

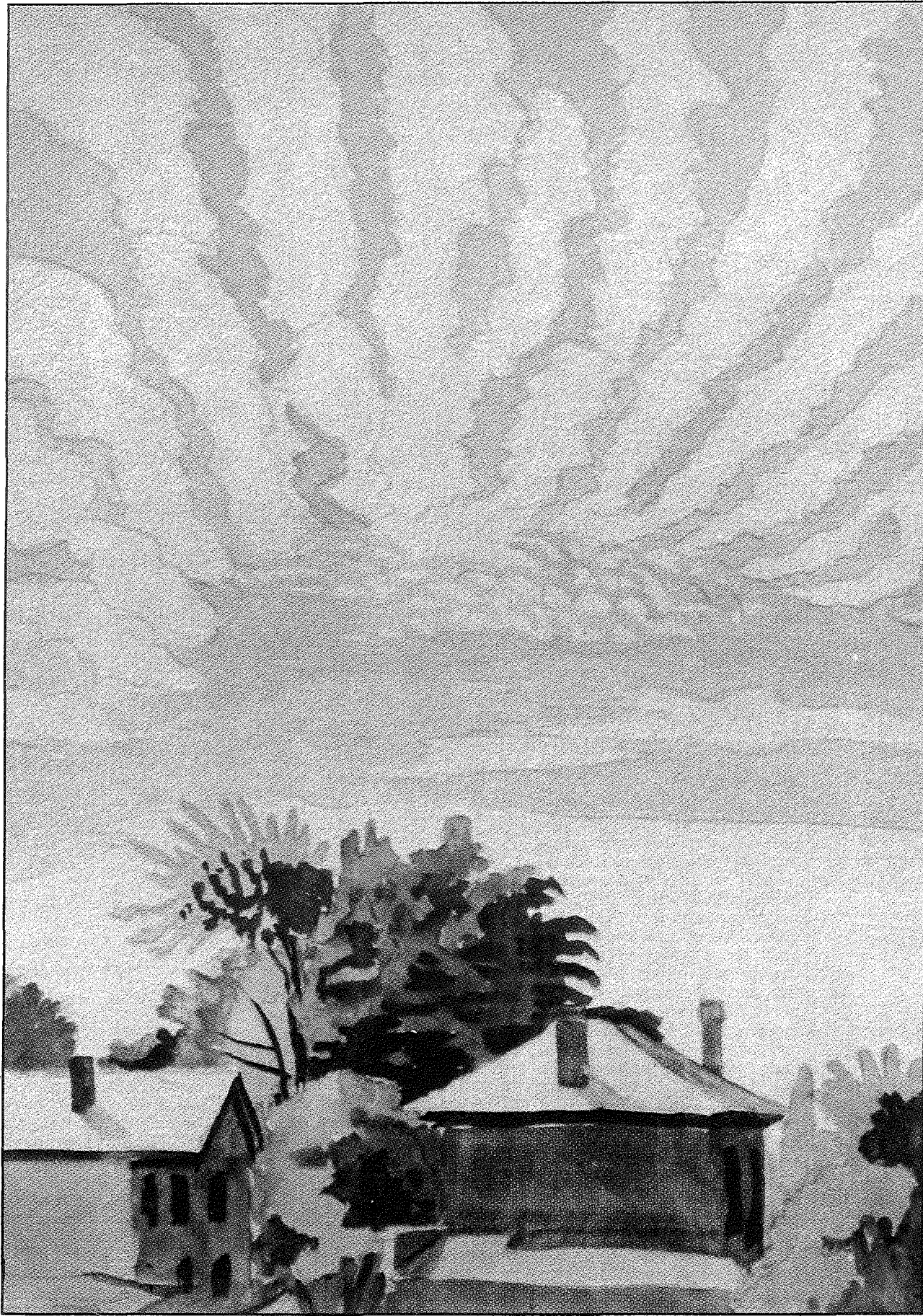
# Burchfield Centennial Edition

# Yesteryears

Vol. 2, No. 21

Tuesday, April 13, 1993

Section of the Salem News



On a balmy May morning in 1916, Charles Burchfield captured this scene of fleecy white clouds floating above neighboring homes along East Third Street from the vantage point of his family's second floor window. This scene, and others painted during those early years of his life, brought him international acclaim. Burchfield never forgot his roots and memorialized his hometown in numerous paintings until his death in 1967.



*Souvenir issue*

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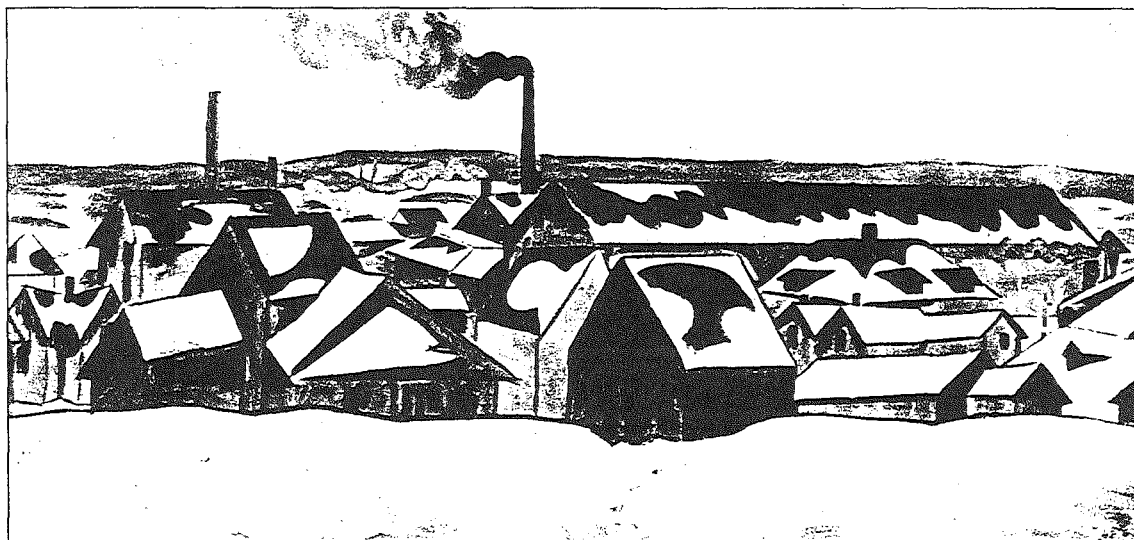
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Snow Patterns

## Burchfield's early work comes back to Salem

By Dick Wootten

THE EXHIBIT OF paintings and drawings by Charles Burchfield that opens Friday for six weeks at the Butler Salem Art Museum marks a homecoming of sorts.

The artworks themselves most likely haven't been seen here since Charles Burchfield left Salem to move to Buffalo in 1921.

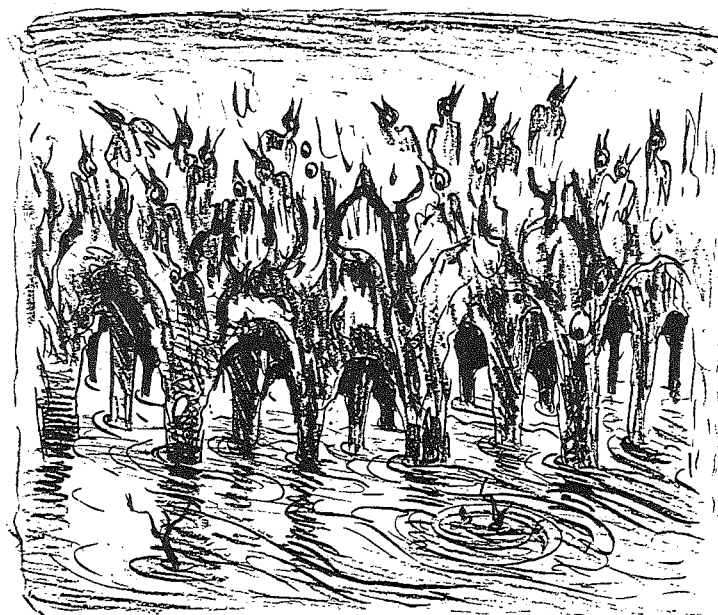
Burchfield (1893 — 1967), a watercolorist whose name is firmly fixed in American art history, evolved through several art styles during his long career. The Salem exhibit features several works from 1916, a time when he was still influenced by oriental art.

His biographer, John Baur, wrote in his 1956 book, "Charles Burchfield."

"In June, 1916, Burchfield graduated from the Cleveland School of Art and returned to Salem and his job in the cost department at Mullins. For about a year he had been painting his own impressions of nature — at first in rather harsh, brilliant colors and bold, flat patterns; then, in 1916, with quieter tones, greater subtlety and more poetic feeling, though still in an essentially flat and decorative manner. Now he spent every spare moment sketching in the familiar countryside of his youth, and a wave of happiness came over him. 'After a long period of gloom ... and self-hatred, I came home tonight under the half-moon exceedingly light of heart, so that I unconsciously whistled.' Fireflies 'popped like stars' in the marshy valleys, and as he walked he composed strange music to an improvised tale of unhappy lovers. He had no more possessions, he reflected, than the love of nature and life, but then, 'the



Sleet Storm, also titled After the Ice Storm: The Rent Collector



Birds driven with Cries of Fear from a Woods by a Rapidly Rising Flood

true poet needs no more.' For was he not an artist these days, sketching when and where he wished, with the whole world of nature still to be explored? Its bigness overwhelmed him. With youth's unconscious egotism, 'life seemed short for the stupendous work I am to accomplish.' "

The paintings from 1916 that are in the Salem exhibit include:

• "Stormy Day in Late August," 1916, watercolor w/ pencil, 13 3/4 by 9 1/4." The view

is from behind Burchfield's East Fourth Street house looking south.

• "Bozzert's Dam," watercolor, w/pencil, 20 by 14." The dam, no longer in existence, was off Butcher Road, southwest of Washingtonville.

• "Untitled (Red houses)," May 17, 1916, watercolor w/ pencil, 20 by 14." The painting is the rearview of a Third Street house, just south of Burchfield's home.

See EXHIBIT, page 4



# Schedule of Burchfield Centennial

## FRIDAY, April 16

The Burchfield Gala is a fund-raiser for the Salem Branch of the Butler Institute of Art. Tickets are \$30 per person. Persons who buy the \$40 ticket also received a limited-edition poster showing the original Burchfield painting donated to the Salem Museum by Arthur Burchfield, son of the artist.

A ticket includes admission to "Burchfield's Homecoming," a one-act play at the Salem Community Theatre at 7:30 p.m. and the Gala party at the museum. The museum will open at 7 p.m. for patrons not attending the play. Members of the Burchfield family will attend a reception at 9 p.m. For gala tickets call 743-1107

A free laser light show for the general public and party-goers will be featured on State Street at 10 p.m.

## SATURDAY, April 17

10 a.m. to noon

Free walking tour of Burchfield's painting sites will be held near his boyhood home at 867 E. Fourth Street. (No interior tours.) The public is invited to park in the Salem Junior High School parking lot behind the school on North Lincoln at East Second Street.

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Burchfield Room at the Salem Historical Society, 208 South Broadway, will be open. Janice Lesher will be on hand to discuss the display, which includes Burchfield family photos.

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Burchfield art exhibit will be open at the Salem Butler Museum.

3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Repeat performances of "Burchfield's Homecoming" will be presented at the Salem Community Theater. Tickets are \$5 per person. Call 332-9688 for tickets.

## SUNDAY, April 18

Noon to 5 p.m.

The Burchfield art exhibit will be open at the Salem Butler Museum.

3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Repeat performances of "Burchfield's Homecoming" will be presented at the Salem Community Theater. Tickets are \$5 per person. Call 332-9688 for tickets.

The art exhibit at the Salem Butler will continue for six weeks. Hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays; 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Fridays; and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays. Admission is free.

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*"Come Celebrate The Arts"*

# The day Burchfield unveiled the 3 trees

By Dale E. Shaffer

ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, June 9, 1946, a special event took place in Salem. Charles Burchfield visited the Salem Public Library to participate in the unveiling of his 36 by 60-inch painting called "The Three Trees." Miss Alice MacMillan was presenting the painting to the library in commemoration of the MacMillan Book Store's 100 years in the community.

Burchfield came from his home in Gardenville, New York to supervise the hanging of the artwork over the fireplace in the library's main reading room. The painting was set off by a wide gold frame. Many Salemites remember spending hours studying in front of the beautiful painting, which depicted a scene of the southwest corner of Hawley Avenue and East Sixth Street. The tower which originally graced Fourth Street School appears in the background. This was the largest watercolor ever done by Burchfield.

The painting had been in his hands for many years, and he had a deep affection for it. Before the unveiling, he remarked that he "couldn't part with it except to go where it was going." The fact is, it was being donated to the library by one of his mother's friends from childhood. Mrs. Alice Burchfield and Miss Alice MacMillan were members of the Salem High School graduating class of 1878. Charles worked in the MacMillan Book Store while he was going to school.

At the ceremony he was surrounded by friends and admirers who filled the library. G.R. Deming, president of the library trustees, presided over the brief, but very fitting program. Mrs. Frank W. Lease, reference and assistant librarian for 25 years, presented the painting on behalf of Miss MacMillan.

Another participant in the ceremonies was Mrs. W.H. Dunn, a trustee and one of Burchfield's high school teachers. It was she who started the movement to bring a Burchfield painting to Salem.

In her remarks she paid tribute to the artist and his accomplishments, referring to the fact that a Burchfield painting was owned by every art museum of any consequence in the country. She said he had exhibited his works in all the larger museums, and also had exhibitions in London and Paris. Frequently, he served as a judge at important art exhibits.

Burchfield began painting "The Three Trees" in 1932, but did not give it the final touches until 1945. By then only one

tree was still standing, the other two having been felled by a 1925 tornado.

On Jan. 9, 1945 he wrote to Miss MacMillan, and that was the start of negotiations for obtaining one of his paintings for Salem. The letter read as follows:

"Last night I talked with Mrs. Dunn and described to her two or three pictures that I thought might be suitable for the purpose. She thought, and I agree heartily with her, that one I have under way and almost completed — 'The Three Trees' — would be most nearly ideal.

"I can think of no more appropriate place for this picture, which I have painted partly as a monument to my love for Salem, and my life there. In it I would give the lie to, and squelch forever the mistaken notion of certain critics that I hated the city of my early life.

"They got this notion from viewing certain realistic interpretations of mine of some Ohio River industrial towns, which they took to be Salem. I never could convince them they were not Salem, and that I had nothing but affection for my home town.

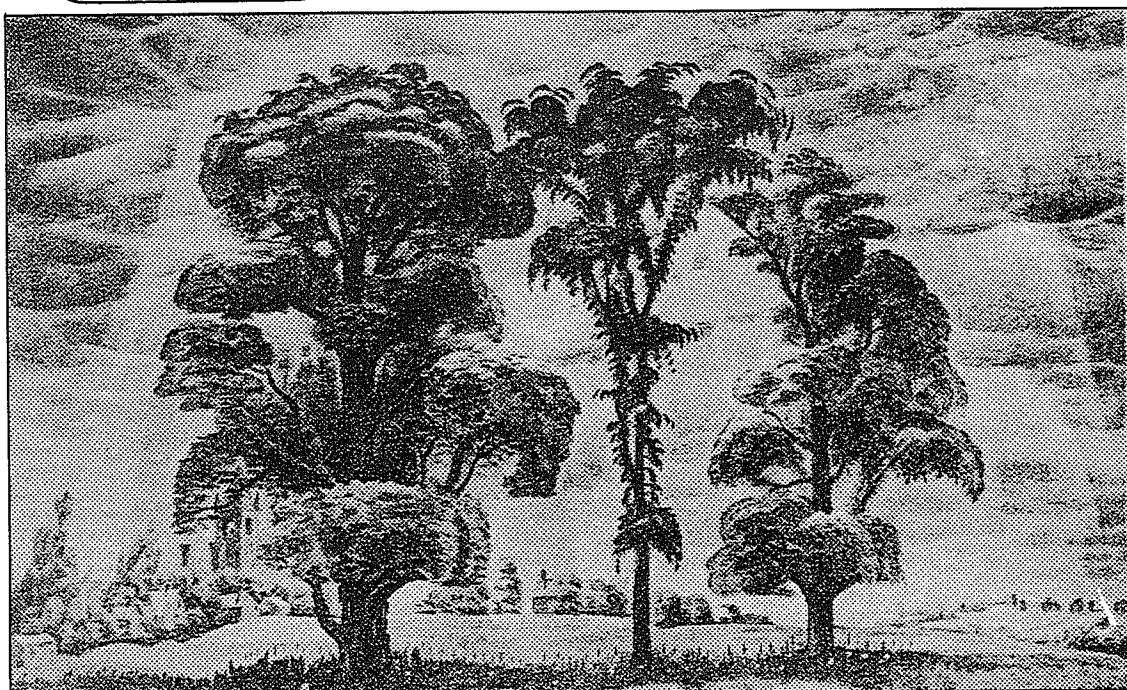
"But back to 'The Three Trees.' When I learned that the tornado of 1925 had felled the two finest of these trees, I was seized with a desire to re-create them in a picture. I mulled over the idea for many years before making an actual start at the painting.

"Fortunately, I had made several drawings, one or two small watercolors, that I could use as material. I started it in 1932, and have worked on it at various times since.

"It is of such a monumental character that it has had to grow slowly. It has now reached the stage where, to the average observer, it would seem to be complete. However, there are a number of loose ends to catch up before I can be satisfied (as nearly as I ever can be with a picture).

"I expect to do that this June (1945). I always have to wait for the season depicted in a picture to work on it. Now as to the picture itself. The three trees themselves, of course, dominate the composition. The point of view is to the east of the trees, looking west-southwest toward Salem. On account of the many trees, with which Salem is so happily blessed, not much of Salem can be seen except on Garfield (North Lincoln) Avenue, and of course the tower of the Fourth Street School building, which used to be such a 'beacon' tower before its removal (in 1923).

"The main motif is simply the three trees, with the field immediately around them. I



The Three Trees

have never seen a more noble growth of trees, and to me they epitomize all that Salem meant to me as a boy and young man.

"The season is June, close to the summer solstice (when the sun is farthest from equator). I have chosen one of those cloudy days in June when the sun is felt almost more than seen. Hidden behind the clouds, it breaks through here and there in long rays, lighting up isolated trees and bits of meadow grass. Against this vast panorama of sky the trees themselves are dark and brooding.

"As an underlying motif, in addition to expressing the mood of childhood when a summer noon seemed endless, I have tried to express the idea of the presence of God, the God-in-nature that Beethoven spoke of often, and wrote one

of his best shorter pieces around.

"So now perhaps you can understand why I feel that Salem is the place that this painting should go to and find a permanent home. And I would hope that it is one that the Salem people, too, would love, and that many of them, like me, have memories tied up with this noble growth of trees."

Many guests at the memorable unveiling ceremony remained long after the program was concluded, studying the painting and talking with Burchfield. Attending were many artists from the Butler Art Institute, Mount Union and Massillon. With Burchfield were his wife and son; his brothers, James and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Burchfield and son from Logan, Ohio; his brother,

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Burchfield and son; and his sister, Miss Louise Burchfield of Cleveland.

At the time, Burchfield's daughter was a student in the art school in Cleveland. His sister, Louise, was assistant curator at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and one of his brothers, Joseph, was a commercial artist in Cleveland.

Today, Burchfield's paintings are found in the collections of leading museums throughout the country, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Art. But to view and enjoy one of his favorite and very special paintings, "The Three Trees," art lovers must come to Salem and visit our public library, where the work was unveiled by the artist himself 47 years ago.

## Exhibit

Continued from page 2

- "Yellow Afterglow," July 31, 1916, watercolor w/pencil, 20 by 14." The west side of Burchfield's home, looking north.
- "Marshy Meadows," 1916., June 30, 1916, watercolor w/pencil, 14 by 20." The location is unidentified.

Also exhibited will be a charcoal drawing titled:

- "Study #1 for Hogan's Alley in spring," 8 1/2 by 10 1/2 inches. Hogan's Alley ran east and west between South Ellsworth and Broadway. Burchfield walked along it every day when he worked at the Mullins Company. Hogan's Alley was also the name of a turn-of-the-century comic strip.
- "Flooded Field," 1920, watercolor, 11 by 19 inches, may have been a view looking towards Salem from the lowlands west of Leetonia. At first glance, you hardly notice the source of the smoke that swirls above the flood. Then a viewer realizes that he's seeing a train

chugging towards the vanishing point on the right side of the painting. The smoke is from the engine.

- "Untitled (walking man)," Jan. 10, 1918, watercolor w/pencil, 18 by 11 1/4 inches, reveals Burchfield's comic touch. The figure appears to be a clown, who for some unknown reason, is out for a stroll.
- "Sleet Storm (after the ice storm)," 1920, watercolor and gouache, 19 by 26 1/2 inches. This painting has been also called "The Rent Collector."

The house is on East Fourth Street, directly across the street from Burchfield's home.

- "Factories," 1920, watercolor, gouache and pencil, 13 1/2 by 29 1/2 inches, according to information at the Burchfield Art Center in Buffalo, was a view from what is now the Timberlans parking lot looking north-west. The east side of the top of the J.C. Penney store is visible, however the other buildings, including the tower of the East Fourth Street School are long gone. Burchfield sometime created composites, placing unrelated structures together for composition reasons. We

welcome elderly Salemites who recall that corner in 1920 to let us know if they can identify the buildings.

- "The Haymow," 1924, wood engraving, 7 by 10 inches, according to Burchfield himself was created from drawings he made at the corner of Vine Street and Sugartree Alley. Burchfield did very few engravings. His former Cleveland School of Art teacher Frank Wilcox, instructed him on engraving methods.

All of the above artworks were loaned for the Salem exhibit by the Burchfield Art Center in Buffalo.

- "Snow Patterns" (1920) is the real masterpiece of the show. "Yesteryears" readers informed us that Burchfield must have been on the fire escape of the now-raised Columbia Street School when he made the sketch for the work, which shows the Bliss Company and other industrial buildings and sheds along South Broadway. The painting was loaned by the Castellani Art Museum in Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Turn to next page

This view of "The Edge of Town," inspired by the buildings on the southwest corner of Broadway and State, can be seen today in Salem. This painting is number one in the series of 35 Burchfield painting sites that follow on the next three pages. The painting is in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Mo.



### Exhibit

Continued from page 4

Nannette Maciejunes, curator of American Art at the Columbus Museum of Art, made arrangements for the Salem Butler Museum to display six unusual drawings that are a bit of a mystery.

In 1919 Burchfield was dissatisfied with the way his artwork was coming out and he destroyed a number of his own works that year. These drawings are either lucky 1919 survivors or they were re-created for his biographer John Baur in the 1950s.

These disturbing works are:

- "A Tree Like a Grinning Skull, and the First Spring-Beauty," ink, charcoal, crayon and pencil; 14 by 12 inches.

- "A Woods Sprawling Like the skeleton of a Prehistoric Monster," charcoal, ink, crayon and pencil on paper, 12 by 14 inches.

- Budding Cottonwoods and

Brick Kilns as if the Branches Were Growing out of the Kilns," charcoal, ink, crayon and pencil on paper; 12 by 14 inches.

- "Birds Driven With Cries of Fear from a Woods by a Rapidly Rising Flood," charcoal, ink, crayon and pencil on paper; 12 by 14 inches.

- "A Bird's Nest with a Bird Just Emerged from an Egg," charcoal, ink, crayon and pencil on paper; 12 by 14 inches.

- "Bird Asleep in a Tree Just Before Dawn," charcoal, ink, crayon and pencil on paper, 14 by 12 inches.

Two major works owned by the Butler Institute will be returned to the Salem branch for the exhibit. They are "Mid-Winter Radiance" and "September, Wind and Rain." Also shown are paintings from area

collectors and even some doodles for which Burchfield was famous. Labels and documenting photographs will accompany the paintings.

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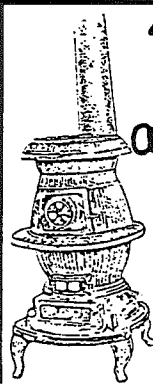


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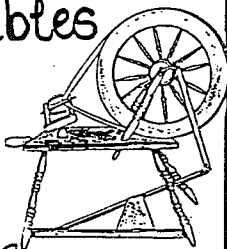
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*During The*

*Charles Burchfield Celebration*

**Inside Bozick's Office Machines**

321 S. Broadway, Salem



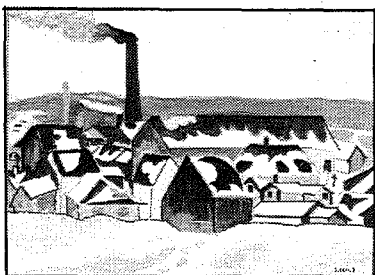


2



"Rising Smoke," 1917  
Page 1, "Watercolors, 1915-20," Kennedy Galleries  
Scene different now.

3



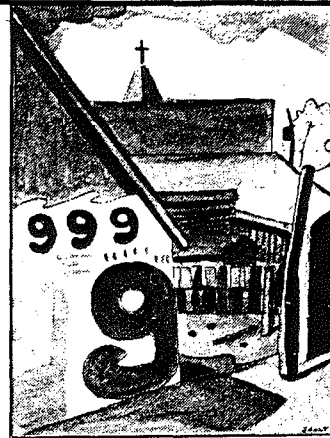
"Snow Patterns," 1920  
Figure 68, Early Works of Charles Burchfield, 1915-1921  
View from now-raised Columbia Street School, at South Lundy and Columbia Street.

4

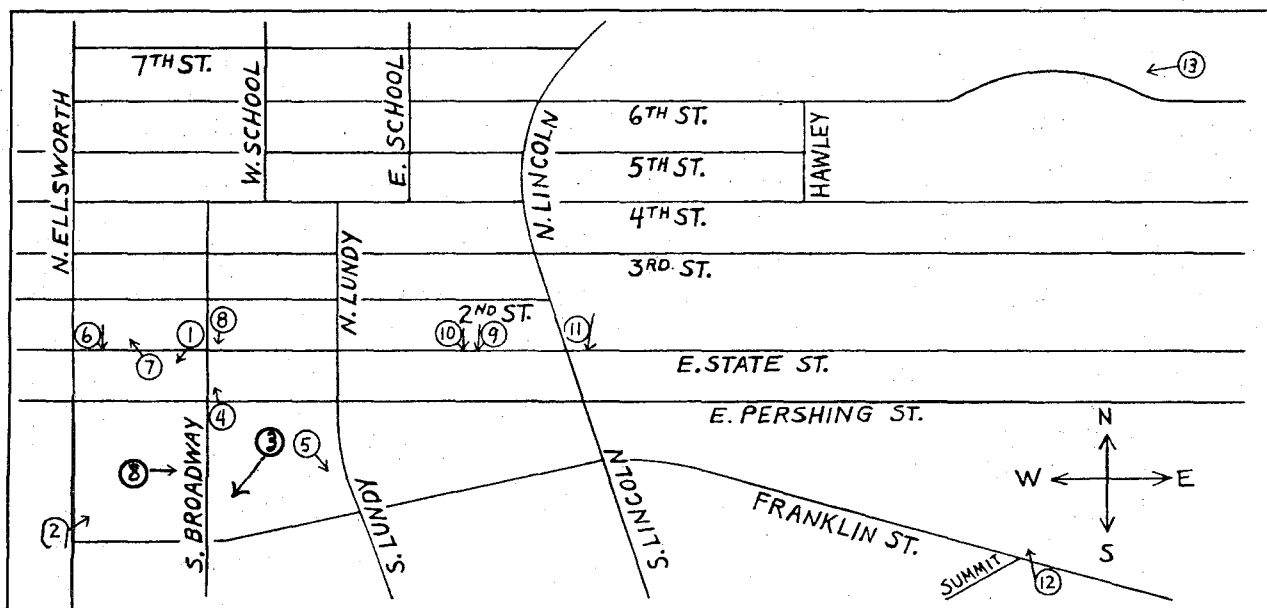


"The Interurban Line," 1920  
Page 20, "Charles Burchfield" by Matthew Baigell  
Buildings on left still identifiable.

5



"Circus Poster 999," 1917.  
Page 27, "Watercolors, 1915-20," Kennedy Galleries  
Buildings in foreground gone; church tower the same.



6



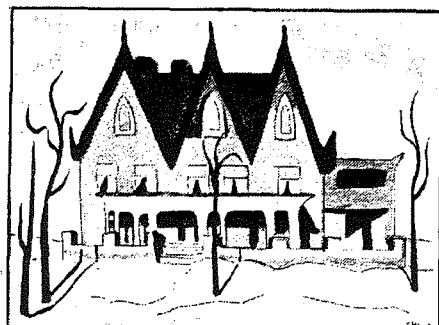
"February Thaw," 1920  
Page 97, "Charles Burchfield, Catalogue of Paintings in Public and Private Collections"  
Fantasy versions of buildings rearranged on State Street.

7



"Main Street, Winter Day," 1917, reworked years later.  
Page 69, "The Inlander" by John I.H. Baur  
Fantasy version with artist's private joke (his birth year, 1893, on building.)

12



"Gothic House," 1920  
Page 108, "The Inlander" by John I.H. Baur  
Except for missing middle gable, structure is the same.

13



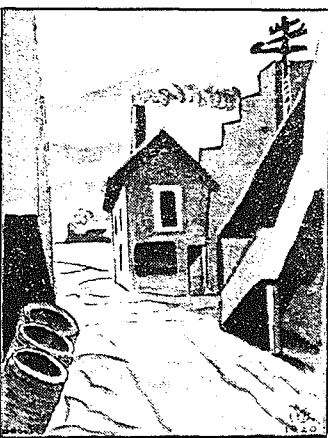
"The Three Trees," 1931-46  
Original at Salem Public Library  
Scene changed; now site of Salem High School.

11



"Church Bells Ringing, Rainy Winter Night," 1917  
Page 37, "Charles Burchfield" by Matthew Baigell  
Fantasy version of former Baptist Church, now Salem Area Chamber of Commerce building.

10



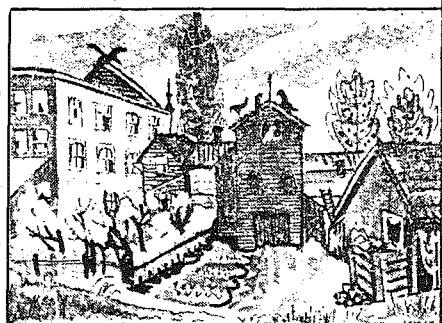
"Twilight in the Alley," 1920  
Plate 9, "The Drawings of Charles Burchfield"  
Stairway on right is still in place on east side of Love's Bakery; center building possibly a relocated Penn Grill.

9



"Three Days of Rain," 1918  
Page 84, "Charles Burchfield, Catalogue of Paintings in Public and Private Collection"  
Appearance of building similar except for ground floor.

8



"Backyard in Spring," 1917-46  
Page 220, "Charles Burchfield, Catalogue of Paintings in Public and Private Collections."  
Scene changed. Building on left was Broadway Hotel, razed in the 1920s. Two buildings adjacent to hotel still exist.

14



"Trees and Roofs," 1915  
Plate 1, "Charles E. Burchfield: Watercolors, Visual Music," Kennedy Galleries.  
Scene basically the same today.

15



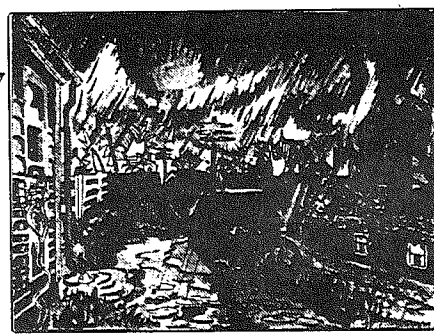
"The Night Wind," 1918  
Page 40, "Charles Burchfield" by Matthew Baigell  
Fantasy version of present building. One of his most famous paintings, now owned by Museum of Modern Art in New York.

16



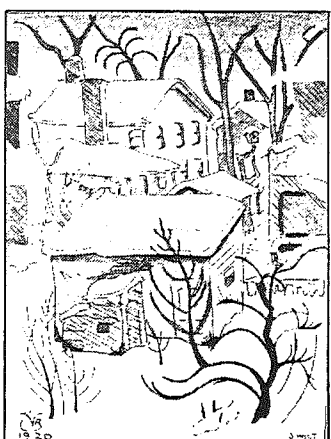
"The Christmas Chimney"  
Plate 33, "Watercolors: Visual Music," Kennedy Galleries.  
Chimney still in place.

17



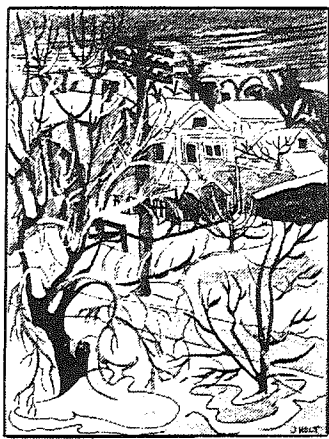
"Night of the Equinox," 1917-55  
Page 173, "Charles Burchfield" by Matthew Baigell  
His boyhood home on left and house with tall chimney on right are still in place.

25



"Gentle Snow Fall," 1920  
Plate 10, "The Drawings of Charles Burchfield"  
Foreground buildings gone, houses still present.

26



"Power Lines and Snow," 1916  
Plate 6, "The Inlander" by John I.H. Baur  
The two houses on the left are still on East Third Street.

27



"Village Lane, Morning Sunlight," 1916  
Page 15, "Catalogue of Paintings in Public and Private Collections"  
Buildings between poles still present.

18



"Sunlight Before The Storm," 1915  
Page 4, "Watercolors, 1915-20," Kennedy Galleries  
Scene similar today.

24

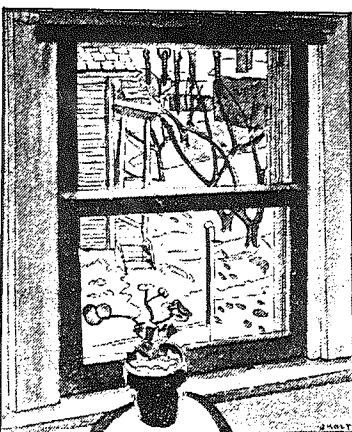
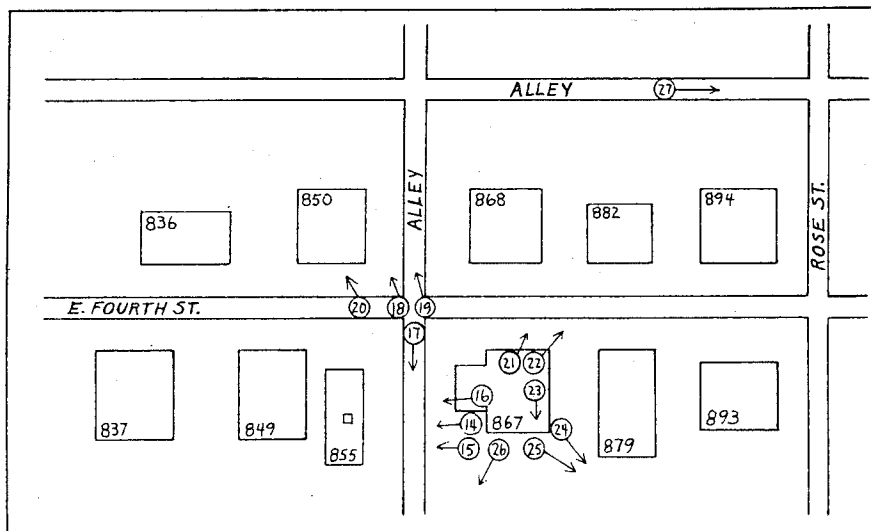


Plate 9, "Watercolors, Visual Music," Kennedy Galleries  
Addition to porch now obstructs view of background.



19



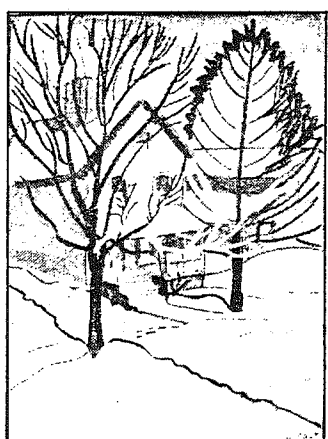
"Wet Winter Dusk," 1916  
Plate 20, "Watercolors, 1915-20," Kennedy Galleries  
Scene similar today.

23



"In the Bedroom Studio," 1917  
Page 59, "The Inlander" by John I.H. Baur  
Room with skylight is still in private residence.

22



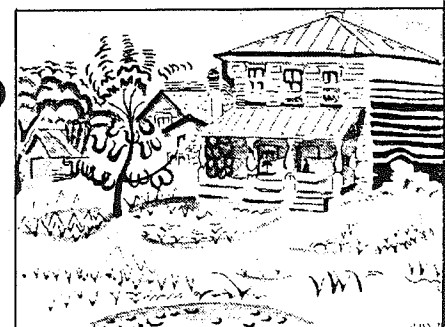
"Noon Sunlight in Winter," 1917  
Page 19, "Watercolors, 1915-20," Kennedy Galleries  
Scene similar today.

21



"Storm," 1917  
Page 69, "The Inlander" by John I.H. Baur  
Scene similar today.

20



"The Song of the Katydid on an August Morning," 1917  
Page 28, "Charles Burchfield" by Matthew Baigell  
Scene similar today.

28



"View Near Salem, Ohio," 1917  
Plate 24, "Charles Burchfield, Kennedy Galleries"  
View similar today.

29



"Pine Hollow in Spring," 1917  
Page 64, "The Inlander" by John I.H. Baur  
Area still has similar appearance.

30

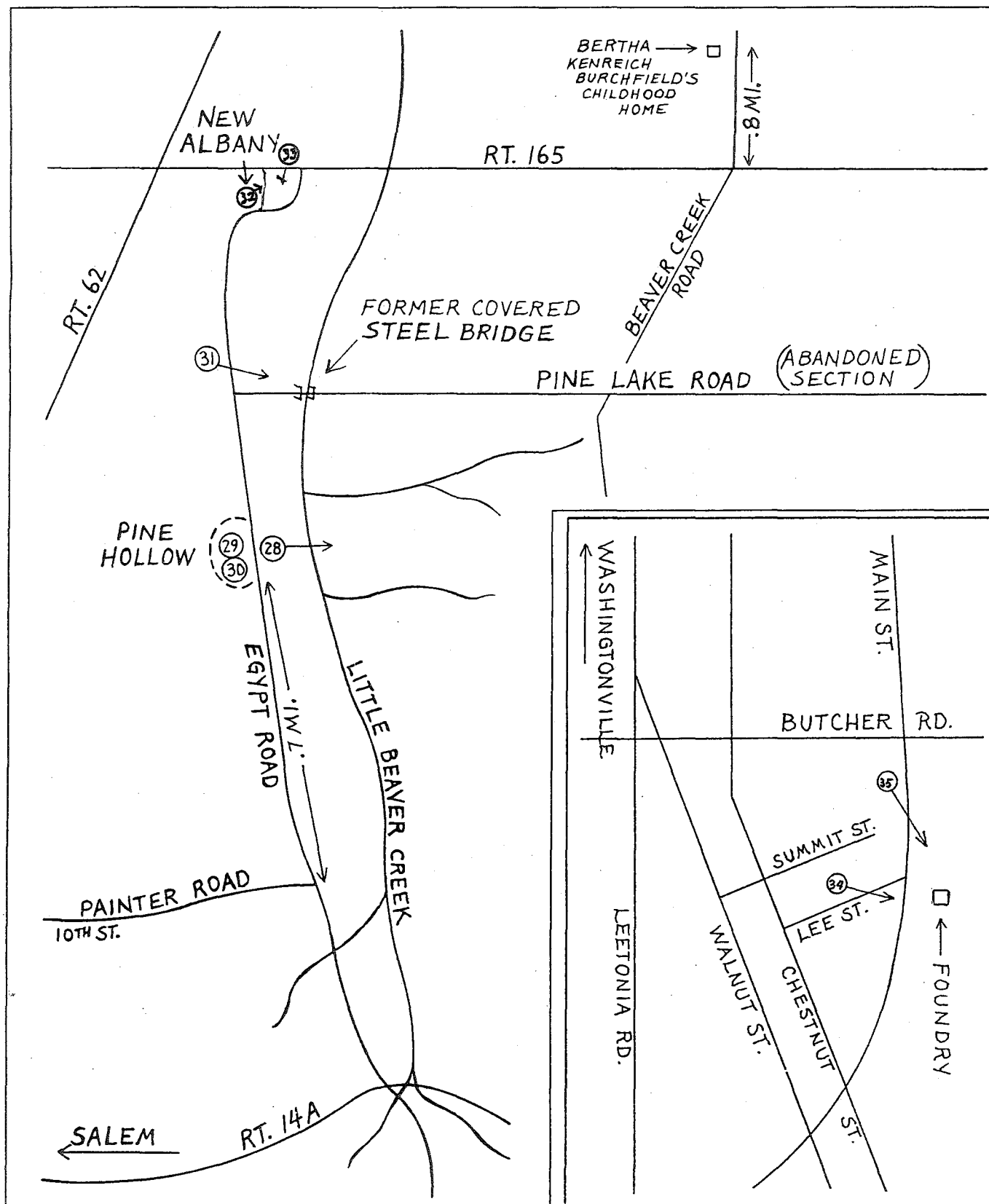


"White Violets and Coal Mine," 1918  
Page 89, "The Inlander" by John I.H. Baur  
Very similar today.

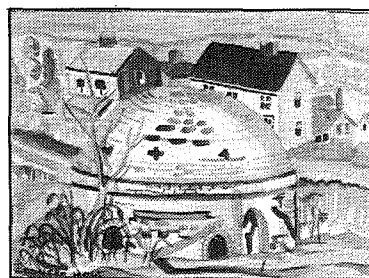
31



"Little Beaver Valley," 1917  
Page 70, "The Inlander" by John I. Baur  
Covered bridge is gone on road now abandoned.



32



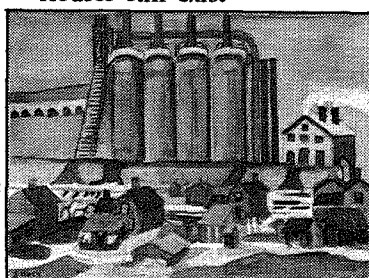
"Building with Domed Top," 1917  
Plate 21, Charles Burchfield Watercolors, 1915-1920  
House on left above brick kiln still exists.

33



"Evening," 1919  
Plate 28, Charles Burchfield Watercolors, 1915-1920  
Houses still exist

34



"Factories," 1919  
Plate 29, Charles Burchfield Watercolors, 1915-1920  
Foundry razed for World War II scrap metal

35



"Star and Fire," 1920  
Plate 22, The Inlander by John Baur  
Remains of coke ovens at Cherry Valley Coke Ovens and Arboretum Park in Leetonia



# Misconceptions plagued Burchfield about his feelings for native town

By Nannette Maciejunes

THE RELATIONSHIP between artists and critics in modern culture reminds one of the old popular song about love and marriage, which jauntily proclaims "you can't have one without the other." Though most artists lament this reality, few have not come to accept the conventional wisdom that even a bad review is better than none at all.

As a commentator and interpreter of the artist and his work, the critic inserts himself into the vital equation that links artists and audience. He asks the initial questions about the artist's work, often presuming in his answers not only to explain what the artist is doing but to declare whether he is doing it successfully.

Critics, who the public perceives as arbiters of quality and taste, can make or break careers. Critics with their own aesthetic agenda — of which there have always been many — can champion or condemn an artist's work for reasons irrelevant of artistic quality. Although the critical response to an artist's work receives during his life does not necessarily reflect what value history will place on the work, it does provide interesting insights into what the artist's contemporaries thought. When followed over the course of a career, criticism can even help explain an artist's checkered fortunes or sustained popularity.

Charles Burchfield made a dramatic, and, for his hometown, a particularly memorable, debut in the New York press, in the early 1920s, as "the young man who lived in Salem, Ohio and hated it." In his commentary on the watercolors Burchfield exhibited at the Sunwise Turn Bookshop and Kevorkian Galleries, critic Henry McBride also described the artist's post 1917 depictions of Salem as savage satires which made "a powerful accusation against our so-called civilization itself." Ignorant of the haunting beauty of many of Burchfield's early 1915 to 1917 watercolors, which would not be seen in New York until 1930, McBride saw in the later paintings "the eloquence of anguish." To his eyes the buildings which filled the paintings were "positively obscene in their wanton disrepair." McBride was so convinced of "Citizen Burchfield's" satirical intent, he even expressed concern for the young artist's "present safety and future spiritual growth" doubting that Salem would allow him to "go on hating her at close range" and worrying if forced to leave the town whether Burchfield could "as effectively hate any other

place."

Although Burchfield publicly denied hating Salem in 1928 — explaining that he had indulged a mental mood of "dissatisfaction with myself and everything about me" only briefly before embracing "the great epic poetry of midwest American life" in early 1920 — McBride remained unconvinced. Dubbing Burchfield's paintings "Songs of Hate," in the pages of the very magazine in which the artist defended himself, McBride reported happily that Burchfield's recent work proved that Buffalo, where the artist moved in 1921, also served his "talent for hating." Though few other critics seem to have wanted to venture into the argument over whether or not Burchfield truly hated Salem, (some preferring to refer to it simply as the artist's "adolescent revolt") it is clear from their comments that most of them saw strong elements of satire and irony in the first works exhibited in New York. This impression lingered in the minds of critics for a number of years. For many the question of how much satirical content any given Burchfield watercolor contained became a point of departure for all discussions of Burchfield's work.

The rumor that Burchfield hated his hometown was not the only misconception about the young artist repeated in the New York press. According to one romantic legend, which followed Burchfield as far as London, England when his watercolors were exhibited there in 1923, he was "a self-taught artist who supported himself by working as a coal miner and who painted pictures of Salem because he must paint something and had no means to go elsewhere." Burchfield tried patiently to put this tale to rest as well in the 1928 article he wrote about himself. Burchfield also enlisted the assistance of fellow painter Edward Hopper to help explain his intentions to the public. In a 1928 article on Burchfield, Hopper foreshadowed much later critical opinion on the artist: "The work of Charles Burchfield is most decidedly founded, not on art, but on life and the life that he knows and loves best. From what is to the mediocre artist and unseeing layman the boredom of everyday existence in a provincial community, he has extracted a quality that we may call poetic, romantic, lyric or what you will." Burchfield returned the favor in 1933 in a insightful essay he wrote for the Museum of Modern Art's Hopper retrospective.

Less flippant critics than McBride immediately acknowledged Burchfield as "a realist of disconcerting frankness"

whose concern was truth and who literary counterparts were Dickens and Balzac. At least one openly conjectured that the Burchfield's depictions of both Salem and Buffalo — a "spectator standing before one of these pictures is so moved by the beauty of Burchfield's truth... as to almost forget all this sordidness and ugliness in the communication spirit of his art its clear intensity, its shining passion."

Although there seems to have been confusion in the early reviews of his work over who Burchfield was and what he was up to, the opinion about his prodigious talent as a painter was nearly unanimous. By any standards the critics agreed he was a painter whose talent was to be reckoned with. Burchfield's willingness to disregard the "rules for the polite usage of watercolors" astonished and delighted most critics. Embracing both the style and expanded size of his watercolors, critics readily accepted Burchfield as an artist "outside the school of watercolor" who, as one critic put it simply, "really paints in watercolor." They magnanimously declared to "permit any use or misuse of the medium he wishes." Only an occasional critic dissented. To critics who favored traditional watercolor, Burchfield's work sometimes seemed heavy and flat. In it, they felt "workmanship" had replaced the "sparkling spontaneity" of watercolor.

One critic even considered the difference of approach and Burchfield's preference for gouache to be signs of limited technical knowledge. When the artist began to exhibit his oils in 1930 many critics were supportive, encouraging Burchfield to explore the medium further since they believed it gave his work even greater "dignity and solidity."

As interest in painting and writing about overtly American subjects strengthened in the late 1920s, critics began to discuss Burchfield as a "pioneer of the American scene," noting that his satire had turned to poetry. They saw in his work a change in mood that reflected their own changing attitude — "He reflects a general change among us in our attitude towards ourselves, our new respect for what we have been and what we are. We restore the once-despised furniture of our parents to favor; he makes works of art from our mongrel architecture, and the homely locomotive steaming through the town, workingmen's simple homes, factories, railroad tracks and semaphore, the entrance to a mine, the ugly little stores

See CRITICS, page 10

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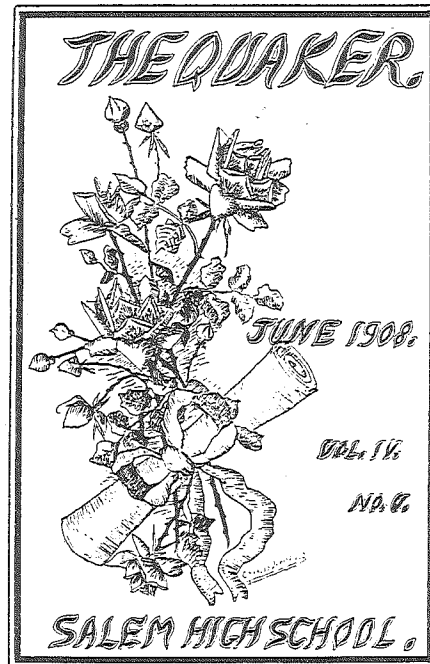


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## Critics

Continued from page 9

with their false fronts." His great achievement to these critics was his ability to provide Americans with a "fresh vision" of themselves — "Suddenly we are cured of our astigmatism and can see the rich colors of the everyday world."

By 1930 Burchfield was regularly heralded in the press as "the 100 per cent American recorder of the American scene." He was seen as the young man who "brought painting down to earth." "A grim gifted independent American who takes nothing for granted" and "painted the country that was in his blood, the Mid-Western environment that had matured his conception of America." In 1934 The New York Times critic, Edward Alden Jewell declared, perhaps rather facetiously, that Burchfield "had made himself the all but undisputed maestro of that redoubtable institution, the freight car."

Jewell went on to note in all seriousness, however, that Burchfield "is really an artist whose interest in subject goes far beneath the surface." Sounding as impudent as ever, Henry McBride joined the chorus of praise again in 1934: "I like

helpless honesty such as his. I like honesty of any sort. I can't always manage it myself, but I certainly like it in others. So the absence of floss and delicate persiflage and double meaning doesn't worry me at all. . . I am more than content with his determined insistence upon the truth and nothing but the truth about Buffalo and places in that neighborhood."

Certain critics were willing to claim something even greater for the artist. One New York newspaper observed: "No American painter has been able to capture and dramatize the mood of contemporary American civilization with the same degree of emotional conviction. . . He has taken the obvious and familiar Main Street, the desolate urban landscape, and our mongrel architecture as subject for his art and transformed it into something epic and universal. Those who sum him up as a cynical realist because he chooses to paint untraditional aspects of the American scene, have missed his essential quality." Hopper had already voiced a similar opinion on Burchfield in 1928: "By sympathy with the particular he has made it epic and

universal."

For those writers who saw in the rising American scene painters a repudiation of the early modernism, of artists such as Dove, Hartley, and Schamberg, Burchfield and Edward Hopper were sarcastically dismissed as having "put into paint" Theodore Dreiser's "descriptive journalism." Incensed by the country's seemingly obsessive search for "The Great American Painter," they bemoaned both the demise of the Burchfieldian vein of satire, and the crowning of Burchfield and Hopper as "our American white hopes" by those they considered national chauvinists.

In the spring of 1930 New York got its first opportunity to see Burchfield's early expressionistic watercolors when the Museum of Modern Art mounted a one-man show of Burchfield's work from 1916 to 1918. Alfred Barr, director of the museum, declared the body of work to be "one of the most isolated and original phenomena in American art. "At least some critics seemed to agree, astounded "to see what veils of mysticism and imagination this pitiless realist has looked through," and fascinated to

realize that "the shacks he now paints with such brutal factuality he then invested with his own fears and joys, making them bewitched or terrible according to his fancy." The primary interest the paintings held for many, however, was the "poignant glimpse" they provided "into the artist's interior growth."

Far more directly influential on critical opinion about the artist was the fact that his dealer, Frank Rehn, began to include Burchfield's recent landscape, many of which were decidedly romantic in mood, in his regular New York gallery shows. Burchfield's landscape,

March, in the December 1930 show suddenly had critics mentioning comparisons with the seventeenth century Dutch landscape master Ruisdael rather than the contemporary American novelist Dreiser. The discovery that Burchfield could also be a romantic pantheist increasingly led critics after 1930 to define Burchfield as a "thoroughly American artist not only because he paints the American scene, but because he combines realism and romance in a characteristically American manner."

Ms. Maciejunes is curator of American Art at the Columbus Museum of Art.



# We salute the 100th birthday celebration of Charles Burchfield and welcome this gala event to Salem, Ohio

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# Center is museum dedicated to artist

## World's largest Burchfield collection is housed there

By Nancy Weekly

**T**HE BURCHFIELD ART Center is both a dedicated and regional museum, housed on the campus of Buffalo State College in Buffalo, New York.

The center possesses the world's largest collection of art and archival materials relating to American watercolorist Charles E. Burchfield (1893-1967), including paintings, drawings, doodles, prints, wallpapers, and commercial designs.

The Burchfield collection surveys his career with childhood drawings (1908-1910), early watercolors that track his stylistic development and emerging symbolism (1915-1919), commercial designs and wallpapers produced at M.H. Birge and Sons Company (1921-1929), realistic urban and rural scenes (1920-early 1940s), and romantic and transcendental landscapes (mid 1940s-1960s).

The Burchfield Archives specialize in manuscript materials

which include 72 autograph journals, 13 art indexes, notebooks, sketchbooks, and correspondence (1,654 letters). The archives also contain his studio equipment, photographs, record albums, memorabilia, and extensive documentary files about his extant work, including the Rehn Archives which contain records from Burchfield's New York dealer, the Frank K.M. Rehn Galleries (1918-1981).

The Burchfield Collection is contextualized by works of his contemporaries, including Rehn colleagues Reginald Marsh and Marsden Hartley, and members of the Buffalo Print Club and the Art Institute of Buffalo. In compliance with Burchfield's wishes, the Center also represents artists who have lived in the Western New York region. The Western New York Collection is comprised of more than 4,500 works spanning 1875-1991 by such artists as: Charles Clough, Nancy Dwyer, Hollis Frampton, Robert Longo,

Arnold Mesches, Steve Miller, Susan Rothenberg, Paul Sharits, Cindy Sherman and Michael Zwack.

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Burchfield's birth, the Burchfield Art Center has organized a traveling exhibition that explores Burchfield's spirituality. Charles E. Burchfield, The Sacred Woods will open June 10 in the Drawing Center in New York City. The exhibition will travel to the Minnesota Museum of Art, Saint Paul, Minnesota on Sept. 10 through Nov. 7; the Burchfield Art Center, Buffalo, on Dec. 11 through Feb. 6, 1994; and the Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, Tenn. on April 3 through May 22, 1994.

The exhibition traces the development of symbolic and stylistic motifs in Burchfield's art beginning in 1915, including his highly inventive "Conventions for Abstract Thought" devised in 1917. It connects Burchfield's artistic origins and evolution to developments in the 19th century art and literature, including pantheism, luminism, romanticism, and transcendentalism. The exhibition culminates with Burchfield's masterful, late rhapsodic watercolor paintings that

celebrate a visionary, transcendental unity with nature.

Works in the exhibition are drawn from collections around the country. Lenders to the exhibition include the Cleveland Museum of Art, Delaware Art Museum, Hunter Museum of Art, Kennedy Galleries, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Charles Rand Penney Collection, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Valparaiso Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Wichita Art Museum, among other institutions and private collectors.

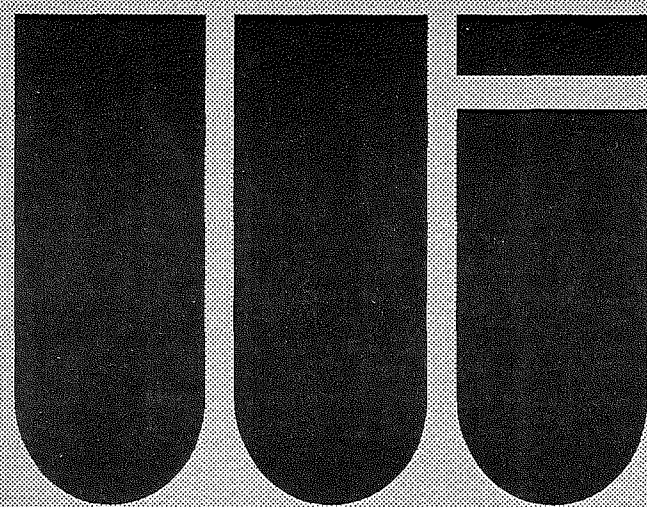
The exhibit will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by the State University of New York Press, including an essay by Nancy Weekly, Charles Cary Rumsey curator of the Burchfield Art Center, who selected the works for the exhibition. The exhibition is made possible with foundation support from the Charles E. Burchfield Foundation and corporate support from the Buffalo News.

On the occasion of the exhibition's premiere, a two-day scholarly symposium will be

held in New York City. Proposed participants include Joseph S. Czeszchowski, director of the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art; Patricia D. Hamm, paper conservator; Donald Kuspit, professor of art at SUNY at Stony Brook; Nannette V. Maciejunes, curator of American Art at the Columbus Museum of Art; artists Charles Clough, Bob Gober, April Gornick, Robert Lobe, and two members of the Burchfield Art Center staff, researcher Robert Slammon and Nancy Weekly.

This Burchfield symposium is the second in an annual series pledged by the center. Last year's symposium was held in the center at Buffalo State College. Three oral history panels were devoted to "Remembering Charles Burchfield, The Man, The Artist, The Teacher." Among those participating were Burchfield's grandchildren, David Richter and Peggy Richter Haug; key center founders, Drs. Paul Bulger and Edna M. Lindemann, and artists who knew or studied with Burchfield. Formal presentations were delivered by scholar J. Benjamin Townsend, collector Charles Rand

See CENTER, page 14



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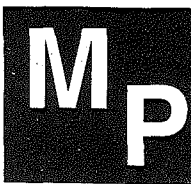
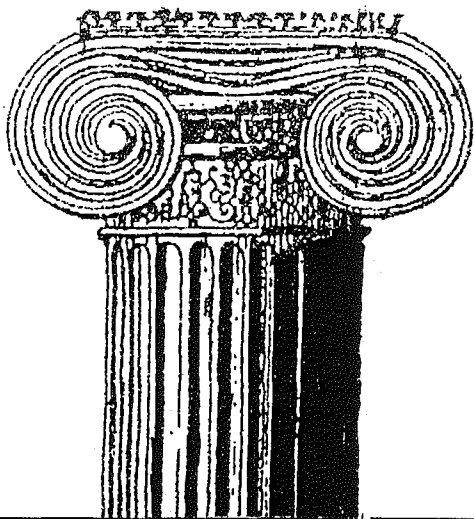
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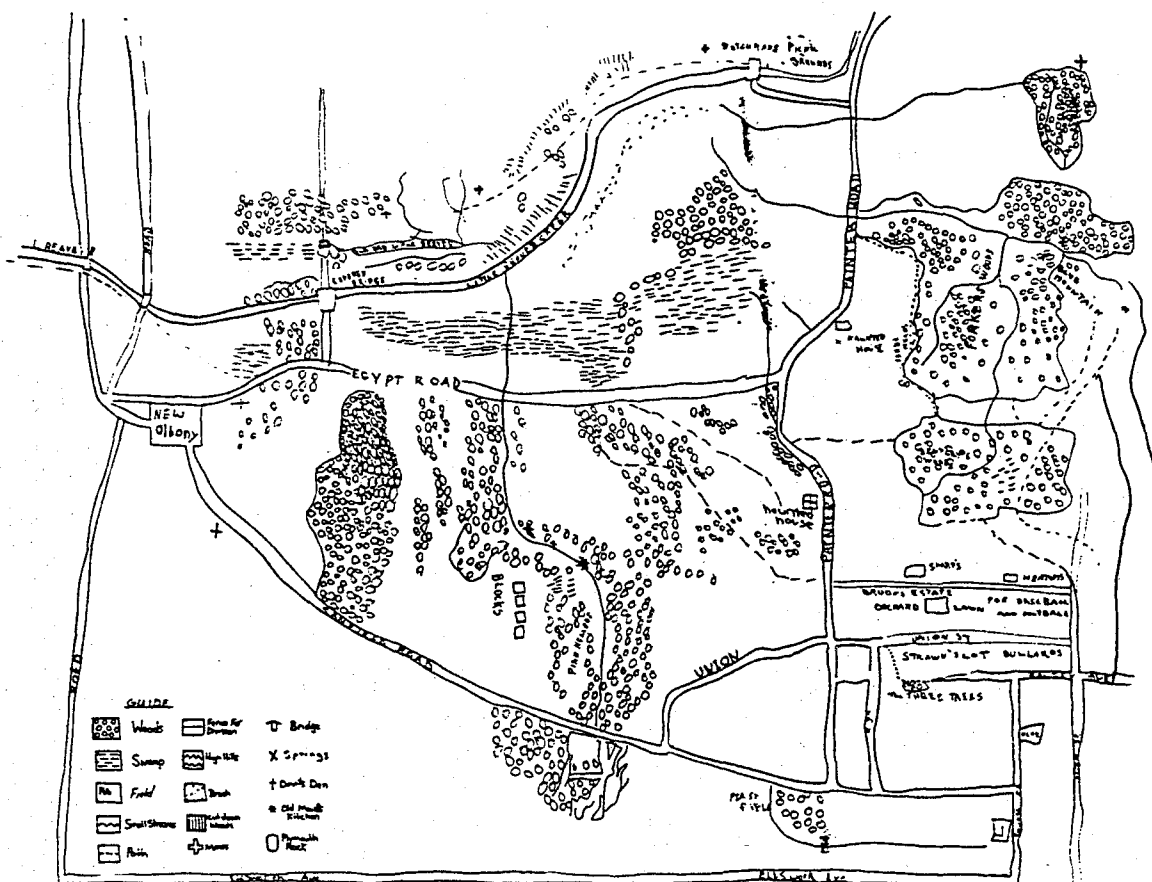


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## Junior High artists recreate map



This recreation of Charles Burchfield's map was drawn by six students in Marilou Polshaw's Salem Junior High School art classes: Tim Lucas, Deanne Brown, Devon Cleland, Casey Ward, Jason Rice and Greg Zeigler. Burchfield himself was possibly a student when he drew the map which shows areas he roamed northeast of Fourth Street home. He took pains to mark the location of coal mines and two sites in Pine Hollow; Old Maid's Kitchen, a room-like section of the ravine; and Devil's Den, an overhanging ledge, under which he liked to sit. The map will be used in the "Burchfield's Homecoming" play.

### Center

Continued from page 11

Penney, art dealer Lawrence A. Fleischman, and conservator Patricia D. Hamm.

As a primary resource center dedicated to the study of Charles Burchfield, the center sponsors important scholarly publications about the artist and his

art. In collaboration with SUNY Press, the center published Charles Burchfield's Journals: The Poetry of Place in 1992. As editor, J. Benjamin Townsend wrote rich, insightful essays to introduce each section of journal selections. The 737-page volume is organized thematically with entries progressing chronologically in each section, supplemented by 41 color plates and 131 black and white illustrations. With this book, Dr. Townsend has set the pace for future Burchfield scholarship.

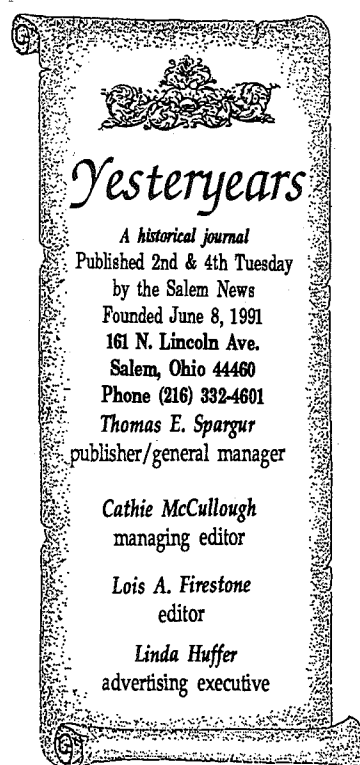
Upcoming publications include a complete, fully illustrated catalogue of the center's Burchfield collection. Burchfield's art in all media will be discussed thematically in essays written by J. Benjamin Townsend, Nancy Weekly and Robert Slammon. Projected topics include an investigation of recurring symbols and motifs as they relate to modernism, synesthesia and the influence of music, popular culture and its influence on the design of wall-papers, temporality and the staging of seasonal change, and the use of memory and dreams in fantasy compositions.

The Burchfield Art Center also plans the publication of a

newsletter for Burchfield collectors to be released later this year. Robert Slammon is editor. Burchfield newsletter articles will report upcoming national events such as exhibitions and symposia, excerpts from Charles Burchfield's Journals, auction prices and sales of works, a column on financial advice for art collectors, and information about conservation of works on paper.

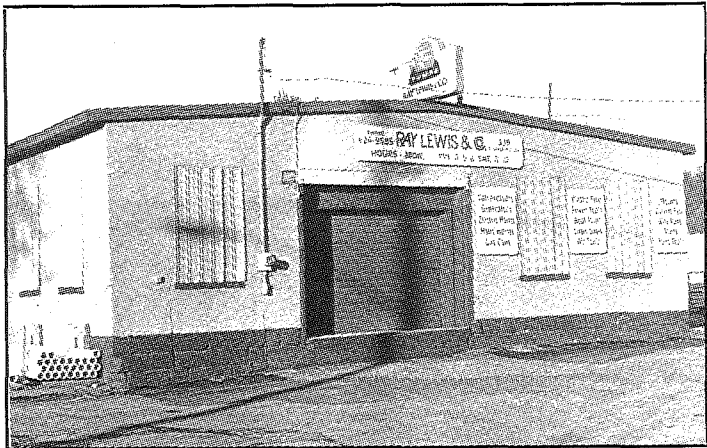
The Burchfield Art Center's mission is to collect, exhibit, preserve, and promote the art of Charles Burchfield. The center strives to provide an educational service in conjunction with its museum role. For example, the Education Department is culminating a year-long collaborative project with Clarence Senior High School focusing on students' interpretation of Burchfield's works through various media, including holograms, computer graphics, videos, photographs, and watercolor paintings. The public is invited to participate in its programs and to view its exhibitions. Scholars are invited to use the center's Burchfield Archives.

Ms. Weekly is curator at the Burchfield Art Center in Buffalo, New York.





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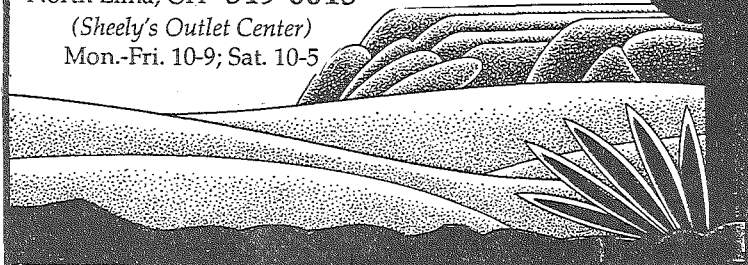
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# Rare Burchfield family photos published here for the first time

By Dick Wootten

THANKS TO TIM BURCHFIELD, nephew of Charles Burchfield and son of the artist's younger brother Fred, early photos of the Burchfield family in Salem are being reproduced here for the first time.

"As my dad's brothers and sisters passed away, the family photographs were passed on to the survivors," explained Tim Burchfield, who now lives in Delaware, Ohio. "My aunt Louise was the last of that generation to die. When she passed away in 1982, the photos came to me. I thought the Salem Historical Society should have copies of them and the Charles Burchfield Centennial is an appropriate time to see that they get them."

The Burchfield Room of the Salem Historical Society on South Broadway across from City Hall will be open Saturday, April 17 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Janice Leshner will serve as guide to visitors. The room has examples of Burchfield prints, wallpaper, publications and photos of paintings and painting sites.

The Burchfields of Salem were remarkable people. Charles Burchfield arrived here at the age of 4½ in 1898 with his three brothers and two sisters and their mother, Alice Mur-



Pictured about 1915 are Charles (left), Frances, Louise and Fred.

phy Burchfield, who was a Salem native. They had been living in Ashtabula when Alice's husband, William Charles Burchfield, died at the age of 38.

Alice's two bachelor brothers, Samuel (1854-1938) and James (1858-1940), bought the family a five-room house on East Fourth Street.

Alice's oldest son, James (1882 — 1956) went to work as a coremaker at the Deming Company to provide an income for the transplanted family. Next, Fances (1886 — 1933) went to work. By 1917 she was employed as a clerk at the

Brian Dry Goods store on Broadway. That same year, Louise (1888 — 1982) was manager's clerk at the Central District Telephone Co. Joe (1890 — 1952) worked at Atchinson's drug store. Charles was doing errands at the Hawkins Drug Store when he was in the seventh grade and was later to work at the Mullins Company off and on from his high school years until he left town for Buffalo in 1921.

Charles was the first in the family to complete high school. He graduated from Salem High School in 1911 as valedictorian. Then in 1912 he entered the Cleveland School of Art. A year later Joe joined him there. Joe's course of study led to him becoming a commercial artist and then the advertising manager of the George H. Bowman Co. in Cleveland.

Fred (1896 — 1961), Joe and Charles all joined the army during World War I. Charles never made it to France. He was attached to field artillery at Camp Jackson in South Carolina and later was transferred to a camouflage section. Fred served in the Third Battalion, 1st Gas Regiment.

Joe was in the Medical Corps, 16th Infantry, First American Division. During the battle of Soissons, he was in the thick of the fighting, helping the wounded. He was shot in the hip, but after a hospital stay, returned for the battle of St. Mihiel. In October, 1918 he received the Distinguished Service Cross "for extraordinary heroism in action throughout the operations south of Soissons, France, 18-22 July, 1918." The citation continued, "During the entire operations he repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire in order to dress and evacuate the wounded. On July 22 he went through a heavy enemy barrage to render first aid to the wounded in the front lines and to evacuate



Joe is kneeling. Standing from left to right are their mother Alice with a cat, Jim, Fred, Frances, Charles, Ruth (Joe's wife), Irma (Fred's wife). The photo was probably taken about 1933.

Turn to next page



**Photos**  
Continued from page 16

them to the rear, and was himself wounded while engaged in this work."

June, 1933 was an especially sad month for the family. Frances, at age 47, died and then nine days later, her mother passed away.

Fred became an educator. He graduated from Oberlin College and earned his master's degree at Ohio State. He taught school in Mantua and Logan before taking a position with the Veteran's Administration in Athens from 1946 to 1950. He returned to teaching in Ironton and then in 1953 came home to Salem. When he died in 1961, he was teaching at Salem High School and was school treasurer.

Louise left Salem in 1923 to become an assistant in the registration department of the Cleveland Museum of Art. She took courses in art and languages at Cleveland College and Western Reserve University graduate school. As associate curator of paintings, she was in charge of a collection of portrait miniatures. She wrote numerous articles on the subject.

While her artist brother Charles chose to stay in America, Louise traveled abroad a number of times. She reviewed artworks assembled by Queen



*Burchfield siblings and friends are pictured enjoying an outing in a field. From the left are Frances, Louise, Joe, unknown, unknown, Charles (on top) and Fred.*

Wilhelmina in the Netherlands and those in the Rosenberg Castle in Copenhagen and Frederiksborg Castle in Nyburg, Denmark. In 1952 she won a Guggenheim Fellowship, which allowed her to study in Europe.

She was the first staff member of the Cleveland Museum to win a Guggenheim.

There was a running interest in the Salem Alumni Association throughout the family. Their mother, Alice, who gra-

duated from Salem High in 1878, was active in the formation of the association. When Fred and Louise died, it was requested that donations be given to the Salem High School Alumni Scholarship Fund.

Scholarships also ran in the family. Charles won the first alumni scholarship in 1911. He received \$120 and although some of his teachers were hop-

See PHOTOS, page 20

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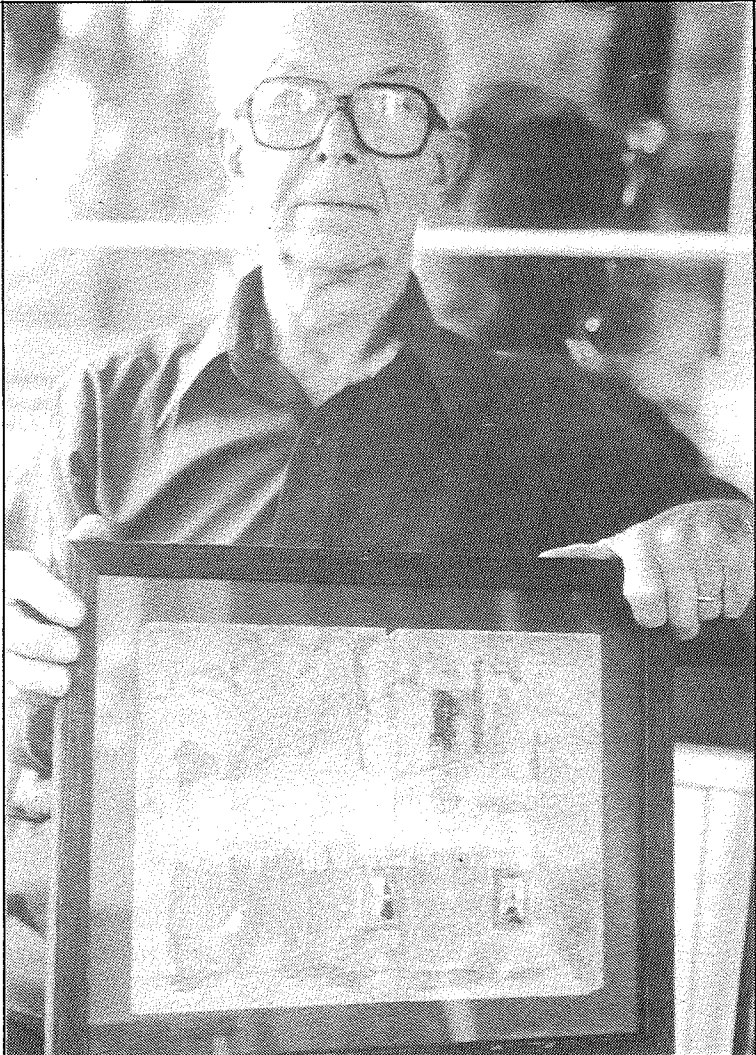
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# Burchfield scribed letters to his friend Don Smith

**By Barbara Zeigler**  
**D**ONALD JOSEPH SMITH lived a couple of doors away from Charles Burchfield and was his friend.  
 During the "golden year" of the artist's career — 1917 — he produced over 165 paintings while working full time at the Mullins Company five days a week and a half day Saturday.  
 Burchfield explained how he fit it all in this way:  
 "I had one and a half hours for lunch, I allowed a half hour to walk to and from the office, fifteen minutes to eat, which

left forty-five minutes to do a quick sketch. The materials of the evening's work I gathered on my walks to and from work. Often at night I had to bathe my eyes in cold water to keep awake. There was so much to say and so little time."  
 There was "so little time" for the paintings done in a corner of his small bedroom, but time enough to write to a small neighbor, 7-year-old Donald "Josh" Smith.  
 A letter dated July 18, 1917: "Dear Donald, It has seemed a week since you went away. I miss you a whole lot so you'll have to hurry back. I don't know whether I'll be able to come down Saturday or not, so don't be too disappointed if I don't come. If you stay down till after two o'clock tomorrow (that's Friday) afternoon you will win your bet. And the sketch will be waiting for you when you come back. Major and the black dog were over here today playing. Herbert was in tonight on a visit. Louise is going to Cleveland Saturday. Have you been in swimming yet, and have you made a picture of the falls yet? Well I am sleepy so I must go to bed. Yours with love, Charlie."  
 The sketch to which Burchfield refers in this letter was a portrait he had done of Donald. (eds note: Herbert was

probably Herb Bush, the boy next door, and Louise was his sister).  
 A letter written on W.H. Mullins Company letterhead stationery and dated Sep. 26, 1917: "Dear Donald: — I am sending you and Helen and Wilfred three puzzles. I bet you a penny each you can't put them together. Put the side with the cross on X on the underside and see what you get. I hope all the Polyomyelitis germs leave town soon so you can get out and play. Charlie — P.S. This isn't the letter I spoke of. There ought to be another one come."  
 Helen and Wilfred were Donald's sister and brother.  
 Three-year-old Wilfred was the subject of a letter postmarked Nov. 23, 1917: "Dear Donald, I got your letter and was glad to hear from you. What are you doing? I suppose the time goes slow for you. I hear that Wilfred held mother up yesterday morning. I hope I don't meet him in the dark for he might scare me to death. (Note: Wilfred had, Don says, a toy gun with which he "held up" Mrs. Burchfield.) I have some black paper that you can have and a white pencil to draw with. When you come up Saturday ask mother for them. I am going to Ashtabula tomorrow and so I won't be here to see you; but I'll be back Sunday night so you can come and see me then. Tell Helen not to dare to get the chicken pox — Good-bye — Charlie."



Don Smith holds a precious drawing he's kept over the years since as a youngster he lived near Charles Burchfield. The two drew this scene of the Weaver home together and it's signed by both.

In July 1918, Burchfield was called for military service and sent for his training to Camp Jackson in South Carolina. On the train down, he had his first taste of army language, about which he wrote: "It is not enough to have high standards of speech, moral conduct and purity of thought — it must be learned how to preserve these intact when thrown among those who have the basest, or no standards at all." Army life made a very bad first impress-

ion on Burchfield, but later, when he was transferred to the Camouflage Corps, he seemed to tolerate it well. His commanding officer, also an artist, gave Burchfield opportunities to sketch and the work of the corps, itself, was interesting and sometimes quite humorous — Burchfield recalled the visit of a major who spurred his horse over one of the corps'

Turn to next page

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## Letters

Continued from page 18

artificial hills with disastrous results!

### Army Life Photos

Letter of Aug. 1, 1918, on military stationery which had photos of army life as letter-head: "Dear Donald: We haven't done anything like the picture above yet; when we go to dinner we have to line up in long lines and march into the mess house and stand at tables until all are in. Then we sit down and everyone grabs everything; and if you don't get anything the first time you have to sit and suck your thumb. How would you like that? For two weeks after we come down we are kept in quarantine. None of us are allowed to leave the company street. The company street is about a hundred feet long so you can see how many square miles we can wander around in. We just received our uniforms the other day. Most of them were misfits. My coat fits me about like an overcoat for an elephant would do as a vest for a flea. I could put both legs in one of my leggings, and both feet in one of my hike-shoes. Don't you think I would look pretty in such an outfit. These suits are just for the time being. When we are put in a regular company we will have suits to fit us. Until then I can't have a picture taken but when I do I'll

be sure and send you one. The sun down here at six o'clock in the evening is four times as hot as it is in Salem at noon. We have nothing but pine trees and sand here. Wilfred and Dale (Leeper) wouldn't know where to start to make a sand pile, there's so much of it. Well, there goes our call, Donald. I'll have to run. Be sure and write to me. Address your letter very carefully in the order I have it below. Remember me to all your folks — Charlie. 156th Depot Brigade, camp Jackson, S.C. Co. H. 2nd Prov. Reg."

Postcard dated Aug. 12, 1918: "Dear Donald, Monday morning. I am going out in a minute to sketch. Isn't that just fine? I saw a big brown beetle last night that had horns like a reindeer. As soon as I get my full equipment I will have my picture taken. Remember me to all the folks. Charlie. Hq. Co. 15th Bn. F.A.R.D., Camp Jackson, S. Carolina."

Postcard dated August 23, 1918: "Dear Donald: How are you? I got your letter and will look for another one. Say Don Jarsh, I lost the picture you sent of you and me. Could you send me another one? I want one very much. I am studying mostly now and listening to lectures. I hope we go across soon — give my love to all the folks — Charlie."

### On YMCA Stationary

Letter written on YMCA stationery and dated Sep. 14, 1918: "Dear Donald: I have been intending to send you my picture for some time but have

been transferred twice in the last few days so you can see how busy I have been. I am now in the Camouflage Dep't, where I have been for about a week. I don't know yet how I am going to like it as I haven't had much to do yet. I did help daub up a gun to make it look like a raspberry bush in a storm. I got your letter with the two snap-shots in it. Thanks very much. I see Wilfred is already learning how to 'salute'. My old company is leaving for France tomorrow — I wish almost that I were going along, but if I can go over in the camouflage I will be satisfied. Anything just so I can get over and help your Uncle Bryan and Joe get to Berlin. I hear you are raising a pompadour? Look out, it might develop into a layback! Well Donald Jarsky the way the Americans are going thru it looks as tho I might soon be at home once more. Then we'll have a picnic in the woods won't we? It's pretty near time for mess so I'll say goodbye. Write soon again — Charlie — If you hang the picture in your room you'll have bad dreams."

Postcard written Nov. 7, 1918: "Dear Donald: Your letter a little late as it was sent to the wrong address. I am glad Helen won the prize. I hope you can soon start to school again. Give my love to all. Charlie."

This story appeared in Barbara Zeigler's "Looking Back" column in the Thursday, May 12, 1983 issue of the Salem News.

# The day mam'selle carried the banner

By Lois Firestone

THE AERONAUTIC show was a major attraction at Salem's annual homecoming on Oct. 7 and 8, 1910.

Theresa Broadwick was one of the stars and performed derring-do as they traveled from town to town. Billed as "Mademoiselle" Broadwick, her act was to ascend in the air sitting on a trapeze, attached to a limply hanging parachute. That in turn was fastened to a hot air balloon to be released by pulling a cord. She would go up to a certain height, pull the cord and float gracefully to the ground (if she was lucky, since there wasn't much leeway with the buildings, houses and telegraph wires below).

Bill Kirst and Charles Burchfield, high school chums, talked Theresa into carrying

their class pennant on her lift-up — the jump was a success and the elated boys "passed the hat" and bought her a box of candy.

She wasn't as lucky on her second jump and was burned severely when she landed on telegraph wires.

Years later, Charles was watching the TV show, "To Tell the Truth." Three elderly women claimed to be "Tiny" Broadwick, the first person to parachute from a plane in 1913. He recognized her immediately. "I wonder if I would have believed that 53 years later I would see her on a 'contraption' known as TV," he wrote, "still looking very petite and...very much a doll (incidentally, the 4 panelists all chose her as the real astronaut)."



Charles Burchfield "Weaver's Chimney"

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## Charles Burchfield

and welcomes his family to the  
city on this special occasion.



Charles Burchfield is shown here at peak of his fame in his Gardenville, New York studio behind his home. He left Salem in 1921 to work as a designer for the M.H. Birge and Sons Wall Paper in Buffalo. In 1925 he moved from Buffalo to Gardenville, where he lived the rest of his life. He left the job in 1929, the year of the stock market crash, to live solely from his artwork.



Photo of Charles in his 20s, possibly taken in Salem in front of the family's grape arbor.

## Photos Continued from page 17

ing he would use it to continue studying Latin, he applied it towards art school.

Fred's son Tim won a \$400 alumni scholarship in 1960 and Tim's daughter Joan won a \$4,000 scholarship in 1987.



This photo of Charles may have been taken at the Cleveland School of Art between 1912 and 1916.

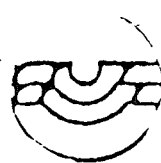
## Comments on Charles Burchfield

From Edward Hopper: "Burchfield has exacted a quality that we may call poetic, romantic, lyric or what you will. By sympathy with the particular, he has made it epic and universal."

From John Baur, Whitney Museum of Art: "Nature acted upon Burchfield like a catalyst, stimulating his imagination, memory and emotion, and releasing a vein of fantasy quite unique in our art. No realist painter of the century got as near to nature or found in it so profound a source of inspiration."

From Catherine Burchfield Parker, daughter of Charles Burchfield: "My father's paintings were called Expressionistic Fantasy, Romantic Realism and Symbolist Art. He never felt the need to travel to paint. He never went to Europe. In fact, he had to stay in a spot for a long time to get the feel of the place before he could paint it. He kept his boyhood memories of Salem alive, and Salem themes kept showing up in his art right up to the end. Nothing he saw was bland to him. Everything evoked strong emotions. He saw an old house and gave it a face and a mood. It was as if everywhere he looked he just said, 'Wow!' "

From Paul Travis, classmate, teacher at Cleveland Institute of Art: "Burchfield was undoubtedly the greatest artist America has ever produced."



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# Charles Burchfield speaks to fellow graduates

## FRIENDS PACK M.E. CHURCH

(Continued From First Page.)

sis, spoke holding the undivided attention of his audience throughout.

An extract from Mr. Kirt's oration had been prepared, but The News regrets to state that it has been unavoidably crowded out of this issue and it will appear in Saturday's issue.

This oration was followed by one that showed equal preparation and thought. Charles E. Burchfield, recipient of first honors of the class of '11, chose for his subject, "The Evolution of Art," a subject treated in a manner that reflected much credit upon the young graduate. An extract from this oration follows:

### The Evolution of Art.

"Milton once remarked that 'the lyric poet may drink wine and live generously, but the epic poet, he who shall sing of idealism, must drink water out of a golden bowl.' In painting, as well as in literature, the production of the artist is the expression of his mind and unless he 'drink water out of a golden bowl' there will be no spiritual loftiness in his art. Since man first began to express his ideals in painting, there have been thousands of painters, but few artists, for, as Ruskin says, 'no false man can paint.' Mere perfection of technical skill does not constitute art; it is the soul, the aspiration and the personality of the artist reflected in his art that makes up the greatness of his work. One artist, Andrea Del Sarto, who lived during the Renaissance, the greatest period of art development, is generally conceded to be the faultless painter among painters; yet because his art lacked sincerity of purpose, his name remains unspoken. There may be many ideals in art, for no two characters are alike. Three men might paint the same scene, and the results of all be different, since every real

artist has a certain individuality which distinguishes his work from any other. In the beginning of art, there was lacking a true ideal and real individuality. As centuries went on, however, these qualities were gradually infused into the art, by a slow growth of artistic ideals that may be called the evolution of art.

"In the first stirrings of an impulse to art in all ages a remarkable harmony may be observed since art is the universal language and its ideals in the beginning are everywhere the same. In the first awakening to art, man was not civilized enough to have a desire for an idealization of his beliefs or of things around him, and therefore he turned to decoration as the expression of his artistic emotions.

"But the development of an individual expression and the realization of a true ideal, which are the jealous possessions of later artists, are not found in early art. True enough, Egyptian art was perfect in decorative ideals, but as far as the pictures represent the soul and thoughts of the artists, they all might have been drawn by one man; for there is a general sameness, formality and conservatism about them that prevents Egyptian art from becoming true art with true ideals.

"While Egyptian art was stiff and formal, certain grace of expression existed in the ideal of the Grecian, Roman and early Christian era of development—the ideal of religion. The Greek pagan faith was a worship of nature—nature modified and spoiled to suit their ideals; a glorification of humanity—humanity with all of its merits and none of its faults, and an exaltation of physical and moral perfection—perfection that was unnatural. With these exalted ideas of religion to guide them, the Greek artists strove to attain that almost unattainable glory—perfection of beauty—

beauty for the sake of their religion. In the realization of this ideal in the hundreds of truly wonderful statues, modeled on these lofty ideals which they left behind them, their art began to ascend the height of the perfection of beauty. Then when it had attained the summit and soared in its lofty upper air, it fell into inevitable decline. Greek art declined because it did not embody a true ideal, but before its final ruin was complete, the Romans came, wondered at and copied it, ideals and all. The glory of Greek art was thus prolonged several centuries, until the Christians infused into it their Biblical ideals; ever divine they made it the ideal was still innatural and when finally a love of pomp crept into their art, it perished.

"For many years after the Dark Ages had brought about the decline of the art of Romans, art in general had been obscured by low ideals, but now at the beginning of what is known as the Renaissance it was bursting forth into a newer and more splendid ideal. Renaissance means 'rebirth,' but in art it was not a rebirth of the old forgotten ideals for a new inspiration was urging on the artists of this period. This was an ideal of beauty—beauty not for the sake of decoration, nor for the sake of religion, but for its own sake. Artists had learned to turn their glance inward, probing the soul's most hidden mysteries. Instead of faces which merely expressed the joy of living in a joyous world, we find countenances in which are depicted all the passions of humanity, its most secret instincts; its innocent aspirations. It was no longer the aim of the artist to find a type, but his effort was given up to his desire to represent individual beauty.

"The art of an age must embody its ideals; the modern age is filled with new theories of social and political betterment and painting is necessarily not the highest form of expression. Yet modern art is greater

than all preceding arts by reason of its ideals. It is not the ideal of formal decoration, which was that of the Egyptians; it is not the ideal of serene beauty for the sake of religion, which was that of the Greeks; it is not the ideal of spiritual loftiness and detachment from human affairs, which was that of the Middle Ages; it is not the ideal of intellectual freedom, splendor and grace, which was that of the Renaissance. But it is a worship of nature and a worship of humanity, with all its faults and weaknesses which is stirring the modern artist to work. Nature is better understood today than formerly, for in attempting to interpret her moods, the artist and poet cast aside all reserve and give themselves up to her entirely. This is why a Turner, a Delacroix, a Rousseau or a Millet say something to us in their art which even the greatest landscape masters of preceding centuries have not said and cannot say. To those who know how to read it, modern art reveals every shade of feeling, every shade of thought, every aspiration of the time which it represents. The true glory of modern art is that it has been colored throughout with an ardent love and sympathy for humanity as it is, with a true sense of the beauty that is in it, not because it may be lifted by genius, by heroism, by spiritual or physical

beauty, to heights above the common level of man, but just because there is reflected in it the true emotions of the human soul.

"Such, through the evolution of art, has been the development of the ideal, of the motive of the artist—and of the mind and soul of the artist. It is the aim of the true artist to appeal to his countrymen's minds by expressing ideals of spiritual loftiness in his pictures and when there is little crime to contend against there is no inspiration in humanity for him, but mere beauty. The Egyptians strove against the evils of their time by elegant decorations; the Greeks by the realistic beauty of their art; the early Christians by their Biblical art; the Renaissance artists by the mere beauty of their art. In all of these periods the artist lived in conditions which were denominated by barbarous crimes, but his ideal conquered, and whatever his message to his times, he was able to express it in his work. The modern age is one of more enlightened and peaceful civilization and the artist finds himself influenced by a worship of nature and humanity, in which after all he finds his most sincere aspiration, from which will be evolved in future ages the perfect art which will be the expression of a perfect ideal.

Reprinted here is the text from Charles Burchfield's speech to his 1911 Salem High School graduating class which appeared in the June 16, 1911 edition of the Salem News (see Front Page from the Past section on pages 12 and 13 in this issue). Regrettably, the type is smaller and may be difficult to read; however, we wanted to reprint the speech in its entirety and in its original form.

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## Fourth was typical of 1900s neighborhoods

By Lois Firestone

**S**ALEM IN THE 1900s was an ideal place to grow up — its hard working inhabitants passed on a strong work ethic to their children, along with an ability to enjoy a full life with simple diversions.

With a population of only 5,000, most everyone in town knew everyone else — or at least knew who people were talking about when someone's name was mentioned. Every Saturday night, people came downtown to "see the sights," wander through the dry goods store or buy an ice at the drug store — and stop at the corner of Main and Broadway to watch the medicine man sell his Kickapoo Indian snake oil, a cure-all for a myriad ailments.

After school and during the sultry summer months, the town's youngsters roamed freely and spent a lot of time hanging upside down from the hitching post pipes that ran along Main Street, waiting for the fire bell to clang or the arrival of the Stark Electric car.

Henry Ford's marvelous invention was giving people the chance to explore outside their cities. But few could afford one of the prized Model Ts so people walked to where they had to go — their everyday lives were focused mostly on the families who lived nearby.

If Salem's downtown was typical of 1900s small towns, then East Fourth Street, a modest section northeast of town, personified the era's neighborhoods.

Most women stayed at home to keep house unless they were widows or "maiden ladies." East Fourth Street had five such women making it on their own in 1917. Laura Brown decorated stoneware at the Salem China, Cathrinne Diville toiled at the Kirkbride Laundry, Mary Jane Martin packed novelties at the George Bowman Co., Minnie Bush manned the switchboard at the Ohio State Telephone Co., and Ida Carlisle worked at the Bell Telephone Co. office.

The men worked long hours in local industries making steel boats, pumps, and engines, or at one or another of the dozens of local businesses. F. C. Duncan was a foreman at the Deming Co. and Benjamin Edwards, Benjamin Engel, William Sheen and Vernon Lodge were machinists there.

Jacob Moss, Ben Harris, J. G. Smith and Robert Leipper worked at the W. H. Mullins Co.; James Bingham at the Nail Mill; Harry Wisner at the Pittsburgh Foundry; and Ralph Ridge at Porter Lumber.

A. C. Sheen drove for the Wells Fargo Express, Eugene Leipper clerked at the Hemme-

ter store downtown and Burton Reynolds was an engineer at the water works.

Alice Burchfield, a young widow, had moved her scant belongings and large family of six youngsters to the six-room frame house at 214 East Fourth in 1898. James was 16, Frances 12, Louise 10, Joseph 8, and Fred was 2. Young Charles Ephraim, her fifth born and the one destined for fame as an artist, was 4½. The house was owned by her brothers, Samuel and James Murphy, and she lived gratis there, but James' job as a coremaker's assistant at Deming's supported them all.

By 1917 the Burchfield clan, now grown, still lived at home with the exception of 27-year-old Joseph who had enlisted in the Army. Frances was a clerk at Brian Dry Goods along Broadway; James continued his daily shift as a coremaker at Deming's; Fred was a student; and Louise was a manager's clerk with the Central District Telephone Co.

Twenty-four-year-old Charles was working in the cost department at Mullins — he'd graduated from the Cleveland art school the year before and would continue to work at the local plant until 1921, excepting for a one-year stint in the Army from 1918 to 1919.

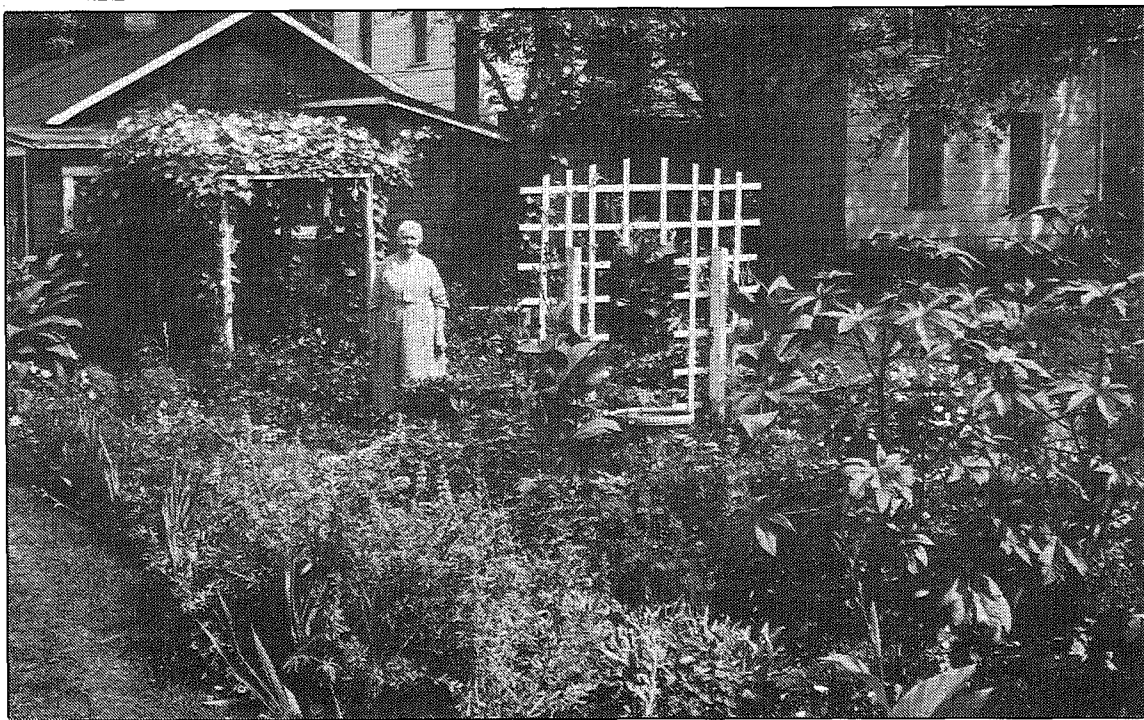
Although he rarely talked about his art, he was seldom without a drawing pad and pencil. He sketched during his lunch hours, before and after work and on weekends, and often the subject of his drawings was the house across the alley, viewed from an upstairs window.

Then and in time to come — and the tiny cottage with the too-large "smokestack" chimney captivated his imagination for 30 years — he called it the Weaver house. It wasn't just the cottage, though, that held him; it was the people living there.

Minnie Bush was a young mother abandoned by her husband struggling to survive with her two sons, Elmer and Herb in a shanty along Egypt Road. Her sister, Ellie lived at 208 E. Fourth St. with her husband, Vernon. To help Minnie, Vernon built a cottage in front of their home for Minnie and her two boys in 1913 — Herb was 4 and Elmer "Dutch" was 8 years old. After her husband Joseph died three years later, the girls' mother, Margaret "Pommy" Weaver joined them.

The house was heated by a coal stove in the living-dining room and Vernon built a coal house at the back of the cottage using a plywood piano box. The improvised coal house has been immortalized in several of Charles' drawings.

He talks about his interpreta-



Margaret 'Pommy' Weaver stands in the showpiece garden behind her Fourth Street home. Her cottage was the subject of numerous Burchfield drawings.



Elmer and Herb Bush pose in their Sunday best in front of their Fourth Street home.

tion of the Weaver house depicted in "The Peace of Christmas," in his journal entry of Dec. 22, 1960: "It is nightfall, the last glow for the setting sun behind the snowbound cottage — a slender new moon floats in the southwest sky — Mrs. Weaver is sitting in her accustomed chair by the window lit up by an unseen lamp, or open fire — in it I tried to express the humble dignity of such a modest home...to me it symbolizes the very best in human existence, all this in a setting of the fairyland of frost and snow of a very cold night."

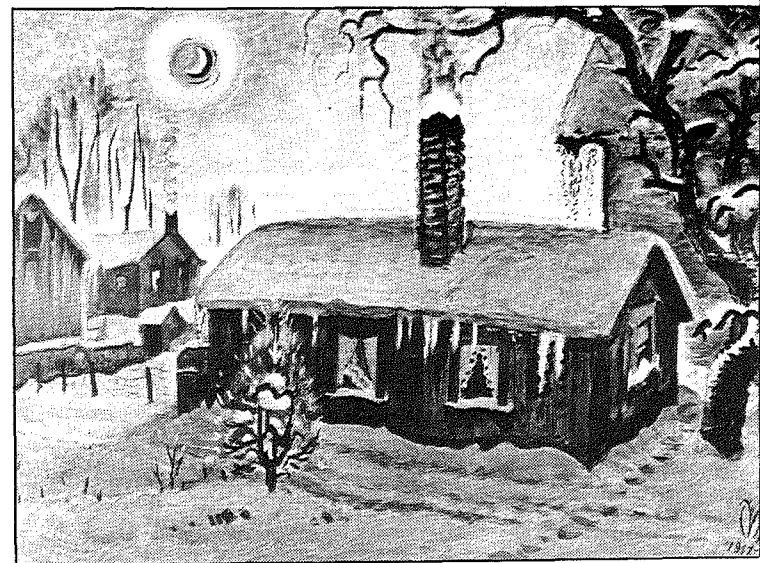
The home of another neighbor became famous. Ida and William Carlisle lived across the street from the Burchfields at 207 E. Fourth. The friendship continued after William died and Ida went to work at the Bell Telephone Co. The Carlisle house, too, was a frequent subject.

Long after the other homes on East Fourth were darkened for the night, the light in Charles' small second-floor bedroom glowed on into the early morning hours. For him, there was never enough time to put on paper his impressions of the scenes around him, including his neighbors and their homes.

It was in this simple environment that he created masterpiece after masterpiece. All were based on his own humble



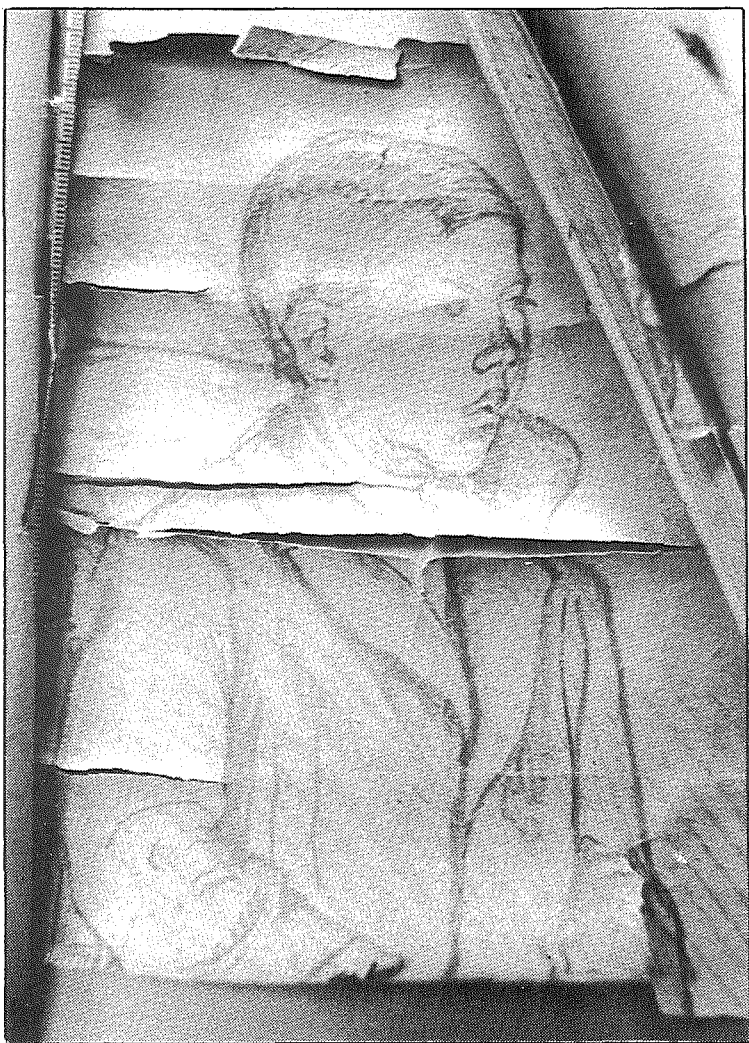
The Bush family relaxes in the shade (from left) Elmer 'Dutch,' Minnie and Herb.



The Peace of Christmas

upbringing which in subsequent years he never denied: "I have tried to show," he said, "not that the most modest home is dismal or worthy of our pity, but that therein life is dignified and deserving of our highest respect."





Charles Burchfield drew this sketch of young Elmer Bush who lived with his mother, grandmother and brother in the Weaver house next door to the artist. Over the years the pencil drawing has deteriorated. Elmer's daughter, Treva Miller of Salem is eager to know if the drawing can be salvaged in some way.



Youngsters from Fourth Street School gather on the steps in this 1900s photo. Young Elmer Bush is standing with his arm on the pillar at far left in back row.

## One-man play will star local actor John Dunlap

"Burchfield's Homecoming," a one-man play featuring veteran community theater actor John Dunlap, will have its premiere at 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 16 at the Salem Community Theater as part of the Burchfield Centennial Gala.

The Gala, a fund-raiser for the Salem Branch of the Butler Institute of Art, will also

include the opening of a Charles Burchfield art exhibit and a laser light show. The museum doors will open at 7 p.m., a reception is set for 9 p.m. and the laser show is at 10 p.m. For tickets call 332-8213 or 743-1107. Tickets are \$30 per person.

The play will be repeated at

the theater at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. both Saturday, April 17 and Sunday, April 18. Tickets are \$5. Call 332-9688.

The hour-long play, written by Dick Wootten and directed by Jeanne Elser, is based on the question: What would Burchfield have to say about Salem if he were to return?

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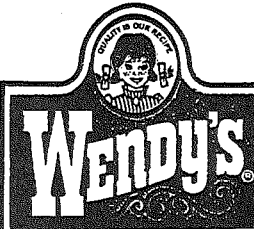
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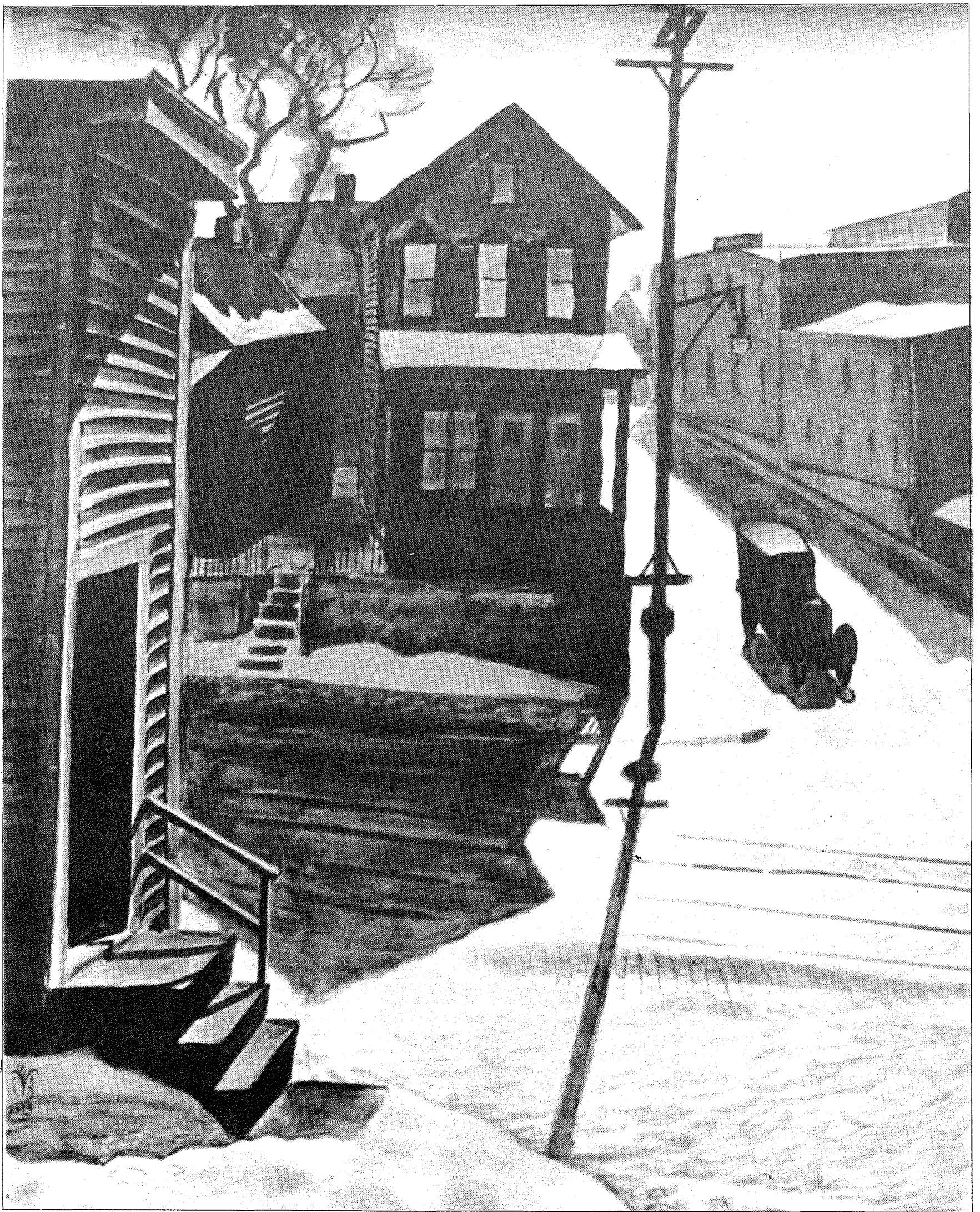
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