

Varnishing Day
At The Norfolk Country Club

September 12, 1935



Window In Anticoli* - Guy Pène du Bois, 1928

* asterisks denote artworks shown at the 1935 NCC Varnishing Day exhibition

In the mid-1700s London artists established a tradition of previewing their latest paintings at the **Royal Academy of Arts** by hosting a ***Varnishing Day*** to which they invited art patrons, dealers and fellow artists. Ostensibly, these artists would put the finishing touches to their latest works and apply a transparent varnish to preserve the paintings but in reality it was more of a show, an opportunity to have a reception and party to celebrate the artists and their work and to, perhaps, sell some of their new paintings. Famed atmospheric marine painter, **J.M.W. Turner**, became identified with Varnishing Day in the 1800s due to his penchant for dramatic last-minute studio entrances, whereupon he made changes to his monumental works while fellow artists and invited guests watched in awe. Varnishing Day, at least in name, is still held every year in June (as it has been since 1769) at the Royal Academy of Arts to kick-off their acclaimed summer exhibitions.



Turner on Varnishing Day - William Parrott, 1846

It had to have been the talk of Norfolk 90 years ago, on Thursday, September 12, 1935 in the depths of the Great Depression, when the *Norfolk Country Club* hosted its very own **Varnishing Day** to kick off a festive five-day **Norfolk and Neighborhood** art exhibition bursting with paintings on display throughout the NCC's museum-like Clubhouse (*see catalog below*). The exhibition was open to the public daily from 10-6 for a \$1.00 entrance fee, and newspaper articles proclaimed that it would put Norfolk and the surrounding area "on the map" of important American art colonies.

It is interesting enough that the NCC staged this significant exhibition but, even more intriguing is how ambitious it was: **90 works of art by 41 artists**, many of them successful and well-known in the art world of the early decades of the 20th century.

Several of the 76 art patrons listed in the catalog are familiar former Norfolk CC members including, with their wives, **Abel I. Smith, Robbins Stoeckel, Philip Curtiss, G. Lister Carlisle, S. Winston Childs, James Lawrence, James Mabon, George Case, Starling W. Childs, Carroll J. Post, David Goodnow, Ralph Carroll** and, of course, Norfolk's signature architect, **Alfredo S.G. Taylor** who, in 1917, designed the NCC clubhouse in which the exhibition was being held.

Most of the prominent artists were New Yorkers who maintained art studios in Connecticut during the summer months - in Norfolk, Salisbury, Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, Old Lyme, Stonington and Falls Village which, at the time, was a well-known, thriving art colony. The NCC exhibition was held in conjunction with the **Kent Art Society**, founded in 1923, of which several of the exhibiting artists were members.

Exhibition
of
Paintings
by
Artists

from
NORFOLK AND NEIGHBORHOOD
at the
NORFOLK COUNTRY CLUB
NORFOLK, CONNECTICUT

SEPTEMBER 12 TO 16, 1935, Inclusive



Harvesting Day

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2 to 6 p. m. (d.a.t.)

RECEPTION AND TEA

ADMISSION - - - ONE DOLLAR

The Exhibition will remain open daily from 10 a. m.
to 6 p. m. (d.a.t.) until September 16, Inclusive

ART COMMITTEE

Ernest Lawson

Hon. Frederic C. Walcott

Guy Pene du Bois

George J. Dyer

Dr. Edward Quintard

Ellen Emmett Rand

Ezra Winter

LIST OF EXHIBITORS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Bishop's Chapel | Theodore Van Soelen |
| 2 Reflection | Dines Carlsen |
| 3 Midsummer Masque | William L. Carrigan |
| 4 Studio | Dines Carlsen |
| 5 After a Storm, Peggy's Cove | Arthur Covey |
| 6 Candles | George Baer |
| 7 The Ice Pond | Harry F. Waltsman |
| 8 Interior at Adullam | William McKillop |
| 9 Peconic Bay | Childe Hassam |
| 10 The Terrace | Ezra Winter |
| 11 Sun Flowers and Globe Thistles | George Laurence Nelson |
| 12 Girl on Horseback | Ezra Winter |
| 13 Haystack Mountain | Ernest Lawson |
| 14 Norfolk Studio | Guy Pene du Bois |
| 15 Window in Anticoli | Guy Pene du Bois |
| 16 Old Willows | Ernest Lawson |
| 17 Litchfield Road | Guy Pene du Bois |
| 18 Janet and Young Solomon | Ezra Winter |
| 19 The White Bowl | Dines Carlsen |
| 20 All-Saints' Day | Elizabeth Hicks |
| 21 Down in the Pasture | G. Glenn Newell |
| 22 Winter—Dutchess County | Arthur Powell |
| 23 Portrait of William Carrigan | Ellen Emmett Rand |
| 24 Road to My House | Robert Nisbet |
| 25 Midwinter in Dover | Robert Nisbet |
| 26 Falls at Bull's Bridge | Harry Gottlieb |
| 27 On the Seine | Yvonne Pene du Bois |
| 28 Roman Peasant | George Dyer |
| 29 Jewel Sullivan | Edward Quintard |
| 30 Limestone Quarry | |

LIST OF EXHIBITORS

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 31 Behind the Garage | Helen Rous |
| 32 Pink Peonies | William L. Carrigan |
| 33 Portrait of My Grandfather | Anne Curtiss |
| 34 Wessac | Harry Waltsman |
| 35 Winter | William L. Carrigan |
| 36 Arab Boy | George Baer |
| 37 Summer's Breath | Mary K. Karasick |
| 38 Lone Tree | Edward Quintard |
| 39 Indian Girl | Anne Curtiss |
| 40 Drummer of San Juan | Niles Hogner |
| 41 Auctioneer | Arlington Yutzel |
| 42 Campbell's Falls | James S. Hodges |
| 43 Hillside Farm | Edward Quintard |
| 44 Tranquil Day in Winter | Arthur Powell |
| 45 Cascan Valley | Ernest Lawson |
| 46 Litchfield Hills (Ornamental) | Guy Pene du Bois |
| 47 Young Girl in Blue | Guy Pene du Bois |
| 48 Quintard and Lawson—Sketch | Ernest Lawson |
| 49 Zinnias | Helen Rous |
| 50 Portrait of Wonky-Wu | George Baer |
| 51 June Bouquet | Lois Lenski |
| 52 American Wing, Metropolitan Museum | G. L. Nelson |
| 53 Old Fashioned Flowers | Lois Lenski |
| 54 Cloudy Mountains | M. S. Goodnow |
| 55 American Wing, Metropolitan Museum | G. L. Nelson |
| 56 North Africa | Frederic C. Walcott |
| 57 Group of Bird Prints (hand colored) | Ren Brasher |
| 58 Landscape | Wayland Wells Williams |
| 59 Wood Cuts | Harry D. Cimino |
| 60 Group of Etchings | Troy Kinney |

(Continued on next page)

LIST OF EXHIBITORS

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 61 Group of Etchings | Robert Nisbet |
| 62 Etching on Velvet | George Baer |
| 63 Water Color | Harry D. Cimino |
| 64 Winter | Harry Gottlieb |
| 65 Water Color | Frederic C. Walcott |
| 66 Cold Morning | Marjorie S. Goodnow |
| 67 Water Color | Frederic C. Walcott |
| 68 Landscape | John Goodwin |
| 69 Water Color | Frederic C. Walcott |
| 70 Hills | Marjorie S. Goodnow |
| 71 Water Color | Harry D. Cimino |
| 72 Red Barn | Mary Carpenter |
| 73 Man Tossing Hay | Mary Carpenter |
| 74 Ghost Flowers | Florence Kernick |
| 75 Still Life | Elizabeth Hicks |
| 76 Hills of Connecticut | Mary Kunkel |
| 77 Dogs | Florence Kernick |
| 78 Grandma | Elizabeth Roraback |
| 79 Still Life | Mary Kunkel |
| 80 Portrait of Father | Elizabeth Roraback |
| 81 Landscape | Florence Kernick |
| 82 Girl with Doll | Florence Kernick |
| 83 Still Life | Harry D. Cimino |
| 84 Wall Paper Design | Florence Kernick |
| 85 Landscape | Ellen Emmett Rand |
| 86 Portrait of Mary Foote | George B. Case |
| 87 Etchings | George B. Case |
| 88 Etchings | Elizabeth Hicks |
| 89 Willows and Old Bridge | Lois Lenski |
| 90 Group—Peggy's Cove | |

PATRONS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mrs. William Hall Walker | Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Carl Reiland |
| Dr. and Mrs. Edward Quintard | Mr. and Mrs. Edward Waterman |
| Mr. and Mrs. Robertson Cleveland | Hon. and Mrs. Samuel A. Eddy |
| Mr. and Mrs. G. Lister Carline | Mr. Ernest Lawson |
| Hon. and Mrs. Robbins B. Stoeckel | Mr. and Mrs. Donald Lowe |
| Mrs. William J. Matheson | Mr. and Mrs. Allan Hubbard |
| Mr. and Mrs. James B. Mahon | Mr. and Mrs. Kelly Prentice |
| Hon. and Mrs. Charles Carlsle | Mr. and Mrs. Donald J. Warner |
| Mrs. John Sheppard | Mr. and Mrs. S. Winston Childs |
| Mr. and Mrs. Sterling W. Childs | Mr. and Mrs. R. Graham Biglow |
| Mr. and Mrs. Winfield Shirox | Mr. and Mrs. James S. Hodges |
| Mr. and Mrs. Carroll J. Post | Mr. and Mrs. William Hazen |
| Mr. and Mrs. Denison Dina | Mr. and Mrs. E. Kendall Gillett |
| Mr. and Mrs. James F. Lawrence | Mrs. George G. Haven |
| Mr. and Mrs. Alai I. Smith | Miss Edith Souville |
| Hon. and Mrs. Phillip Curtis | Mrs. Henry W. Hodge |
| Mr. and Mrs. Alfredo S. G. Taylor | Mrs. Anne W. Holmes |
| Mr. and Mrs. Graham Smith | Mrs. Norman Thompson |
| Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Souville | Miss Marguerite Gale |
| Mr. and Mrs. James A. McGraw | Mr. and Mrs. David Goodnow |
| Mr. and Mrs. Guy Pene duBois | Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Carroll |
| Mrs. Marjorie Wehner | Miss Marion Rous |



Varnishing Day - Norfolk and Neighborhood Artists - Exhibition Program
(includes listing of 41 artists, 90 works of art and 76 patrons)

The following biographical sketches and representative art works (including 13 that were hung at the 1935 exhibition) give some sense of the stature of the artists showing their work in the Norfolk Country Club's only known art exhibit (in the club's 113 year history) - many of whom were likely present on that Varnishing Day 90 years ago this September 12th.



Seated Ballet Dancer - Guy Pène du Bois – 1934
(art collection of NCC member Michael Petrillo)

Guy Pène du Bois (1884-1958)

- highly-regarded modernist, realist painter, popular art critic and teacher who, along with Edward Hopper, George Bellows and Rockwell Kent, studied under **Ashcan School** founder, **Robert Henri**
- played a key role in the development of American art in first half of 20th century
- known for witty, mocking views of New York Society, depicting the upper classes with a cold, calculated eye - a bemused view of humankind

- best man at **Edward Hopper's** wedding in 1924
- from 1932 to 1935 du Bois was the driving force behind the flourishing **Norfolk Art Colony** which attracted a who's who of talented artists of the day
- in addition to working on his own paintings in Norfolk, du Bois gave art lessons in **Dr. Lucius Duncan Bulkley's** wonderful 18th century barn on Roughland Road (that unfortunately has been subsumed within an enormous vanity estate that is now serves as a sober house)
- **Window In Anticoli** shown above was on display at the 1935 Norfolk CC exhibit and is now installed at the Westmoreland Museum of American Art in Greensburg, Pennsylvani



Childe Hassam (1859-1935)

- recognized as the premier American Impressionist of his time,
- famous for his pastoral paintings of idyllic seaside scenes and his series of some 30 World War1 Fifth Avenue flag paintings
- influenced by **J.M.W. Turner** and the **Barbizon School** which advocated painting directly from nature
- produced over 3,000 works of art



Great Peconic Bay, The National* - Childe Hassam, 1922

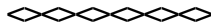


Ernest Lawson (1873-1939)

- member of “**The Eight**”, which included **Ashcan School** artists Robert Henri, William Glackens and George Luks who were lionized after their 1908 exhibit at the *Macbeth Gallery* in New York in which they boldly celebrated American art free of European doctrines
- spent summers of 1932-1935 at Dr. Edward Quintard's **Knolly Brook** residence on Greenwoods Road - painted and hosted exhibitions in the red studio barn behind the house
- destitute and alcoholic, Lawson walked into in the ocean in Miami Beach in 1939 and died in an apparent suicide



Haystack Mountain* - Ernest Lawson, 1932



Ezra Augustus Winter (1886-1949)

- internationally known, American muralist who studied at the American Academy in Rome and was said to be obsessed with “the fleeting nature of youth and evanescence of beauty”
- his brilliant murals can be seen today in such distinguished buildings as:
-
- ***The Library of Congress***, Washington, D.C. - 1922
- ***The Supreme Court Building***, Washington, D.C. - 1934
- ***The Cunard Building***, 25 Broadway, NYC - 1921
- ***The Eastman Theater***, Rochester, NY - 1922
- ***The New York Cotton Exchange***, 3 Hanover Square, NYC - 1924
- ***The Bank of Manhattan Trust Building***, 40 Wall St, NYC - 1930-1945
- ***The Guardian Building***, Detroit, MI - 1929
- ***Radio City Music Hall***, NYC - 1932

- in 1945, while painting his 7th mural at the Bank of Manhattan Trust Building, Winter fell from a scaffold and broke his tailbone which effectively ended his painting career
- in April, 1949 at his home ***Juniper House*** (1932) which he designed in the *International Style* on Under Mountain Road in Falls Village, Winter walked into the woods and killed himself with a shotgun at age 63
- below is Winter's magnificent 60-foot tall mural in the foyer of **Radio City Music Hall** in Manhattan:



***Quest for the Fountain of Youth* - Radio City Music Hall
Ezra Winter, 1932**



Ellen Emmet Rand (1875-1941)

- known for portraits of prominent Americans such as **Franklin Roosevelt**, **Henry James**, **William Sloan Coffin** and **Augustus Saint-Gaudens**
- studied art with **William Merritt Chase** at Shinnecock Hills, NY
- lived and worked in Salisbury, CT



Portrait of Mary Foote
Ellen Emmet Rand, 1898*

Rand's portrait of **Norfolk Library** founder *Isabella Eldridge* can be seen hanging in the library's balcony:



Portrait of Isabella Eldridge -
Ellen Emmett Rand, 1926
(photograph courtesy of Christopher Little)



Rex Brasher (1869-1960)

- pre-eminent wildlife illustrator of the 20th century who, at age 7, determined to paint every species of North American bird from life and do it better than **John James Audubon**, celebrated wildlife illustrator of 19th century
- Brasher painted **875 watercolors** depicting **1200 species of birds**, more than twice as many as Audubon, who painted 489 species of birds in his lifetime
- Audubon only painted dead birds while Brasher painted live birds in the wild
- a perfectionist workhorse, he twice destroyed all his paintings, a total of 700 canvasses
- his exhaustive, classic work ***Birds and Trees of North America*** contains 90,000 reproductions hand-colored by Brasher which took him 4 years to complete and resulted in 100 twelve-volume sets (1200 books) which he created for his loyal patrons
- somehow Brasher has been overlooked by art historians (though many experts consider his paintings to be superior to Audubon's, an unabashed self-promoter)
- this disparity will be partially rectified with the opening in 2026 of ***The Rex Brasher Museum*** on **Chickadee Farm**, his 116 acre property in the Hudson Valley, just over the border from Kent, CT



Group of Birds (hand-colored) - Rex Brasher, 1930s*



Theodore Van Soelen (1890-1964)

- Santa Fe, New Mexico-based artist known for his Western landscapes and portraits
- established a studio in Cornwall, CT in the 1930s
- painted several post office murals (see this post's *Afterword* to view mural in Livingston, TX)
- member of the *National Academy of Art*



Bishop's Chapel* - Theodore Van Soelen - 1928



Harry Gottlieb (1895-1992)

- born in Bucharest, Romania in 1895
- painter, lithographer, screen printer, educator
- scenic and costume designer for **Eugene O'Neill's** *Provincetown Theater*
- studied at *Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts*
- member of **Woodstock (NY) Artist Colony**



Winter* - Harry Gottlieb, c. 1930



William Carrigan (1868-1939)

- art career interrupted when he became United States Consul in Lisbon during WW1
- spent most of his career at his studio in Falls Village, CT where he studied with **Emil Carlson**
- member of *Norfolk Art Colony*



***Pink Peonies* -
William Carrigan, c. 1933***

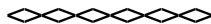


Dines Carlsen (1901-1966)

- American Expressionist
- maintained a studio in Falls Villiage, CT
- member of *National Academy of Design*
- known for his still life paintings
- son of well-known Danish artist **Emil Carlsen**



Studio (self-portrait) -
Dines Carlsen, 1931*

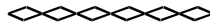


Arthur Sinclair Covey (1877-1960)

- muralist known for painting industrial workers
- three of his 1937 WPA murals of abolitionist **John Brown** are in the Torrington, CT central post office on Elm St. (John Brown was born in Torrington on May 9, 1800 after his parents, Owen Brown and Ruth (Mills) Brown moved from Norfolk on March 28, 1799)
- painted murals for Lord & Taylor in New York and Filenes in Boston
- married to artist **Lois Lenski** who also participated in the NCC exhibit

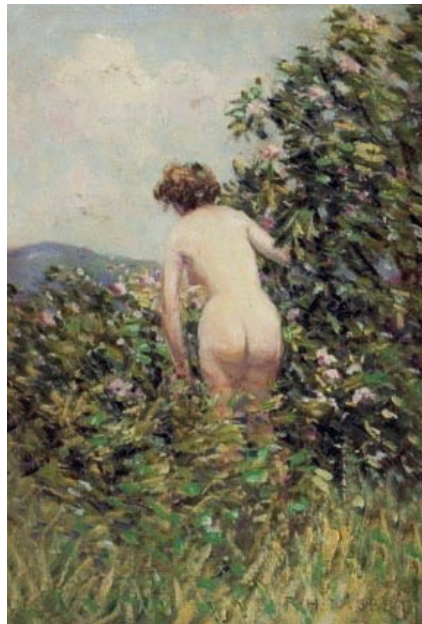


John Brown Mural -Torrington, CT Post Office, 1937
Arthur Sinclair Covey -



Robert Hogg Nisbet (1879-1961)

- recognized for his landscape, figure, genre and etching work
- won three *National Academy of Design* awards
- president of **Arts Students League of New York**
- founder and first president of **Kent (CT) Art Association**



Nude in a Landscape -
Robert Hogg Nesbit, 1925

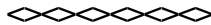


Arthur James Emery Powell (1864-1956)

- American landscape painter and muralist
- maintained a summer studio in Dover Plains, NY
- member of **Salmagundi Club**, **National Academy of Design** and **National Arts Club**



Ten Mile River - Arthur James Emery Powell, c. 1924



Troy Kinney (1871-1938)

- American artist, etcher and author
- known for works portraying dancers, fanciful subjects and stylized nudes
- worked with dancers **Ruth St. Denis** and **Anna Pavlova**
- he and his wife, **Margaret West Kinney** were premier illustrators of the early 20th century under the name, "***The Kinneys***"
- their studio was located in Falls Village, CT



Pavlova and Volinin in Amarilla -
Troy Kinney, c. 1928



Dr. Edward Quintard (1867-1936)

- eminent Columbia University internist lived at 1050 Fifth Avenue in New York
- **Mark Twain's** personal physician was at Twain's bedside shortly before he died in 1910 in Redding, CT
- **Dr. Quintard** summered at **Knolly Brook** on Greenwoods Road in Norfolk for 20 years where he nurtured and supported prominent artists who were adversely affected financially by the the Great Depression
- wrote poetry and essays and was an amateur painter who had two of his works in the NCC exhibit
- Quintard remodeled a barn behind his house into a studio where Ernest Lawson, Guy Pène du Bois, Robert Nesbit and others painted and exhibited their works



Knolly Brook Studio as it looks today
(on the property of NCC members, *Emily Bode and Aaron Aujla*)



***Mark Twain with his personal physician,
Dr. Edward Quintard - c. 1900***

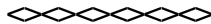
Along with other local artists, several NCC members displayed their own art work in the Varnishing Day exhibit, including:

Ann Curtiss (1919-2014)

- much-admired figurative painter and welded steel sculptor who was 16 at the time of the exhibition and one of Guy Pène du Bois's art students
- established art studios in McClean, VA and Taconic, CT
- one of her paintings at the Norfolk show depicting her grandfather, Everett Philip Curtiss, is shown below:



Portrait of My Grandfather
Ann Curtiss (Scoville), 1935*

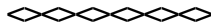


Senator Frederic Walcott (1869-1949)

- United States Senator from Connecticut, 1929-1935
- assistant to Herbert Hoover in WW1 United States Food Administration
- co-founder, with ***Starling Winston Childs***, of Norfolk's **Great Mountain Forest** (1909)
- below is one of Senator Walcott's four watercolors on display at the Norfolk art show:



North Africa - Senator Frederic Walcott, 1931*



George Bowen Case (1872-1955)

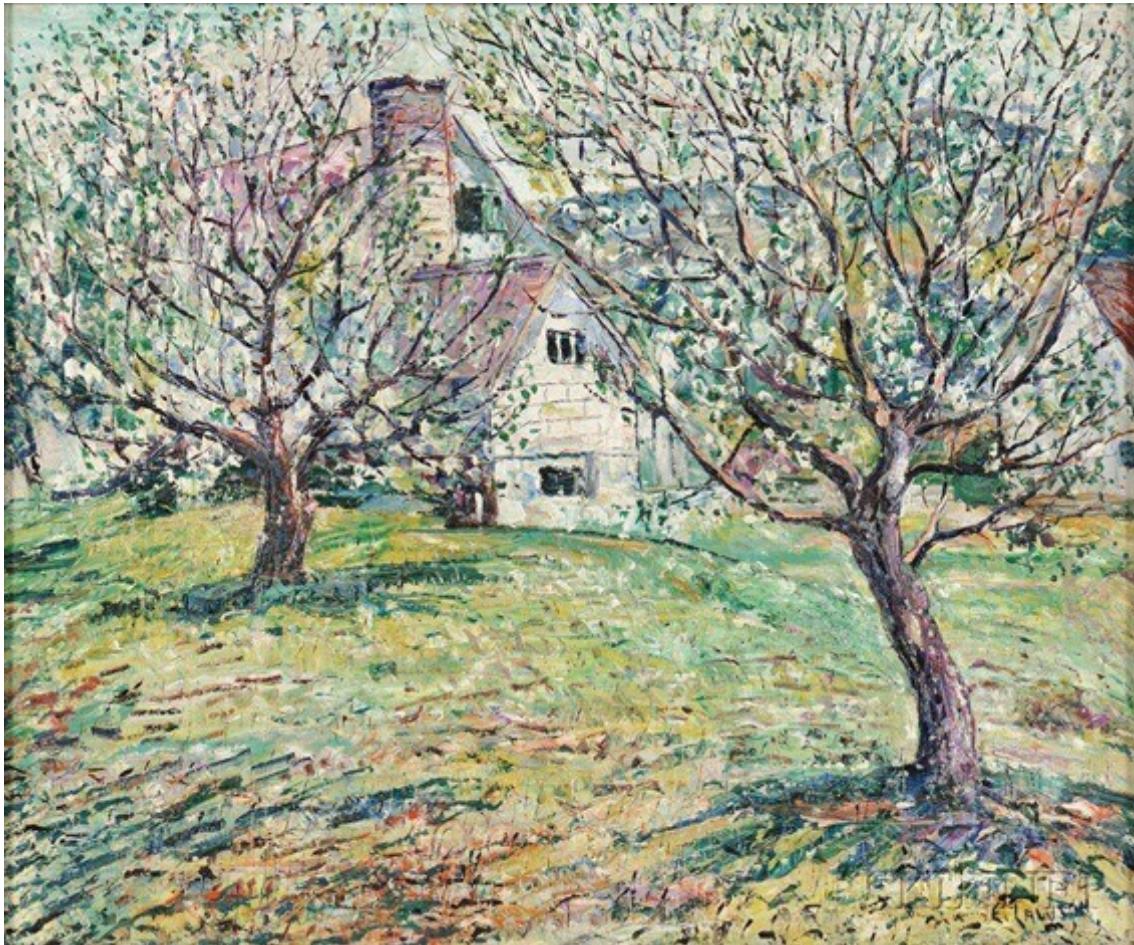
- co-founder in 1901 of **White & Case**, one of the first global law firms
- **John Pierpont (J.P.) Morgan**'s personal attorney
- legendary Yale baseball player who invented the squeeze bunt
- father of **Robert Case**, first winner of NCC men's golf championship in 1930 at the age of 18



Etching - George B. Case, c. 1933*

George Jones Dyer (1886-1935)

- longest-serving Norfolk Country Club President (1930-1939) during the Great Depression
- club president at the time Varnishing Day exhibit was mounted
- New York attorney
- grandson of **George Jones**, co-founder of the ***New York Times***
- avid art collector and amateur artist had two paintings in 1935 NCC exhibit
- below is a painting by **Ernest Lawson** of a cottage on Dyer's estate, situated just beyond the NCC's 7th fairway



Gardener's Cottage, George Jones Dyer Estate, Norfolk, CT

Ernest Lawson - c. 1933

(cottage still stands on property of NCC members, *Elizabeth and T.C. Clark*)

The ***Varnishing Day/Norfolk and Neighborhood Exhibition*** is apparently the the only formal art exhibit ever held at the Norfolk Country Club, at least one of such ambition featuring so many estimable artists. There were no prices listed in the catalog but the paintings most certainly were for sale. Could it be possible that paintings, purchased in the NCC Clubhouse that glamorous week-end in September, 1935, are still be hanging in the homes of some old



**Albert Warren (A.W.)
Tillinghast (1876-1942)**

It's interesting to note that, by coincidence, famed golf course architect, **A.W. Tillinghast**, who is acknowledged to have designed the Norfolk CC course in 1928, was in Norfolk on Varnishing Day inspecting the course for the PGA. Tillinghast toured the course with NCC golf pro **Waldo “Wally” Emerson Martin**, recommended a new 6th green and new 7th hole tee box and also rendered a creative, but never-realized plan to convert the NCC and adjoining **Norfolk Downs (1897)** courses into one seamless 18-hole layout. Tillinghast was an antique dealer and patron of the arts who, presumably, would have been delighted by the remarkable works of art arrayed throughout the Clubhouse on the day of his visit.

by Mícheál Cummings Kelly
Club Historian
June 28, 2025

Afterword

Selected Paintings by Artists Who Exhibited on Varnishing Day



Portion of Guardian Building (Cathedral of Finance) Mural, Detroit, MI
Ezra Winter, 1929

(note *Winter's* deft incorporation of The Great Lakes into this striking mural)



***Girl in a Storm* - Yvonne Pène du Bois, 1947**

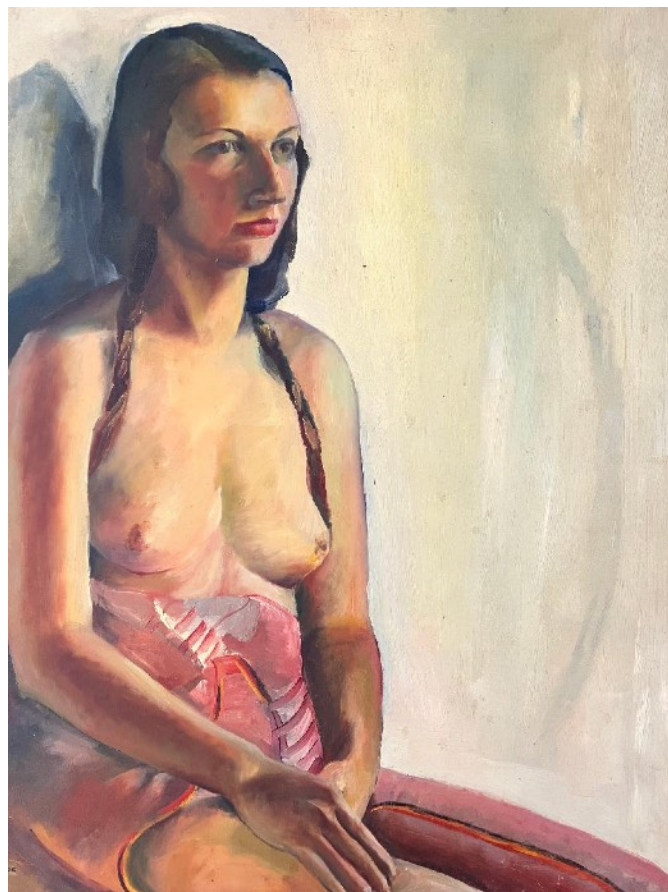


***Portrait of Yvonne* -
Guy Pène du Bois, c. 1932**

(du Bois's artist daughter who also exhibited at the 1935 NCC art show)



***Buffalo Hunting* -Post Office Mural - Livingston, TX T
Theodore Van Soelen, 1940**



***Indian Girl* (ascribed) -
Ann Curtiss (Scoville), 1935**



***September Afternoon* - Robert Hogg Nesbit, 1916**



Down in the Pasture* - George Glenn Newell, c. 1925



West Cornwall Train Station - George Baer, 1941



La Grande Bleue, Nice - Guy Pène du Bois, 1929