

E.L. McClain High School Murals

The three large mural paintings were executed especially for the Edward Lee McClain High School. Two of the murals are in the library-study, and are each forty feet in length. The third is above the staircase in the main entrance, and is twelve feet by twenty-four feet.

APOTHEOSIS OF YOUTH

Installed in 1919

(Main Entrance, Above Staircase)

The subject represents the service of education in the evolution of the citizen. His imagination stimulated and his intelligence quickened, he fares forth on the barge of life to contribute his power to the perfection of an ideal civilization.

On the left Alma Mater, symbolizing Education, is seen on her throne, surrounded by the humanities. Science, Literature, Art, Manual Training, and Domestic Science are each represented. A soldier guards her throne, symbolizing the protection of Patriotism, which defends and makes possible her existence.

On the last step of this throne a senator symbolizing Authority, is placing a golden wreath of laurel upon the brow of a young graduate. Another youth has already received his wreath, and is eager to assume his responsibilities in the affairs of men. Opportunity, in red and gold, fortified by Courage, in armor, invites him aboard the barge of life; to fare forth and contribute his knowledge and energy in creating the ideal civilization of the future; symbolized by the vision in the clouds.

Hope stands at the tiller as the sail is hoisted. Providence is symbolized by the provision being taken aboard.

The group of figures at the right represents Labor, Industry, and Thrift, necessary accompaniments to successful endeavor.

The peacock symbolizes Pride, a modicum of which is necessary to the highest efforts.

The quotation for this mural is from Proverbs 29:18 "Where There Is No Vision The People Perish."

THE MELTING POT

Installed in 1920

(Library-Study, East Wall)

As is suggested by the title, this painting represents in allegorical form the process of the Americanization of the foreign elements that come to America through immigration. As the central motif of the picture is America, symbolized by an heroic female figure, seated upon a throne, before whom passes the procession of immigrants, representing the brawn and brain from the old world that have made this country rich and great. As the procession of immigrants passes before the melting pot, they are seemingly transformed into a line of sturdy American workmen, mechanics, artisans, and farmers representing the ideal types that result from the fusing together of all the heterogeneous elements that flow through our ports of foreign entry.

The people approaching the melting pot from the left side of the picture, have the characteristic features of the Italian, the Slav, the Chinese, and the Scandinavian, each bringing his contribution of gifts to our complex American civilization.

The title of the picture was suggested by Israel Zangwill's great drama, "The Melting Pot," and the theme of the artist is that majestic Scriptural quotation, from Acts 17:26: "And God Hath Made Of One Blood All Nations Of Men To Dwell On The Face Of The Earth."

THE PAGEANT OF PROSPERITY

Installed in 1918

(Library-Study, West Wall)

This painting symbolizes Prosperity toward which all men are striving, the ideal civilization, a land flowing with milk and honey, where peace and plenty reign.

The ox cart, loaded with the fruit of the earth, is being escorted by a band of happy people, who, with music and dancing, with flowers and song, express the joy of living, liberty, fraternity, and the absence of want.

This idea is emphasized in the quotation, used as an inscription in Roman capitals, beneath the picture from Ecclesiastes 5:19: "To Rejoice In His Labor, This Is The Gift Of God."

GEORGE, VESPER LINCOLN (1865-1934)

An American artist and teacher, born in Boston, Massachusetts, June 4, 1865. He received his public school education in Boston, and his art education in New York and Paris, studying under the famous French painters, Benjamin Constant, Jules Lefebvre, and Lucien Doucet. He was the owner and director of the Vesper Lincoln George School of Art, Inc., Boston, founded in 1924. Some of his best known mural decorations can be seen in the Public Library, Lowell, Massachusetts, in the Music Room of Mr. Session's home, Bristol Trust Company, where he has four large panels, representing Commerce, Industry, Finance, and Agriculture. Each panel is about ten feet in length. In the Edward Lee McClain High School, Greenfield, Ohio, are three panels, executed especially for the school. Mr. George resigned from a position as head of the department of design, Massachusetts School of Art, which he held for over twenty years, to organize the Vesper George School of Art in Boston, Massachusetts. He was a member of the Mural Painters' Society and of the Architectural Society of New York, the Boston Art Club, and the Boston Chamber of Commerce.

The above information was extracted from the Catalog of Pictures, Sculptures and Other Works of Art in Edward Lee McClain High School, Greenfield, Ohio; Grace Atkinson Blake.