

Marvin D. Cone and Grant Wood

AN AMERICAN TRADITION

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GRANT WOOD

SELECTED CHRONOLOGY



1891 Born 13 February on a farm near Anamosa, Iowa, the second of four children of Quaker parents, Hattie D. Weaver Wood (1858-1935) and Francis Maryville Wood (1855-1901).

1898 Attended Antioch School House (built 1872) on Highway 64 southeast of Anamosa. Catherine Hines was his teacher.

1901 After death of Wood's father in March, Mrs. Wood moved in September with her four children from the Anamosa farm to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, about twenty-five miles away.

1904 Earliest work in watercolor, drawing foliage and landscape elements.

1906 Met Marvin D. Cone (1891-1965).



1908 Provided illustration of *Graduating Seniors, 1908* for Washington High School yearbook, *The Reveille*.

1910 Graduated from Washington High School, Cedar Rapids, in June. Emma Gratton was his art teacher. Immediately traveled to Minneapolis and entered the summer term of the Minneapolis School of Design, Handicraft, and Normal Art to study design with Ernest A. Batchelder (1875-1957). Author of the book *The Principles of Design* (Chicago: Inland Printer Company, 1904), Batchelder was a frequent contributor to *The Craftsman* and a leading advocate of the English Arts and Crafts movement.

1911 Enrolled for a second summer term in Minneapolis with Ernest A. Batchelder.

1911-1912 Taught classes at Rosedale Country School near Cedar Rapids. Sporadically attended night class in life drawing taught by Charles Atherton Cumming (1858-1932) at the University of Iowa, Iowa City. For a time, worked as an illustrator with Paul C. Hanson, a photographer. Also worked with Kate Loomis making jewelry and wrought iron fixtures.



1913 Moved to Chicago in the spring and worked as a designer at Kalo Silversmith Shop. Began night classes in October at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Studied under Atelier and Concours System with Antonin Sterba (1875-1963), concentrating on freehand drawing from the costumed model. Remained through 19 January 1915. Lived at 3550 Ellis Avenue.

1914-1915 Established partnership in June with fellow Kalo craftsman Kristoffer Haga. Opened the Volund Crafts Shop in Park Ridge, Illinois (on the Niles Road), specializing in jewelry design. Business failed late in 1915.

1916 Enrolled for about two weeks in the day school of the Art Institute of Chicago. (3-14 January). Abruptly returned to Cedar Rapids in late January to help his mother, who was forced to sell her home because of financial problems. Painted signs and did

interior decorating to subsist. With mother and sister, lived temporarily in a home on a bluff overlooking Indian Creek in Kenwood Heights.

1917 Completed new house at 3178 Grove Court, S.E., on a lot given him by neighbor Paul Hanson in return for his labor.

1917-1918 Entered Army, initially stationed at Camp Dodge in Des Moines, Iowa, then transferred to Camp Leach near Washington, D.C., where he designed camouflage scenes for artillery.

1919 Returned to Cedar Rapids and in September began teaching art at Jackson Junior High School, where Miss Frances Prescott was principal. Continued teaching until 1925. Together with Marvin D. Cone, Wood exhibited twenty-three small paintings of barns, outbuildings, and tree landscapes at the Picture Galleries, Killian Company, Cedar Rapids, 9-22 October.

1920 Traveled to Paris in summer with Marvin D. Cone. Lived in a pension on Square de l'Abeille. During Paris sojourn, executed portrait of Marvin Cone called *Malnutrition*. Cone in turn did one of Wood called *Overstimulation*. Resumed teaching responsibilities at Jackson Junior High School. Exhibited with Marvin D. Cone thirty-one paintings of Paris at the Library Art Gallery, Cedar Rapids, 10-20 November.

1921 Completed *First Three Degrees of Free Masonry* as a commission from George L. Schoonover; subsequently transferred in 1940 to the Masonic Library, Cedar Rapids.

1922 Due to position change of Frances Prescott, Wood also transferred to McKinley Junior High School in September. With his ninth-grade students at McKinley, made the *Imagination Isle Frieze* (cat. no. 148). Completed outdoor mural *Cedar Rapids or The Adoration of the Home* (cat. no. 41) for Henry S. Ely and Company, Realtors.

1923 Series of *Lunettes* (cat. nos. 43-46) completed for McKinley High School, assisted by his students. On a leave of absence from teaching, traveled to Paris in autumn and attended Academie Julian on rue du Dragon.

Worked in Sorrento, Italy, during winter 1923-24, holding exhibit-sale of his paintings at the Hotel Coccumello.

1924 Returned to Paris in spring after winter in Sorrento, Italy. Remained through summer and painted Paris and French provinces. Returned to Cedar Rapids in early September with seventy paintings. Resumed teaching temporarily at McKinley Junior High School. Began to renovate the top floor of the carriage house and stables of the George B. Douglas mansion, which was being converted into the John B. Turner and Son Mortuary. Provided a series of thirteen pen and ink drawings of the new mortuary (at Second Avenue and Eighth), of which six were published in an information brochure dated 12 December. Also did the entire interior decoration for the mortuary. *Imagination Isle Frieze* displayed in McKinley Junior High School in November.

1925 Moved into the top floor of the Turner carriage house in January. Adopted address No. 5 Turner Alley and lived there until 1935. Retired from public school in June after a controversy in the public schools about the teaching of art. Curriculum changed from 225 to 90 minutes a week. In the summer completed a series of eight paintings—commissioned by the Cedar Rapids dairy equipment manufacturer, J. G. Cherry Co.—dealing with the theme of quality through craftsmanship. Offered a class in outdoor sketching, June. Continued a viable business doing interior design and decorating for several Cedar Rapids families. Worked at Tru-Art Engravers, Cedar Rapids, November; Clare R. Marshall was the general manager. David Turner secured a commission from Dunn Funeral Home, Des Moines, Iowa.

1926 John C. Reid announced in February the opening of the Cedar Rapids School of Art in the Edward O. Mansfield house, 702 Third Avenue, owned by David Turner. Twenty students enrolled and Wood was joined by his friend, Marvin Cone. Wood taught "Color Theory with Practical Application" to painting, interior design, and costume design. This activity was closely connected to Wood's September 1926 attempts to establish an art colony along

Turner Alley near his studio. Traveled to Europe in June and July, painting for the last time in Paris and southern France. Exhibited forty-seven paintings of medieval doorways and gates at Galerie Carmine, rue de Seine, Paris, July. Returned to the United States on 2 August. Exhibited many of these works in his studio in September and at the Public Library Gallery, Cedar Rapids, in December. Executed series of five drawings commissioned by David Turner for the planned publication about historic Cedar Rapids, *Early Iowa*. Continued painting murals for various hotels owned by Eugene Eppley of Omaha, Nebraska, in Cedar Rapids, Sioux City, and Council Bluffs. Was assisted by Edgar Britton (1901-1981). Completed the *Corn Room Murals* (cat. no. 76) in June before his departure for Sioux City.

1927 Received commission on 25 January to design stained glass window for the Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Cedar Rapids. Formal contract awarded 20 March. Worked with artist Arnold Pyle (1908-1973) to mount a full-scale, 24-by-20-foot drawing in fifty-eight sections at Quaker Oats Plant. Traveled with David Turner to Estes Park, Colorado, in summer. Completed murals for the Hotel Chieftain, Council Bluffs, Iowa. Intended for the Corn Room, the murals depict the Mormon settlement of Kaneshville, later Council Bluffs, in 1849. Designed Cedar Rapids Community Chest emblem.

1928 Veterans Memorial Coliseum Commission approved design 28 January. Firm of Emil Frei, St. Louis, retained to assemble the window. Wood made unplanned trip to Munich in September to supervise the manufacture of his design in glass. Returned to Cedar Rapids in December. This was his final visit abroad.

1929 Veterans Memorial Coliseum window installed, March. Completed portrait of his mother at age 71. Designed rose window at Turner Mortuary. *John B. Turner, Pioneer* (cat. no. 104) awarded first prize for portraiture at the Iowa State Fair. Decorated the Submarine Sweet Shop in Waterloo, October. *Woman with Plant(s)* (cat. no. 109) exhibited at the 42nd Annual Exhibition of American Painting and Sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago, 24 October-8 December.

1930 *American Gothic*—representing his sister Nan and dentist Dr. B. H. McKeeby—awarded Norman Walt Harris Bronze Medal at the 43rd Annual Exhibition of American Painting and Sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago, 30 October-14 November. Purchased for \$300 by Art Institute. Painting was an instant success and established Wood's reputation as an American painter. Large reception held for Wood at The Little Gallery in Cedar Rapids. *Arnold Comes of Age* (*Portrait of Arnold Pyle*) and *Stone City* awarded first prize for portraiture and landscape at the Iowa State Fair.

1931 *Appraisal* and *Woman with Plant(s)* (cat. no. 109) exhibited at the 126th Annual Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 25 January-15 March. *Midnight Ride of Paul Revere* exhibited at the 44th Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago, 29 October-13 December.

1932 Helped establish the Stone City Colony and Art School, 26 June-6 August. Accredited through Coe College (Cedar Rapids), the Stone City Art Colony was sponsored by the Iowa Artists Club in cooperation with The Little Gallery (Cedar Rapids Art Association) project of the American Federation of Arts. Located in the valley of the Wapsipinicon River, Stone City is twenty-six miles from Cedar Rapids and three miles from Anamosa. Faculty included Marvin D. Cone and Edward B. Rowan (1898-1946). Wood announced plans for Stone City in 4 May *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette and Republican* on the occasion of Governor Turner's proclamation of "Know Iowa" Week. In his announcement, Wood compared the colony to those in Taos and Brown County. With builder Bruce McKay, began Robert Armstrong house. Commissioned in 1931, the *Fruits of Iowa* murals were installed in 1932 in the Montrose Hotel dining room. Designed book jacket for Vardis Fisher's *In Tragic Life* (Caldwell, Indiana: Caxton, 1932). *Arbor Day* and *Victorian Survival* included in the Exhibition of Modern American Paintings at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 28 April-30 May. *Daughters of Revolution* included in the First Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting at the

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 22 November 1932-5 January 1933.

1933 Continued the Stone City Colony and Art School, 27 June-22 August. Met John Steuart Curry for the first time when he visited Stone City, July. Completed a series of five charcoal drawings for *The Art of Writing*, Chicago, and a five-panel mural on the *History of Penmanship* for the A. N. Palmer Method Company to be exhibited at the Chicago Century of Progress Exhibition World's Fair. Established Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Speakers at the University of Iowa. Met Thomas Hart Benton and Thomas Craven for the first time in New York. Exhibit at the Increase Robinson Gallery, Chicago, June. *Daughters of Revolution* included in the 31st International Exhibition of Paintings at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 19 October-10 December.

1934 Appointed director of Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) in Iowa. Supervised the work of fourteen art students from State University of Iowa (now University of Iowa), Iowa City, on his Practical Arts murals for the library at Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (now State University of Iowa), Ames. Provided book jacket illustration for Vardis Fisher's *Passions Spin the Plot* (New York: Doubleday, Duran, & Co., 1934). Became associate professor of fine arts at the State University of Iowa. Lectured extensively. Featured in *Time* article on painters of the American scene, 24 December. *Dinner for Threshers* included in the 32nd International Exhibition of Paintings at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 18 October-9 December. *Midnight Ride of Paul Revere* included in the Century of Progress Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago, 1 June-1 November.

1935 Provided book jacket illustration for Thomas Duncan's *O' Chautauqua* (New York: Coward, McCann, Inc., 1935). Married Sara Sherman Maxon in Minneapolis 2 March and purchased a home at 1142 East Court Street, Iowa City. Elected to the National Society of Mural Painters and the National Academy of Design. Declined appointment as regional director for the Federal Art Project. One-man exhibits at the Lakeside Press

Galleries, Chicago, February-March, and Ferargil Galleries, New York, 15 April-15 May. Mother, Hattie Weaver Wood, died in October. *Revolt Against the City* published in Iowa City with Frank Luther Mott. Essay originally titled *Movement of Art and Letters away from Older Centers to Villages and Country Again*. Retained a New York agent to secure lecture engagements. Signed contract with Doubleday for his biography (never completed), and created two drawings titled *Return from Bohemia* for the book jacket. Critic Thomas Craven spent month of January in Cedar Rapids as Wood's guest.

1936 Provided twenty crayon and gouache illustrations for Madeline Darrough Horn's *Farm on the Hill* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936). Awarded honorary doctor of letters from University of Wisconsin, Madison. One-man exhibit at Walker Gallery, New York, April-May. *Spring Turning* included in the 34th International Exhibition of Paintings at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 13 October-6 December.

1937 Completed series of drawings begun in 1935 for an edition of Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press for Limited Editions Club, 1937). *Breaking the Prairie*, three-panel mural of pioneer farmers clearing virgin land, installed 16 June in the lower lobby of the Iowa State University Library. As in earlier murals, a group of students did the actual painting after designs and sketches by Wood. Began work in lithography, completed five prints for Associated American Artists, New York. Met Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969) on Wyoming ranch.

1938 Provided book jacket illustration for Sterling North's *Plowing on Sunday* (New York: Macmillan, 1938). Summered at Clear Lake. Received honorary degree from Lawrence College, Appleton, Wisconsin. Separated from Sara Maxon Wood. Exhibit at Cedar Rapids Art Association. Nan Wood Graham executed paintings on glass of her brother's best known work.

1939 Divorced Sara Maxon Wood. Completed series of four lithographs for Associated American Artists to be hand-colored by Nan Wood Graham and Edward Graham.

1940 Took one-year sabbatical from University of Iowa. Lectured extensively, including presentations on regional painting at UCLA and the University of California. Provided book jacket illustration for Kenneth Robert's *Oliver Wiswell* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1940). Executed poster, *Bundles for Britain* (cat. no. 126). Drawing of Henry Wallace on cover of *Time*, 23 September. *Parson Weem's Fable* exhibited at the Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 10 January-18 February.

1941 Appointed professor of fine arts at University of Iowa, Iowa City. Summered at Clear Lake. Awarded honorary degrees from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, and Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. Visited in October by Yasuo Kuniyoshi (1893-1953), Doris Lee (1905-1983), and Adolph Dehn (1895-1968), among others. Entered University of Iowa Hospital for surgery 24 November.

1942 Planned to execute a series of paintings depicting historical subjects. Thomas Hart Benton visited in January. Died 12 February of liver cancer at University of Iowa Hospital. Interred at Riverside Cemetery, Anamosa, Iowa. Services by his close friend David Turner. Memorial exhibitions held at the Art Institute of Chicago, 29 October-10 December, and at the Cedar Rapids Art Association.