

Lorenzo P. Latimer: Artist and Teacher
Collection CAE2105

Introduction/Abstract

This archive includes research materials about Lorenzo P. Latimer (1857–1937) plain-air painter, which were collected and used by Alfred Harrison of North Point Gallery in San Francisco for writing of his book and various articles about Latimer.

Biographical Note: Alfred Harrison

Alfred C. Harrison, Jr. spent ten years as an art collector and independent researcher until becoming the President of the North Point Gallery in the Bay Area in 1985. He has written monographs on William Keith, Latimer, John Ross Key, and Thaddeus and Ludmilla. The North Point Gallery was founded in San Francisco in 1972 by Dr. Joseph A. Baird, Jr. Alfred Harrison turned it into a center for research and connoisseurship on 19th- and early-20th century American paintings with an emphasis on the art of early California. The gallery carried paintings by such 19th century artists as Albert Bierstadt, Norton Bush, Edwin Deakin, William Hahn, Thomas Hill, William Keith, John Ross Key, Charles Dormon Robinson, Thaddeus and Ludmilla Welch, Virgil Williams, and Raymond Yelland, as well as works from the plein-air period by John Gamble, Percy Gray, Chris Jorgensen, Lorenzo P. Latimer, Edgar Payne, Granville Redmond, William P. Silva, and Theodore Wores. When the gallery closed in March 2021, Harrison donated his extensive research archives to the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento and his book library and Latimer research materials to the Nevada Museum of Art's Center for Art + Environment Research Library.

Biographical Note: Jack Bacon

Jack Bacon, ISA AM, is a longtime resident of Reno, Nevada with over 40 years of experience as an autograph and rare book specialist, art gallerist, consultant and appraiser. In 2018, Jack was guest curator of a major exhibition at the Nevada Museum of Art featuring the paintings of Hans Meyer-Kassel - 1872-1952. Jack also published the first major book on the life and works of the artist in association with the Nevada Museum of Art coinciding with the exhibition. In 2021 he co-curated the Museum's Chief Curator, Ann Wolfe, "The Latimer School: Lorenzo Latimer and the Latimer Art Club."

Scope and Content

Lorenzo P. Latimer was born in Gold Hill, California in 1857 and grew up in Northern California. He attended the McClure Military Institute in Oakland, CA in the mid-1870s and eventually went on to study under Virgil Williams in San Francisco at the California School of Design. Later he went back to teach there himself and conducted his own art lessons at the Mechanics Institute. He was appointed chair of the School Committee and held this position for 20 years, through multiple name changes until it finally became The San Francisco Art Institute. Latimer was a member of many art organizations in the Bay Area including the Sequoia Club, San Francisco Art Association, Mechanics Institute, and Athenian Nile Club of Oakland, to name a few. Among his many club memberships the most rewarding affiliation was the Bohemian Club of San Francisco, which was originally founded in 1872 and is still in existence today.

Throughout his career, Latimer received honors for his work that included election to various art societies and inclusions of his large murals in World Fairs. His landscapes and redwood trees won gold medals at fairs and expositions in Chicago and San Francisco. Much of Latimer's work was done in the field or what is known as

“Plein-air” painting. It was during these “Plein-air” excursions in the early 20th century that he painted numerous scenes of Lake Tahoe and Fallen Leaf Lake.

Lorenzo Latimer first visited Fallen Leaf Lake on the south side of Lake Tahoe in summer 1914. It was there that he began to teach annual plein air painting classes. In 1916, he was invited by two students to teach a painting class in Reno. He returned for the next twenty years and became a cherished member of the Northern Nevada arts community. The watercolor paintings by Latimer and his students of the Truckee Meadows, Washoe Valley, Lake Tahoe, and Pyramid Lake are foundational to the history of Northern Nevada’s outdoor painting tradition.

In 1921, with the guidance of Latimer, his students formed the Latimer Art Club. During the winter months, while Mr. Latimer was in California, he would share a painting with the members to “copy” and they would mail back to him for critiques. These early members, known as “Latimers” created a strong organization, supporting the arts in the area. The Latimer Art Club incorporated in 1931 when it joined together with the visionary humanist scholar and scientist Dr. James Church to establish the Nevada Art Gallery, now the Nevada Museum of Art. The Latimer Art Club was the founding volunteer organization of the Nevada Art Gallery. Lorenzo Latimer last visited the club for his 80th birthday in 1937, the same year of his death. The Latimer Art Club (LAC), still in existence today, is a 501©(7) nonprofit organization

The research materials about Latimer were collected and used by Alfred Harrison for his North Point Gallery in San Francisco, as well as the writing of his book and various articles about Latimer. Materials include photographs, slides, transparencies, Latimer family correspondence, research notes, receipts, sketchbook, artwork photographs and information, sketches, and press materials. Materials donated by Jack Bacon are an extensive photocopy set of press materials pertaining to Latimer, the Latimer Art Club, and local Reno painters.

This archive is currently in progress.