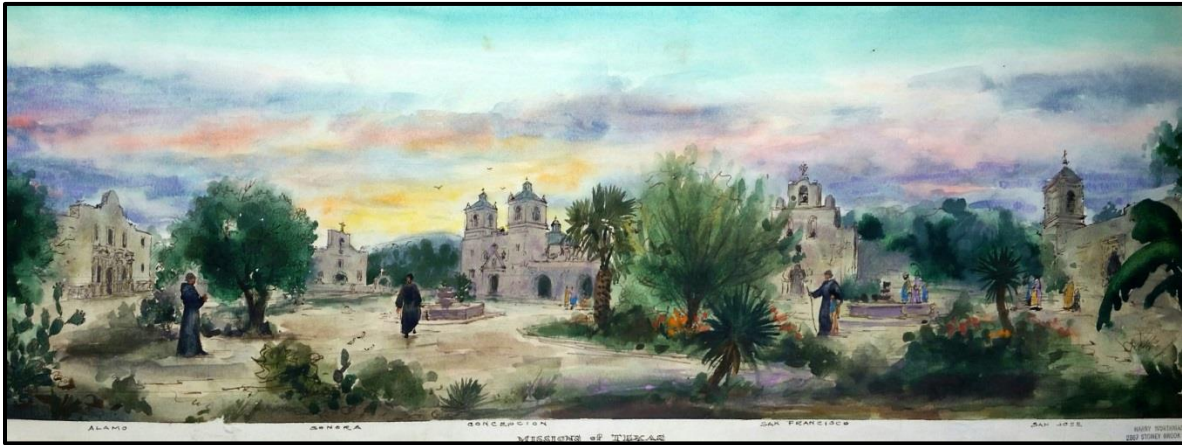


Newsletter March/April 2017

The Houstonians Around Texas Issue



Harry Worthman *Missions of Texas* Watercolor mural study, c.1960

The big event in the Early Texas Art world in March/April is, of course, the upcoming CASETA Symposium in Fort Worth, April 28-30. Even those of us whose art eyes are pretty much Houston focused the rest of the year, happily broaden our view as we look forward to the annual symposium. We know that we'll be reconnecting with our ETA friends from all over the state, hearing talks about lots of exciting aspects of ETA, and buying great art from the dealers who will be bringing the best of ETA to the Texas Art Fair. Who knows, we might even buy something that is by an artist who is not a Houstonian. In acknowledgment of that pre-symposium broader view, this issue of the HETAG Newsletter is the "Houstonians Around Texas" issue: here are views of other parts of the state done by our Earlier Houston Artist. I have to admit that they make the rest of Texas look pretty good too.



Gene Charlton [*Near Bandera*] 1947 (l); Richard Stout *Road to Bandera* 1963 (r)

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



The 15th Annual Casetta: Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art Symposium and Texas Art Fair in Fort Worth, April 28-30, 2017

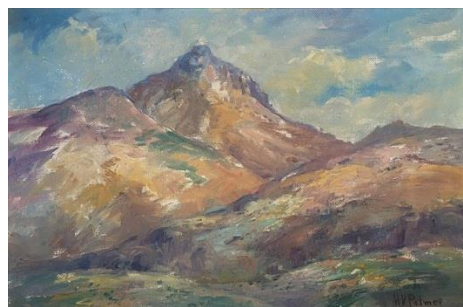
The keynoter this year will be **Richard R. Brettell**, Founding Director of The Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History in Dallas, TX; we'll be treated to a Saturday night reception at the **Amon Carter Museum**; and Houstonians **Althea Ruoppo** (MFAH) will speak on Robert Preusser; **Susie Kalil**, on Dorothy Hood; and **William Reaves** (William Reaves/Sarah Foltz Fine Art) will moderate a panel on collecting ETA from three perspectives. There will also be a reception and tour, just for Casetta, in the Amon Carter Museum of American Art at which we'll get to see Early Texas Art works from the collection that are not usually on view. And if that's not enough, there will be Casetta-only visits to private collections and public exhibitions.

See the whole program and find registration and hotel information at the Casetta website:

<http://www.casetta.org/about>

A special THANK YOU to all the HETAGers who joined together to make HETAG at the Silver Sponsor level. It's getting to be a regular thing – which is a very good thing.

Hope to see you all in Fort Worth.



Jack Boynton *Single Strike* 1958 (I); Hattie V. Palmer [West Texas] c.1920s

HOUSTON ART HISTORY NOTES:

DAWSON DAWSON-WATSON, HOUSTON ARTIST

If you are a devotee of Early Texas Art, when you think of the artist Dawson Dawson-Watson (1864-1939) you probably think of prickly pears in glorious yellow and orange bloom, and of San Antonio. And rightly so, since he spent the last 10-plus years of his life in that city, where he was the first winner of the Davis wildflower competition in 1927 – then the largest art prize ever awarded in the United States, at \$5000 – for his painting *The Glory of the Morning*.¹



Dawson Dawson-Watson *The Glory of the Morning* 1927

If you're a real Dawson-Watson fan you may also know that he was born an Englishman; that he was one of the first artists to live and paint in Giverny, the art colony in Normandy now most famous as the home of Monet; and that he lived in a number of places around the United States and Canada before finally settling in San Antonio in the 1920s.

Even the most devoted ETA groupies, however, are unlikely to know that Dawson-Watson was also a Houston artist. Newly discovered archival sources and newly digitized newspapers have revealed that for several months in 1916/17 he lived, painted, exhibited and taught here, as though Buffalo Bayou water had always flowed in his veins. We can legitimately claim that one of the most famous Early Texas Artists, and in some ways one the most important in the broader world of art, is one of our own.

¹ Reaves, William E., Jr. *Texas Art and a Wildcatter's Dream: Edgar E. Davis and the San Antonio Art League*. College Station, TX.: Texas A&M University Press, 1998. p. 38.

What brought him to Houston? You probably won't be surprised to learn that it was his life-long friendship with Houston artist Emma Richardson Cherry (1859-1954), coupled with a need for a new beginning in his often precarious, always peripatetic artist's life.

By the fall of 1916, when Dawson-Watson and his family arrived in Houston, he and Cherry had been friends and art colleagues for almost 30 years (they would continue so for another 20 years, until his death). They had first met when both were young foreigners, expanding themselves as artists in the art center of the world at the time, Paris. The dashing Englishman met, and in the space of only a few months, married Cherry's childhood friend and traveling companion, Mary Hoyt Sellar (1864-1952), in May of 1888.

The newlyweds set up house in Giverny, and Cherry visited them there at least twice in 1888/89. She and Dawson sometimes painted side-by-side, making her the first woman documented to have painted in Giverny.²



Emma Richardson Cherry *Rue de Giverny* 1888 (l); Dawson Dawson-Watson *Giverny* 1888, Terra Foundation for American Art (r)

She also included some of his paintings in the first Impressionist exhibition in Texas, which she curated for the Texas Coast Fair in 1896.³

When he moved to Houston, Dawson-Watson intended to stay and establish a career as an artist in the city. Cherry introduced him in the cultural circles, of which she was an integral part. She took him as her guest to the Women's Club; The Ladies Reading Club, where he delivered the lecture "Tendencies in American Art"; and the Art League, which extended "the courtesy of the [League] rooms" in the

² Gerds, William. *Monet's Giverny: An Impressionist Colony*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1993. p. 33.

³ Texas Coast Fair, Dickinson. *Art Catalogue*. [Houston: Texas Coast Fair], 1896. The catalog lists four paintings by Dawson-Watson, plus a watercolor and a number of posters, designs and prints.

Scanlan Building for an exhibition of his paintings – mostly Missouri scenes, which is where he had lived for several years before coming to Houston.⁴



Dawson-Watson *Early Spring Along the Missouri* nd

But even though he was still showing Missouri paintings, he had high praise for Houston from an artist's point of view:

*Asked if he found many interesting subjects for painting here, he responded feelingly: "Many, Many: the fish market, the marvelous Texas building at night, with the moon and fine clouds as background: bits along the bayou (don't call it a river, preserve your local names). Already I have stolen a bit from San Houston park for a decorative panel motive. Plenty to paint for a lifetime here. It has been said to me that Houston has no art spirit – too young, too busy making money to care for such things as art. Not so; I hear you have already the site for an art museum. Older cities have not even attained that much."*⁵



In the photo that accompanied the article he was every inch the dashing artist – never mind that the same photo had appeared in a St. Louis paper 12 years before.⁶

⁴ "Dawson-Watson Pictures Shown," *The Houston Chronicle*, February 9, 1917. p.8.

⁵ "Rare art collection will be shown by Mrs. Cherry," *The Houston Post*, November 26, 1916

⁶ "Saint Louis Possesses a New Art Wonder in the Wizard, Dawson-Watson of England," *The St. Louis Republic* June 11, 1905. p.2.

For a while, at least, Cherry and Dawson-Watson even talked about, and advertised, an art school they intended to conduct jointly, the Yupon School.⁷

The Yupon School of Art and Crafts

608 FARGO AVENUE

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings
from 9 to 12, drawing from the antique, still life in black and white
and color.

\$ 1.00 per lesson in class.
\$10.00 per month.
\$45.00 per term.

Criticism three times a week, or more, according to the needs of
the pupils.

Saturday morning sketch class free to students enrolled for full
time; to others \$8.00 per term.

Saturday morning Juvenile Class, 10 to 12 o'clock, \$3.00 per
month.

Evening class, drawing from the life and antique, two nights a
week. Tuesday night free, Friday night \$3.00 per month.

A course in commercial drawing will also be held on these
two nights at the same fee.

Friday morning class in wood carving and gilding and the
making of simple articles of furniture.

During the school term Mrs. Cherry will give a series of in-
formal talks on the appreciation of Art in general.

Under the direction of
DAWSON DAWSON-WATSON
Formerly Instructor in the Life Class of the
St. Louis School of Fine Arts

and
MRS. E. RICHARDSON CHERRY
Pupil Art Students League, New York; Académie Julian, Paris,
Præda, Rome; Zanetti-Zilli, Venice, and Rhoda Holmes Nichols.

Befitting their status as proper members of the Houston social whirl the Dawson-Watsons announced their at-homes in the society column of the newspaper: “Mr. and Mrs. Dawson Watson will be at home this afternoon, 608 Fargo street [sic].”⁸ If the address sounds familiar, it may be because it was also the address of another prominent Houston family, Mr. and Mrs. D.B Cherry.

Yes, during their time in Houston the Dawson-Watsons – Dawson, Mary and daughter Hilda – lived with the Cherrys in their house, now known as the Nichols-Rice-Cherry House and part of the Heritage Society at Sam Houston Park. But at the time it was located at the address on Fargo. Those of you who have toured the house know that it isn’t small, especially for the period, but for two families it also isn’t any too large, especially when the families included two artists who had to have studios. It helped that Dorothy, the Cherry’s only child, had married and moved to Texas City, and also that Mr. Cherry was often away tending to his oil exploration ventures.

⁷ “Current Literature Club,” *The Houston Chronicle*, January 14, 1917. p.16.

⁸ “Mr. and Mrs. Dawson-Watson At Home,” *The Houston Post*, January 21, 1917.

But even though the families were devoted to each other, a stay that stretched from November 1916 to April 1917 tested friendship. Especially so in the early part of the visit, when Mrs. Cherry's mother was also there and needed much care as she drew toward her death on November 26.



Dawson-Watson [untitled portrait of Frances Mostow Richardson] 1917; [untitled portrait of D.B. Cherry] c.1936. Both may have been done as mementos of Cherry's mother and husband and presented to her as gifts. The oil portrait of D.B. Cherry, who died in 1935, is in a frame by Dawson-Watson and was in Mrs. Cherry's estate at the time of her death.

But even after that crisis passed, there were strains both personal and financial. As usual, Cherry wrote often to Dorothy and shared some of her secret thoughts. On November 18, 1916, Cherry confided to Dorothy: “Dawson is not much of a pusher and it will be hard for him to get started. He needs a business manager – and from the outlook I am afraid I won't have as much chance to do for him as he needs—and of course I am not much of a biz lady. But I am a lot [illeg.] headed about it than he is.”

In the same letter she suggested that Dorothy consider having Dawson-Watson make an “elaborately carved” frame as a wedding present for a friend. “You could furnish the materials & he the work -- & we turn that to board & help you in that way.”⁹ He was an expert designer/maker of Arts and Crafts furniture and frames.



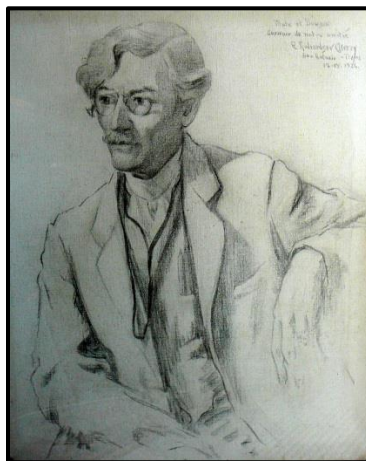
Dawson-Watson carved and gilded mirror frame. nd.

⁹ Emma Richardson Cherry, letter to Dorothy Cherry Ennis, [November 18, 1916]. Private collection.

By January 1917, however, she was definitely feeling the strain. Writing to Dorothy again she said: “I want to get the Watson’s off our hands as soon as possible. If he cannot succeed in getting something to do they will have to go somewhere else – as I am about at the end of my rope in introducing & helping. Houston seems so unresponsive -- & if this fails I am through. I thought I was going to enjoy the winter with Dawson as a working companion. But with such a financial problem [as] it has become there is not much incentive to work. Money, money – goodness how it is needed.” The stress of the extended visit even prompted her to say some uncharacteristically unsympathetic things about her friend since childhood, Mrs. Dawson-Watson: “If I was Matie [sic] I’d get something to do and not be so dependent. She has had such a good education she ought to be able to find something. Do you think her French accent any good?”¹⁰

As we know from history, Dawson-Watson did not establish himself as a Houston artist. It is perhaps not surprising that the family returned to Missouri for the summer of 1917. But the Cherry/Dawson-Watson friendship survived. By October of 1917, he and his family were in San Antonio, where he began his duties as the director of the San Antonio Art League, “induced to come to San Antonio” through Mrs. Cherry’s influence, according to the local newspaper.¹¹

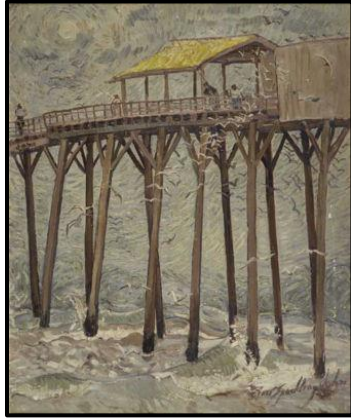
There were visits, letters and gifts of art back and forth right to the end of his life in 1939. He even painted the portrait of Mr. Cherry pictured above, probably as a gift for Mrs. Cherry when she became a widow in 1935, and put it in one of his hand-carved frames. And she did this portrait of him in San Antonio in 1926. She inscribed it in part, “souvenir de notre amitié” – a tribute to a friendship in life and art which, by the time of his death in 1939, had lasted 50 years.



¹⁰ Emma Richardson Cherry, letter to Dorothy Cherry Ennis, [January 15, 1917]. Private collection.

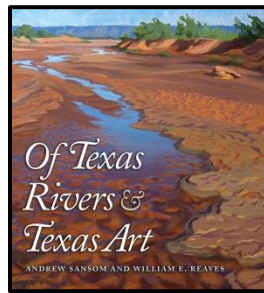
¹¹ *San Antonio Express*, January 13, 1918.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Grace Spaulding John *Wind and Waves* c1939 (l); William Houliston *Evening Star* 1942 (r)

New Books of Interest:



Andrew Sansom and William E. Reeves

Texas A&M University Press, 2017

Published in conjunction with a touring exhibition of the same name now on view at the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts.

<http://www.samfa.org/current-exhibits>



Prof. Carl Christian Zeus *View of San Antonio and Water Street Iron Bridge in the City of San Antonio, Bexar County* 1887/88

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Don Edelman *West Texas Scene* c.1948 (l); Henri Gadbois *West Beach, Galveston* 1954 (r)

Exhibitions:

On My Journey Now: The Legacy of John Biggers

Arts Brookfield, curated by Sally Reynolds

January 11, 2017 - April 3, 2017

[Two Allen Center](#)

1200 Smith St.

Houston, TX 77002

<http://www.artsbrookfield.com/event/on-my-journey-now/>

Printed and Bound in Texas: Selections from the Powell Library's Hogg Family Collection

Lora Jean Kilroy Visitor and Education Center, Bayou Bend Collection and Gardens

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

6003 Memorial Drive at Westcott Street

Houston, TX 77007 | mfah.org

Tells the story of early Texas printers and binders through a selection of books and pamphlets made between the early-19th and early 20th centuries. On view Spring, 2017

<http://texasartisans.mfah.org/cdm/texasbound>

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group



Emma Richardson Cherry *The Alamo, San Antonio* 1911 (I); *At Seabrook* 1917

Out of town exhibitions:

JOSE ARPA: A SPANISH IMPRESSIONIST IN TEXAS

Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont

A major touring exhibition of Arpa's work – not getting any closer to Houston than Beaumont, so don't wait!

March 11 through May 28, 2017

Opening Reception: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., Friday, March 17, 2017

<http://www.amset.org/future>

Julian Onderdonk and the Texas Landscape

January 20 – April 23, 2017

San Antonio Art Museum

<http://www.samuseum.org/exhibitions/current-exhibition/895-julian-onderdonk-and-the-texas-landscape>

This is the exhibition we saw at MFAH last fall, which is now touring to other Texas museums.

Recuerdo: Early Texas Art from Fort Worth Collections

April 7-30, 2017

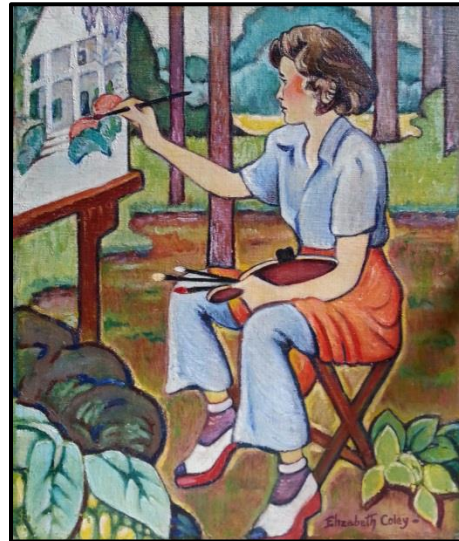
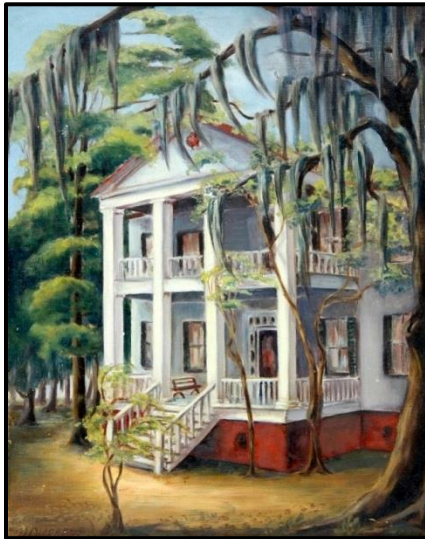
Fort Worth Community Arts Center

1300 Gendy St.

http://www.fwcac.com/?exhibition_detail/5345

This exhibition will be one of the high spots of CASETA Symposium weekend.

HETAG: The Houston Earlier Texas Art Group

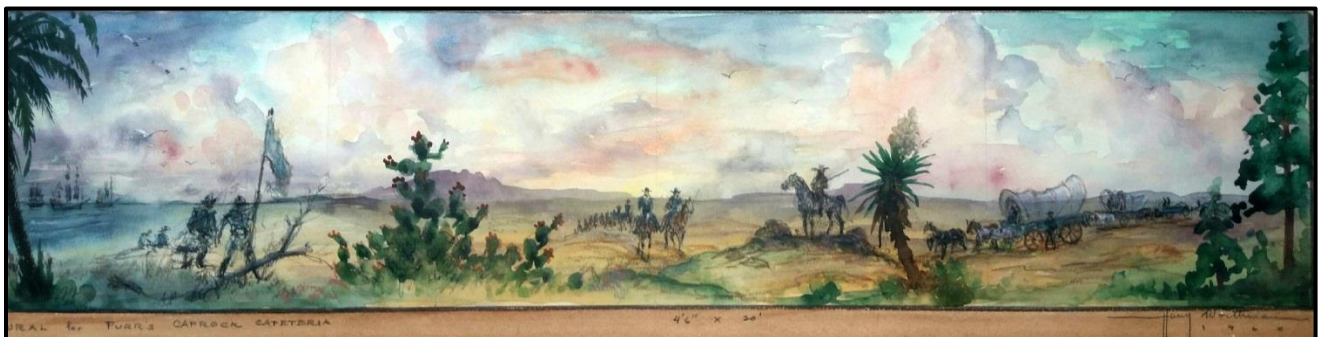


Doris Childress *Liendo* c1940s (l); Elizabeth Coley *Sketching – Liendo* 1943 (r)
(Liendo Plantation, for those who may not be familiar with it, was once the home of the German/Texas sculptor Elisabet Ney; built in 1853 and located near Hempstead, Liendo is open for tours <http://liendoplantation.com/liendo/>)

Next HETAG Meeting:

Instead of having a HETAG meeting in April, let's go to the CASETA Symposium. And let's also thank Mary Ellen and Tom Whitworth for the great time they showed us at their Montrose home on March 19: what a home; what a collection; what a tree! Great fun was had by all. Thanks Mary Ellen and Tom.

Randy Tibbits, coordinator
HETAG:
Houston Earlier Texas Art Group
tibbits@rice.edu



Harry Worthman *Mural for Furr's Caprock Cafeteria* 1960