A History of the Helen C. Peirce School Trust, 1915-1938

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

A HISTORY OF THE HELEN C. PEIRCE SCHOOL TRUST
1915 - 1938

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND POLICY STUDIES

BY
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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
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The author also extends heartfelt appreciation to her daughter for her support and understanding.
PREFACE

The focus of this study is to document the history of the Peirce Elementary School beautification projects and the school art collection which were purchased through a bequest left in trust by Luther H. Peirce for the purpose of creating a fitting memorial for his wife, Helen. The Trust financed a beautified and expanded kindergarten, a landscaped garden, purchased an art collection and provided other improvements for the Helen C. Peirce School between 1915 and 1938. The important role of the Lake View Woman’s Club in the naming of the school in Helen C. Peirce’s honor and its role in the development of the beautification projects is discussed in detail.

The significance of the contributions of contemporary midwest artists, Adam Emory Albright, John W. Norton, John A. Spelman and others, as well as architect George Grant Elmslie, and landscaper Jens Jensen, have been researched to discover and describe what was created by the Peirce Trust and how it represents the educational philosophy and social sensibilities of the time.

Chapter One examines the life of Helen C. Peirce and traces the developments which led to a Chicago Public School being named in her memory. The bequest left to the school by
her husband, Luther H. Peirce, is examined, as well as the leadership and dedication that members of the Lake View Woman's Club and the Chicago Board of Education school committee members demonstrated to ensure that the school named after Helen C. Peirce would honor her memory.

Chapter Two recounts the history of the art collection as developed through a detailed study of the Peirce School Papers, interviews and other primary sources. A survey was sent to Peirce graduates from 1915 to 1940 to request information, remembrances and photographs of the school. Of the 105 surveys sent, 39 were returned with much relevant information, many wonderful anecdotes, kind wishes and photographs!

Chapter Three studies the park designed by Jens Jensen. This was the first project that was undertaken by the school committee with the bequest and was dedicated to Mr. Luther Hills Peirce in appreciation for his generous gift. Jensen's life, philosophy and career is examined to bring into focus the significance of this contribution to the school and community.

Chapter Four examines the Prairie style kindergarten, flower room addition and murals that were designed and executed by architect George Grant Elmslie and artist John W. Norton. The lives and careers of these two men are examined to provide insight into the historical importance of their contribution to the school. Particular attention is
given to the importance of the architectural style in the midwest and the development of mural painting in the early twentieth century.

The Aftermath summarizes the work and describes the future of the Peirce collection. Elementary schools are not normally thought of as guardians of fine art collections or as architecturally significant institutions. In fiscal years when school boards have difficulty balancing austere budgets, maintaining historical architecture and art collections are not at the forefront in importance when planning for educational programs for elementary students. Institutional memory can be short and, as school personnel changes, the significance of school artifacts and holdings can be easily forgotten or discarded when they are no longer in good repair or in vogue. The responsibility for caring for public school buildings is a fiduciary responsibility viewed most often by school boards as a necessity to be dealt with in the most economical manner, often without regard to esthetics. Caring for and insuring aging art work can be both burdensome and expensive, making it unpopular and an uneconomical expense for most school boards.

The findings of this study will serve to document the importance of the art collection in terms of the early twentieth century Chicago artists and to provide information to those who must decide the future of the collection. At the present time nine of the twenty-one remaining paintings
have been restored and are on public display. The architecture and landscaping which was provided by the trust for the school community will be described to document what features remain and what is now lost.
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As with any other story transmitted over time the facts are often altered or changed with repetition. The story of Helen C. Peirce’s life is no exception. The sources of information about her life are several, and somewhat conflictual. The Peirce School archive contains eight Peirce School histories and a clipping of a 1966 Chicago Tribune article about the school. The various histories record a similar story about Helen’s life.

Helen Caroline Peirce was born in India in 1840, where her father and grandfather served as officers in the British army. Her father, hating war, sold his commission and returned to private life. While she was still a child the family emigrated to Canada. Later, her family traveled to Chicago where Helen’s maternal aunt lived. Her father died enroute to Chicago. Helen’s aunt died shortly after their arrival and soon after that Helen’s mother died leaving Helen an orphan. Helen was fortunate to be adopted by the Rees family with whom she lived until her marriage to a Chicago realtor, Luther Hills Peirce. Due to her adoption at a very early age, no record of her natural parents’ surname is ever
mentioned in any record.¹

Careful research adds more details and reveals some conflicting information about Helen's life. The 1 June 1860 federal census lists Helen as Carrie, age 17, living in the household of James H. and Harriet F. Rees. Helen, according to this document, was born in Canada rather than in India on 5 December 1842. The June 1880 and June 1890 federal census provide additional information. In 1847, at age four, Helen immigrated from Canada. Her father is listed as being born in Scotland and her mother in Ireland. The parents recorded here must refer to her natural parents. As for her adoptive parents, Mr. James H. Rees was born in Pennsylvania and Mrs. Harriet F. Rees was born in Connecticut. The 1870 census lists Helen living in the household of Luther H. Peirce, the couple having married in 1866. The sole other occupant of the Peirce's household in 1870 was a domestic servant named Annie Miller, age nineteen.

In the 1880 census, two children, Charles, age thirteen born in France in 1867, and Clara, born in Illinois in 1869, age eleven are also listed. Luther and Helen Peirce are listed indirectly as their parents, as the birthplaces of the parents are listed as Maine for the father and Canada for the mother. These facts suggest that the Peirce's adopted Charles and Clara sometime after the 1870 census. Clara also is mentioned as an adopted daughter in several school histories and she was a member of the Lake View Woman's Club.
No further mention is made of the child, Charles.

**Helen's Life with the Rees Family**

Of the Rees family that adopted Helen, it is known that, in 1939, James H. Rees was a draftsman and surveyor for Chicago's Mayor William B. Ogden. Mr. Rees was one of the earliest of Chicago's citizens and is listed as having voted in Chicago's first city election on 2 May 1937. By 1847, Mr. Rees was working as a land agent and with his partners kept an office in the city's center. For a time they had an office in the basement of city hall. Luther Peirce worked for James Rees in his surveying and real estate business.²

That Helen had a significant place in society may be traced to her adopted father's important role in the history of Lake View. On 14 May 1852, James H. Rees and his partner Elisha E. Hundley purchased 225 acres of land. The land was bounded on the east by Lake Michigan, to the north by Graceland (later renamed Irving Park Road), on the west by Halsted Street and on the south by Belmont. The price of the tract was $3,529.50. Until this time development of the Lake View area had been centered west of Halsted. The land east of Halsted was a mix of sandy stretches and swampy bogs. This parcel of land was well placed between Chicago, Rogers Township and, further north, Evanston. As such, it was a prime site for development. The partnership first erected
Figure 1: Helen C. Peirce by W.C. Brownson. Courtesy Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
the Lake View House, a hotel built in 1854 when Helen was just seven. The name of the hotel has been attributed to Walter Newberry who was delighted with its unobscured view of the lake. The construction of the Lake View Hotel would spur the development of the area. Rees was also one of the organizers of a company which would become the predecessor of the Chicago Title and Trust Company. The Rees home was located in Lake View as early as 1854. Conditions were primitive and a plank road to the area was constructed in 1855 by Rees and other property owners to make the area more accessible. Although the hotel was difficult to reach until the plank road was constructed, the hotel was a popular recreational spot attracting many of Chicago's most prominent citizens, some staying there from April until September of each year. The hotel also became a refuge for the wealthy from a cholera epidemic which occurred during that time. The town of Lake View was incorporated in 1856. Rees was elected in 1858 as the township supervisor and remained in that capacity until Lake View was annexed by Chicago in 1889. It is clear that due to Mr. Rees' business successes, Helen would have had a secure and comfortable childhood. Perhaps it was her appreciation of her fortunate position in society that made her such a tireless worker for the less fortunate.

Helen's Association with the Lake View Woman's Club

While little personal information has been recorded
about Helen Peirce's early life, much can be learned about her later character from her association with the Lake View Woman's Club. She was also a member of the Chicago's Women's Club and a founding member of the Lake View Woman's Club.

The Club developed from a group of prominent women in the Town of Lake View, including many principals and teachers. Helen's enthusiastic participation in the group is understandable as she was raised in a socially prominent family and this status continued through her marriage. No more is known other than Helen is listed in the 1880 federal census as a teacher at the Select School and that she was a peer of the other educators in the group. The club women met on a weekly basis to read and discuss classical literature in the home of Miss Anna Peats.

It was Helen Peirce's idea to form a club devoted to providing service to the community and to undertaking projects to further educate women. Thirty-two women from Lake View were invited to an organizational meeting in her home at 1904 Surf Street, on 3 October 1893. At this first meeting, the group voted to write a constitution and bylaws. Members of the group formalized their association and adopted the name The Lake View Woman's Club at their next meeting on 17 October 1893. Mrs. Peirce was elected the club's first president. Mary S. Meyer describes the nature of the club and Mrs. Peirce's role in her book, History of the Lake View Woman's Club, written in 1918.
That these women were determined to dedicate the Club to service, is evidenced by the second article of the constitution which reads: "The object of this Association shall be to know the present time and do what it bids."

Naturally, the woman who had inspired the movement and who possessed all the necessary qualities for leadership, was unanimously chosen its first president. Under this efficient president the Club began at once upon activities that would render results in humanity.

The Lake View Woman's Club was the first club on the north side of Chicago to expand its interests from the study of literature to service, and the latter became its primary goal. The club responded to the great need for community service and also held social gatherings and educational meetings. Mrs. Peirce served as the club's president from 1893 to 1897. She served on the club board of directors from 1887 to 1901. The club and its members were listed in the Chicago Blue Book, a directory which listed the city's most prominent members and clubs. The Lake View Woman's Club played an important role in society from its inception by providing an organization for women through which they could give service to their community, have a forum for study and discussion, and meet together for social purposes. The club was well organized and often lobbied state and local legislators to assist them in achieving their goals. Mary Meyer comments:

The Club programs have usually been carried out according to the calendar, and while most of them have been of a serious nature, dealing with the vital issues of the day, or with some literary, educational, civic or philanthropic subject, an occasional social day has given opportunity for mirth and originality.
The women were well informed about social conditions and issues, many of them were educators, and their interests reflected the concerns of the times. Listed on the program for the month of February 1907 was: a director’s meeting, a social day with a talk by essayist Minnie Houston, a lecture by Carl Rodin of the Public Library for the Philanthropy Department, a visit to the Art Institute, a class in domestic science on cake making, and a study class on The Four "Great Prophets" sponsored by the club Art and Literature Department.6

The Club participated in a broad number of political and social issues using its influence to support various causes. The club women sent a resolution to the 1908 Illinois Charter Convention asking that a measure providing for the enfranchisement of the women of Chicago be passed. A petition was circulated for a playground and field house in the Twenty-third Ward and a protest was lodged against placing the First Cavalry Armory in Lincoln Park. Always interested and proactive in the area of education, a resolution was sent to the Board of Education, in 1909, asking that Mrs. Ella Flagg Young be considered for the Superintendency of schools. Later a protest was organized against a proposed tariff on gloves and hosiery.7

The first project of the club was to propose to the Chicago Board of Education that a kindergarten class be
formed in a poverty stricken area popularly called the "Clay Holes," located at the western edge of the city. This area was a city garbage dump and home to many of Chicago's poorest residents. Meyer describes the Clay Holes:

...a dumping place for the city's garbage. The people in that vicinity were very poor; women and children often starving, sought food and rags in those dump heaps. The children in that and neighboring localities were idling away their time in the streets.8

As a result of the club's request to the Chicago Board of Education, the Prescott School Free Kindergarten began its operations on 4 December 1893 at the corner of Perry and Dunning. The Lakeview Women's Club paid the rent, heat and maintenance for the kindergarten and the Chicago Board of Education paid for a teacher and necessary supplies. By the next year the kindergarten was moved to a larger space on Southport near Wrightwood and the Lake View Woman's Club continued to pay the rent of $500 a year. The Lake View Woman's Club continued to support the kindergarten until 1898 at which time the Chicago Board of Education began to fully finance kindergarten classes.9

The club rapidly expanded its membership and formed four departments: education, arts and literature, philanthropy and science and philosophy. Club meetings were held the first, third and fourth Tuesday of each month. The education department had five committees in 1907: school decoration and visiting, vacation and playgrounds, library, membership and legislative. In 1907, Mrs. Peirce was a
member of the school decoration and visiting committee, as was Helen W. Affeld, who would later play an important role in the decorating of the Helen C. Peirce School. The school decoration and visiting committee furnished the schools of Lake View with works of art, curtains, statuary, flowers and plants in an effort to provide a more cultured environment for the students. Mrs. Peirce personally donated a painting by a Chicago artist to the Nettlehorst School in memory of the former principal Maria Clark who had also been a founding member of the Lake View Woman’s Club. Mary S. Meyer summarizes the efforts of the committee:

Through their efforts the walls of many schoolrooms have been brightened with pictures, the windows made attractive with curtains, plants and flowers, all of which have a refining influence on the pupils. Over fifteen hundred (1500) magazines and three hundred and fifty pictures, large and small, in oil, water color, etching, prints and photographs have been sent to thirty (30) public schools of Lake View, to the Jail, Detention Home and Parental School. Efforts were made to beautify the school grounds by sending trees, plants and shrubs.\[10\]

The Lake View Woman’s Club was active in public affairs on the city, state, national and industrial levels. It sent delegates to other institutions and organizations and often lent not only moral, but also financial support to them. The Club assisted in having women appointed to positions of influence such as membership on the Chicago Board of Education, library and park boards. In 1899, Helen C. Peirce spoke out against the dismissal of a female teacher by the Chicago Board of Education. The reason for the dismissal is
not recorded. The Lake View Woman’s Club reacted to this situation by sending a letter on 1 June 1899 to the Chicago Board of Education asking: “What is the tenure of office of women teachers in the Public Schools?” A response was received and the Club reconvened at a special meeting on June sixth to consider the reply. Mary Meyer describes Mrs. Peirce’s response at the meeting. This is the only record of Mrs. Peirce’s actual words and demonstrates her leadership and strong convictions on the importance of justice and equality:

Mrs. Peirce called upon to state the object of the meeting, said: “We are here in the interest of justice,” then giving a brief outline of the past history of the teaching fraternity in Chicago, concluded by saying: “I think our Club should stand, and ask other clubs to stand with us, in protest against deposing any teacher, black or white, high or low, without a good and sufficient cause.”

Helen C. Peirce died at home at eleven P.M., on 15 December 1911 at age sixty-nine. The cause of death listed on her death certificate was diabetes. She was cremated at Graceland cemetery in Chicago and buried in Lot 367 in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Bangor, Maine. On 30 January 1912, a memorial meeting of the Lake View Woman’s Club was held to honor Helen C. Peirce. Miss Lina E. Troendle made the following tribute to the club founder:

“Bethink you of what great service is a good example, then know that the memory of great men is of as great benefit as their presence.” Thus spoke Seneca, nearly two thousand (2000) years ago, and thus we say now, in contemplating the life and labors of Helen C. Peirce. Truly her example lives, and will live in the
countless deeds of kindness that marked her activity, and the spirit of the Lake View Woman's Club whose founder and inspired worker she was.

Helen C. Peirce was eminently possessed of the qualities that make for leadership. And what are they? An intellect alert and keen, in its analytical power and penetration: an abundance of common-sense practicality; while coupled with these was a sympathy as wide as humanity itself.

It would seem that Mrs. Peirce was originally an intellectual aristocrat, a lover of culture and the intellectual life. But, like the great souls of all times, she had learned the deep lessons of life, 'that we are allied to that which doth provide and not partake,' and that only in service to humanity can he whose life is rooted in something deeper than this world find peace and contentment. Like Goethe, Ruskin, Tolstoy, she began by being a lover of culture and developed into a lover of humanity. Nothing that was human was foreign to her large mind and larger heart, and to succor, to support, and to defend humanity in man was her happiness. No one was too insignificant or too lowly for her sympathetic charity, and the beauty of all this activity lay in its sweet sincerity, so free from all patronage or ostentation.

How best honor the memory of Helen C. Peirce? By making her ideal for the Lake View Woman's Club our ideal. Mrs. Peirce held that the raison d'être of a Woman's Club is service, high-minded, effective service in the cause of humanity.

If through her devoted example we can make this Club, which is the inspiration of Helen C. Peirce, an efficient and permanent instrument for good in our community, there will be raised a monument to her memory which neither time nor chance nor circumstance can efface or destroy.

When we pause thus reverently to consider the influence of a noble life, we are constrained to accept that immortal life is a reality, for we know "that in the being and the working of a faithful soul, is there already a something that pertains not to this wild death element of Time; that triumphs over Time, and is and shall be when Time shall be no more."¹²

A School Named for Helen C. Peirce

In the earliest Peirce School history on record, Inger Schjoldager recounts that at Mrs. Peirce's funeral a friend shared the thought, "We must name a school for this good
woman who through her whole life was so devoted to the best interests of children." Mary Meyer attributes the request to Mrs. Cornelia D. Heile of the Lakeview Woman's Club, who suggested that Mrs. Peirce be honored for her humanitarian works by having a Chicago Public School named for her.

After proposing this idea to Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, the Superintendent of Schools and after receiving her support, the idea was presented to the Board of Directors of the Lake View Woman’s Club. The club appointed Mrs. O’Connor, the president, Mrs. Heile, and Mrs. Morrill to write a resolution and formally petition the Chicago Board of Education. Mrs. Morrill is attributed to be the author of the petition. On 26 June 1912, Mr. George Swift, Chairman of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds, acknowledged a report from the Committee on Naming Schools recommending that the school to be built near Southport and Bryn Mawr be named in memory of Helen C. Peirce. The following biographical information is included in board report, and although the statement is in quotes, the author is not identified; it is possible that this is part of Mrs. Morrill’s original petition which reads as follows:

The life and character of Mrs. Peirce were such as to render it eminently fitting that her memory should be perpetuated in the community that knew her. She was always an earnest and consistent friend of popular education, and spared neither time nor money to secure its benefit for the needy classes. To that end she caused to be established and from her own resources with some assistance from the Lakeview Woman's Club, supported for two years the kindergarten class at the Prescott
School. This class was one of the first of its kind in the public school system of the city. During the past year she has rendered a similar service at the Agassiz School.

Mrs. Peirce also showed her interest in promoting the efficiency of the public school system by her liberal expenditure of both money and effort in establishing libraries in various school buildings and by contributing works of art for their adornment. Her entire life was characterized by unobtrusive acts for the benefit of others and should be an inspiration to those who admire an example of true philanthropy.  

On 4 September 1912, a board report was presented and approved, correcting the spelling of the Peirce name. The Committee on Building and Grounds reported that the Secretary of the Board received a letter from Mr. C. E. Affeld in which he states that he had been asked by Mr. L. H. Peirce to request that the spelling of the Peirce name be corrected from Pierce to Peirce. On 12 November 1913 the Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, recommended that the Peirce be constructed with the same architectural plan as the George Armstrong School built at 2111 W. Estes. Ten elementary schools were built using the Kohn plan, the Chicago Board of Education finding economy in using the same architectural plans various times. This policy is still effected at the present.

The school was built on Bryn Mawr Avenue near Clark Street and opened on 6 September 1915. The first principal was Miss Inger M. Schjoldager, who was transferred from the Adams School. There were 510 pupils and thirteen faculty members at its opening.
Figure 2. Helen C. Peirce School, 1915. Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
After the members of the Lake View Woman’s Club succeeded in obtaining their goal of having a school named after Helen C. Peirce, one of the first objectives of the School Decoration and Visiting Committee was to beautify the school for its dedication. The committee planned to acquire “good pictures by old masters and new in all of the rooms of the school, naming the rooms after the artist therein represented.” Mr. Peirce’s interest in the school, named in honor of his late wife, was stimulated by Mrs. Meyer and Mrs. Affeld who met with him in his home to plan how to make the school a fitting memorial for Helen. He promised to donate five thousand dollars for the purchase of the art work, a promise which he kept through a bequest in his will. One of the plans that he authorized was the commission of copies of masterpieces to be painted by students of the Art Institute. Another plan was to purchase the land west of the building to build a wading pool for the students, but this plan was not immediately effected. Mr. Peirce suddenly became ill with pneumonia on 18 October 1915 and died two days later on 20 October 1915. Mr. Peirce was cremated at Graceland and his remains were placed next to Helen’s in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Bangor, Maine.

Although Mr. Peirce died before the school was dedicated, he did have the opportunity to see one of the completed copied masterpieces and one of the prints which were purchased for the school. These met with his approval.
Mary Meyer expresses his reaction, "Mr. Peirce...was very much pleased with what the committee was doing and happy in the thought of how much the children would enjoy the pictures."¹⁶

Three collections of paintings were obtained on loan through the efforts of Mrs. Affeld, the chairman of the committee. The Municipal Art League, the Commission for the Encouragement of Local Art and C.E. Boutwood, a local artist, lent fifty-four paintings which remained in the school for some time after the dedication. An additional eighty-seven paintings and two statuettes were contributed to the school through the efforts of the Club. The Lakeview Woman's Club also provided copper plates for each painting which were inscribed "Helen C. Peirce Collection of the Lakeview Woman's Club." The impressive contributions of art to the school are recorded in the History of the Lake View Woman's Club 1893-1918:

...Mrs. Affeld gave three oil paintings by herself and forty-five (45) photographs; Miss Jane Larrabbee, two statuettes and twelve (12) prints; Mrs. Heile an oil painting, "Springtime," by herself, Miss Laura Stoddard, an oil painting, "Indian Chief," by herself; Mrs. Meyer, a portrait of Mrs. Peirce, by W. Brownson. The Art Institute gave 21 studies in oil by students as a permanent loan, making a total of one hundred and forty-one (141) pictures hung ready for the dedication.¹⁷

The school was dedicated at an evening program on Friday, 19 November 1915. Ella Flagg Young, Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, gave an address at the
Also on the program were a contralto solo, a violin solo and a choral presentation by the seventh and eighth grade students. Mrs. Carrie Norton Hopkins, President of the Lakeview Women's Club, gave the dedication address and presented the school an oil painting of Helen C. Peirce, a gift from Mrs. Mary S. Meyer. A program from the dedication and a handwritten copy of Carrie Norton Hopkin's address are preserved in the Peirce School Papers. The following remarks by Mrs. Hopkins describe Helen Peirce's character and her dedication to serve her community:

ADDRESS AND PRESENTATION OF PICTURE

Washington Irving expressed a beautiful sentiment when he said, "Sweet is the memory of departed friends. Like the mellow rays of the declining sun, it falls tenderly, yet sadly, on the heart." To-day, we are filled with very tender memories of the beloved founder of our Club, as we look backward on the years of service, she gave so generously and graciously gave to us.

In the garden of our affections, there are certain loyal natures, that continue faithful in all things. Such a personality was she; and, to the friends who were privileged to know and understand Mrs. Peirce, was given a priceless friendship.

It is hard to estimate how far reaching was the influence of such a life, but we know her chief characteristics were firmness of purpose, tempered with gentleness, generosity, unselfishness, helpfulness for all humanity, loyalty to friends, and joy in service. At the end of her useful life, what could be more pleasing to her, than the fact that her friends still carry on her work, still hold her memory dear, and still revere her as "The Spirit of our Club?" As the presiding officer of the Lake View Woman's Club it gives me great pleasure to accept this appropriate gift, and to express our gratitude, and deep appreciation to Mrs. Meyer, for this excellent, and lifelike portrait.

As we gaze upon it, from time to time, during our
club activities, may we become more united, more unselfish, more considerate, more charitable toward each other's failing thus proving in deed, and in truth, "Her works do follow her."\textsuperscript{18}

The Bequest

In his will, dated 19 August 1915, Mr. Peirce left the sum of five thousand dollars:

...for the purpose of erecting or establishing a memorial to my beloved wife, HELEN C. PEIRCE, now deceased. I direct that said memorial shall consist in beautifying the lands upon which are situated the school building known as THE HELEN C. PEIRCE SCHOOL, ... or for the beautifying of the interior of said building.\textsuperscript{19}

Mr. Peirce suggested in his will that his executor consult with the officers of the Lake View Woman's Club for their recommendations as to the memorial that should be established, authorizing the executor to carry out such recommendations, but not making them binding. The Illinois Trust and Savings Bank was named as the executor of the Peirce Estate and was directed to administer the fund which was to be totally expended in the five years after his death. Peirce School was also to receive one half of Mr. Peirce's Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Company 4% Adjustment Bonds. (Mr. Peirce left the other half of this railroad stock to Yale College.)\textsuperscript{20}

On 21 June 1916, the Committee on Buildings and Grounds of the Chicago Board of Education reported the receipt of a report from the Committee on School Management which recommended the acceptance of the bequest of Mr. Luther H.
Peirce. A board report acknowledges a communication had been received by the Superintendent of Schools from Mr. William H. Henkle, Secretary of the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank, describing the bequest and its stipulations. A transcript of the pertinent portion of the last will and testament of the late Luther H. Peirce was included.

In writing his will Mr. Peirce remembered his promise to the Lake View Woman's Club members and provided funds for the school. Mr. Peirce's bequest made available five thousand dollars for the purpose of erecting or establishing a memorial to Mrs. Helen C. Peirce and in addition provided securities with a value of $30,000 which was to be used in a period of five years from the death of Mr. Peirce for beautifying the grounds, or for beautifying the interior of the Helen C. Peirce School. Comparing the value of the 1915 dollar to the present day dollar, the bequest of the railroad stock was worth approximately $90,000 dollars.

The board report states that the Superintendent of Schools first recommended that for the purpose of carrying out the terms of the bequest, the President of the Board appoint a committee of two to consult with the trustees and the officers of the Lake View Woman's Fund to plan appropriate public ceremonies to attest to the public appreciation for the bequest and for the art works already donated. In addition, plans for the expenditure of the bequest were to be made and a provision was included.
allocating funds for a means to protect the art work. Funds were also set aside to provide any construction that might be purchased with the grant. The Superintendent also recommended that a message of appreciation from the Board of Education, representing the public, be sent through the trustee of the estate to the family and friends of Luther H. Peirce.21

A ceremony to formally present the pictures donated by Mr. Peirce to the Helen C. Peirce School was held on 8 December 1916. Twenty three copies of masterpieces were given by the executors of the Peirce estate and the Lake View Woman's Club. A Board report approved on 21 December 1916, recommended the approval of the Superintendent of Schools' request that fifty dollars be appropriated to the Peirce School from the general education contingent fund for expenses incurred for exercises observed at the Peirce in the acceptance of art work donated posthumously by Luther H. Peirce.22

The School Decoration and visiting Committee did not rest with the completion of the dedication and decoration of the Peirce School, but continued to raise funds and seek donations of art works to provide for the thirty-two schools in the Lake View area. Lake View High School, Nettelhorst and Blaine all received art work. "Mrs. Clara Peirce Hohl gave the committee sixteen (16) beautiful pictures from the Peirce homestead; these were sent to schools where her mother
was known and loved."  

According to the terms of Luther Peirce's will, the executor, the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank, was to consult with the Lake View Woman's Club, but was not bound by their suggestions. The club purchased the initial copies of the masterpieces and remitted the bills to the executors. Mrs. Meyer described the decision of the executor to turn over the authority for the bequest to the Chicago Board of Education with the following comment: "...but the executors, believing and saying that a woman's club was not capable of handling money, placed the rest of the bequest in charge of the Board of Education."  

This decision must have been a real disappointment to the club members who had been realizing good work in the community for twenty-years.

A board report, dated 5 June 1918, was submitted by John D. Snoop and Eva. H. Thompson, committee members in charge of the improvements for the Peirce School. The committees' plans included the construction of an addition to the kindergarten classroom, the improvement and landscaping of the playground, the decoration of the office of the principal, the furnishing of the ends of the corridors of the building and the decoration of the entrance of the building.  

The Art Department of Lake View Woman's Club suggested that the Art Institute be consulted for recommendations on the best person to commission to undertake the remodeling of the kindergarten room. According to a typewritten history of
the school, plans for the improvements were postponed due to the war and the subsequent high prices. The Trust would, however, continue to purchase paintings for the school as it had since the opening and dedication of the school. Principal Schjoldager would direct this effort with the advice and assistance of the Lake View Woman's Club Committee on Art.\textsuperscript{26}
NOTES

1 Lynn Taylor, "Woman's Club Leader Inspires School Name," Chicago Tribune, 16 June 1966, 1.

2 W.W. Danenhower, Danenhower's Chicago City Directory. For 1851; Containing an alphabetical list of the mechanics and business men with their several places of residence; also, brief notices of the religious, literary and benevolent associations of the city, military, fire department, etc., etc., etc., etc. (Chicago: W.W. Danenhower, 1851) 178.


5 Ibid., 24.

6 Lake View Woman's Club Yearbook 1907-1908 (Chicago: Barnard and Miller Printers, 1908), 19.

7 Meyer, 14.

8 Ibid., 4.

9 Ibid., 9.

10 Ibid., 18.

11 Ibid., 13.

12 Ibid., 22.


15 Meyer, 19.

16 Ibid., 21.
17 Ibid., 20.


19 “Last Will and Testament of Luther H. Peirce”, 19 August 1915, Circuit Court of Cook County, Probate Division, Chicago, Il. 1.

20. Ibid., 2.


23 Meyer, 21.

24 Ibid.


26 “History of Peirce School”, No. 5 [ca. 1925], Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.
CHAPTER II
THE ART COLLECTION

Progressivism, Education and Chicago Society

Progressive Education, which embraced society, politics and education, was part of a larger movement in the United States from 1900 to 1920. During the progressive movement, social reformers such as Jane Addams and others, including those who formed the Lake View Woman's Club, sought reforms and improvements in society to benefit all. Political and economic reforms were underway, under Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, to make the democratic processes available for the populace as a whole. Although the social and political aspects of progressivism diminished by the end of World War I, the educational experiment continued through the nineteen thirties.1

Evelyn Marie Stuart authored an article in The Fine Arts Journal in May 1918 comparing the traditional view of education with the progressive view, praising the positive changes in progressive educational methods:

We who remember the stuffy school room, the arbitrary routine, the autocratic teacher can well feel a pang of regret when we see the care of physical comfort, the sympathy, understanding and help that are offered to young bodies and minds in the schoolroom of today. Nothing in all our civilization is so significant to
future greatness as is this advance in educational systems and ideas, nothing else promises so well for a race of supermen and superwomen.2

In the traditional school children were expected to be passive. Teachers used rigid discipline to keep order and imposed knowledge through lectures. The students were often required to memorize their lessons verbatim. In contrast, in the progressive school students were encouraged to be active learners and lessons were developed from the interests of the students. The educational environment was to be stimulating and nurturing. The role of the teacher was to guide the learners.

Early art education in the United States was directed by Englishman, Walter Smith, who was appointed to direct art programs in Boston and the State of Massachusetts simultaneously. In his educational design he perceived art training as preparation for vocation. His program of art education served as a model for the rest of the country. Art could be taught as a series of tasks from the drawing of straight lines to curved lines to the combination of both. Industrial leaders supported this view of art education as the late eighteenth century was a period of intense industrial expansion in which manual skills were necessary. Other educators, while recognizing the need for vocational art, stressed the importance of the self-expression, creativity and the appreciation of beauty through the study of examples in nature and art. The tension between these two
views would continue for decades.

The goals of the course of Art offered from kindergarten through the eighth grade by the Chicago Board of Education in 1918 is described by Lucy S. Silke, the Supervisor of the Department of Art in the Elementary Schools:

1st- To aid the child in self expression by helping him to acquire a form and color vocabulary drawn from his own environment, adequate to his needs and commensurate with his powers.

2nd- To develop creative ability by encouraging original work in illustration and design, and by affording opportunities for demonstrating this ability in practical problems.

3rd- To develop appreciation of beauty through the study of fine examples in Nature and Art, enriching the mind, refining the tastes and increasing the capacity and resources for wholesome enjoyment.

4th- To broaden the field of vocational guidance to include occupations requiring a knowledge of form, color and composition, for children whose natural aptitudes and desires lie in that direction. 3

These goals balance the two philosophies of art education stressing both the vocational and the need to develop the creativity and the appreciation of fine art. Stuart places the responsibility for art education reaching children of all economic situations with those responsible for public art education:

Tons have been written and volumes spoken with only the effect of reaching the upper classes, the fortunate ones whom study and travel make most receptive to aesthetic ideas. It has remained for the directors of art in the public schools to awaken to the fact that taste like morals must be inculcated at an early age if it is to be a permanent part of mind and character. 4
Regardless of such high aspirations, the vocational aspect of the curriculum was stressed as practical and most schools offered boys and girls manual training and household arts including cooking and sewing classes. The vocational nature of the art classes were part of a larger social design, some seeing the necessity to be ready to establish the United States as an industrial power after the war.

It is clear that the Lake View Woman’s Club, Inger Schjoldager, and the Chicago Board of Education Committee charged with the trust, made expenditures specifically to provide an environment where beautiful architecture and fine art work would inspire the children many of whom were immigrants and newly arrived in Chicago:

In the early twentieth century the population of Chicago was largely made up of European immigrants. In the Peirce district, located between Edgewater and East Andersonville, the majority of the students were of Swedish, German and Polish descent. Some of Peirce’s early graduates recall that many of the children came to school knowing little English. The Peirce School was Edgewater’s third public school and built in response to the rapid increase in the number of housing units built in the area from 1910 to 1929.5

Decorating Peirce School

As soon as the Board of Education approved the naming of the school to be built on Bryn Mawr near Clark in honor of Mrs. Helen Caroline Peirce, the School Decoration and Visiting Committee of the Lake View Woman’s Club began making plans for its decoration. The club women had already provided art work to many schools, but they approached this school
with special enthusiasm as it was to be dedicated in the name of their fellow club member and friend, Helen. The committee’s mission was to provide paintings and other art work to schools so as to expose the children to classical and contemporary art and to uplift the educational environment from an institutional one to an atmosphere of inspiration, refinement and beauty. With this goal in mind the club purchased three paintings as a gift for the school and individual club members also contributed. Helen W. Affeld (Mrs. C.E.) donated three paintings from her daughter’s estate in Germany and Mrs. Pauline Palmer gave a painting she herself painted, A City Among the Hills, depicting a New England village. Lily G. Egan (Mrs. L.E.) donated a water color of the poppies in the school garden, Poppies by Evans. A framed copy of the Appeal to the Great Spirit was donated by Miss Jane Larrabee and the artist, Miss Laura Stoddard, donated one of her own paintings, Indian Chief. Mrs. John Meyer and Mrs. C.E. Affeld selected fifteen paintings to be copied by students at the Art Institute:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Painting</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judgement of Paris</td>
<td>McEwen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep in Picardy</td>
<td>Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrait of a Girl</td>
<td>Rembrandt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarpon Springs</td>
<td>Inness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing Home the Newborn Calf</td>
<td>Millet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Dubois</td>
<td>Van Dyck</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 1--Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Painting</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Returning from Market</td>
<td>Troyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy Spain</td>
<td>Clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Holland Waters</td>
<td>Domingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep Going Home</td>
<td>Mauve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cows in a Meadowland</td>
<td>Van Marcke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marquise Spinola</td>
<td>Ruben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icebound</td>
<td>Metcalf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to Market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June in the Alps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A handwritten note on a typed school inventory indicates that the Lake View Women's Club spent $1300 to have the paintings copied and framed. The note is signed by the principal I.M. Schjoldager.6

The Collection Scrapbook and Correspondence

The records at Peirce School include a picture scrapbook containing a post card of each of the oil paintings which were copied by students at the Art Institute for Peirce. The majority of the paintings selected for the school were by the classical European masters. Accompanying each post card is a biography of the painter. Some were cut from printed material, while other biographies were typed on the school typewriter. The purpose of the collection was clearly to expose the students to classical European paintings. It is apparent that the scrapbook was created to serve both as an educational tool and also to document the paintings in the building. That the scrapbook has endured some seventy-five years is fortunate as it also contains a black and white
photograph of Laura Stoddard's painting Indian Chief, thereby preserving a visual record of the painting which disappeared from the school sometime prior to 1960.7

There is no doubt that the Lake View Woman's Club Educational Department, principally Mrs. Affeld and Mrs. Meyer, and Chicago Board of Education Committee who were charged with the expenditure of the bequest, placed a great deal of importance on the availability of art for the students to view and appreciate. Funds from Luther Peirce's trust, private contributions and donations from the Lake View Woman's Club, were used to purchase art work for the school in the early years. Letters from the trust document that, in great part, this effort was later directed by Mrs. Inger Schjoldager, the first Peirce principal.

The Illinois Merchants Trust and Savings Bank was the executor of the Luther H. Peirce Trust and continued in this role until 9 April 1923 when the bank became the Illinois Merchants Trust Company. On 18 March 1929 the bank merged with the Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Company of Chicago. Records at the Peirce School contain ten letters written between the trust managers and three Peirce School principals. These letters provide ample information about the transactions entered into by the Trust, and about the policies and personalities involved. Principals Miss Inger Schjoldager 1915-1927, Miss Mary Mc Mahon 1927-1935, and Miss Mildred Fahy 1935-1952 corresponded with the trust
managers on matters regarding the relationship between the Trust and the school, the purchase of paintings by the trust, and the insurance which the trust provided for the collection.

The earliest correspondence on file is dated 30 March 1921 from Mr. C.H. Binney who was the Manager of the Real Estate Department of the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank. Mr. Paul C. Butcher, Assistant Secretary, and Mr. A.B. Hussander also directed correspondence to the principals from 15 June 1926 until 17 November 1937. The Continental Bank keeps files for a period of twenty-five years after the closing of a trust. For this reason, the Continental Bank no longer has material relating to the Luther H. Peirce Trust in its' archives.

A typewritten letter from Mr. Binney directed to Miss Schjoldager, dated 30 March 1921, confirms the purchase of the painting *The Four Generations* by the artist Mr. Charles E. Boutwood for $300. This correspondence acknowledges a letter written on 22 March 1921 by Miss Schjoldager expressing fondness for the picture. Mr. Binney's letter also reveals that the painting had hung in the school for two years at the time of the purchase. Mary Meyer's *History of the Lake View Woman's Club* documents that the Club arranged for artists and private citizens to lend their paintings to the school for the appreciation and enjoyment of the students.⁸
Acquisition Of Paintings By Adam Emory Albright

One of the next paintings acquired by the school was On the Raft by Adam Emory Albright in August 1925. At a cost of $1000, this painting was the most costly purchased by the school. The purchase was featured in an article in the Art World section of the Chicago Evening Post on 11 August 1925. The article praises the selection of an Albright painting as particularly appropriate for a school setting: "The picture is well adapted to this purpose, for it is a children's picture in feeling as well as in subject." 

The painter, Adam Emory Albright, was born in Wisconsin in 1862 and was a long time resident of Illinois. He was a figure painter and specialized in portraying children at play in the outdoors, often choosing to use his own sons, or the children of neighbors, as models. Albright's paintings were frequently pictured in the Art World Section of the Chicago Evening Post. He held numerous one man shows from just after the Columbian Exposition through the 1920s. Picking Wild Strawberries (which was purchased at a later date for the school) was exhibited at the Art Institute from 2 October to 19 October 1902. The Art World article describes On the Raft:

In painting On the Raft Mr. Albright had his sons as models for two of the figures. The captain and pilot in the picture is his oldest son Lisle,... The younger boy is Malvin Marr Albright, the sculptor.... The girl in the picture was an Edison Park girl borrowed for the occasion. The raft was made by the boys and floated on a pond which had been flooded by spring rains. In it Mr.
Figure 3. *On The Raft* by Adam Emory Albright, 1902
Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
Figure 4. *Picking Wild Strawberries* by Adam Emory Albright, 1922. Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
Albright has recreated one of the characteristic studies of American country children of a generation ago, for which he is best known.10

The article concludes with the wish that the children of the Peirce School, "find reflected their own pleasure in play and youthful adventure." On the Raft which measures forty-eight by thirty-six inches was framed in a gilded wooden frame and hung in the first floor hallway. A knowledgeable Chicago restorer of fine art has suggested that the gilded hand carved frame in which The Raft hangs is possibly hand carved by Albright himself, as he enjoyed carving his own picture frames. The frame is in the art nouveau style and has a scroll and tassel motif.

The Collection Continues to Grow

On 15 June 1926, Mr. Butcher wrote Miss Schjoldager to confirm the payment of $275 to Mr. Arthur G. Rider for his painting In Spanish Waters and $425 to Mr. Charles Halberg for his picture Sunset on the Atlantic. The letter also requested that the principal have the artists send her their bills for approval of payment and requested that she remit them to the bank which would then pay the artists directly.11

Mr. Frederick Fursman, Director of the Art Institute Alumni Association Summer School of Painting at Saugatuck, Michigan, directed a letter to Miss Schjoldager, dated 11 September 1926, in which he communicated appreciation for her visit to his school in Saugatuck. He continued to write
that the three paintings she wished to see in Chicago were sent express to the Peirce School for approval. The paintings were: *Maybelle and Connie (Two Girls Sewing)* $450, *On the Dunes* $375 and *Wash Day* $375.12

The Collection is Appraised

Mr. Harry L. Engle, Manager of the Chicago Galleries Association was engaged by the school to appraise the original oil paintings, water colors and copies of paintings at Peirce. The appraisal, dated 7 December 1926, listed the artists, paintings, and values of each. Throughout the years from appraisal to appraisal and also in news and magazine reports the spelling of some the artists names has differed greatly. Whenever possible the author has used the same spelling as used by the artist in signing his work. C. Hallberg is often written as Halberg, W. Brownson is often misspelled as Bronson and J. Spelman is sometimes written as Spellman. In each of these cases the former spelling is correct; however, in reproducing the appraisals here the appraisers original work is shown as written in the appraisal. The appraisal was complied for insurance purposes and included all paintings owned by the school: oil paintings, water colors, copies of oil paintings and prints.
### TABLE 2

**APPRAISAL OF PAINTINGS - 7 DECEMBER 1926**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title Of Painting</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Appraised Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Original Oil Paintings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrait of Helen C. Peirce</td>
<td>Bronson</td>
<td>$ 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoeing Cabbages</td>
<td>Boutwood</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Generations</td>
<td>Boutwood</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Raft</td>
<td>Albright</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset on the Atlantic</td>
<td>Halberg</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Ozarks</td>
<td>Mc Kee</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Forest Preserves</td>
<td>Mc Kee</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Chief</td>
<td>Stoddard</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A City Among the Hills</td>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp in the Wilderness</td>
<td>Spelman</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Jan Stikas’ Garden</td>
<td>Sheffer</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>Stoddard</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Mountains</td>
<td>McKee</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the North Woods</td>
<td>Spelman</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River in Normandy</td>
<td>Aldrich</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the German Forest</td>
<td>Affeld</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Spanish Waters</td>
<td>Rider</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve paintings representing the months.</td>
<td>Norton</td>
<td>at cost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Water Colors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Painting</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Appraised Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poppies</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeward Bound</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Clearing in the Forest</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke Hut</td>
<td>Affeld</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior of Hut</td>
<td>Affeld</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Copies Of Paintings At The Art Institute**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Painting</th>
<th>Identifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cows in Meadowland</td>
<td>Normandy Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing Home the New Born Calf</td>
<td>Icebound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy Spain</td>
<td>Going to Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep Going Home</td>
<td>Judgement of Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep in Picardy</td>
<td>In Holland Waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrait of Helen DuBois</td>
<td>Approaching Storm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2--Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Painting</th>
<th>Prints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portrait of a Girl</td>
<td>Moonlight Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarpon Spring</td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June in the Alps copy, not at the Art Institute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately $300 on this lot. Average $15 each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nightwatch</th>
<th>Moses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appeal of the Great Spirit</td>
<td>In the Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Homer</td>
<td>Fjords of Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melon Eaters</td>
<td>Home of the Heron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John and the Lamb</td>
<td>Sunset Splendors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of Charles I</td>
<td>Flower Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acropolis</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madonna of Chair</td>
<td>Notre Dame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Three Fates</td>
<td>Amalfi\textsuperscript{13}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A handwritten note on the appraisal documents that the oil paintings Indian, In the German Forest, and A City Among Hills were given as gifts by the Lake View Woman's Club, as were all of the listed water colors. These paintings are also mentioned by Mary Meyer in the book, History of the Lake View Woman's Club.

The 1926 appraisal is the earliest appraisal on file and documents the paintings either purchased for the school or given as gifts. A subsequent letter to Miss Schjoldager from Mr. Butcher acknowledges the appraisal and refers to paintings by John W. Norton. Butcher writes, "For your information the cost of the twelve paintings representing the months of the year by John Norton was $2,400." A notation on the inventory substantiates that Norton sold the pictures at cost to the school. This letter also reveals that the
collection was to be insured. Butcher adds, "We will proceed immediately with the securing of the insurance."  

In a letter dated 6 December 1926, Mr. Harry L. Engle, Manager of the Chicago Galleries Association, recommended that the painting of Four Generations by C.W. Boutwood be restored so as to enhance its value. Engle continued in his letter to offer to restore the picture. Only an undated, handwritten note by Miss Schjoldager on the school copy of the December, 1926 appraisal documented that the restoration of the Four Generations was completed. Engle continued his letter remarking that the artists, Mr. Sheffer and Mr. Spelman, had contacted him to inquire when they would receive payment for the paintings purchased through his gallery for the school. This remark fixes the time of the purchase of the painting, In the North Woods by John A. Spelman as shortly prior to the date of the letter.

John A. Spelman (1880-1941) was a well known landscape painter who painted many forest scenes featuring trees, water and sky in all seasons. His paintings reflected the beauty and tranquility of nature. The Chicago Evening Post newspaper frequently published photographs of his work between 1920 and 1930. To honor Spelman's fine work the Illinois State Museum Magazine, The Living Museum published an article about Spelman and a photograph of his painting, September Reflections, one of several of Spelman’s paintings owned by the museum, after his death in September of 1941.
Mr. Engle's letter dated 6 December 1926 gives some interesting detail and perspective into the use and display of the pictures:

While waiting for the boys to get the ladder to hang the pictures in Room 308, the other day, I walked up and down the hallways and noted the possibilities of lighting, and I was impressed with the fact that your hallways could be made into very successful display galleries at a very nominal expense in changing the lighting system. It seems to me that the equipment you have there, by simply using more powerful lamps, the lighting on the pictures would be about all that could be desired.16

While some of the pictures were placed in the halls, as Engle suggested, many were displayed in the classrooms. The original plan for the display of the pictures by the Lake View Woman's Club School Decoration and Visiting Committee, prior to 1915, was to name each classroom after an artist. Meyer comments: "Their plan being to place good pictures by old masters and also new in all of the rooms of the school, naming the rooms after the artist herein represented."17 It is clear that Schjoldager and the committee intended to surround the students and faculty with quality art. The practice of displaying borrowed art work allowed the school community to enjoy a larger collection than the school actually owned. A folder containing the typewritten biographies of each of the classical painters represented at Peirce was without a doubt used as resource material for the teachers and students in their art studies. This folder was kept in the office files for ready reference along with the
scrapbook and letters from the trust.

A letter dated 27 December 1926, from Assistant Secretary, A.B. Hussander of the Illinois Merchants Trust Company to the principal, enclosed a $375 check to pay for the painting entitled Mountains, Colorado by artist Clara A. McKee. This letter revealed that Miss Schjoldager had substantial freedom to select paintings for the school and apply to the trust for payment.18

Seven Paintings Stolen

At some time before 20 January 1927 seven paintings were stolen from the school. Although the circumstances are not known, an undated inventory lists the art work lost. Three of the stolen paintings were privately owned. Two prints were stolen, one entitled The Fish Market and another print, owned by a Miss Harden, entitled Child and Shell. Of the original oil paintings, In Spanish Waters by Rider, the month of June by Norton, and In the German Forest by Affeld were gone. The latter had been a gift of the Lake View Woman’s Club. The month June was one of a set of twelve paintings by John W. Norton painted especially for placement in the kindergarten room of the school. Unfortunately, no description of the painting exists in any of the inventories or correspondence, so Norton’s depiction of June remains a mystery19.

Two of the three oil paintings that Frederick Fursman
had sent to the school for approval in September were also in the group stolen. A letter from Fursman to Schjoldager expresses dismay at the loss and responds to her inquiry to say that the paintings had been insured, but only during transit, and not while at Peirce. A receipt shows that soon after, Fursman had the remaining painting, Two Girls Sewing, returned to him. The combined value of the stolen paintings was $890. On 3 February 1927 a receipt notes that the painters H.H. Betts and I. Leon Betts had the following paintings picked up after being on loan to the school: Marine, H.H. Betts, Early Spring, I. Leon Betts, Overflow of Mississippi, H.H. Betts, Glen Ellyn Scene, I. Leon Betts.

On 4 March 1927 Mr. Mc Kee picked up his pictures and those of Laura Stoddard. Miss Stoddard had loaned three pictures: The Bluff, The Brook, and The Bridge. These paintings had been displayed in the school office. It is apparent that with the succession of artists reclaiming their paintings after the burglary, they lost confidence in the ability of the school to protect their work.20

In addition to the postcards of the art works and biographies of the artists contained in the school scrapbook, the autobiographies of three of the Chicago area artists who either loaned or sold their art work to the Peirce Trust are preserved. Miss Schjoldager requested autobiographical information from the contemporary artists who had paintings at Peirce. Responding to her request, Mrs. Laura Stoddard
and Mrs. Helen Affeld submitted handwritten autobiographies. Mrs. Affeld writes of herself in the third person on 15 May 1917:

Helen W. Affeld was born on the Island of Mackinac. She was early interested in drawing and painting and was always happy when trying for some truth in nature and so while never expecting to be a professional, lost no opportunity for sincere effort. She studied some at the Art Institute. Also studied with Freer and Spread; also joining classes both here and abroad in outdoor sketching. never studied. She enjoyed the famous galleries as no one could who had not studied. She was a member of the Lake View Art Club and believes that every honest effort is worth while, and says, "No one even the greatest masters can reach the goal, so let us all try."21

In a handwritten letter written to Miss Schjoldager, Mrs. Laura Stoddard described her garden which was the landscape she used to paint The Indian. Stoddard further described George Whitewater, the Winnebago Indian who posed for her. The painting was forty by fifty inches and was described in a 1938 appraisal as: "Young Chief sitting on the ground, dressed in a dark shirt, buckskin leggings, with a red stripped blanket thrown about him."22 The painting was a gift to the school from the Lake View Woman’s Club. The original value of the painting was $600. This painting was seen in the school until approximately 1960 when it disappeared.

From early photographs and descriptions it is likely that the paintings, both loaned to and owned by the school, were displayed in the classrooms and hallways much as the Art Institute was displaying paintings at the time, painting
Figure 5. *The Indian* by Laura Stoddard
Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
after painting lining the walls, with little room in between the frames. Certainly this must have been the case at the time of the school dedication when there were 141 paintings hanging in the school. Raymond C. Jonas, a January 1927 Peirce graduate recalls:

> There were eight to ten paintings hung on the walls of the halls. The students from each room were taken through the halls to view the pictures and were asked to vote on the ones we wanted for permanent display."^23

George Hedstrom, a 1929 Peirce graduate, also recalls the process used for the selection of paintings:

> As to the collection of paintings, my recollections are that there were quite a few paintings hanging on the wall for all the students to look at, and at a given time, we were permitted to again view them and vote on the ones we like the most (they were numbered) and then handed in our choices to the teachers who in turn no doubt tabulated the choices. These votes were then given to the committee in charge and the pictures were then purchased and became a part of the school and hung in the halls.^24

In August 1927 Miss Schjoldager retired. Her contributions as the first principal of the school, from its opening in 1915 to 1927, were significant especially in terms of her role as a leader and decision maker on the trust committee, and in carrying out the mission of the trust. Her meticulous notes and care in conserving the trust correspondence have supplied important information about the collection. During her administration, the kindergarten room was improved and the playground completely landscaped. Miss Schjoldager also managed the school’s large collection of paintings, some on loan, others given by the Lake View
Women's Club and those purchased by the Peirce Trust. In addition, and of particular importance, Miss Schjoldager and the Chicago Board of Education committee must be recognized for the excellent selections that they made of contemporary paintings to purchase. The largest group of paintings was acquired by Schjoldager and the committee. The selections that they made met their goal of providing quality art work for the appreciation of the school community and these same paintings continue to be excellent and relevant selections some eighty years later. The next decade would bring great changes to the collection and grounds.

New Leadership

When Miss Mary McMahon became principal in August of 1927 there was $2000 remaining in the Peirce Trust. The Chicago Board of Education committee then consisted of Miss Ella C. Sullivan, District Superintendent, Miss E. Courtright, Mrs. H. Hanlon, Assistant Principal, and Miss Mary McMahon, Principal. An interesting series of letters from the trust administrator to the principal serve to underscore the mission of the trust in the view of the educators associated with it.

In May of 1928, the committee informed Mr. Butcher, the trust administrator, that the committee had decided to purchase Picking Wild Strawberries for $1000. The painting was already hanging in the school as a companion to On the
Raft, both by artist Adam E. Albright. Principal McMahon expresses her delight with the picture:

While one thousand dollars seems great I believe it will bring inspiration to many a child’s heart....I trust you will agree that the children should be enjoying the pictures while the memory of Mrs. Peirce still resides in this vicinity.\textsuperscript{25}

Butcher replies on 1 June 1928 with an acerbic:

It is the feeling of the Trustee, in view of the theft of the pictures which were taken from the school some time ago, that it is rather unwise to put such a large sum as $1000.00 in a single picture. We are also of the opinion that the Trustee should have been consulted in the purchase of this picture and we will ask you to kindly advise us if delivery has actually been made to the school of the above mentioned picture.\textsuperscript{26}

Miss McMahon responded immediately on 6 June 1928:

I regret exceedingly that I failed to consult the Trustees of the Fund regarding the purchase, but I understood that the committee were to decide and refer the matter to the Trustees in charge as heretofore. I certainly regret my remissness.

The picture hangs upon our walls and everyone is delighted with it, and I am sure that you will agree with me in feeling that the Peirce fund was intended to do the unusual for the school, and the purchase of this wonderful piece of art will do the unusual.\textsuperscript{27}

Time has validated the selection of the two Albright paintings. Newly restored they are bright and happy subjects for the school children and adults at Peirce, reminding all of the delight of such carefree pursuits as picking strawberries or rafting on a summer day.

In March 1932 McMahon wrote Butcher to ask the balance in the Trust. Butcher replied that the balance was $1,015.42. On 16 November 1933, the Trust notified Miss McMahon that the Rollins, Burdick Hunter Company insurance
policy would expire on 14 December 1933. Butcher reminded McMahon of her decision to hold the remainder of the trust funds to continue the insurance policy, "You will remember that it was decided at the time you had a loss on account of vandalism to hold these funds for the purpose of keeping insurance on the works of art until the funds were exhausted." The nature of the vandalism to the paintings is undocumented. The insurance policy provided $13,420 coverage for the paintings. On 19 February 1935, A.E. Burton of the Trust notified Miss McMahon that the insurance on the paintings was renewed for a period of three years for the amount of $13,420. The balance of the trust, after the premium of $175.98, was $769.05. In June of 1935 Miss McMahon retired.

Miss Mildred Fahy

Miss Mildred Fahy became the Peirce principal in September 1935. Mr. Burton, Assistant Secretary, directed an inquiry to Miss Fahy on 17 November 1937 requesting an update of the list of paintings so that the insurance could be properly renewed. He also indicated that funds would be available for repair of the paintings if necessary. Miss Fahy replied that "five or six of the painting were missing," and also remarked, "I feel the valuation on the pictures are far above what they should be." To assess the value of the paintings, Mr. Benjamin K. Smith was engaged to appraise
the value of the collection. In his appraisal dated 19 January 1938 the collection was valued at $9272.30.

The 1938 inventory provides a more descriptive representation of the art collection than the previous one done on 7 December 1926. Each painting is listed by artist, title and description of the painting, size and value. From this more detailed inventory, additional facts about the collection emerge. Paintings acquired after the 1926 appraisal were: Portrait of Helen C. Peirce by Laura Stoddard, and Picking Wild Strawberries by Adam E. Albright. The 1938 inventory is much more descriptive and informative, describing in detail the oil paintings of the collection.

**TABLE 3**

**APPRAISAL OF PAINTINGS - 19 JANUARY 1938**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title of Painting</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Appraised Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Framed Oil Paintings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownson, W. C.</td>
<td>Portrait of Helen C. Peirce</td>
<td>50&quot; x 36&quot;</td>
<td>$ 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Seated in a chair by a table; facing to the left, head slightly turned toward the spectator; black costume.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoddard, Laura</td>
<td>Portrait of Helen C. Peirce</td>
<td>50&quot; x 36&quot;</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Seated, facing three quarters the left, hands on lap; white flowered costume.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albright, A.E.</td>
<td>On the Raft</td>
<td>48&quot; x 36&quot;</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>A boy poling a raft on which are a little blond girl and a boy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Title of Painting</td>
<td>Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boutwood, C.E.</td>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Four Generations</td>
<td>57&quot; x 44&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A babe in arms, mother, grandmother and great grandmother, in a bright sunny garden.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albright, A.E.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Picking Wild Strawberries</td>
<td>48&quot; x 36&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halberg, G.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marine Subject</td>
<td>30&quot; x 40&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoddard, Laura</td>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Indian Chief</td>
<td>40&quot; x 50&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young chief sitting on the ground, dressed in a dark shirt, buckskin leggings, with a red stripped blanket thrown about him.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelman, John</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Trapper's Camp</td>
<td>20&quot; x 24&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Characteristic example by the artist; a pool in the foreground, in pine woods in autumn; tent at right.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer, Pauline</td>
<td></td>
<td>City Among the Hills</td>
<td>20&quot; x 24&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>View of a New England village among the hills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mc Kee, Clare A.</td>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Pool in Woods</td>
<td>20&quot; x 24&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunset time, with trees and sky reflected in pool among rocks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldrich, George</td>
<td></td>
<td>Normandy River</td>
<td>30&quot; x 36&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A cottage near the turn of a river; a village in the distance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mc Kee, Clare A.</td>
<td></td>
<td>In the Forest Preserve</td>
<td>28&quot; x 32&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A view across a valley; bare trees at left sunset time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boutwood, C.E.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hoeing Cabbages</td>
<td>36&quot; x 30&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single figure of a French peasant woman.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKee, Clare A.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rocky Mountains</td>
<td>22&quot; x 29&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A great hollowed-out glacial path or valley; stream in foreground.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 3--Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist Description</th>
<th>Title of Painting</th>
<th>Size Appraisal Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheffer, Glen C.</td>
<td>In Jan Styka's Garden</td>
<td>29&quot; x 24&quot; $300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Two young women on the steps of a house; flowers and shrubs about.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelman, John A.</td>
<td>A Camp in the Wilderness</td>
<td>36&quot; x 36&quot; 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>A tent pitched among tall trees near a northern lake.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A Group Of Decorative Paintings By John W. Norton 1878 - 1936**

The Months of the Year: eleven paintings 36" x 48" $3300

- **January:** Cold afternoon light; snow covered tree in foreground.
- **February:** A cat sitting in a white chair before a grate fire.
- **March:** Big cloud, high wind, village and canals.
- **April:** Green covered hills, new foliage, rain storm.
- **May:** Apple blossoms and Robins; broad beach and lake in the distance.
- **July:** "Old Glory" waving above high buildings. Tribune Tower in background.
- **August:** A sloop running before a wind; light house and high bluffs.
- **September:** A crow flying over a shock of wheat; farm buildings in distance.
- **October:** Ducks landing among reeds in a broad lake.
- **November:** Turkey gobbler and hen; corn stalks on hills.
- **December:** Moonlight and snow; a church in a valley.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist and Title</th>
<th>Size Appraised</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Framed Copies In Oil Color Of Paintings By Old and Modern Masters</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After J. F. Millet, by Manton Moulds;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing Home the New-Born Calf</td>
<td>32” x 40”</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Harry Thompson, by Anonymous copyist;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep in Picardy</td>
<td>32” x 46”</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Rembrandt, by Anonymous copyist;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Girl At Half Open Door</td>
<td>40” x 32”</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Sir Anthony Van Dyck, by Uldine Shryver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena DuBois</td>
<td>38” x 32”</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Constant Tryon, by L. Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Road to Market</td>
<td>36” x 28”</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Walter McEwen, by W.C. Brownson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Judgement of Paris</td>
<td>36” x 50”</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After E. Van Marcke, by Trego Smith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle in Meadow Lands</td>
<td>28” x 37”</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Francois Domingo, by Anonymous copyist;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy Spain</td>
<td>26” x 32”</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Anton Mauve, by Anonymous copyist;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep Going Home</td>
<td>22” x 29”</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After P.J. Clays by Anonymous copyist;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland Waters</td>
<td>29.5” x 22”</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After W.D. Metcalfe, by G. Weissemberg;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icebound</td>
<td>29” x 26”</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After George Inness by Anonymous copyist;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarpon Springs</td>
<td>42” x 32”</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After George Inness, by Manton Moulds;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etretat, Normandy</td>
<td>30” x 42”</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 3--Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title of Painting</th>
<th>Size Appraised</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water Colors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Egan</td>
<td>Poppies</td>
<td>22&quot; x 16&quot;</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. W. Affeld</td>
<td>Peasant Interior</td>
<td>17&quot; x 23&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. W. Affeld</td>
<td>Thatched Barn</td>
<td>18&quot; x 22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Framed Reproductions In Color

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Painting</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Size Appraised</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Night Watch</td>
<td>Rembrandt</td>
<td>20&quot; x 24&quot;</td>
<td>$8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant St. John</td>
<td>Murillo</td>
<td>24&quot; x 18&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Melon Eaters</td>
<td>Murillo</td>
<td>24&quot; x 18&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry VIII</td>
<td>Holbein</td>
<td>20&quot; x 24&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Children of Charles I</td>
<td>Devos</td>
<td>20&quot; x 24&quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June in the Alps</td>
<td>Macwhirter</td>
<td>30&quot; x 40&quot;</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaching Storm</td>
<td>Troyon</td>
<td>30&quot; x 40&quot;</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittany Fisherfolk</td>
<td>LeGout Gerard</td>
<td>30&quot; x 40&quot;</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Acropolis</td>
<td>E. Koerner</td>
<td>22&quot; x 36&quot;</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiords of Norway</td>
<td>Sorensen</td>
<td>30&quot; x 40&quot;</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading From Homer</td>
<td>Alma Tadema</td>
<td>12&quot; x 20&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madonna of the Chair</td>
<td>Raphael</td>
<td>20&quot; x 20&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madonna</td>
<td>Bosenhausen</td>
<td>20&quot; x 14&quot;</td>
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<td>The Horse Fair</td>
<td>Rosa Bonheur</td>
<td>12&quot; x 30&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tulip Time - Holland</td>
<td>Hitchcock</td>
<td>14&quot; x 20&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Framed Prints</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>8&quot; x 10&quot; @ 2</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>10 General Washington</td>
<td>Stuart</td>
<td>20&quot; x 16&quot; @ 3</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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On 16 September 1940, Benjamin K. Smith updated the appraisal and reduced the total value of the entire collection from its January 1938 evaluation of $9,272 down to $4993. On 7 March 1947, the collection continued to be valued at the same amount as the 1940 appraisal and was insured by the Travelers Fire Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut for $4993. The renewal premium was $63.91 to expire on 7 March of 1950. Hereafter there remains no
Mr. John Burke, Peirce principal 1960-1981, recalls that the collection continued to be insured by the PTA after he became principal in 1960. Soon after, the PTA discontinued the insurance feeling that the paintings were no longer valuable enough to warrant paying the insurance premium. The attitude that the paintings were not valuable was fostered by the principals who feared that they would be stolen or vandalized. This was a legitimate concern. In the eighty years, 1915-1995, eighteen oil or water color paintings disappeared. There have only been eight principals at Peirce to date and this has been fortunate for the preservation of the collection and for conservation of the documents authenticating the collection.

The attitude of each principal has reflected the individuals’s personality and the values of the time. Miss McMahon was the first principal to insist that the appraisal of the paintings be reduced. Mr. Burke, wanting to display both of the portraits of Helen Peirce in smaller frames, cut the paintings down from their original size of fifty inches by thirty-six inches to twenty-six by thirty-two. Unfortunately, this distorted the proportions of the pictures resulting in images that have an odd perspective. Most interesting was the whispered message communicated principal to principal was that the collection was important and to protect it through silence.
NOTES


4 Stuart, 18.


7 Peirce Collection Scrapbook, [ca. 1920], Peirce School Papers, Helen C. Peirce School, Chicago.

8 Mr. C.H. Binney, Manager of the Real Estate Department, Illinois Trust and Savings Bank to Miss Inger Schjoldager, Principal, 30 March 1921, TLS, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago; and Meyer, 19.


10 Ibid.

11 Mr. Paul Butcher, Assistant Secretary, Illinois Merchants Trust to Miss Inger Schjoldager, Principal, 15 June 1926, TLS, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.
12 Mr. Frederick K. Fursman, Director of the Summer School of Painting at Saugatuck, Michigan to Miss Inger M. Schjoldager, 11 September 1926, LS, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.


14 Mr. Paul Butcher, Assistant Secretary, Illinois Merchants Trust Co. to Miss Inger M. Schjoldager, Principal, 8 December 1926, TLS, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.

15 "September Reflections," The Living Museum, September 1941, 34.

16 Mr. Harry L. Engle, Manager, Chicago Galleries Association to Miss Inger M. Schjoldager, Principal, 6 December 1926, TLS, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.


18 A.B. Hussander, Assistant Secretary, Illinois Merchants Trust Co to Miss Inger Schjoldager, Principal, 27 December 1927, TLS, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.

19 Inger M. Schjoldager, "List of the original paintings, water colors, copies of paintings and prints stolen from the Peirce School," [ca. January 1927], DS, [carbon copy], Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.

20 Frederick K. Fursman, Artist to Miss Inger M. Schjoldager, Principal, 20 January 1927, TLS, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.

21 Helen W. Affeld, Artist to Miss Inger M. Schjoldager, Principal, [ca. 1918?], LS, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.

22 Laura Stoddard, Artist to Miss Inger M. Schjoldager, Principal, [ca. 1915?], LS, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.


25 Miss Mary McMahon, Principal to Mr. Paul Butcher, Assistant Secretary, Merchants Illinois Trust Co., TLS [carbon copy], 28 May 1928, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.

26 Mr. Paul Butcher, Assistant Secretary, Illinois Merchants Trust Co. to Miss Mary McMahon, Principal, TLS, 1 June 1928, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.

27 Miss Mary McMahon, Principal to Mr. Paul Butcher, Assistant Secretary, Illinois Merchants Trust Co., TLS, 6 June 1928, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.

28 Mr. Paul Butcher, Assistant Secretary, Illinois Merchants Trust Co. to Miss Mary McMahon, Principal, TLS, 16 November 1932, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.

29 Miss Mildred Fahy, Principal to Mr. Springer, Trust Department, Continental Illinois Bank, TL, 9 December 1939, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies, Chicago.


31 Ibid.

32 Mr. John Burke, Evanston interview by author, 15 November 1994.
CHAPTER III

IMPROVING THE PLAYGROUND IN HONOR OF LUTHER H. PEIRCE

The Chicago Board of Education special committee on decorations for Peirce School was charged with the expenditure of the Peirce bequest, and in accordance with Mr. Peirce's request in his will, the board committee consulted with the committee on art of the Lake View Woman's Club. Together the committee members decided to first improve the Peirce playground in honor of the school's benefactor Mr. Luther H. Peirce. Mr. John D. Shoop and Eva H. Thornton represented the board of education and Peirce Principal, Miss Inger Schjoldager, was the third committee member. Mr. Jens Jensen, a noted Chicago landscape artist, was commissioned to "make the school yard an ideal playground."¹ The playground was designed to include the ideas of Mr. Peirce as shared with the principal, Miss Schjoldager, before his death.

Jensen made preliminary drawings in March 1917 and finalized the plans with a planting plan for the grounds in July 1917. Eleven pages of Jensen's original plans for the Peirce playground can be found at the Art and Architecture Library at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Six of the plans are signed plans on linen or tracing paper. The
playground plans describe each element of the playground design: the location and types of plantings in the park, the flagstone and gravel paths, the stone steps, benches, a story ring, a large bird pool, a bird feeding table, five bird houses, a council ring, a wading pool, two drinking fountains, an area for school gardens for the children and neighbors to plant, a girl's playfield, a boy's ball field and a children's playfield. Although the plans were completed in 1917, the construction of the playground was delayed and was not completed until 1923. In her "Peirce School History," Schjoldager attributes the delay to the advent of the World War I and the subsequent difficulty in procuring materials and laborers.²

Mr. Peirce had planned to purchase the land immediately west of the school and had arranged to do so. But he died before the deed could be signed. At the 23 June 1917 meeting of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, Mr. John D. Shoop, recommended that the Chicago Board of Education purchase the land west of the school for the playground so that the work could move forward. The actual purchase was to be delayed for over a year. The Board of Education considered a board report dated 6 February 1918 which describes the proposed transaction:

Acquire additional property immediately west of the present school premises to carry out playground facilities provided for in the Peirce Fund, which property is legally described as the east 214 feet of Lots 11, 12, and 13, and the west 28 feet of Lot 7 in
the resubdivision of Lots 8 and 9 in the division of the north ten acres of the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of section 8-40-14.1

At the time of this report the property owners had not all responded back to the Board of Education’s business manager so action was deferred on the purchase. The attorney of the board was requested to determine fair prices for the properties and to notify the owners so they might submit or revise their proposals. In the end, the Chicago Board of Education acquired the land through condemnation proceedings. The location of the property to be purchased was the interior area of the block west of the original school property line and enclosed by the apartment buildings facing both Bryn Mawr Avenue and Gregory Street. The property acquired measured 234 feet by 127 feet and was later enclosed by a five foot board fence.

At the 5 June 1918 meeting the Board of Education approved a board report appropriating $945 to install the required plumbing to provide the water necessary to implement Jensen’s plans. In addition, the board agreed to the land purchase and specified that all of the other expenses associated with the project be paid for by the Peirce fund.4

The Edgewater News featured the newly remodeled Peirce kindergarten room in an article published on 16 June 1925. The late Luther H. Peirce is mentioned as the donor of the playground finished in 1923, at a cost of $18,000. To protect the playground from destruction was the rationale
given in a board report approved on 26 March 1924 for the construction of iron fencing around the Peirce playground. The project was bid out and the work was given to the Chicago Fence and Wire Co. for the sum of $1661.40.5

Landscape Design in the Early Twentieth Century

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century the field of landscape gardening and park design was expanding and developing. Initially, park designers depended on European ideas and traditions which were simply implemented in the United States. The profession of landscape architect was emerging as designers began to develop gardens that drew form and flora from the native landscape. In Chicago, at the turn of the century, as both the population and industrial base experienced rapid expansion, the city's leaders recognized the need for cultural development and social reform.6 The importance of public parks and gardens to the inhabitants of an expanding industrial city was vital. The Reconstruction Platform of the Chicago Plan Commission gave priority to planning a city that would be orderly, convenient, attractive and healthful. Allotting space for public recreation and open park space was viewed as a responsibility of the city planners. The Fine Arts Journal published an article, entitled, "Make Chicago Beautiful" in the June 1919 edition which describes the outlook of those charged with urban planning:
We have reached a time now when the citizen, to do his duty, must plan for the welfare of coming generations. It is necessary that the people realize and that the young be taught, that the really great work of the world today is that which foresees and builds for the future.7

The planners aspiration to create a more attractive Chicago had, a second, more lofty purpose than of planning for the future and simple material improvements:

There is another and deeper motive in planning for the future generations of our city than its splendid material upbuilding. This is of significance only as it expresses the actual social, intellectual and moral up-building of the people, and so far as, in turn, it opens the way for further development of this higher type. Who is there among us who is not lifted above sordid industrial existence into the realm of the beautiful and ennobling things of life by attractive surroundings?8

Public parks provided open space and recreational opportunities for those who could not afford to leave the city to seek the pleasure of the country. The city planners intent was to provide for people of wealth and people of small means alike.

**Jens Jensen - Landscape Architect**

Jens Jensen was born in Dybbol, Slesvig, Denmark in 1860. His family owned a prosperous farm. In 1864, Slesvig was invaded and annexed by Germany. Although the area was ruled by the Germans, Jensen's family sent him to a Danish folk high school in Vinding, Jutland and later to an agricultural college at Tune in Zealand province. Jensen was proud of his Danish heritage and recalled the culture and the landscape of his birthplace throughout his life. Jensen
served in the German army from 1880 to 1883. At the end of his military service, he left Denmark for the United States with his fiancee, Anna Marie Hansen, and they married soon after. His family in Denmark was disappointed that Jensen did not return home to work on the family farm. Jensen first worked as a laborer in Florida and Iowa.

In 1866, Jensen began working as a laborer and gardener for the West Chicago Park District. He was very successful and advanced rapidly in the system. He worked as the foreman at Union Park and then, in 1894, as the superintendent at Humboldt Park. As early as 1888, Jensen began using native wildflowers in his designs. This was contrary to the normal practice of more formal displays of annuals. He planted the American Garden in 1988 in Union Park using wildflowers and shrubs. Six years later he was dismissed for refusing to cooperate with the political machinations of the park district bosses. This experience caused Jensen to take up the cause of park reform and later he spoke out for the designation of forest parks for public use. Jensen also participated in the Special Parks Commission which conducted a study and published a report in 1904 on plans for a metropolitan park system.

In 1905, Jensen was rehired under a reform government as the General Superintendent and Chief Landscape Architect of the West Park System. Jensen then renovated Garfield, Humboldt and Douglas parks, the three largest parks in the
system. These parks were largely renovated by 1910 and were the first parks where the prairie influence on landscape architecture was evident. In Douglas park, Jensen created a large meadow with native flowers, trees and shrubbery. He also designed the indoor landscape for the Garfield Park Conservatory creating what he called the prehistoric prairie landscape, complete with indoor rivers and a waterfall. Jensen then redesigned Humboldt Park, constructing a limestone bluff and a prairie stream. In addition, he designed a formal rose garden and rectangular pool with pergolas at each end of the pool. The Humboldt Park renovation was well received and popular with the public. Jensen continued to supervise the West Park System landscaping several of the smaller parks until 1920.11

In 1911, Jensen wrote an article "Regulating City Building" in which he proposed that community centers be developed around schools. He urged the school board to purchase more property around schools for this purpose. The centers would provide both recreational and cultural opportunities designed for people of all ages. Three years after he completed the plan for the Peirce playground, Jensen designed a plan for the grounds of the Lloyd School and Logan Schools. In both plans he emphasized the concept of a neighborhood center designed to serve the entire community. The plans repeated many of the features of the Peirce plan. In the Logan and Lloyd School plans, Jensen added a player's
hill, a natural theater area designed to encourage outdoor drama and music presentations, a naturalistic swimming pool and tennis courts as well as an old folk’s corner.

Jensen was most satisfied with his 1916 design of Columbus Park, located at Austin and Jackson Boulevard. His aim was to create a reflection of the Illinois native landscape. The park was 170 acres in size and undeveloped, giving Jensen the opportunity to shape the park to his own taste. The park featured a prairie meadow with hawthorns and other trees bordering the expanse. A golf course, tennis courts and playfields were integrated into the plan. A lagoon with native plants provided an opportunity for boating. Jensen took pleasure in the fact that the rustic country environment he created there had attracted a great blue heron. Two swimming pools were built. The older children’s swimming pool was ninety feet in diameter and a second more shallow pool for smaller children was 220 feet by 60 to 130 feet wide. The pools were edged by horizontal layers of stratified limestone, which were planted with ferns, vines and shrubs, emulating the country swimming hole. The pools survived intact until 1955 when conventional cement swimming pools were built. A council ring was located on the corner of Jackson Park and Central near the children’s playground and was used for story telling.\textsuperscript{12}

Jensen also had a long and successful career as a landscape architect in the private sector primarily between
1910 and 1930. He also continued to consult for the West Chicago Park System until 1920. He produced landscape designs for residences, estates, hotels and businesses, golf courses, parks and preserves, schools and institutions and for the government, including the Illinois State Supreme Court. Three notable commissions Jensen completed were the Lincoln Memorial Garden in Springfield, Illinois, the grounds of St. Ann's Hospital in Chicago and the Shakespeare Garden on the campus of Northwestern University. Some of his more influential estate clients were Henry and Edsel B. Ford, Sears and Roebuck founder, Julius Rosenwald, J. Ogden Armour, Henry B. Babson and George W. Maher. Jensen collaborated with the midwest architects who were using prairie style designs. Jensen worked with Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, George W. Maher, Robert Spencer and Dwight Perkins on several large projects.13

Jensen was an active man and he participated fully in the preservation movement in the midwest. A member of many organizations, including the Cliff Dwellers and the Municipal Art League, Jensen founded two organizations. The Prairie Club and the Friends of Our Native Landscape recommended sites for preservation and inclusion in the Illinois State Park System, such as White Pines State Park, as well as campaigned for the creation of a state or national park at the Indiana Dunes. The Indiana Dunes State Park was created in 1926 as a result of the Friends continued lobbying.
The Prairie Club organized trips to area preserve sites for the purpose exposing the public, including inner city youth, to the beauty of scenic forests and natural resources in the state.\(^{14}\)

Jensen used clearings in areas where there was enough land to create an open space. He named his studio in Ravinia, The Clearing. After the death of his wife, Jensen left Chicago and created a school at his summer home, also The Clearing, in Ellison Bay, Wisconsin. The students studied landscape design under Jensen and guest teachers.

**A Landscape Plan for the Peirce Playground**

The park Jensen designed for the Peirce playground featured many of the elements that Jensen felt were important for school communities, especially as he viewed schools in the potential role as neighborhood community centers. The species of trees, shrubs and flowers that Jensen chose for the park were native to the midwest prairie. Many hawthorn trees were planted. Jensen liked the low and horizontal spread of its' branches which emphasized the prairie theme of his work. Jensen writes of his fondness of the hawthorn tree in *Siftings*, Jensen's memoirs written in 1939:

> It is difficult to imagine a prairie landscape in Illinois without the hawthorn. Like a friend its outstretched branches, harmonious with the horizontal lines of the plains, greet you from afar. Its silvery lace-work against the purple ridges of the forest border add a note of poetry to our winter landscape.\(^{15}\)
Figure 6. View to the Northeast Council Ring. Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
Figure 7. A Planting Plan for the Grounds of the Helen C. Peirce School, 1917. Courtesy of the Art & Architecture Library, University of Michigan.
Hawthorns, crab apples, lindens and witch hazel were used to shape the park naturally lending definition to the various areas. Of the crab apple Jensen wrote:

There is nothing more profound on the edge of the woodlands in the prairie landscape than a grove of crab apple-its lavender touch reflected on massive snowy fields, turning into delicate blue in the light of the day's afterglow. Or its pink blossoms in May bringing untold mystery and loveliness to the forest border where prairie and woodland meet.16

Jensen considered the area to be landscaped as it would appear at different seasons of the year and different times of the day. The light and possible weather conditions affecting the vista were also important elements in his planning for a garden or park.

One of the most memorable features of the Peirce park was the wading pool. The pool was built on six inches of cinders and constructed of cement slabs six inches thick. Built kidney shaped, the wading pool measured seventy-two feet by fifty feet, the length running north and south. The pool was located in front of the principal's office near Byrn Mawr Avenue. The pool was six inches deep at the sides and eighteen inches deep at the center. The cement lip of the pool was one foot wide providing an area for the children to sit comfortably. Jensen surrounded the pool with hawthorn trees, plum trees, sumach, ribes oureum, cornus paniculata, cornus alba, sheepberry bushes and violets. The wading pool was the topic of a newspaper article published in the Edgewater News which appeared on 23 June 1925. The headline
It is to the regret and disappointment of the children of Peirce School that they will not be able to use the wading pool this summer or to play in the $18,000 playground which Luther Peirce gave the children of Edgewater, because the school board does not find it expedient to place a supervisor to watch the children, according to Miss Schjoldager, principal.17

The fact that the playground required additional school staff was to be problematic early on and was one of the contributing reasons for a change in the park in 1938.

On the west side of the wading pool was an area called the sand court where the children could play in the sand. A flagstone path lead to the children's gravel playfield which was surrounded by crab apple trees and had eleven benches around the perimeter of the oval playground area. The children's playfield was intended for the youngest school children or pre-school children. Jensen did not provide paved areas, nor play equipment, hoping to simulate the beauty of the country and encourage the children to use their imagination in play. John M. Forde graduated in 1929 and recalls the playground. In his remembrance he indicates that there were lannon stones placed on the playground which were used for a variety of purposes. His recollections also demonstrate that Jensen was successful in creating an environment that would stimulate the imagination of the children:
The grounds west of the building were most inviting. This area was landscaped—trees and shrubs—and featured as well, lannon stone "benches," and other lannon stone "creations," which made for a place to sit, enjoy the sun, play with pre-school offspring, meditate, rest, etc. For us, this was an ideal environment for hide and seek. Also, when teachers were out of the room, a few of us would gather at the windows. There we'd draw maps of the grounds, with the trees and lannon stone structures being the most prominent. Each was given a "secret" number or name. When the teacher returned to the classroom we went to our desks quickly. Then we'd "slip" notes to our friends who had the maps; the notes indicated the "secret" places' numbers where we would "secretly" meet at recess, sometimes after school. And, we would change the "secret" numbers/names frequently so that others wouldn't know of our "secret" operations.18

Jensen placed a story ring on the northwest corner and a council ring on the southwest corner of the playground. These circular rings of benches had limestone bases with stone seats. The council rings Jensen designed had fire pits in the center for campfires. The purpose of these areas was to provide a place for conversation, storytelling, music, or drama. The council ring also expressed a spirit of democracy for Jensen, as he describes in his book Siftings:

In this friendly circle, around the fire, man becomes himself. Here there is no social caste. All are on the same level, looking each other in the face. A ring speaks of strength and friendship and is one of the great symbols of mankind....Many of these rings I have built since this first attempt. When they are on school grounds or in playfields I call them story rings. These rings are the beginnings of a new social life in the gardens of the American of tomorrow.19

Norma Haddleton taught at Peirce from 1938 until 1952 and she recalls that the kindergarten children often had classes outdoors at the council ring.20
Jensen believed that parks should be designed so that city children could observe nature. For this reason it is not surprising to find a large bird pool, a bird feeding table, and five bird houses located on the western edge of the children's playfield in the central area of the park. The bird pool was built on four inches of sand, six inches of stone and was constructed of a four inch thick concrete slabs. Although the bird pool was actually a rectangle in shape, measuring four feet, six inches by six feet, it had an oval appearance due to the fact that the pool was finished at the lip with stratified limestone slabs positioned in various layers and levels. Jensen often used stratified limestone often for pools of all kinds. The intent of the limestone slabs was to imitate the cliffs of the Illinois rivrways and bring natural scenes to the city for those who could not visit the country. Two well known pools of this type were the swimming pools designed for Columbus Park in 1916, just one year prior to his Peirce commission. The plantings in this area were planned to attract birds to the area: plum and crab apple trees, iris, goldenrod, sumach and sheepberry.

A flagstone path, edged in iris, goldenrod, viburnum dentatum, and sumach, lead from the story ring on the northwest side of the playground to the bird pool and back to the children's playground. In the center, dividing the playground north from south, was a gravel walk to the boy's ball field. The walkway was bordered by hawthorns, lindens
and witch hazel shrubs on both sides. South of the walk way was the girl's playfield. This area was enclosed with hawthorns, crab apples, ninebark, rosa blanda and violets. A delphinium edged flagstone path ran from the center of the walk way to the council ring on the south end of the playground. Leading from the council ring was crab apple lane, which ran parallel to Gregory Street.

East of the playground, the school building was not overlooked in the landscaping effort. The front of the building was planted with philadelphus and persian lilacs. On the sides of the building crab apples, sumach and rosa setigera were planted. A path led to the rear of the building where there was a large area designated for school gardens. The area was bordered by sweet briar and there were plots where flowers and vegetables could be planted by the students and community members alike.

The Jens Jensen playground endured until 1938, when Mayor Kelly provided funds for a field house and a new gravel playground with modern playground equipment for the children. The community felt that the Jensen playground did not have a large enough field for team sports or play equipment. Cecilia Forrester, a Peirce graduate, contributed her view of the Jensen playground:

The landscaped playground was lovely, with paths and benches....What we children wanted was a playground with swings and slides. We used the iron railings and somersaulted over those endlessly. Children do not walk around on pretty paths and rest on benches.21
An additional factor which caused the removal of the Jensen landscaping was that the trust funds ran out and the cost of maintaining such a large, landscaped park was prohibitive. The new playground was very successful. A field house was built and staffed by two teachers who provided recreational activities and sports in the afternoon and evening hours. It provided a safe and haven for all of the neighborhood children.
Figure 8. School Children on the Peirce Playground. Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
NOTES


2 "Peirce Opens $40,000 Kindergarten Room- Memorial to his Wife, Helen," *Edgewater News*, 16 June 1925, 6.


8 Ibid.

9 Darrel G. Morrison, Afterword to *Siftings* by Jens Jensen (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press), 112.

10 Grese, 151.

11 Ibid., 73.

12 Ibid., 81.

13 Ibid., 104.

14 Ibid., 127.

16 Ibid., 50.


19 Jensen, 66.


CHAPTER IV

IMPROVEMENT OF THE KINDERGARTEN ROOM

When the playground that Jens Jensen designed was completed in 1923, the Board of Education Committee, on the advice of the Lake View Woman’s Club Art Department, consulted experts at the Art Institute of Chicago for a recommendation for an artist to redesign the existing kindergarten room. The kindergarten room was chosen for special treatment as Helen C. Peirce was interested in early childhood education and devoted so much of her time to the development of kindergarten programs in Chicago. As President of the Lake View Woman’s Club, she was a leader in petitioning the Chicago Board of Education to establish the first publicly funded kindergartens. The recommendation of the Art committee of the Lake View Woman’s Club, to seek assistance from the Art Institute in selecting a person to undertake the kindergarten renovation, was a very natural one. Several members of the club were painters and had connections with the Art Institute and club member Laura Stoddard was an instructor there.

John W. Norton, a well-known painter and teacher at the Art Institute, was recommended for the project and was
subsequently selected to oversee the kindergarten renovation. Norton had often worked with George Grant Elmslie of the architectural firm of Purcell and Elmslie and he invited Elmslie to collaborate on this project.¹

Elmslie, Norton and Jensen were contemporaries and were members of the Cliff Dwellers Club, a men’s private club dedicated to promoting the arts in Chicago. Other members were Igor Stravinsky, Theodore Dreiser, Thornton Wilder, Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. Members often met for lunch at the club located in Orchestra Hall on Michigan Avenue and discussed their work together. Composed of the leaders of the city’s cultural institutions, architects, artists, musicians, writers and businessmen, the club was a place for cultural exchange, conversation and relaxation.²

All three men involved in the Peirce renovation, Elmslie, Norton and Jensen, came to be internationally acclaimed for their individual work. One of the most significant aspects of the work done at Peirce is that all three artists contributed to the project.³

No photographic record of the completed kindergarten has been discovered to date. The Edgewater News praised the design of the kindergarten in an article reporting its opening on Tuesday, 11 June 1925. The finished room was hailed as “the most complete and beautiful kindergarten in Chicago.” The news article describes some of the prominent features of the renovated room:
The old kindergarten room has been redecorated: it has mission woodwork, hanging electric lanterns in antique design, and French doors leading to a private playground. On the walls are panels painted by Mr. Norton which represent the months of the year. There is a small stage with indoor and outdoor sets. Off the main room is a large glassed sun porch with stone boxes under the windows which are filled with ferns given by William Schlief, florist.

The headline of the article tells that the total cost of the renovated kindergarten room was $40,000. In the earliest of the school histories, Mrs. Inger Schjoldager, the first Principal of Peirce, commented on the success of the remodeling of the kindergarten:

The painter and architect, artists both, took a box of a room and made it a thing of beauty and convenience, a room that would have satisfied Mrs. Peirce's love of beauty.

At the opening of the room, the eighth grade girls staged the operetta, Hansel and Gretel, which was attended by the Superintendent of Schools, parents and other school officials.

The Kindergarten Classroom

A number of artifacts remain to describe what the room looked like when finished in 1925. The original plans for the room are conserved at the Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries, St. Paul, Minnesota. The four ink on linen architectural plans, dated 28 June 1924, consist of: the first floor plan, the elevation of the kindergarten looking south, the kindergarten
and flower room section looking east and the foundation plan. These plans are marked: George G. Elmslie-Architect, drawn by L.B. Clapp, traced by J.L. Dorman and corrected by G.G. Elmslie. Of course, the most significant artifact is the kindergarten room itself. Unfortunately, the room has been changed because of various building rehabilitations through the years, significantly altering the appearance of the room. A dropped ceiling, a tile floor and improved lighting were installed, surely for convenience and in an effort to modernize. All three of the leaded glass doors were replaced by wooden doors and the leaded glass windows in the garden room were replaced by plain glass panes. The classroom has been painted several times through the years covering the original colors and some of the classroom's accessories have been lost: the original sets of scenery that belonged to the stage and the seven small lanterns that stood atop the ornamental picture frames are now gone. Mr John Burke, the Principal at Peirce from 1960 to 1981, recalls having seen the lanterns in the fan room at one time, but they were lost or discarded some time after that.

The following describes the kindergarten room according to the architectural plans and other primary sources, chiefly school records or statements from students and teachers who attended or worked at Peirce between 1920 and 1935. Mr. Wilbert R. Hasbrouke, noted architect and author, also provided many insights into the architecture of the period
and described many details of the architecture unique to Elmslie. It is important to note that the kindergarten room designed by Elmslie was a renovation of the existing room. The room was redesigned in terms of the allocation of space, utility, ornamentation and an addition was added. Two additional doors to the exterior were also added to provide access to the private patio. The doorway into the room from the hall was not changed from its original location and is placed on the northeast side of the rectangular shaped room. The plan indicates that the door leading in from the hallway was made of leaded glass, replacing the original wooden door. The entry has a marble threshold, an architectural feature which is used to connect one floor surface to another. The floor surface in the hall is concrete and the classroom floor is quarter sawn oak, dovetailed and finished a medium oak color. As a result of this construction, the entire floor in the kindergarten room was raised one half inch above the original level. A circle was stained in a darker color in the center of the room.

To the right of the door is the stage which measures six and one half feet high and fifteen feet wide. The stage is elevated only five inches off the floor, which is a safe and appropriate height for five year old students. Originally, the stage had portable sets with both indoor and outdoor scenery. A later addition is a mural on the rear wall of the stage which is attributed to the Work Progress
Administration (WPA) of the nineteen thirties. The subject of the mural is a cottage in the country. While the subject of the mural is similar to one of Norton's paintings, the mural is not original to the room. Four sixty watt stage lights with a control panel located on the north side of the stage are provided for illumination of the students' theatrical presentations. The stage was placed in the location of the original wardrobe which was relocated to make room for the stage. The stage floor is consistent with the rest of the room and is of oak.

Flanking both sides of the stage are milled doors which open into closets, each with six shelves, providing needed storage space. The plans describe the doors as: "Wood Open Bars in Door." Directly opposite the entrance is a deep cloak room with a built-in oak wardrobe providing hooks for the children's coats and additional storage for the teacher. The cloak room is irregular in shape and measures eighteen square feet in size. The architect's plan indicates that the wardrobe front is fitted with a Wilson Style B Rolling Front Wardrobe. The Wilson wardrobe has vertical sliding oak doors which close to conceal the interior. A storeroom for kindergarten decorations appears in the plans constructed of a five foot wood screen partition and door inside of the cloak room. This convenience was later replaced by a solid wall with coat hooks.

Continuing on the west wall is a four foot by five foot
oak framed blackboard installed only eighteen inches above the floor, which is exactly at eye level for the children. Next, on the west wall, is a opaque leaded glass door which leads to the student’s washroom where the commodes and sink are also scaled to the students size. A second three by five foot blackboard continues on the west wall. Adjacent to the blackboard is a French door, in leaded glass, which measures approximately seven feet high and thirteen feet wide. This door leads to the children’s private terrace. Attached to the south corner of the west wall, is a built-in, sixty-eight inch by seventy inch by eight inch, three door bookcase with leaded glass doors. Actually all of the windows and cabinet fronts are composed of glass and zinc strips. These materials were used in the twenties before they were replaced by lead, which was a more sturdy material.

In the southwest corner of the room next to the bookcase is a eight foot marble threshold which is the doorway to the addition called the flower room. Through the years this room has also been called the solarium, the sun room, the garden room or the sun porch. The flower room is twenty-five feet by sixteen feet in size with leaded glass windows on the east, south and west walls. The room contained long cement tubs for flowers under the windows and a flexitile floor for ease of cleaning. The purpose of this room was for gardening and craft activities. Above the leaded glass windows on the exterior an alternating brick and
stone pattern accentuates the south wall. This effect of horizontal banding is characteristic of Prairie style architecture. A leaded glass door from the flower room leads out into the children's terrace. The design for this project included not only an addition and renovation for the kindergarten room but also a cement terrace and grassy play area enclosed by wrought iron and cement block fences. Iron gates with decorative geometric designs completed the enclosure. The terrace is eighteen by seventeen feet and the play field which curves around the addition is approximately twenty-five hundred square feet. To the left of the door to the garden room is a striking nine and one half foot by nine foot zinc strip (leaded) glass window with geometric detailing and red and blue glass ornamentation in each of the corners. This large window provides the maximum amount of natural light for the classroom.

On the east wall of the classroom are displayed six John W. Norton murals which extend across the whole wall. The framing system ties all the murals together, but at the same time exhibits each picture individually. The monthly themes of the murals are of interest to the children. The paintings are removable and the display is changed as the seasons change. Originally, it was planned that the six frames would revolve so as to change the paintings, but this idea was abandoned. The frames also featured small electric lanterns at the top of each post. As six pictures can be
displayed at a time, the pictures are rotated as the season demands. Some pictures, therefore, are in storage part of each year. As already noted the mural for the month of June was stolen in 1927 and no record exists of its description.

The exact color of the rooms after the 1925 renovation is unknown, although Wilbert R. Hasbrouck suggests that a light olive green or gray would have been popular colors during this period. In addition, it is possible that there was stenciling above the golden oak molding which surrounds the room five feet nine inches from the floor. Consistent with other Elmslie projects, the ceiling may have been painted blue or another color.7

George Hedstrom, who attended kindergarten at Peirce in 1922 and graduated in 1929, recalls the kindergarten room:

In those days, the Peirce Kindergarten was known as the most beautiful in the city of Chicago. Many beautiful appointments such as floral plants, and if I am correct, even to having Gold Fish in the aquariums in various parts of the room. Beautiful beyond descriptions to be sure.8

The small fenced kindergarten playground is recalled by two Peirce graduates. Mrs. Bernice S. Coonen, a 1936 graduate, relates:

The kindergarten room was a huge and very wonderful place, presided over by Miss Harpold and Miss Werneke. Its playground, fenced and elevated above the main sidewalk, was a safe haven.9

Cecilia A. Foster, also remembers the kindergarten classroom and the kindergarten playground as a place of security:

Figure 10. Kindergarten Room and Milled Door, 1995. Photograph by Richard Patrick Duba. Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
Figure 11. Plan for the Kindergarten Room, number 1.
William Gray Purcell Papers,
Northwest Architectural Archives
University of Minnesota Libraries,
St. Paul, MN.
Figure 12. Plan for the Kindergarten Room, number 3. William Gray Purcell Papers, Northwest Architectural Archives University of Minnesota Libraries, St. Paul, MN.
Figure 13. Plan for the Kindergarten Room, number 4. William Gray Purcell Papers, Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries, St. Paul, MN.
The kindergarten experience was quite pleasant. Tables were set up in the sunroom portion. We did drawing projects, etc., there. It was nice having our own playground close to our classroom where older children did not bother us.¹⁰

**John W. Norton His Life and Work**

John W. Norton's contribution to the project was two fold; he served both as the project director and as a contributing artist. At the opening of the kindergarten rooms an article in *The Edgewater News* credits the management of the Peirce renovation project to Norton: "John W. Norton, Chicago artist, assisted by G.G. Elmslie architect, had charge of the building."¹¹

In addition to managing the project, Norton's artistic contribution enhanced the beauty of the room greatly. He designed and painted twelve panels for the kindergarten room, each symbolizing a month of the year. The subjects of each of the panels are unrelated except that they all are appealing to the children for whom they were painted. Each painting measures thirty-six inches by forty-eight inches. The paintings are exhibited six at a time. The paintings are wall mounted in frames that are well set into the wall. Zimmer describes the paintings and framework as follows:

The architectonic framework along one wall accommodated half of the paintings at any given time; the design allowed the panels to be easily interchanged according to the current season. Evidently an alternate method of display was originally planned, one in which the panels would be sequentially mounted on both sides of six revolving wall panels. The final solution, however, maintains an integrity with the room's original
design. With the exception of June, all original panels including July still exist and are used in the kindergarten room today as intended. Each piece maintains its own identity--some more painterly, some more decorative--but collectively they have delighted youngster for over sixty-five years.12

The presentation of these pictures underscores the fact that Norton and Elmslie clearly understood the needs of the clients they were commissioned to satisfy, that is five year old children. The room demonstrates a sensitivity to the viewpoint of children; the proportions of the room are designed so that the paintings and decorative elements are at eye level for the child. The paintings are installed low for easy viewing and also are recessed into the wall, a factor which has contributed to the fact the pictures have survived for seventy years in excellent condition considering the proximity of such young children with crayolas in hand.

The collection of paintings was described by Inger Schjodager, Peirce’s first principal as follows:

January: Cold afternoon light; snow covered tree in foreground.

February: A cat sitting in a white chair before a grate fire.

March: Big cloud, high wind, village and canals.

April: Green covered hills, new foliage, rain storm.

May: A lake in the distance.


August: A sloop running before a wind; light house and high bluffs.
September: A crow flying over a shock of wheat; farm buildings in distance.

October: Ducks landing among reeds in a broad lake.

November: Turkey gobbler and hen in foreground; corn stalks hills in distance.

December: Moonlight; a church window in a valley; lights in house windows.13

Mention of Norton's paintings is first found in an appraisal of the school's paintings signed by Mr. Harry L. Engle, Manager of the Chicago Galleries Association, an organization sponsored by the Municipal Art League. The appraisal, dated 7 December 1926 simply lists the paintings as, "Twelve paintings representing the months. John Norton (at cost to school.)" The value of the paintings was established in a letter to Miss Schjoldager on 8 December 1926 from Mr. Paul Butcher, Assistant Secretary of the Illinois Merchants Trust Company, which administered the Peirce Trust Fund. Butcher reports to Schjoldager that the cost of the paintings by John Norton was $2,400. An undated, handwritten notation was added by Schjoldager at a later time and notes that the mural depicting the month of June was stolen. There is no record of how June was represented or the exact date the painting disappeared.

The Contribution of John W. Norton

John W. Norton was born in 1876 in Lockport, Illinois. His family was a prominent one; both his maternal and paternal grandparents settled in the Lockport area around
Figure 14. *March* by John W. Norton, 1924. Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
Figure 15. *July* by John W. Norton, 1924. Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
Figure 16. *November* by John W. Norton, 1924. Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
Figure 17. December by John W. Norton, 1924. Courtesy of Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies.
1835. His family held interests in milling and manufacturing in Lockport. They were wealthy and held positions as leaders in the community of Lockport. As a teenager Norton was educated at Reverend D.A. Holbrook’s military preparatory school in Ossining, New York. Jim L. Zimmer, co-author of an Illinois State Museum Exhibition Catalog, John W. Norton, speculates that this military experience may have taught Norton the discipline needed for a career as an artist.14

In 1893, Norton returned to Chicago to study at the Harvard School for Boys. Norton’s father then sent John to Harvard University to study law. While there, John W. Norton illustrated the school newspaper, the Lampoon. His law studies were cut short, however, due to a reverse in his families’ finances. Norton returned to Chicago in 1897 and enrolled in the Art Institute School of Drawing, Painting, Modelling, Decorative Designing and Architecture. His reason for leaving his studies at the Art Institute are not clear. For the next few years Norton traveled and tried various occupations such as working as a cowboy in Arizona, tutoring students in California and volunteering in the United States Cavalry. He served with Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders in 1898. Norton returned to the Art Institute in 1899 and completed his formal art education.15

In 1901, Norton taught a Saturday youth class at the Art Institute. Norton’s early studies concentrated on illustration and he worked for several years, primarily as an
illustrator for magazines and books. He contributed several ink drawings to magazines such as the Chicago Inter-Ocean, Blue Sky and the Inland Printer. At this stage of his career Norton did not align himself with any movement. However, he was much impressed with the examples of Asian drawings his sister, Harriet Louise Norton Brown, brought home after traveling to the Orient. Another strong influence on his work came from a trip to the American Southwest. Shortly after his marriage to Margaret Washburne Francis in 1903 the Nortons traveled widely throughout the southwest. The Santa Fe Railroad commissioned Norton to paint several paintings, two entitled Hopi Indian Dance and In Mokiland. Zimmer points to these paintings as examples of the diversity of Norton’s style:

Hopi Indian Dance utilizes the painterly brushwork characteristic of the Impressionist style. In Mokiland, on the otherhand, represents the more controlled yet still animated imagery of Norton’s later book illustrations.16

These paintings are now are held in the Santa Fe Railway Collection of Southwestern Art. Norton also illustrated three books: With Sully into the Sioux Land (1910) and With Carrington on the Bozeman Road (1912) by Joseph Mills Hanson and Don McGrath: A Tale of the River by Randall Parrish (1910). In his examination of Norton’s work, Zimmer attributes Norton’s talent in visually portraying the text in his book illustrations as a precursor to his success in making his painting relate to the architectural style:
Norton conveyed a strong, intimate sense of the land and people portrayed in the text, a familiarity surely gained during his travels in the Southwest. Although Norton’s book illustrations are somewhat unremarkable when compared to his other work, they exhibit his early understanding of how two art forms can successfully enrich each other. The relationship established between text and illustration in Norton’s early work would later translate into a partnership between architecture and mural decoration.17

Perhaps the culmination of this talent is the blending of the murals and architecture in the Peirce kindergarten room. The system of frames work so well with the paintings, and the paintings with the framing, that it is apparent Norton had a clear vision of how the room would look and what he wanted to achieve. It is evident that Norton and Elmslie worked together to produce such a satisfactory result. Henry J. B. Hoskins remarks on Norton’s ability to work well with an architect and to consider the location of a mural as of central to his work:

John Norton’s contribution to the problems of an architect was always valuable and when called into conference he was a great listener to the other man’s ideas.

In his work he gave first consideration to the wall and the architecture to which it belonged; secondly to the need of fine workmanship; and lastly to his own individual expression, telling in his own way his reverence for architecture and his recognition of it as the mother of all arts.18

Norton was an excellent teacher and took great responsibility as a educator. Zimmer suggests that the great amount of time Norton invested in teaching probably hindered his own career as an artist. William Gray Purcell, who was
George Grant Elmslie’s partner, often worked with Norton and comments on his abilities as a teacher in an article written in 1954 for Northwest Architect magazine:

Norton’s temperament made him a natural teacher; the students believed in him. He taught mural painting too and with his students began integrating their studies with the new architecture.19

Norton was on the faculty of the Art Institute from 1910 until his death in 1934. He achieved the rank of full professor on 15 June 1928.

In 1919, Norton briefly returned to work in the field of graphic art, under the influence of George Bellows, experimenting with lithography. Two works of note from this period are St. John’s Episcopal Church and Imaginary Landscape. Norton also painted Lockport Night Scenes and Light and Shadow, paintings which focus on everyday urban scenes. Norton received the French W.M.R. French Gold Medal for Light and Shadow in 1924. The period from 1910 to 1920 was an economically difficult time for Norton. He and his wife Margaret lived in Lockport at his family’s estate. There they raised three children Margaret, John and Nancy. Norton commuted to Chicago to teach at the Art Institute and also took portrait commissions to supplement his income. Some of the prominent people he painted were: Charles A. Stevens, owner of a department store chain, actress Violet Henning, architect Thomas Tallmadge, and Professor Edward W. Hinton of the University of Chicago.
In the early part of the twentieth century, mural painting was used as a decorative element primarily in private homes in the United States. The art form was not well developed. Murals painted in the late nineteenth century had been painted by Europeans using the Beaux Arts influence. Zimmer attributes the surge of interest by American artists in mural painting to the commissions that came out of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. The subject matter of these murals remained traditional, allegorical or historical.

In 1908, Norton began to study and teach mural painting at the Art Institute. His interest in this medium grew and he subsequently was commissioned to execute many murals, mainly in the Midwest, but others across the United States, also. Norton's approach to mural painting departed from the previous norm and European outlook. He had an open mind and sought new methods. His study of Japanese art forms influenced his work in the areas of color and perspective. In 1908 Norton received his first mural commission for an overmantel painting for the William Haseltine home in Ripon, Wisconsin. In 1910, the Cliff Dwellers Club moved their meeting place to the penthouse of Orchestra Hall. Norton, a club member, painted his first large mural for the landing on the stairs leading to the club room. The mural titled Navaho is approximately eight feet by five feet and continues to rest in its place of honor on the landing at the top of the
stairs at the Cliff Dwellers Club in the Orchestra Hall building on Michigan Avenue at the present time. Navaho is notable because this painting was his first public mural and in it he combined his admiration for Southwestern American themes with the composition techniques he so admired from Japanese art.

Between 1910 and 1920 Norton accepted several mural commissions. In 1913-1914, he painted nine panels for the Fuller Park Assembly Hall representing the exploration of the midwest. The murals are noted for the rhythmic pattern of the design and stylized treatment of the figures.20

Other significant early mural work done by Norton were commissions for the LaSalle Hotel, Holabird and Roche Architects, 1912-1915, Chicago, since demolished, Midway Gardens, Chicago, 1914, Frank Lloyd Wright Architect, now demolished, and twenty historical panels for the Hamilton Park Field House in Chicago in 1916. In 1917, Norton began a long and satisfying professional relationship with the Architectural firm of Purcell and Elmslie. Commissions completed for Purcell and Elmslie were: four panels for the Head Office Library for the Alexander Brothers Manufacturing Plant in Philadelpia in 1917, the Woodbury County Court House in Sioux City, Iowa in 1917-1918, an overmantel painting for a private residence in 1918, Hinsdale, Il. and murals for the National Farmer's Bank, in 1923 in Owatonna, Minnesota and the First National Bank of Adams, in 1924 in Adams,
The next mural project, in conjunction with George Grant Elmslie, was the Peirce School murals in 1925. The Peirce murals are overlooked in early discussions of Norton's work. In the publications that describe Norton's many murals, a reference to the murals is found in the *The Living Museum*, published by the Illinois State Museum in 1991. Nineteen twenty-five was a busy time for Norton, who would also undertake a series of twelve panels for the Logan Museum of Anthropology at Beliot College, Beliot Wisconsin. The twelve murals, *Rise of Man*, depicted the development of humankind from the *Anthropoid* to the *Inca*. These murals were highly acclaimed. Five of the murals were displayed at the Art Institute in 1925. The images portrayed in the murals were often used in photographs, postcards, and textbooks.21 The whole series of murals was exhibited at Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition in 1933. In 1926, a female nude study won him the Norman Wait Harris Bronze Medal at an exhibition at the Art Institute.

One of the last commissions Norton was to complete for Elmslie was The Old Second National Bank in Aurora, Illinois. Completed in 1925, the three panels were historical in nature and depicted area-indigenous Native Americans, early settlers and a historic home and mill. In the next several years Norton would begin a relationship with the architectural firm of Holabird and Root through which he would produce some of
his best work. In 1928 Norton was commissioned by Holabird and Root to execute a large map of the United States for the Chicago Motor Club at 68 East Wacker Place in Chicago. The colors that Norton favored suited this mural and the Art Deco lobby it was designed for: light green, orange-red, gray and tan. Geometric shapes were used to symbolize bodies of water, mountains and parks.22

Recognized as his masterpiece, Norton completed the mural for the Chicago Daily News Building at 400 West Madison, Chicago in 1929. The mural was painted for the vaulted ceiling of the concourse connecting the Daily News Building and the Chicago and Northwestern railway station. The mural is an abstract using geometric shapes and figures to depict the printing of the news. The stunning location and size of the piece at ceiling level, twenty-five feet above the floor, 180 by 18 feet in size, has lead at least one art critic to compare it to the Sistine Chapel. The mural was admired daily by the thousands of commuters who used the concourse until fall of 1993 when the mural was removed for restoration.23

One of Norton’s most striking works is Ceres, a mural completed in 1930 for the Chicago Board of Trade at 141 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago. Ceres is the Roman goddess of agriculture. The mural stands thirty-one and one-half feet tall by eight feet wide, a single dramatic image. Norton painted a mural, Pagan Paradise, for the Tavern Club in 1928.
This work was recognized in 1931 by the Architectural League of New York when Norton was awarded the Gold Medal of Honor for Mural Painting. Other important commissions painted in the 1930s include a mural for the Elizabeth M. Cudahy Memorial Library at Loyola University, Chicago, a mural for the Hall of Commerce at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, two murals for the Jefferson County Court House in Birmingham, Alabama and a series of five murals completed for the Hall of Science at A Century of Progress Exhibition, Chicago.

Norton died in 1934 at the peak of his career as a muralist. His work was recognized and acclaimed shortly after his death and rediscovered by the public in the nineteen nineties due to an exhibition at the Illinois State Museum in Lockport.

**Progressive Architecture**

Architecture at the turn of the century was represented by several different forms and philosophies. The beginning of the twentieth century was marked by the advance of scientific technology and economic wealth. The men controlling these forces, however, continued to cling to architectural designs and forms from the past. The Greek and Roman styles, medieval Romanesque, English Tudor, Gothic, Asian and even Egyptian Styles were popular. At the end of the nineteenth century the architecture of the Columbian Exposition was an example of the use of the Beaux Artes
style. The symbolism of the endurance of classical architecture made a strong case for its continued use. Society's definition of beauty came to hinge on the symbolism and outward appearance of the buildings, rather than concerning itself with a building's function\(^2\). An opposing attitude to this neo-classic viewpoint gained momentum in the mid-eighteen nineties. The Chicago School architects rejected the revivalists penchant for classical forms and sought to express the American character and contemporary spirit through their work. The movement emphasized the democratic spirit of our nation and originated and remained in the Midwest. This architecture was not only for the very elite and wealthy, but for a new and increasing middle class. Both Wright and Purcell and Elmslie designed for the middle class. In 1906, Wright published plans for a $5000 fire proof house in the *Ladies Home Journal*. Elmslie always worked closely with his clients to be sure the plans were affordable.

The first efforts of the Chicago School architects were concentrated mainly on commercial buildings. The vast improvements in industrial technology permitted the building of skyscrapers with the use of steel skeleton frames. This innovation allowed for improvements in design for both exterior and interior spaces. A second phase of the Chicago School was identified as the Prairie School and concentrated more on small commercial buildings and residences. Beginning
in 1900, and reaching its peak in 1914, the movement all but disappeared by World War I. Miller comments on the development of the movement:

By 1909 the Chicago School comprised more than 30 mature architects producing original indigenous and organic architecture for every type of design--residences, churches, hospitals museums, theaters, railway terminals, warehouses, factories, even tombs, parks, subdivisions and city plans.25

The movement was also called progressive and was defined as those designs and buildings that were advanced, experimental or progressive in nature or spirit.26 While Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan are perhaps the most well known names representing the Prairie School of architecture, there were others of importance to the movement including Purcell and Elmslie, Marion Mahoney Griffen, Walter Burley Griffen, George Maher, Charles White, Robert Spencer and William E. Drummond. While these architects held several common beliefs about architecture, man, nature and their relationships, the Prairie School allowed for a great liberty in personal expression. Wilson and Robinson define the several common principles:

The buildings are abstractions of midwestern landforms and nature, simple geometric forms enlivened by special ornament; thistle flowers on the flat prairie. Flat or gently pitched roofs and low proportions echo the silhouette of the landscape.27

Progressive architects sought to define the an American expression of architecture to represent American themes, concerns and the natural settings of the landscape.28 Louis
Sullivan's credo was that form should follow function. This outlook was embraced by the others and well describes the practical purpose that the architects used in their designs. The materials that the architects chose were natural ones: brick, wood, terra cotta and stucco along with cement and steel. Prairie style designs featured: open plans which combined various interior spaces, low horizontal proportions, geometrical trim and the use of natural materials.

The kindergarten room and addition that George Grant Elmslie designed for Peirce School in 1924 is an excellent example of Prairie school design. The open organization of space and the wooden detailing that draws the eye around the room, accentuating a horizontal viewpoint, are essential Prairie style characteristics. The placement and size of the doors in relation to each other and the proportions of the room as a whole are also important. The ornamentation of the room depends on the natural materials Elmslie selected and the geometric details of the room itself. The milled wooden doors, oak floors, zinc strip doors and windows all are typical of the Prairie style of architecture.

**George Grant Elmslie**

George Grant Elmslie was born in Huntley, Scotland in 1871. One of ten children, Elmslie lived on a small farm with his family. After his family moved closer to town he
attended the Duke of Gordon Schools until his family emigrated to the United States in the fall of 1884. Traveling to Chicago, his father found work in management at the Armour Company. Rather than continuing his formal education at age thirteen, Elmslie worked as an errand boy and apprentice in an architect’s office until 1887 when he moved to the office of architect Joseph Lyman Silsbee. This change was a fortunate one. There Elmslie met and worked with Frank Lloyd Wright and George Maher who both worked for Silsbee at the time. Both became influential residential architects on their own in later years. Silsbee’s practice was known for producing residences using the Queen Ann Shingle style of architecture.29

In 1890, Elmslie left Silsbee and joined the firm of Alder Sullivan, which was located in the Auditorium building. This move was engineered by Frank Lloyd Wright who had become a good friend of Elmslie’s while at Silsbee’s. When a drafting position became available, Wright recommended him to Sullivan for the job. Within five years Elmslie made a significant contribution at Alder Sullivan, ultimately rising to the position which of chief draftsman, a position which he shared for a time with Wright. In 1894, Wright left Alder Sullivan to pursue his own interests. This was due to a contract dispute over Wright’s working on commissions for himself.
Figure 18. George Grant Elmslie. 
William Gray Purcell Papers, 
Northwest Architectural Archives, 
University of Minnesota 
St. Paul, MN.
In 1895, Alder and Sullivan broke up their partnership, Alder leaving to work for the Crane Company. With this new development, Elmslie took on the responsibility of chief designer for Sullivan. He continued in this role until Sullivan closed his offices in 1909. As chief draftsman, Elmslie is credited with the ornamentation and details for several of Sullivan's major works: the Bayard building (New York, 1898-1899), the Gage building (Chicago, 1897-1898) and the Schlesinger & Mayer department store (now Carson, Pirie, Scott, Chicago, 1899-1904.)

In his last years at Sullivan's firm, Elmslie took on increased responsibility for the architectural designs and the actual construction of the buildings, while Sullivan preferred to engage in architectural writing.

This circumstance put Elmslie in direct contact with clients and was of great benefit to him when he later went into a new partnership. Over the fifteen years Elmslie worked for Sullivan, the two men developed more than a professional relationship. Elmslie's friendship and loyalty kept him working for Sullivan despite a decline in the business. It was only economic necessity which forced Elmslie to finally look for a new position.

Elmslie met William Gray Purcell in 1903 and arranged for him to work for Sullivan. Purcell was a very educated man for the times, having acquired degree in architecture from Cornell University in 1903. After five months, however,
Purcell left Sullivan to finish his apprenticeship in Berkley, California and Seattle, Washington. Soon after completing his apprenticeship Purcell left for a year long tour of Europe. Accompanied by former Cornell classmate, George Feick, the two visited major classical architectural remains in Greece and Italy, medieval sites in France and England and Byzantine ruins in Constantinople.

Returning from Europe, Purcell and Feick joined to form an architectural firm in Minneapolis. The firm prospered and two years later, in late 1909, Elmslie joined the firm, which then became Purcell, Feick, and Elmslie. The commissions the firm undertook were both residential and commercial in nature and were Prairie style in design. The largest part of the residential business was building open plan homes. The firm also contracted a number of small town banks in the Midwest including The Exchange Bank in Grand Meadow, Minnesota (1910), the First National Bank in Rhinelander, Wisconsin (1910), and the Merchant's Bank of Winona, Minnesota (1912), and the G.L. Branson Company Bank in Mitchell, South Dakota (1916). The banks they designed are often referred to as small gems for their beauty and originality.

Gebhard suggests that the professional relationship between Elmslie and Purcell was a positive one for both men:

Throughout the partnership, which officially lasted until 1922, both men were involved with the actual design of the buildings. Of even more importance is the obvious
fact that a rapport was established which stimulated each of them to produce their best work. It is unlikely that either of them could have arrived at the heights they did without the presence of the other. Each became absolutely indispensible to the other.32

After the death of his wife in 1912, Elmslie returned to Chicago and opened a branch office of Purcell and Elmslie. Feick left the partnership in 1913 to return to his home in Ohio to work as an engineer and contractor. In 1917, Purcell left Minneapolis to work in advertising for Alexander Brothers in Philadelphia, although the Purcell and Elmslie partnership did not formally end until 1922. Elmslie continued to practice for ten years on his own. Although he continued to design, his designs became more conservative and his practice faltered. In the early nineteen-thirties Elmslie went to work for architect, William S. Hutton. Elmslie assisted with the designs for Oliver Mortin School in Hammond, Indiana and Thornton Township High School in Calumet City, Il. At age sixty-five, Elmslie went into semi-retirement, writing articles and giving informal lectures. He died in 1952.

Elmslie sought to build functional and enduring buildings. Of his work in 1924, speaking as the architect of the The Old Second National Bank of Aurora, Elmslie said:

A very fine consideration is this - will it grow old with grace, dignity and charm? I believe it will. It will always be young in one sense because it has no thought in it that leans toward a worn-out tradition, but is alive the spirit of a new day and with the profound belief that
the best is yet to be - in commerce, in industry, in the arts and the social welfare of the community.¹

These very concise words reveal what was important to Elmslie in his work: grace, dignity, charm and optimism. The Peirce kindergarten classroom exemplifies what was best in Prairie style architecture: the emphasis on functionalism, the use of beautiful natural materials and geometric shapes and as ornament, and the focus on open space, horizontal lines, proportion and light. The very forces that lead to the success of the Prairie style in 1914, when individuality and creativity was valued, were lost after World War I when conformity was more valued than individuality. The Prairie style architects found little market for their designs and moved on to other styles, although there was a resurgence in popularity for the style in the 1930’s and again in the 1960’s.
NOTES

1 "Peirce Opens $40,000 Kindergarten Rooms Memorial to His Wife, Helen," Edgewater News, 16 June 1925, 6.

2 Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Culture & the City: Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago from the 1880s to 1917 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 169.

3 Wilbert R. Hasbrouck, FAIA, interview by author, 21 April 1995, Chicago, tape recording.


5 Schjoldager, 5.


7 Hasbrouck interview, by author, 21 April 1995.


12 Zimmer, 23.

13 Inger Schjoldager, School Painting Inventory, TD, undated, Peirce School Papers, Peirce School of International Studies.
14 Zimmer, 10.
15 Ibid., 11.
16 Ibid., 12.
17 Ibid.
20 Zimmer, 19.
21 Murray, 43.
22 Zimmer, 24.
28 Hammons, 214.
29 Gebhard, 72.
30 Ibid., 76.
31 Ibid., 79.

33 Richard A. Hussman, Bank Historian, About our Building...The Old Second National Bank, Aurora, Il., (Aurora, Il.: The Old Second National Bank of Aurora,) 3.
AFTERMATH

Although Inger Schjoldager credits Mary S. Meyer, Chairman of the Lake View Woman's Club School Decoration and Visiting Committee, for orchestrating the improvements at Peirce, one must recognize Miss Schjoldager's good taste, intellect and wit, having so ably represented the interests of the school and its children as she served on the various committees for the expenditure of the bequest, and as she supervised the work in progress. Between 1923 and 1925 the entire two and one half acre school property was landscaped, the existing kindergarten was renovated and an addition constructed. Miss Schjoldager also corresponded with the representatives of the trust, administered the collection of paintings and was active in selecting paintings to add to the collection. It is obvious that this task was a pleasant one for her and that her motivation was entirely based on satisfying students' needs. Her desire was to create an educational environment that was aesthetically and intellectually stimulating. In this setting, the spirit of democracy worked to bring great works of art to the children of Peirce School, to the children of immigrants and working people. In her selections, Miss Schjoldager focused not only on the European masters, but chose contemporary Chicago
painters as well. Her choices were excellent. If art is ultimately tested by the continued recognition of an artist's work through time, then indeed it can be said that the Peirce collection contains some notable paintings. All of the original paintings owned by Peirce are significant because they are part of the school's heritage. The paintings by Adam E. Albright, John W. Norton, John A. Spelman and George Aldrich are notable because they are still recognized as worthy and continue to be collected today. That the Peirce collection can continue to be enjoyed and be used as an educational tool is a testament to the excellent choices that were made some eighty years ago by Miss Inger M. Schjoldager and Mrs. Mary S. Meyer.

The management of a fine collection of art by a school district can be a blessing or a burden. The care given by one school official to a collection may not be continued by successive officials. In some cases, the visual representation of various groups of people or explicit themes may become offensive or out dated over time causing controversy, public dismay, or unrest. This conflict sometimes is resolved the moving the art work to another location or removing it from public display. The removal of school art is a concern not only as it diminishes the freedom of expression, but also because in many cases, it increases the risk that the work of art itself will be lost, or forgotten, or left to the destruction of time. It is the
responsibility of a school district to recognize and care for its' unique possessions and resources just as it does its' more ordinary ones. Unfortunately, in the Chicago Schools, all too often significant and historic art work has been lost. The school system has no central listing of the schools' art collections and no systematic method to ensure for the care of such treasures. This inattentiveness has lead to the theft, accidental loss and destruction of many works of art and left a general impression in the schools that unique school resources are not important to the school system.

Efforts are underway to ensure the future of the Peirce collection. To date nine of the school's paintings have been cleaned and restored. Efforts are underway to hang them where they can be both enjoyed and protected. The John W. Norton murals are in excellent condition, but require special cleaning and need to be removed from the boards to which they are affixed and remounted on redwood stretchers. The cost of the restoration of the eleven paintings is approximately twenty-two thousand dollars.

That the kindergarten room has survived as intact as it has is indeed fortuitous. Nearly all of the natural wood molding in the rest of the school building has been painted over while the marvelous wood detailing in the kindergarten was spared. The large leaded glass window has survived undamaged, certainly due to the fact that it is set inside
and protected by a second glass pane positioned directly behind it. Other elements of the room survive, but require restoration. The smoked leaded glass door in the bathroom has several broken and missing panes and its lower half is now covered with contact paper. The cabinet doors are also missing several panes of glass. An interested group of community members has recently included the renovation of the kindergarten room and the improvement of the playground, restoring some of the elements of Jens Jensen's original plan, as part of a four phase plan to make the Peirce School of International Studies a community-based school. The plan includes using the restored kindergarten as a meeting room in the evening hours for the use of community organizations.

This view, which defines a community-based school as a neighborhood focal point for the residents of all ages, is in keeping with the views espoused by Jensen in the nineteen twenties. It is interesting to note that interest in this concept has been renewed.

Demonstrated throughout this study is that at the turn of the century the philosophy of social reform had a strong democratic spirit and consciousness in planning for the present and the future. It is apparent that this ethic has not endured. Our plastic, throw-away culture, often does not value such care. There are hopeful signs, however, as more and more schools are discovering special items and finding the resources to restore them.
Certainly the Peirce School is blessed in having a historical and unique Prairie style kindergarten room and a fine collection of paintings which are both aesthetically pleasing and historically significant. However, the school is not alone in its fortuity. Meyer documents that many Lake View Schools were gifted with original paintings and sculpture in the early part of the nineteenth century through the efforts of the Lake View Woman's Club. The Swift School owns two paintings by H.H. Betts and they were recently restored. The paintings, one of George Washington and one of Abraham Lincoln, adorn the Auditorium for the enjoyment of all. The George Armstrong School has a wonderful mural by Marion Mahony Griffen in the main hallway. The Nettlehorst Elementary School and Lane Technical High School each possess important WPA murals. The murals at Lane were restored in 1995 due to the efforts of the Lane faculty. These are positive accomplishments and bode well for future efforts.

Inger Schjoldager wrote a summary of the history of the Peirce School in which she states: "No school has been more fortunate than the Peirce in its inheritance of unselfish interest; for, through Mrs. Meyer and the Club members, the good fortune of being named the Helen C. Peirce brought it spiritual as well as material blessings." The author agrees.
June 10, 1994

Dear Friend of Peirce School:

I am a graduate student at Loyola University Chicago in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, as well as the principal at the Peirce for the past nine years. We are fortunate at Peirce to enjoy a wonderful art collection and a beautiful kindergarten room. I have been told that the playground was one landscaped and was quite special. I am writing my dissertation on the collection of the paintings at the Peirce and the other improvements to the Peirce that were funded by the legacy of Luther H. Peirce.

It is fortunate that the Peirce Archive contains a lot of information on the collection, but I am hoping that you might be able to provide additional information about the collection of paintings present in the school, their meaning to the students and any instructional activities that may have been centered around the art collection or the kindergarten room or playground.

I am looking forward to hearing about any memories of the Peirce that you might care to share. Please write your recollections down on the form provided and return to me in the enclosed envelope. If you have a photograph of the school I would be especially interested in seeing it or a photocopy of it.

I will sincerely appreciate your help with this exciting project.

Sincerely,

Janice M. Rosales
Peirce Elementary School
DATA COLLECTION FORM - PEIRCE SCHOOL

Please share with me any memories you have of the Peirce art collection, the kindergarten room or the playground. Use the reverse side of this sheet for additional space, if needed.

I am willing to be interviewed and discuss my memories of the Peirce School art collection.

/ / Yes

/ / No

I give my permission to Janice M. Rosales to use my name as a source, and any information I submit, in her dissertation and any other publication about the Peirce School. I agree that I will receive no renumeration for my submission.

Signature Date

Address Phone


Danenhower, W.W. *Danenhower's Chicago City Directory, For 1851: Containing an Alphabetical List of the Mechanics and Business Men with their Several Places of Residence; Also, Brief Notices of the Religious, Literary and Benevolent Associations of the City, Military, Fire Department, Etc., Etc., Etc., Etc.* Chicago: W.W. Danenhower, 1851.


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VITA

The author, Janice Marienthal Rosales, is the daughter of Gloria N. Marienthal and the late Frederic H. Marienthal, Jr. She was born in Chicago, Illinois. Her primary and secondary education was obtained in the public schools of Park Forest, Illinois. She studied at the Colegio Nacional de Salta, Argentina during her senior year of high school and graduated from Rich East High School in 1969.

Ms. Rosales attended the University of Illinois at Urbana. During the 1971-1972 academic year she attended the Universidad de Barcelona, Spain. In May 1974 Ms. Rosales graduated from the University of Illinois.

In September 1974 she was employed by the Chicago Board of Education as a teacher. She received a Masters of Arts Degree from Roosevelt University in Chicago in May 1981. In August 1985 Ms. Rosales was appointed principal of the Helen C. Peirce School of International Studies and has continued in that capacity to the present.
APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Janice Marienthal Rosales has been read and approved by the following committee:

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Loyola University Chicago

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Associate Professor
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
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The final copies have been examined by the directors of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.)

3-19-96
Date

Dr. Janis Fine
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