

North Shore PERSONALITIES.

BY
LUCY ROGERS
HAWKINS

The refrain of a popular song of some years ago, "horses, horses, horses," comes to mind irresistibly in making a tour of the Frank Whitney art gallery in Winnetka. It's a one-man show, really, in the Whitney home 764 Locust street. Paintings of horses predominate.

Some are the Chicago stockyards heavy draft horses, the pride of a great company, like the painting of the Morris prize winners in 1909. Others are the western ponies of the hard-riding cowboys. Still others are prancing creatures of the painter's imagination, like the locally famous design for the Boy Scout award.

The medals which have been awarded to eight or nine boys a year since 1929 show a spirited pair of horses, one of which is ridden by a youth. The symbolism is that of "Energy and Ambition Controlled by Reason." Mr. Whitney wrote a verse to accompany the painting:

*Ambition sees on yonder peak,
His highest aims and starts to seek.
With Energy as mate through life—
The goal of fame o'er care and strife.
Though noble steeds they must ill
fare,
Should Reason not control the pair.*

A follow-up to the verse and the painting, which now hangs in the Boy Scout room of Winnetka Community house, the medal was struck off to be used for annual awards to Winnetka Scouts.

Studied Abroad

Horses, horses, horses. They tell the story of Frank Whitney's long life. Part of it has been spent in Kansas, part of it in Sycamore, Ill. He and Mrs. Whitney were married in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 1892 they had a year of study in Europe under Bougoureau in Paris, who complimented Whitney on his "close" painting and shadows, and at the Heatherly Art school in London. Since 1889 the Whitneys have lived in Winnetka, and he has painted the ponds and trails, the pastures and cows in the neighborhood of 764 Locust.

Frank Whitney calls the house "the old Mears' place. It was started in the 70's," he says, "by a promoter on the north shore who had visions of building houses all the way to Lake Forest. Then came the panic of 1873 and hardly a house was finished. A Winnetka lawyer finally completed the Locust street house and I bought it. We had been living in a tent on the lake shore. I wanted a place to paint and liked the sunniness of this house. There were only a few houses around us then."

Starts at Race Track

How Frank Whitney started to paint horses is a story by itself. He and Mrs. Whitney loved them and were fond of going out to the race tracks. One day he was out at the Washington Park track by himself and noticed an artist sketching some of the race horses. He watched him for a while and decided the man didn't know much about horses. They didn't look right.

"I went over and I said, 'Would you like a little help?'" recalls Mr. Whitney. "He looked annoyed and said, 'What do you know about horses?' I said I'd show him, and I made a sketch for him. Pretty soon Ed Carrigan, I think it was, came along and saw what I was doing with some of his horses and he was very

pleased. Well, that artist was from the Chicago Tribune, and he asked me if I could do a dozen. He said he'd pay me a dollar apiece!

"Well, you know we were living in a little room on the north side then and I hadn't known where to get the rent money. Mrs. Whitney was cooking over a gas-plate in the room. I rushed home and climbed the stairs three at a time and told her of my luck, \$1 apiece for a sketch.

"I went right to work on those sketches, but you know that fellow had forgotten to give me a press pass, and I had trouble getting into the stables to see the horses I was supposed to sketch. I didn't know what to do when I got turned down. So I wandered around and I came upon a group of colored chaps who were playing the banjo. I went up and I said, 'Fellows, how'd you like to have me play a tune?' They said, 'fine,' and I strummed away. Pretty

Whitney fed it bread, while I modeled."

Other statuary includes the head in bronze of "Lineman" Jack Hazelhurst a young friend of the Whitney's, and the figure of Florence Burnham as a Camp Fire Girl. The Hazelhursts are neighbors, and it was the father, Sam Hazelhurst, who provided the inspiration for one of the most interesting Whitney paintings, twenty years ago.

He gave the Whitneys a game bird for Sunday dinner, and its colors were so bright that Mr. Whitney took an oak board from the shed, hung up the bird, and proceeded to paint its likeness on the board. The lustrous sheen of its black and white feathers and delicate coloring are lovely to this day.

It is natural for Frank Whitney to record all his emotion in oils. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President, he painted "The Leader" on a sorrel stallion leading his men. This painting was exhibited in Mandel's window last fall on Roosevelt day. And Mr. Whitney has written a verse about this painting, too.

Immortalizes "West"

Some of his best work is western in its setting. He has done a lovely canvas showing a group of Mexican farm-hands threshing grain by riding

her husband to make up a gift book of his verse. But no gift-book would be complete with just his verse. It should perpetuate likewise some of his paintings — horses, horses, horses. A sample of Mrs. Whitney's work should be there, too. "She'd have made a better painter than I," says Mr. Whitney fondly. "But one of us had to keep the house."

Mrs. John Darley and Mrs. I. A. Archambault of Kenilworth will be guests on Friday at a bridge luncheon to be given by Mrs. Herbert McAnly of Mundelein, formerly of Winnetka.

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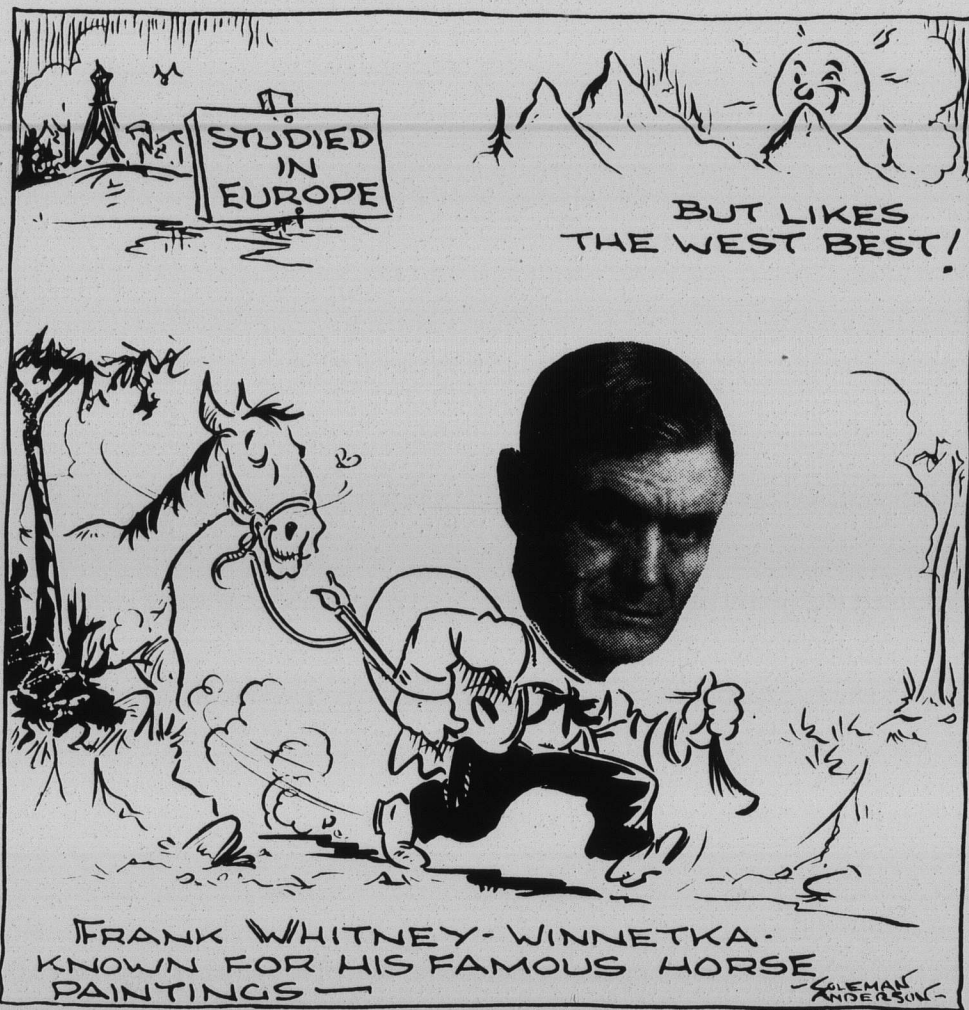
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soon every last negro was dancing high jinks. Then I told 'em what I was after, and they said, 'Boss, you sure can see any hoss in these here stables.'

The Tribune sketches led to work for the Chicago Inter-Ocean, then the Chicago Horseman heard of Whitney's work and offered him \$15 for three sketches.

"See how I was coming up in price?" chuckles Mr. Whitney reminiscently. "After that I got a lot of commissions."

Has Keen Imagination

Much of his work has been done from memory, or on an imaginative basis. No horse could be posed in the prancing or racing steps which Mr. Whitney has painted. "I know horses," confides Mr. Whitney, "and I can paint 'em." He can sculpture them too, but most of his bronzes are of dogs. One is the head of a Great Dane, another is the whole figure of the dog. And there is a cow, which Mr. Whitney says "gave us milk at 5 cents a quart. Mrs.

their horses 'round and 'round the stacks. Buffalo Bill on his favorite horse is the theme of another painting. "Saturday Night" shows a bunch of cowboys shooting their way into town on galloping ponies.

"I worked in the lumber yard for J. C. Baldrige at Albuquerque," says Mr. Whitney in discussing his western experiences of years ago. "I got \$42 a month, and somebody asked me a spell back what I did with all that money. Well you know we saved some of it. But prices were higher then than I've ever seem 'em in boom times. By the way, Baldrige celebrated his 50th year in business recently, I heard. Albuquerque had 200 population when I was there, now it has 36,000, I guess. Mrs. Whitney and I were married out there on November 26, 50 years ago in 1931."

It was to celebrate that golden wedding anniversary that young Jack Hazelhurst presented the Whitneys with a radio, and it is to repay friends like Jack and the neighbors of long standing that Mrs. Whitney is urging

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