The Sculpture of JAMES EARLE FRASER

A.L.Freundlich
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PREFACE

JAMES EARLE FRASER

I am indebted to many kind people who have helped me in the research and writing of this book on James Earle Fraser. Beth Strum, my Graduate Assistant, and Professor Michael Recht, both of Syracuse University's College of Visual and Performing Arts, were responsible for much of the early digging out of information and sources. Mrs. Gladys Leiter, my administrative assistant was instrumental in marshalling information and keeping at bay the many administrative chores of the college, early on when I started working on the book. The late Professor George Stark, my colleague and friend, Jeffry P.Lindsay, I thank for technical advice and critical review. Professor James Anderson, Eddie West, Juan Alvarez, former graduate students, all made valuable contributions.

Finally my thanks to Sharon Woodbury, my wife Tommie and John Ivo Gilles, who wrestled with computer languages and editing. I am particularly indebted to numerous curators and library colleagues around the country who responded to my inquiries in search of their records. To the administrations of Syracuse University, the University of South Florida, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, I express my appreciation for their support.

I first became aware of James Earle Fraser When I found a jumble of crated plasters in a warehouse owned by Syracuse University. Here were segments of immense torsos, dozens of portrait versions of the same face in multiple sizes. Some I recognized as General Patton, Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln, and others were mythical groups in the Classic mode. They had obviously been stored there by an earlier administration. Inquiries gradually led me from the plasters to the Arents Research Library at Syracuse University, where the sculptor's papers were neatly catalogued, and to the many museums and public sites in this country which house his sculpture.

Gradually, I became aware of Fraser's immense output of work. But although he was a major figure in the development of American public sculpture, his name is hardly known outside artistic circles. Several smaller publications have preceded this one, and I am indebted to their authors. An exhibit which had been the original intent of my work was carried on by others after I left Syracuse and, as is noted elsewhere, was seen at the Gilcrease and Everson Museums.

August L. Freundlich
Tampa Fl 3/1/00
INTRODUCTION

James Earle Fraser occupies a rare and baffling position in the art world. Although his work is well-known and often seen, he himself is almost completely anonymous. While his sponsor and teacher, Augustus St. Gaudens, has surpassed Fraser in current public awareness, and others have developed more images of the Indian, the cowboy, or the pioneer West, it remains to Fraser to have created two of the most enduring public images of the American ideal—the pioneer West. The End of the Trail and the Buffalo Nickel are recognized by vast numbers of Americans today as icons expressing our national character, nearly a century after their creation. This suggests a widespread appeal to his art, an implication which in no sense diminishes Fraser's stature as an artist...rather, the opposite. In an era when painting was moving increasingly toward expressionism and abstraction, with subject increasingly obscured, Fraser uncompromisingly and deliberately chose an artistic direction that produced work that was American in subject and accessible to all. His was a robust sensibility, full of life and adventure.

In spite of this, and in spite of his numerous displays of public sculpture in America's major cities, the story of his long and full life is little known. Yet the romantic, almost archetypically American character of his life story is fully reflected in his oeuvre. His background has a kind of epic scope that meshes with his work.

Others of his works are seen daily by thousands who recognize the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial at the Museum of Natural History in New York City, or pass by the Pioneers on the Michigan Avenue bridge in Chicago, without knowing the artist's name. His public sculpture seen throughout the United States remains today the basic statement of the continuing figurative tradition. Fraser stands high above his contemporaries, having achieved elegant resolutions of the major problems facing the sculptors of his day. He led American sculpture from academic traditions of European origin to the representation of real American subjects. In so doing he also helped to develop sculpture's transition towards the contemporary trends in the other visual arts. Fraser was one who, while trained in the most respected academies of the time, showed his colleagues and the public how to maintain the representational tradition of figurative three-dimensional work in the face of dehumanized abstract and other contemporary trends.

If for no other reason, Fraser is important because he and his sculpture are an almost perfect expression of the life and spirit of his country in the late Nineteenth and first half of the Twentieth Centuries. His life
in the Badlands of the West as a youth, his later absorption in European sophistication, his synthesis of Old World knowledge and technique with American subject matter and American concerns, into something new--partaking of both without being either--all reflected America at its leap into the Twentieth Century. His art expressed something new and uniquely American, a melding of influences into a new and vigorous style of expression in sculpture.

The lifework of most artists can be analyzed for those outstanding events which shaped an aspect of their life's work. For St. Gaudens, the early training with cameo cutters led to his development of low and high reliefs to levels of artistry not seen for centuries. For Fraser, his childhood in the Dakotas gave him both the independence of spirit and love of his country--noted by Frederick Jackson Turner as an American personality trait.

The second major influence on Fraser was his training in the Paris of the late 19th century and its Ecole des Beaux Arts. Here he was exposed to the traditions in art, and to the notion that sculpture should relate to its architectural environment. He learned to understand the striving for the ideal of the Greeks, both in school casts and in the original stone to be found in museums. In the work of the French sculptors of the day he was able to see the Neoclassic enhancement of a romanticized subject. He could see the heroic memorials in which the noble ideal was updated with modern dress and icon. Thirdly, then, was his confrontation with the drive for the modern stemming from the ideas of Expressionist and Abstract sculptors. He certainly became aware of the work of the younger generation of sculptors in the second and third decades of the century. He could tolerate, but not relate to, the early anatomical simplifications and abstractions of the small-scale pieces being produced. He also was aware that these new movements found their inspiration in such as the Archaic rather than the Classical period of Greek sculpture: that others were seeking out inspiration in non-Western work such as the African or Egyptian. Fraser was unable to relate his work--major public large-scale sculpture--to those sources until a series of visits to the Yucatan. When he confronted the Mayan sculpture his empathic response was direct and immediate. He was able to relate the Mayan to the Greek and Renaissance traditions he knew and appreciated. By this route, to a great degree, he came to an evolutionary change in the style of his works. This change is seen between the American realistic nature of his earlier works, and the more simplified surfaces and streamlined geometry he adopted for his later pieces. He saw his leadership role as artistic mediation between the radical vanguard and the traditional academic Classicism.

It might have appeared to some critics in the post-World War II period that Fraser and his contemporaries had never changed their style and subject, nor their approach to public sculpture. It is certainly true that he did not join the artistic revolution, but there is paramount in his
life oeuvre a transition—a strong and sane one—a change which goes from his predecessors in Romantic treatment and Classical mythology to Romantic Realism and then to his Americanizing the Realism and, finally, to simplifying and streamlining that American Realism in an accommodation to newer ideas.

Two artists of a generation before Fraser are similar to Fraser's End of the Trail—Cyrus Dallin with his series of four equestrian figures started at the Columbian exposition with The Signal of Peace, and ending with the figure now placed in front of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Appeal to the Great Spirit. The other is Alexander Proctor's On the War Trail, at the Denver Civic Center. Although both earlier sculptors have made work of artistic merit here, neither has quite achieved the totality of emotion, nor quite captured the spirit of the Indians' plight as well as did Fraser.

Fraser was not a populist sculptor. He did not cater to the masses, nor did he sympathize with the Social Realist approach. He differed from his colleague painters, the American Realists of his early days in Greenwich Village. They moved out of the prettiness of the studio to show the ugly realities of city life. Fraser believed that his art should inspire the viewer. While he departed from the toga and the wreath of his earlier sculptural predecessors, he could not stoop to the shovel and rag of the Social Realists. He intended people to recognize his heroes and heroic figures, and to understand and be uplifted.

Fraser was the archetypical sculptor of his generation. Many of his colleagues made portraits of famous people. Loucheim, in her New York Times article, called our attention to his having made more enormous figures of important persons than any other sculptor in America. In fact, he achieved much of his earliest recognition by doing portrait busts and plaques of the well-to-do and their children, beginning with his sometime student, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney and her family, and branching out to other notables of society, government and the art world. He preferred not to make a fetish out of these social connections. Instead, he deliberately developed a solid, workmanlike career by dint of straightforward dealing and a life totally committed to hard work. He applied for and often won public commissions. Among his greatest successes were the number of government commissions he won in Washington. Today, he still has more public sculpture in the capital than any other sculptor. His background and training marked both the end of a major period in American art, and the beginning of the next. He came from a youth imbued with the West of Indians and buffalo. He finished his adolescence in the School of Paris, embracing the Beaux Arts tradition, which remained with him throughout his career. In the decades of artistic turmoil and revolution which then developed, he remained steadfastly committed to this background and ideals.

In his mature years he served as counselor and juror in artistic matters on the national scene and in professional organizations. He was
sSurely aware of the vast stylistic changes underway. At the end of his career, he found the new direction which allowed him to move toward the artistic changes of the twentieth century.

One of the ironies of James Earle Fraser's life is that when he spoke of the flow and ebb of styles and artistic fashion, he was predicting his own virtual disappearance from critical attention, and the later reemergence of some of the values for which he stood. Some sculptors continued the same tradition, but were considered very conservative and out of the main stream of the art world. Their work, frequently commissioned for public situations, was often attacked by the more avant garde artists and critics.

During the earlier decades of the century, when sculpture was struggling to free itself from the romantic and mythical, it was Fraser who led the way in the first few steps. Others, slightly younger, were able to move away from the monumental and into the museum. Still others proved that sculpture could be non representational; that anything, even thought, could become an icon. But the evolutionary waves have once more made the object, even the monument, respectable. Picasso's giant concrete woman's head, or Dine's immense baseball bat, have taken their place in the outdoor civic environment, after such non-representational monuments as those by Sol Lewitt or Tony Smith.

James Earle Fraser was the leading public sculptor of his generation. Despite the fact that he personally was not well publicized, his works were the most important public commissions of a time when public commissions were the sculpture of America. His offices in the government, and the awards given him by his profession, clearly mark him as the outstanding sculptor that he was. His commitment to the thousands of years of continuity in figurative sculpture, balanced by an expressed willingness to allow others a variety of stylistic approaches, opened the way for the vast changes in technique brought on by new materials and techniques he could not have foreseen. His Americanism, his involvement with Beaux Art, with the Mayans, and his appearance on the public scene all over the face of this nation, establish him as a great transitional figure in American public sculpture.

A.L.F
Born on November 4, 1876 in Winona, Minnesota, James Earle Fraser was caught up in the westward sweep then consuming the nation. His father, a manager and engineer for the railroad, moved the family west to follow the rapid expansion of the rails.

Fraser's earliest memories were of the railroad--living in a boxcar, traveling along newly-laid track--and of Indians. Perhaps the first things
to make any aesthetic impact on the young Fraser were Indian artifacts, such as the buffalo robes under which he recalls sleeping.

"On one the sun was painted with its rays extending to the edges; on another the moon and stars, all in beautiful and appropriate colors and fine design. I have looked through museums in vain to find the equal of those paintings. "I

His early experiences apparently kindled a lifelong respect for and fascination with Indians, feelings eloquently expressed in a number of his works.

After several early westward moves, the family came to rest by 1880 on a large ranch near the town of Mitchell, South Dakota. Young Fraser's encounters with Indians were frequent in this area. Often a group would leave the nearby reservation and camp close to the ranch. On one of these occasions, Fraser and his grandfather went to the Indians and purchased a pony for the price of one silver watch on a chain. The pony was to stay with young Fraser for several years. This memory, and that of rides on the open plains, became a lifelong influence.

Some of the younger Indians became occasional playmates and taught the boy how to ride, make toys, and how to shoot bullfrogs and prairie dogs with the bow and arrow. It was, in short, seemingly an idyllic American childhood. The Frasers were a large, closely knit family, and aunts, uncles, cousins, and hired hands were always about the ranch. Fraser wrote about his childhood in a series of autobiographical sketches.

"Father, a few years before we came to Dakota, had been a member of several expeditions sent by the United States Government to survey what he called the Yellowstone Valley. (It is now the Yellowstone National Park.) He spoke with enthusiasm of those wonderful experiences, and particularly of the magnificent landscape of the valley. The expeditions went by steamboat from St. Louis to the Yellowstone and up that river by canoe. On one of their return trips they searched out and brought back the body of General Custer--an event which impressed my father intensely. How vivid the pioneering was to him I now realise, principally because my boyhood on the prairie is so clearly remembered, bringing nostalgia for those youthful haunts that can never again be enjoyed. The prairie which I loved and regretted so to leave--the rivers, my ponies, dogs, and many other pets, were lost to me in a day when we left our home in Dakota."

"I know now, although my boyhood in Dakota was unusual, that I wouldn't have had it different, for I grew fond of
the wild and picturesque beauty of the prairie and learned, little by little, of the courage and ingenuity of man, fighting against the primitive; to know animal and birdlife, and to have had close contact with Indians in their natural state. These things have been of great interest to me always." 1

"Here and there buffalo bones would begin to show, the great gray ribs first, then the skulls with their sculptural contours would seem to rise, until finally endless white trails of bleached bones would wind in serpentine bands across the slowly greening prairie. ...Is it surprising that the Indians were aroused by this ruthlessness? They took only what was needed for their immediate use and wanted fiercely to resist the extermination of their source of food. It was terrible that such slaughter was necessary, but railroads wanted by the government had to be built, and the buffalo stood in the way." 1

"Prairie schooners passed often on the open plain—if they arrived at our house toward evening, they usually camped and came in later to talk...Usually a barrel filled with water was carried on the side of the wagon, and a stove was generally set up on the floor with a chimney run through the side of the canvas because in rainy weather the cooking was done in the schooner...The spirit of adventure was strongly evident in the men at all times. There was also the wonderful spirit of the women who seemed perfectly willing to follow their men to the end of the West, enduring any hardship or danger from Indian uprisings, and the rigors of pioneer life. They undoubtedly contributed greatly to the courage and self reliance of the men who had the ability to establish the frontiers of America." 1

Fraser also was fortunate in encountering many of the colorful Wild West characters who, only a few years later, were to vanish from the face of the earth. One was Diamond Dick, a local cowboy who could shoot the heads of two ducks with a single shot from a hundred yards off, while the astonished boy watched. Of the plainsmen, scouts, and trappers who often passed through Mitchell, one was later to serve as Fraser's model for the figure of Lewis in his "Lewis and Clark." Another colorful character was a man called Hunchback, who was an early and important influence on the boy.

"It was his habit to sit on the porch of his house while he carved chalk-stone into various forms. Many of his carvings I remember, among them one he had cut from a square block--
a small cubicle with pillars on the corners. Inside the pillars he had carved a ball which was entirely separated from the columns. It was round and very well done. I went every day on my way to school to see if he was sitting there and to watch him carve. I asked him where he got the stone and he told me from a quarry--the same quarry that supplied the stone for the facades of buildings...I went out there and got a good many pieces with which to carve, not architectural shapes, but animals, chickens, dogs, anything. I tried carving heads, legs, arms and little figures. The stone was easy to cut. It was good in color and soft as cheese when it was first taken out of the quarry, but hardened when it thoroughly dried. The material would have been good as a medium for statuettes, providing the work was solidly composed.”

Fraser may ascribe some credit to Hunchback for impelling him toward a life in art, but clearly his early inclination was already fixed in that general direction. Too, Fraser's father was often sketching and drafting in the course of his duties as an engineer for the railroad. This might naturally urge the boy to do the same. The atmosphere of his family home life also seems to have encouraged his drawing, carving and other craft activities. Jimmy's Uncle Gene and Aunt Dora were musically inclined, playing fiddle and organ. His parents were fairly permissive for their day. So, added to an early predisposition and a natural talent, Fraser grew up in an atmosphere in which art was a perfectly acceptable activity.

In 1889, when Jimmy was thirteen, his father accepted a new position with the Soo Railroad and the family moved back east to Minneapolis. The boy apparently did not feel that his new home compared favorably with Dakota. He kept the memory of the prairie alive by drawing and modeling the birds, animals, and Indians he remembered with such fondness.

After only a year, the family moved again--this time to Chicago. Here, as a high school age student, Fraser began to take his first formal instruction in art. Here, too, he seems to have confronted for the first time the decision to become an artist. At the age of fourteen, he obtained a position as an assistant in the studio of a well-known Chicago sculptor, Richard W. Bock.(1865-1945) Bock was preparing numerous pieces by other artists as well as his own for inclusion in the upcoming Columbian World's Fair. Bock, German born and a student of Alexandre Falguiere, had come to Chicago to work on the Exposition. He worked for a number of other sculptors, preparing the full-size works from their models. His own work appeared on the mining building, and those for electricity and manufacture. In later years, he formed a close alliance with Frank Lloyd Wright, working on that architect's sculptural
details. Fraser was exposed to all the myriad activities in architecture and sculpture. He later said that the job:

".. gave me an excellent start in a professional sculptor's studio--a wonderful opportunity for a boy to start actual work in a studio and watch the work--even if it was only handing clay to the sculptor."¹

While still a teenaged apprentice in Chicago, he wrote (in a letter) about the Columbian Exposition of 1893, speaking of the

"...beautiful buildings and good sculpture on all sides. It was wonderful training for an art-minded youth. I made many sketches and some finished work, and at the age of 17, in 1894, I created the first model of the "End of the Trail."¹

Years later he wrote Bock about it:

"Another thing that I am very anxious to place in is the time that I made the sketch which is called “The End of the Trail.” I remember bringing it to you for your criticism. It was about the time that I made the head of old John Riley. I place it about 1894 or 5. I had had some such idea from my Dakota days in mind and after seeing the sculpture of cow-boys and Indians at the World's Fair of 1893 I made the sketch and I remember that you liked it and gave me some good advice. I still have a photograph of the original sketch and on the base there is a date which seems to be 1894 barely visible. I think that is correct."²

He also met a number of the artists participating in the Fair, and was impressed by Buffalo Bill Cody's "Wild West Show," which featured genuine cowboys and Indians. The Exposition, carried out in the rational Beaux Arts manner of historic architecture and related sculpture, also emphasized a number of works with Wild West subjects. Work by such as Alexander Phimister Proctor, Henry Bush-Brown, Cyrus E. Dallin, Paul Wayland Bartlett or Gutzon Borglum, may well have served as inspirations for young Fraser. These works struck a responsive chord in a youngster only a few years removed from daily contact with Indians.

Near the end of his life he wrote about his contact with and admiration for native Americans:

"I played with the Indian children and liked them and their games very much. Often hunters, wintering with the Indians, stopped over to visit my grandfather on their way south,
and in that way I heard many stories of Indians. On one occasion a fine fuzzy bearded old hunter remarked, with much bitterness in his voice, "The injuns will all be driven into the Pacific Ocean." The thought so impressed me that I couldn't forget it, in fact, it created a picture in my mind which eventually became “The End of the Trail”. I liked the Indians and couldn't understand why they were to be pushed into the Pacific...I made many sketches and some finished work, and at the age of 17 in 1894, I created the first model of “The End of the Trail”, the thought that had been in my mind since my boyhood in Dakota.”

The original “Trail” began as an example of adolescent welt-schmerz. It was the work of a youngster who, in his early days as an art student, remembered with romantic longings the Indians of his youth. He developed his skills in three-dimensional modeling with a familiar subject. No doubt he was swayed by the examples of the sculpture he helped Bock produce, and the displays at the Columbian Exposition. With his work assisting Bock, and his cast drawings at the Chicago Art Institute school, “The Trail” was undoubtedly one of many student sketch projects. There was probably not too much attention paid to this particular model.

Fraser brought the small model with him to Paris. When he showed it at the exhibition of American art students, it received considerable attention. Paris was much interested in cowboys and Indians at the time. The Natural man and the romance of the American wild west were very much in vogue. Bill Cody and his Wild West Show had twice been presented to great public acclaim.

The young Fraser was seen as the representative of the romantic in American culture. His piece was well enough made to satisfy the current critique. It was, however, its reflection of the American frontier, the Wild West, that brought him attention and praise.

In the surviving models of “End of The Trail” we see that the Indian warrior slumps on his equally tired pony. His braids fall forward, his spear points toward the ground in a diagonal which helps to guide the eye toward the earth. The pony's tail is tucked between his legs, the four hoofs are placed closely together. The composition is based on two triangles—one is based on the ground, pyramid-like, the other is inverted point up, suggesting a basic knowledge of the rules of formal composition. In both the front and rear views, the composition shows downward movement. The content of “Trail”, however, differs from the other works seen by Fraser in Chicago in that it does not portray the Indian in a glorious moment.

Unlike Dallin's "Chief at Sunrise”, here is a sad moment. It is the pathos of the long trail ended that captured the public's imagination. The dejection of both the man and the horse exactly caught the mood of the
people. James Fenimore Cooper and others had written about the noble savage. Numerous sculptures of Indians had made their appearance at Chicago and thereafter. It took a young Fraser, however, to convert the classic and glorious warrior on a mighty steed into a symbol of the lost savage. In effect, it marks America's sadness at losing the frontier in a lasting image stronger than any other before or since.

What happened to the original model of “The End of the Trail” is not clear. Most likely it was lost in the studio fire in Fraser's rented Saugatuck, New York home about 1911. There is evidence of two other surviving pieces of Fraser's from his Chicago student days. A bronze tablet portrait of Eugene V. Debs, the labor leader and later Socialist candidate for President of the United States. Fraser executed a formal profile portrait in a low relief tablet that was inscribed, "This is an age of organization. Everything depends on solidarity. Your power is in Unity. Eugene V. Debs." There is an intense, almost haggard profile of a man looking to the left. The piece is stiff and formally carried out in the manner of a talented student. Fraser described the scene in a letter years later.

"You will undoubtedly be surprised to hear that I worked on a portrait of Debs from life. A man I worked for in Chicago was doing one of Debs in his studio, so I met him, and remember very clearly the way he looked. While Bock was making his study I was also making one... Debs had just finished directing the Pullman strike...He was a most interesting and charming fellow, and an intense believer in the cause of labor."4

The other surviving piece, the portrait head of Old John Riley, is a sculpture student's portrait. It is photographically rendered complete with such specifics as beard stubble, but clearly reveals inherent talent in the young artist.

After the close of the Columbian Exposition Fraser studied at the School of Chicago Art Institute. It was at that time, one of the few good studio schools in America. According to the school's records, he was a student in the advanced life class, reserved for the more able students, and received two honorable mentions.

Theodore Dreiser, in his book The Genius, describes the Art Institute in Chicago at about the time Fraser was attending. The hero, a young man interested in art, was much like Fraser:

One day he ventured to call at the Art Institute Building and consult the secretary, ...that he could enter a life or antique class, or both, though the antique alone was advisable for the time. ...the halls and offices were decorated in an artistic way, and there were many plaster casts of arms, legs,
busts, and thighs and heads. The rooms, too, were exceptional. They were old enough in use to be almost completely covered, as to the walls, with the accumulation of paint scraped from the palettes. There were no easels or other paraphernalia, but simply chairs and little stools. ...In the center of the room was a platform, the height of an ordinary table, for the model to pose on, and in one corner a screen which constituted a dressing room."\textsuperscript{5}

The instructor announced "that there would be regular criticism days by him--Wednesdays and Fridays. He hoped that each pupil would be able to show marked improvement. The class would now begin work." Then he strolled out.\textsuperscript{5}

This kind of Studio School was Fraser's first formal training.

The Chicago Columbian World's Fair of 1893 followed forty years after the British Prince Albert's First World's Fair, the Crystal Palace of 1851, and seventeen years after America's Centennial Fair of 1876 in Philadelphia. The Columbian Fair was in many ways an American cultural watershed, bringing together the sophisticated East with the free and natural mores of the West. Chicago, the Gateway City, marked the last civilized outpost before the wide open spaces of the West. Rebuilding from the destructive fire of 1872, Chicago was in the midst of a major cultural boom. New buildings for music halls, libraries, and universities, allied with the Columbian Exposition, marked a desire to build a cultural life second to none. Jones, in his book, The Age of Energy, refers to the period as one in which "philosophic idealism and a renewed instinct for craftsmanship" were uppermost.\textsuperscript{6}

The Fair's nation-wide impact was felt for decades. As the major city of the western outpost, Chicago, at its Columbian World's Fair, declared itself to be a part of the Eastern and European tradition. A contemporary commentator wrote:

"Other World's Fairs have celebrated the civilisation of a race, but the Columbian Exhibition will glorify the world's transcendent migration. Other fairs have shown civilisations spreading from field to field like a prairie fire; but this fair will flame with the human energy that handed the torch of civilisation across an ocean.\textsuperscript{7}"

The architect who designed the land use plan was Frederick Law Olmstead, of Central Park renown. Others who designed the architecture and sculpture of what was to be called "The Great White City on
the Lake" were basically East Coast practitioners trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, or under its influence. In charge was architect Daniel H. Burnham. Some of the architects whom he selected to do the buildings at the Fair's Court of Honor, and along its half-mile of lagoon, were Stanford White of McKim, Mead and White, who designed the Agricultural building; Richard Morris Hunt, the Administration Building; and George B. Post, the Manufactures Building. The Boston firm of Peabody and Stetns did the Machinery Hall.

Most of the architecture and sculpture designed and built for the Fair perished at the end of the Summer of 1893, but their descendants, in marble and bronze, soon dotted the countryside in parkways, in railroad stations, in public buildings, and became the established style of the period.

Stanford White asked his friend St. Gaudens to correlate the sculpture for the fair. He, in turn nominated other artists to participate. Painters, as well as sculptors, were encouraged to collaborate closely and harmoniously with the style and use of the architects' products. For perhaps the first time in America, sculpture was something other than a somber memorial or portrait. The works produced for out of doors on a major scale were joyous reinterpretations of various themes. Many of them based in American mythology others based in American images of wild or native life.

Sculpture was a critically important component of the design of the Fair. There were numbers of free-standing pieces placed throughout the grounds. Others were major elements of buildings and entrances, on lagoons, plazas, and pediments.

St Gaudens believed that the fair provided an assembly of, perhaps "the greatest meeting of artists since the Renaissance", he also pioneered the organisation of the National Sculpture Society. Among the principles of the new society were "to spread the knowledge of good sculpture, promote the decoration of public and other buildings, squares, and parks, provide from time to time for exhibition of sculpture." The establishment of the society also helped to form a more tangible link between architect and sculptor. "8

Among the American sculptors invited by St Gaudens to work at the exposition, there was a fair division of content and styles. The subject of their works was almost evenly divided between the romanticized virtues (ie. Columbia, Music, Agriculture) and reflection of the American Western frontier, such as various native American animals and representations of Indians. The sculptors included were:


Karl Bitter, as a young Austrian immigrant, had found decorative work with the architect Richard Morris Hunt. As it turned out Hunt led the delegation of Eastern architects to the Columbian Exposition, and
brought Bitter with him. Bitter developed a number of decorative architectural groups; among them those for Hunt's domed administration building. These groups consisted chiefly of writhing human figures in a pyramidal arrangement, owing much to the complex and ornate Austrian Baroque.

Gutzon Borglum was, like Fraser a product of early years in the West. In his case, Idaho. His early interest in painting later changed to sculpture. During his Paris studies with Mercie, he developed a series of horse studies.

On his return to the United States, he exhibited Indian Scouts at the Columbian Exposition. Another sculptor to come out of the West, Cyrus E. Dallin, also followed the path to Paris for training as a sculptor. In his childhood in Utah, a childhood spent around mountains, mines, and Indians, he began to draw and carve. At the Académie Julian he was a student with Chapu. In 1889, when Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show came to Paris, he created Signal of Peace, the first of a quartet of Indian pieces. The rendering is naturalistic, the pony scrawny, the chief lifting his spear in salute. First developed in 1890, it was exhibited at the Columbian Exposition, arousing considerable interest and was, no doubt, an important influence on young Fraser.

Daniel Chester French, according to Craven, was among the first Americans to design allegorical figures characterizing various virtues. It was in this genre that he was represented at the Columbian Exposition. He built a huge figure symbolizing The Republic, sixty-five feet high atop a column, as well as a number of other figures in a similar vein--The Farmer, The Teamster, Corn, and Wheat--most of them with the assistance of Edward Clark Potter, who did sculpture of:"Live animals placed along the various bridges on the grounds. In addition, he showed a number of smaller renditions of animals in the Fine Arts Building, among them Panther and Her Cubs, Bison, Jaguar, and Boa Constrictor."

In many ways, Frederick MacMonnies's fountain was the crowning achievement in the middle of the lagoon. The architect, Daniel H. Burnham, considered MacMonnies's grandiose fountain, Columbia, "the most beautiful conception of a fountain in modern times, west of the Caspian Mountains."

The work shows an angel in the bow of a large boat. She holds a trumpet forward, her wings acurl. Each of the eight figures at the oars are moving in parallel harmonies as they sweep forward. Atop all, the dominant Columbia, representing the nation, guides the ship of state forward in stately allegoric fashion.

Alexander Phimister Proctor, while born in Canada, grew up in Denver and in the nearby hills and mountains learned to admire nature and its animals. After study at the Art Student's League and the National Academy of Design in New York, he was invited to Chicago to work at the creation of animal sculptures. He produced some thirtyfive. His
work called attention to a new subject in American sculpture—the strength and beauty of the wild animals of America.

At the main lagoon, Proctor built two equestrian pieces, Cowboy, and Indian Scout. In his autobiography he discusses his days at the Columbian Exposition.

"Frank Millet, Director of External Exhibits, suggested that he model life-size animals to decorate the bridges crossing the Fairground lagoons. They were to include among others; polar bears, elks, cougar, moose, mountain lions."

He also mentions the help and friendly critiques of Edward Kemeys, commenting: "life at the fairgrounds was fast and furious, and all of us worked hard." 10

By 1891, St. Gaudens, had become America's most renowned sculptor. He particularly encouraged the development of major pieces by French and MacMonnies. He contributed but two minor pieces of his own: a figure of Columbus, which was actually made to his design by his student, Mary Lawrence, and a medal honoring Columbus. The medal was the source of a major controversy, since it depicted on the reverse a frontal figure of a nude youth. Though St. Gaudens attempted modifications, it was finally rejected by the United States Senate Committee. A different design for the coin was created by Charles F. Barber, Chief Engraver for the U. S. Mint

Lorado Taft, and Fraser's master, Richard Bock, were two Chicago sculptors involved with the Columbian Exposition. A typical product of the Beaux Arts Academie, Taft contributed two groups for the Horticulture Building: The Sleep of Flowers and The Awakening of Flowers. Both were full of poetic symbolism.

Phillip Martiny, European born and trained, contributed chiefly architectural decoration to the Exposition. He had served some years as a St. Gaudens apprentice, and was asked to do decorations for McKim, Mead and White's Agriculture Building. These included similar groups at the four corners of the building consisting of nude maidens representing four races. His Rococo inspired groups along the cornice were composed of similarly designed female and putti forms.

Many learned societies met in the course of the Fair's brief tenure during the Summer of 1893, among them the American Historical Society. Professor Frederick Jackson Turner of the University of Wisconsin History faculty delivered a paper at this Society's meeting entitled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (July 12, 1893). He pointed out that for the last three centuries European immigrants had come from the countries where land belonged to the ruling class, to a country where there was an opportunity to acquire land freely. He believed that human nature responded differently to such an environment, that equality of opportunity generates democratic ways of life, that the isolation of the frontier encouraged survival of the robust and opinion-
ated, and further, that the relation between the frontiersmen and government led to an intense American nationalism.

By 1893, with free land about gone, Turner saw a major change about to take place in American culture and government. He marked the end of an era—the era of continued openings to the West, the end of continental expansion. The United States stopped being a pioneer land and became an empire as expansion continued offshore. Turner's ideas had far reaching effect, and were quoted by historians and analysts of the American people. They established the American personality of the twentieth century as derivative not of the Puritans, but rather of the openness of the West and its patriotism.

It was Turner who pointed out that the disappearance of the American frontier, "this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society," had formed the dominant strain of the American national character. With a steady advance toward the west had come a steady movement away from European influence. Turner accurately pointed to the Chicago fair as a meeting of European civilizations, the traditions and sophistication adopted by the Eastern establishment, with the romance of the American West

The sculpture which now came forth, echoing Turner, celebrated both the Gods and Godesses of Myth and the pioneer West of Wild Animals and Native Americans. The Chicago-Columbian Exposition brought to Chicago much which influenced American art in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Art now could reflect the longing for a past no longer quite real. The popularity of the Wild West Show, the writings of Cooper and others and, in later years, the profusion of Western films all attest to the continuing American love for the lost frontier.

In architecture, the post-War period had seen a rapid increase in building. There were the ornate homes of the new rich with their striving for cultural status and relation to the old European symbols of power and wealth. Here was the call for Florentine splendor and Roman opulence. At the Exposition, the splendid public buildings with their accompanying sculpture, were direct stylistic cousins of much of European historic style, as well as antecedents to a great deal of public building to come. Yet, at the same Fair was Sullivan's golden doorway of transportation, which portended a revolutionary Chicago architectural future eliminating separate sculptural decor and using instead the notion of design as an integral part of the total building itself.

The Columbian Exposition, its architecture and sculpture had a strong effect on a teen aged Fraser, he became increasingly serious about becoming an artist. The works he saw there must have had a strong and direct influence on the young student of sculpture. He could see that sculpture was to be designed to relate to a building or location's
theme and purpose or its contents. He could also learn about the manner of choosing and carrying out allegorical themes.

But, closest to his own boyhood experience, he could glory in and relate to subjects of the American pioneer West. Work such as Borglum's Indian Scout, Dallin's Signal of Peace, or Proctor's Cowboy and Indian Scout led Fraser to the development of End of the Trail's first model. He saw that it was possible to express his fond remembrances of childhood. His love and respect for the early days could be expressed by a sculpture remarking on the sad fate of the red man. The artists of the Columbian Fair showed him how. This was the first World's Fair of Fraser's experience. It provided a first and basic learning experience to his career as a sculptor.

Although sympathetic with his son's career aspirations, Fraser's father was worried that the boy might be a failure or, even if an artistic success, be forced to live in poverty. He was anxious for the boy to attend Cornell University. Yet he was also honest enough to realize that his judgement in the matter was colored by his concern. He therefore did an unusual and wonderful thing. He turned the resolution of the problem over to a railroad friend, Sir William van Horn. Van Horn was an artist himself and a well known connoisseur of painting.

Fraser said of him: "Sir William was a great engineer, but he might have been a very fine artist. He has left many fine paintings of his own, along with a collection including a Rembrandt and an El Greco, among others....added to the paintings, I recall that he told me of a collection of Japanese sculptures." 1

Fraser and his father dined with Sir William. After what was probably quite a good meal, (Sir William loved food), van Horn studied young Fraser's portfolio and approved of his choice of career. Fraser Senior had no recourse against such an authority, and James soon sailed for France. The trip to Paris had the air of youthful adventure to it, almost as though Fraser decided to go because "all REAL artists go to France." As he later wrote, he embarked "not knowing a person or where to find a school except by name." By luck, on board ship he met playwright Edward Knobloch, the author of Kismet. Knobloch, familiar with Paris and its art world, was able to introduce Fraser to the proper persons when they arrived.

As a young American art student, Fraser arrived in Paris in 1897 with a strong memory of the American West. He had personally lived what was considered in Europe to be very fashionable: the Wild West of buffaloes, Indians, and brave sheriffs. There was, in fact, in the Europe of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a considerable romanticizing about the Wild West, the American Indian, and the essential native oriented purity of that life.

The American Indian was seen to be the essential human, untouched by the problems of the cities and industry. The Noble Savage, living in great stretches of prairie, immense mountains and forests, was the ideal
of many youngsters' dreams. Fraser's memories of the Indian Bad Lands could only have been enhanced by the attitudes of his European friends. Perhaps he even drew some admiration from them for his background. They, in turn, helped to enhance his understanding of society and civilization.

In France, Fraser now learned of the masterpieces of the European traditions of art. Undoubtedly, he had seen and heard of them in the Chicago Art Institute classes, but the artistic excitement of Paris, the work at the Academie des Beaux Arts, and a visit to Italy solidified a second major facet of Fraser's artistic personality; admiration for the Classic and Renaissance traditions in art. His education in the art of sculpture did not lead him in the path taken by more rebellious students toward the new experiments of Post Impressionism. Instead, he accepted a very thorough training in the history and technique of traditional sculpture. His style was established in the tradition of the human figure and plant and animal in nature, as the proper subjects for the sculptor's ideas.

The Academie des Beaux Arts never established a particular style in the sense that one thinks of Impressionism or Cubism; rather, it was an overarching philosophy that stressed the coherent interrelationship of all the arts. Architecture seen as the mother art, called for sculpture and painting that decorated and supported the basic motifs, the use of the building and its surrounding spaces. The historic arts of Western culture formed the basis of both study and design for the future.

There can be no doubt that Fraser wished to learn more about the kind of work designed by the more established and recognized sculptors at the Columbian Fair, who had trained in Paris.

The dominant sculptural works of the Fair were not the revolutionary renderings of the West, but rather the beauties of allegories--French's huge Republic or MacMonnies's Columbian Fountain, as well as the other decorative and heroic pieces which adorned the buildings, bridges, and walks. These were the stylistic descendants of the French masters. Fraser's ambition to study with such masters automatically would send him to Paris to study where others had learned. As so many other young American artists of his time, he went to the artistic center of the world. Here he would learn the best techniques, the best ideas available at this time.

Fraser was soon enrolled at the Academie des Beaux Arts, where he found himself to be the only English speaking person in a class that included.

"a few Spaniards, some Russians, and the others were French. What a very interesting collection of young men they were, all the way from 15 to 32 years old, every one with some kind of strange beard, spotty or thin and funny looking, grey beginning to enter the black in some cases."
Hazing was a respected tradition of the day, and Fraser fell victim to his share of it. Caricatures of him were displayed, poking fun at his stocky, robust build. In one case, challenged to carry in the studio litter with another student, he found the litter stacked impossibly high with wet, heavy clay. All the weight was, of course, on the end he was to carry. He struggled through the task, and shortly the hazing died down. The young student at the other end of the litter that day was the French sculptor, Louis Henri Bouchard, who went on to do a number of well recognized French public sculptures.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, Paris had become the undisputed Art Capital of the world. The Paris which the young sculptor saw had become, in effect, the ebullient architectural and artistic model for sculptors and architects. Paris had evolved into a city of broad, tree-lined avenues, elegant buildings and parks, possessing a logical plan for traffic. The development had come under the emperor Napoleon III and his Prefect Baron, Georges Haussmann, in the 1870s, after the Franco Prussian War. Under his direction broad boulevards and tree-shaded parks left many places for splendid public monuments. These works reflected the growing feelings of French national pride, in paying tribute to its numerous recent and ancient heroes.

The Paris which was the focus of artistic activity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was created then. Its major landmarks were erected or completed during that time. There was Francois Rude's Marseillaise on the Arc de Triomphe, with a winged victory above the departing military volunteers dated 1836; Carpeaux's 1869 Bachantes for the Opera, where a male nude was surrounded by dancing female nymphs, and Carriere-Belleuse's Torchere, also at the Opera; and Dalou's Triumph of the Republic, of 1889, on the Place de la Nation.

All of these, and the many other sculptures and buildings were enough to impress for a lifetime a young American boy artist from the Midwest. Here was the original model for much of what the Exposition had tried to build afresh. In their stylistic approach, the sculptors had changed from cold, idealized Neo-Classicism, and the togas and wreaths of an earlier time, to the actuality of the moment. Public sculpture was evolving from concepts based on the Roman to that of intense, romantic Realism. Here figures were intended to be real people rather than ideals. Yet there was poetry and artistic license taken with the poses, creating moments dramatically frozen in time. Neo-Classick gods and Purism gave way to enhanced versions of factual persons and scenes. While Francois Rude's Marseillaise (1833-1836) on the Arc de Triomphe used much of the anatomical emphasis of the classic, its action and emotion spoke more of the violence of the French Revolution than ancient Greece. By the time of Rude's monument to Marshall Ney, in 1853, the hero waving his saber skyward was dressed in the actual uniform of the moment, not in the traditional toga and wreath.