

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ARTS

“Art does not represent things falsely, but truly as they appear to mankind.”

- LUSKIN

Over the years Jaffrey’s cultural life has been enriched by visual artists, musicians, craftmasters, academicians, poets, and authors, and even a performing artist. We name them with pride.

Jeanne Duval (see Duval genealogy), a true native of Jaffrey, has achieved international fame as an artist and has several paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fannie Hillsmith is another whose paintings and collages are widely recognized and valued.

Elieana Gagnon is our “Grandma Moses,” whose paintings are treasured by many beyond the Jaffrey area.

Helen Cox is a local artist who has achieved mastery in her work.

Gilbert Emery’s work has been exhibited.

James Pelletier has a substantial following. James’s skill has also reached out into the therapeutic art field.

Christine Reid is another artist whose work is recognized beyond Jaffrey.

Ann Sawyer exhibits with our local artists and has sold many paintings outside Jaffrey.

Russell Smith taught at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts for many years. His wife, Ruth, taught English and Drama at a private school in Massachusetts. They spent many summers in Jaffrey and then retired here.

Francis Quinlan, a lawyer, and Cornelius (Bud) Lyle, a journalist and professor, both have created creditable works of art.

Those who work in woodcarving bring artistry and beauty in another way. Most outstanding are the Warfields, husband and wife team, who carved and handpainted birds so beautifully that they are valuable collectors’ items and sold in the finest stores.

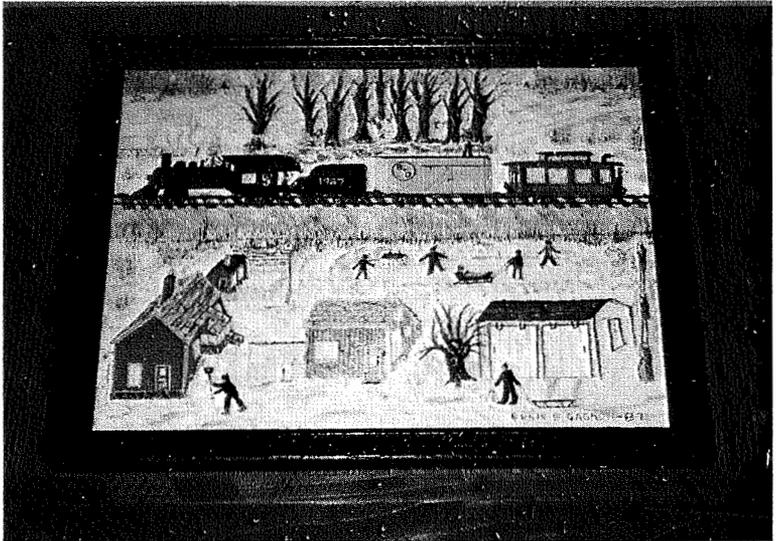
Ronald Devens works with wood and his carved figures are a delight.



Jeanne Duval's "Grapes and Vessels," oil on linen

Bonnie Bennett (see Bean genealogy) is another whose skill in wood carvings and ceramics has been recognized.

Viggo Brandt-Erichsen, Danish sculptor of the "Buddies" World War I monument that graces downtown Jaffrey, also gave the United Church of Jaffrey a bronze altar piece. The Brandt-Erichsens moved to Solvang, California, a renowned Danish village. They bequeathed their Solvang home and all their art work to the town of Solvang, and the house is maintained as a historic site. Their son, Thor, who was born and spent his early years in Jaffrey, lives in Alaska with



Painting by Jaffrey's "Grandma Moses," Elieana Gagnon

his wife and family. Thor has occasionally visited Jaffrey. Also artistic, and fluent in Russian, Thor has been involved in a Rotarian scholarship for teaching art in Russia. He was featured in a Russian magazine that carried his picture on the cover. Copies of the magazine are at the library and the United Church.

A retired professor, Norman Torrey, head of Romance Languages at Columbia University, led a reading group at his home on Monday afternoons for over 20 years. It was open to everyone.

Eleanor and George Austermann, for many years managers of Shattuck Inn, are known for their long friendship with the distinguished author Willa Cather. The Austermanns are named in biographies of Willa Cather and during their lifetime became a resource for students and scholars.

Willa Cather, who is buried in the Old Meetinghouse cemetery, made her first visit to Jaffrey in 1917. She was visiting her friends the Jam Hambourgs, who were staying at Shattuck Inn. Willa Cather had a tent in the meadowland below the inn and did much writing there. At the library is a letter she wrote to Harrison Blaine in which she tells him that "a considerable part of *My Antonia* was written in Jaffrey."

Bissell Alderman, an outstanding architect, was generous in contributing his knowledge and talent to the town. Alderman Park is named in his honor.

Lena Bourne Fish brought fame to Jaffrey when interviewed by Harvard University scholars for her work with folk songs. Her story is told in the *History of Jaffrey* Volume III.

Among our authors we name Thomas Hyman and Susan Haldane. And we have a father and daughter team, William and Cami Jack, who teamed up to co-author a book about Mount Monadnock.

Coburn Kidd, lawyer and statesman, who retired to Jaffrey, gave the town the gift of two books he wrote, one on Jaffrey houses, another on Jaffrey roads.

Our distinguished jazz pianist, Virginia Eskin, has performed all over the world and has been most generous in delighting local audiences at special events.

Jean Hampsey, a Jaffrey native, is an accomplished organist who plays at the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge as well as in St. Patrick Church in Jaffrey.

A performing artist, Daniel Hurlin, is a dancer who weaves drama into his productions. He performs in New York City as well as New Hampshire.

Harold C. (Gus) Nystrom was a piano teacher and piano tuner for many years in Jaffrey.

Serving the arts in another way, Edith Grodin, a volunteer at the Sharon Arts Center, went on to chair the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts from 1984 to 1991. She also served as president of the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen and secretary of the National Association of State Art Agency.

Catherine L. Seiberling Pond (see Grummon) and Robert Stephenson collaborated on a book, *Jaffrey Then and Now*, which is an invaluable treasure for the community.

Primary history about the unsolved Dean murder was made available when Margaret Bean transcribed the court reporter's notes of the Grand Jury Inquest. She was also a columnist for the *Monadnock Ledger* for a period of years.

For more than 50 years the Amos Fortune Forum has provided outstanding lectures in the Old Meetinghouse during July and August. The list of speakers has included such distinguished people



Old Meetinghouse

as Thornton Wilder, Edward H. Land, Governor Sherman Adams, poet May Sarton, author Elizabeth Yates McGreal, astronomer Harlow Shapley, historian Henry S. Commager, to name just a few.

(For more detailed information on the Forum see Vol. III pp. 237 - 240.)