleries Ltd. Santa Fe. 21 artists, excluding EIC, but cover photo of EIC work, *Seated Woman With Guitar*. March 15, 1981.
5. Notice. Palm Springs Desert Museum. Painters of Taos. Cover: *The Wedding*. By E.T. (sic) C. Harrison Eiteljorg Collection. December 14, 1984 -February 2, 1985. Photocopy.
6. Catalog. Saginaw Art Museum. Saginaw, Michigan. [EIC] Memorial Library and Gallery. Three-folded, illustrated. 1987.

Extended Biographic sketch.
Cover: *Indian Warrior Making Arrows at His Fire*. By EIC. Color.
Photo of EIC.
7. Invitation. Albuquerque Museum. December 21, 1991. Show titled [EIC], Image Maker For America.

Cover: photo of artist and some of his works.
8. Catalog. Fenn Galleries Ltd. Santa Fe. [EIC], N.A. N.d.

Cover: *Strange Blanket By Firelight*. Color.
Excellent biographic essay. By Harold McCracken.
Color illustrations.

Section III : Letters re: Santa Fe Railway company calendars

[Most of the correspondence digested in this Section III passed between EIC and officials of The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company [herein ATSF], and concerned the paintings done by EIC for the railway's annual calendars. Many of the calendar paintings are depicted in the material to be found in O.B. 20 (Misc. 1, Part II) in these archives. The letters are all photocopies unless otherwise indicated. Officials of ATSF are: W.J. Black, [WJB], Passenger Traffic Manager; W.H. Simpson [WHS], Ass't General Passenger Agent; C.J. Birchfield [CJB], Ass't General Advertising Agent.

1. Titles of the calendar pictures with years of issue [No indication of source.] Typewritten.
4 pp.
From 1907 to 1987.

A. ATSF paintings

2. 1-29-25: [Writer not shown but ATSF] to EIC.
Discusses 1925 calendar painting:
The Basket Weaver.
- 2-20-25 EIC to WHS.
Enclosing color sketch [not identified].
- 3-17-25: [Writer not shown, but ATSF] to EIC.
Comments on *Grinding Corn* for 1928 calendar.
3. 7-27-26: WHS to EIC.
Looking for large Indian subject for wall of new city office in Los Angeles.
- 8-20-26: WHS to EIC.
Same topic.

- 11-18-26: Railway Age to ATSF.
Returning photo of *The Sun Worshippers* to be depicted in Railway Age.
Enclosed: copy of page from magazine with picture of painting.
- 12-20-26: [Writer not shown but ATSF] to EIC.
Intended to use *The Chant* for 1928 calendar, but so many compliments for 1927 calendar they will postpone it one year for painting with light background.
- 12-29-26: WHS to EIC.
Returning two sketches; prefers *The Navajo Blanket*.
4. 1-14-27: WHS to EIC. 2 cc.
Reviewing plans for 1928 painting to tie in to new extra-fare train named "The Chief "
- 2-8-27: WHS memo.
Dealing with new sketch of Indian chief, large, for office.
- 12-4-27: EIC to WHS. 2 letters.
- 11-5-28: WHS to EIC.
Needs 125-word description of "The Sun Worshippers" for leaflet they are getting out for the public.
5. 2-6-31: WHS to EIC.
Asks for modifications of "Indian Flute Player" and return of sketch to "large painting" which CJB wants.
- 4-9-31: WHS to CJB.
Discusses 1933 calendar and plans for calendars for 1934 and 1935.
- 9-25-31: WHS to EIC.
The Smoke Ceremony planned for use on 1934 calendar.
- 11-19-31: WHS to EIC. 2pp.
Suggests modifications in unspecified painting.

- 12-14-31: EIC to WHS.
Discusses *The Chief*
- 12-28-31: EIC to WHS.
Discusses *The Chief*
6. 10-27-32: WHS to RWB.
Declines to sell *The Return of the War Party*.
- 4-21-33: WHS to EIC.
Plans to use *The Chant* for the 1935 calendar.
- 10-22-34: CJB to EIC.
Moving *The Chief* to 1936 calendar.
- 6-27-35: CJB to EIC.
Asking for changes in unspecified sketch.
- 7-16-35: CJB to EIC.
- 10-27-36: K.W. Couse to CJB.
Lists four paintings to be delivered to him, each at \$800.
- 1-8-37: K.W. Couse to RWB.
Acknowledges return of four paintings.
- 10-25-90: Virginia Couse Leavitt to Sandra D'Emilio. 2 pp.
Enclosing group of letters from Couse archive.
Reviews earlier EIC paintings.

Section IV : Other Letters

1. 6-15-67: Edna C. Robertson [Curator, MFA] to KW. Couse.
Thanks to him for allowing the MFA to borrow *The Pueblo Weaver* and *The Prehistoric Image Maker* for its anniversary exhibition, November 12, 1967 through January 21, 1968.
2. 5-29-84: Julia Santino to MFA
Enclosing Xerox of colored pencil drawing of French soldier; inquiring whether it is by EIC.

8-21-84: The Peters Corporation to Julia Santino.
They need good quality color 35mm photo or Polaroid to identify the drawing.
3. 1-7-87: Smith and Tour, attorneys to MFA
Inquires how painting depicted on enclosed color photo, by EIC can be sold.
Reverse side of photo shows price of \$35,000.
4. 5-8-99. Linda G. Little, Bethel Park, PA to MFA
Seeks to authenticate work on enclosed photographs.

5-20-99: MFA to Little.
Cannot under State law authentic works of art.
5. N.d.: Rodney G. Engard, Tucson, AZ. to MFA
Seeks to know whether photocopies of enclosed pencil drawings by EIC were ever painted.

Section V : Newspaper clippings

The original clippings, continuing to deteriorate, have been photocopied, and are filed in this Section V. The originals have been discarded. All clippings are digested chronologically where they have dates; others are at the end of the Section. Headlines highlight the contents of articles, where articles are of no particular significance, they are simply identified by dates. Some articles are incomplete as noted.

1. 9-6-60: Taos News. Headline. [EIC] Studio Is Open to Public.
Allowed by Kibbey W. Couse, son. Photo of son with pictures in background by father.
- 9-12-68: Taos News. Headline. [EIC]. Article by Kibbey W. Couse. Anecdotal. 2 pp. Photo of EIC; indistinct.
2. 9-12-71: Albuquerque Journal. Headline. Exhibit Planned of Pioneer Painters - Couse, Deming.
Reports on show opening on September 16 at Coronado Galleries. Abbreviated biographic sketch; pictures of works of both artists.
- 10-3-73: Union County Leader. Headline. Beaux -Arts Bazaar.
Reports on EIC painting, *Evening In Taos Pueblo*, a 50 year-old painting, cleaned; hanging in MFA.
- 11-24-74: New Mexican. Headline. [EIC] Shown At Fenn. [Article incomplete.]
EIC described as a member of the original "Taos Six painters."
- 4-17-75: New Mexican. Headline. Ben Lujan Dies; Was Couse Model for 21 years, in connection with the Santa Fe Railroad calendars.
Traces his modeling; used in first Taos painting, *The Historian*.
3. 9-23-82: St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Headline. Six Paintings of the American West Bring In \$62,500. at Auction Here.
Reports that EIC painting, *The Cayuse*, sold for \$7,500.
- 9-21-83: Taos News. Headline. [EIC] Captured the Sentiments of His Time. Photos of his studio and of Kibbey Couse and wife.

- 9-28-89: Taos News. Headline. Sculpture, Landscapes and Other Art Objectives. Reports EIC exhibit at Blumenschein House.
4. 12-22-91: Albuquerque Journal. Headline. Couse. Portraits of the West. Photos in color (2), *All Saints Day* and *Bead Maker*. [From same exhibition.]
- 2-20-92: Rio Grande Sun. Headline. Family Archives. Opened for [EiC] Exhibit. Announces major retrospective exhibit, *[EIC], Image Maker for America* continues at Albuquerque Museums through March 15.
- 6-23-92: Taos News. Headline. Couse Exhibit Will Take Your Breath Away. [At same exhibition.]
- Photos of three EIC works.
5. [No dates.] – Not identified. Article. Southwestern Books. By Alice Bullock. Headline. Book on Artist Fails In Organization. Review of EiC book by Nicholas Woloshuk.
- Albuquerque Journal. Headline. Thieves Steal Two Paintings From Museum. Stolen on July 4: Oscar Berninghaus and EIC paintings. The latter, *The Pipe Maker* valued at \$90,000.

Section VI : Photos

1. Tear Sheet. El Palacio Magazine. Vol. XXIX. No. 2. August 25, 1930.
Photo of EiC in living room of his Taos house.
2. N.M. State Library. Original and copy. Picture. *A Vision of the Past*. By EiC.
Awarded Altman Prize, \$500. National Academy of Design. 1916.
Descriptive comment at bottom.
3. Photo of painting. Black and white. 8 x 9 3/4. Indian-painted skin.