FIGURE 1 Frederic Clay Bartlett (American, 1873—1953) at his easel, 1906.

Frederic Clay and Helen Birch Bartlett:

The Collectors

COURTNEY GRAHAM DONNELL,
Assistant Curator, Twentieth-Century Painting and Sculpture

*I*N 1902, when he was barely thirty, Frederic Clay Bartlett was asked by a reporter whether he should be called an artist or a collector. Bartlett replied:

I am a collector. It is a habit—a disease with me. I cannot help buying curios, antiquities, and works of art, even when I have no place to put them. ...I store some, I weed out about half in favor of better pieces, I exchange, I sift, I sell, and then—well, then I go to work and collect more.'

The Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection is testimony to this inclination. Given to The Art Institute of Chicago in memory of Frederic's second wife, Helen Birch, in 1926, it includes twenty-four paintings by artists then considered radically avant-garde—Matisse, Cézanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, and Seurat, for example. Bartlett's life as an artist and as part of the cultural and social circles of Chicago and elsewhere in the early years of this century is the fascinating story of a millionaire son of a millionaire who eschewed a traditional life as heir to a major mercantile establishment and instead embarked upon an uncertain creative path. His career brought him a degree of personal fame and success, particularly as a painter of murals but also as an easel painter and imaginative decorator of interiors.

Frederic Clay Bartlett (fig. 1) was born in Chicago on June 1, 1873, to Mary Pitkin Bartlett (1844—1890) and Adolphus Clay Bartlett (1844-1922).2 His father had risen from office boy to the presidency of Hibbard, Spencer and Bartlett, a prosperous hardware company. Adolphus Bartlett came from New York State to Chicago in the 1860's. As his position in Chicago business rose, so did that as a civic leader. Among many other activities, Bartlett became a governing member of the Art Institute in 1883, just a few years after the museum's founding, and served on its board of trustees for thirty-five years.

Although he attended preparatory schools such as St. Paul's in Concord, New Hampshire, and the Harvard School for Boys in Chicago, Frederic chose not to go to college. Instead, at the age of nineteen, he left Chicago to study art in Europe. Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 was a major inspiration for this

move. In memoirs he wrote in 1932—33, Bartlett told the story of what motivated him to study abroad with his friend, Chicagoan Robert Allerton:

Tired as we were, for as was our custom, we had walked past miles and miles of pictures, a never-ending wild excitement for us. To think that men could conceive such things, and actually bring them into being on a flat bare canvas . . . we pledged our lives to the creation of beauty and forthwith determined to leave the security and luxury of home, and at nineteen to forge out into the world, to learn the techniques, secrets, and methods of artists.[3]

In 1893 or 1894, Bartlett and Allerton became among the few Americans admitted to the Royal Academy in Munich. For both, this was a vindication of sorts, since it showed their industrialist fathers, who had hoped their sons would follow them into business, that they were worthy of undertaking careers in art. During this time in Munich, Frederic met the woman who would become his first wife, Dora Tripp of White Plains, New York. After his studies in Munich ended, he and Allerton next went to Paris, where, according to his memoirs, in 1896 they enrolled in the Ecole Collin (run by Louis Joseph Collin) for drawing classes in the morning and in the Ecole Aman-Jean (directed by Symbolist painter Edmond Francois Aman-Jean) for painting classes in the afternoon. Bartlett spent two years studying in Paris, interspersed with trips home to see his family and fiancée and travels in Italy.

In October 1898, he and Dora Tripp were married in New York State and shortly afterward left for an extended stay in Europe, first in Paris, where Bartlett was one of the first students to enroll in the short-lived school opened by American expatriate painter James Abbott McNeill Whistler. After it closed, he devoted his full attention to mural painting and was introduced to the French master of this genre, Puvis de Chavannes. Puvis did not take pupils but offered Frederic encouragement and critical help. In a little less than a year, he and Dora found themselves drawn back to Munich, which Frederic regarded as "always to me the most beautiful city in the world." Finally, after more than five years of European study, he concluded that his schooling was over, and he brought Dora to Chicago, where they settled. In 1900, he rented a studio on the tenth floor of the Fine Arts Building on Michigan Avenue, which housed many of the city's artists, musicians, and writers; and he received his first commission, a portrait, for which he was paid $75.

In 1902, Frederic built his own home on fashionable Prairie Avenue, designed by the Chicago firm of Frost and Granger,[6] and named it Dorfred House, a combination of his and Dora's names. The house was only two blocks away from the Prairie Avenue home in which he had grown up. The modest brick exterior belied the extensive interior decoration by Frederic, which incorporated painted woodwork, furniture, curios, prints, and other objects, including the paneling of a German Louis XVI room the couple had found in Europe. Frederic decorated the walls of his entry vestibule with trompe-l'oeil shrubbery, pedestals, and grotesques, and painted the beams of his Renaissance music-room ceiling with animals, mottoes, and swags of fruit alternating with beams inscribed with names of great artists and musicians (see fig. 2). Running the entire width at the rear of this house was Frederic's studio. This residence

FIGURE 2 Dorfred House, Chicago, Residence of Frederic and Dora Bartlett, designed by Frost and
Granger, 1902. Italian Renaissance Music Room with beams decorated by Frederic Clay Bartlett. Photo:
The House Beautiful 12 (Sept. 1902),p.206.

was unconventional enough to have been the subject in 1902 of a long article in *The House Beautiful* magazine.[7] Just as his house on Prairie Avenue was a joint venture with the architects, in the same way, Frederic collaborated with Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw in 1905 on the design of Bartlett's father's country estate, House in the Woods, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.[8] Here, Frederic's wall decorations consisted of patterns of flower baskets, garlands, and wreaths. His studio in Wisconsin was a detached structure, placed in symmetrical relationship to the main house and gardens in a traditional Italianate manner. The house on Prairie Avenue has been torn down, but the Lake Geneva residence still stands.

In his work, Frederic always integrated painting, architecture, and. decoration. His career was most active during the years after he returned to the United States and before the death of Dora in 1917. In 1900, he received his first large mural commission, for the decoration of the Second Presbyterian Church in Chicago. He filled this building, redesigned by his friend Shaw after a fire, with frescoes depicting the Tree of Life and a Heavenly Choir painted in the Byzantine manner.[9] In 1904, for

the lobby of the Frank Dickinson Bartlett Memorial Gymnasium at the University of Chicago, given by his father in memory of Frederic's younger brother, who died in 1900, he painted a frieze (fig. 3) showing a medieval tournament procession. He also designed the drop curtain in the university's Reynolds Club Theater. In 1909, he created an extensive series of over fifty panels, depicting a Gothic hunt and feast, for the ceiling of the Michigan Room of the University Club of Chicago. His cartoons for these panels and designs for stained glass for the club were exhibited at the Art Institute in 1908.

FIGURE 3 Frederic Clay Bartlett.
Medieval Athletic Tournament,
1904.Murals for the lobby of the Frank Dickinson Bartlett Memorial Gymnasium, University of Chicago.
Photo: University of Chicago Archives.

FIGURE 4 Frederic Clay Bartlett. *Bassin deDiane (Fountain ofDiane), Fontainebleau,* c.1907. Oil on canvas; 68.4 x *76.2* cm.
The Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs.Martin A. Ryerson Collection (1933.1181).
This painting appeared in the Art Institute's American Exhibition in 1907.

This was not the first time his work was shown at the museum. In fact, it appeared regularly in the Art Institute's annual American Exhibitions starting in 1898 (see fig. 4) and continued through the "Century of Progress" exhibition of 1933; Bartlett was also represented in the museum's Chicago Artists Exhibitions beginning in 1901, and he had numerous one-man shows at the Art Institute and elsewhere throughout his career. Among his awards were an honorable mention at the Carnegie International, the Art Institute's Cahn Prize in 1910, and silver medals at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904 and at the Pan American Exposition in San Francisco in 1916. His work was acquired for the collections of the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh; the Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D.C.; and The Art Institute of Chicago. Bartlett's easel paintings were competent reflections of the academic techniques he absorbed from his various teachers, from the Munich Academy to Whistler. While his murals were perhaps more individualized, they reveal an allegiance to the compositions of Puvis de Chavannes and the style of the Pre-Raphaelites.[10]

Dora and Frederic soon became part of Chicago's fashionable circle.[11] Their son, Frederic Clay Bartlett, Jr., called Clay, was born in 1907.12 Ten years later, Dora, who was described as "one of the prettiest, sweetest, and most entertaining women of the South Side,"'[3] died, after nineteen years of marriage.

In 1919, Helen Louise Birch (fig. 5) became Frederic's second wife. She was also a child of a pioneer Chicago business and civic leader. Born in Chicago on February 27, 1883, to Maria Root Birch (1848—1913) and Hugh Taylor Birch (1848—1943), Helen was the only one of three children to survive past her twenties. Hugh Birch was as much a self-made man as Adolphus Bartlett. Like Bartlett, he arrived in Chicago in the 1860's. He had left Yellow Springs, Ohio, where his father, Erastus Birch, had followed educator Horace Mann to participate in the early days of Mann's educational experiment, Antioch College, as a financial supporter and trustee of the school. Although Birch had nearly completed all his studies at Antioch, he lacked one passing grade for graduation (he did not receive his degree until 1929 in a special ceremony). Nonetheless, he set out to become a lawyer in Chicago.

Through a family introduction, he obtained an unpaid position in the firm of Hervey, Anthony and GaIt, in exchange for use of the law firm's library. At the time of the 1871 Chicago Fire, he was a junior partner; it is said that he and another junior partner, having stayed in the firm's offices to save its papers and records, were the last to cross the bridge over the Chicago River before flames engulfed it. Hugh Birch became a partner of Galt, Birch and Galt and in 1872 was appointed the first State's Attorney of Cook County, Illinois.

The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 propelled both Hugh Birch and Frederic Bartlett away from Chicago, although for entirely different reasons. Always a lover of nature, Birch became uncomfortable with the commotion created by the fair and sought respite in the then unpopulated land along the Florida coast. Leaving his wife and family in Chicago, he took the railroad to its terminus in Florida and then sailed to the area that is now Fort Lauderdale. Some of his early land purchases included acreage he later deeded to the state, most significantly Birch State Park.[15]

FIGURE 5 Helen Louise Birch, date unknown.

Photo: AntiochianaCollection,
Olive Kettering Library, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Helen Birch was educated mainly by governesses. As the only daughter, she was doted upon by her father; she went as a young girl to Europe with her parents and spent much time with her father on their land in Florida. According to one report, "Even when her mother wanted her to go to Europe for the opera season the little girl always stipulated that before sailing she was to have her winter with her father in Florida."[16] Helen's mother died in **1913.17**

Even though she could have led a comfortable and idle existence, Helen chose not to. She was both a published composer and poet. She studied music with the German expatriate Bernhard Ziehn, a music theorist and teacher of harmony and composition in Chicago; in 1915 and 1916, several of Helen's songs, settings for poems by Yeats, Matthew Arnold, and others, were published by a Chicago music company (see fig. 6). Between 1919 and 1926, her poems and book reviews were published in *Poetry* magazine, the famous journal started in Chicago in 1911.18 Since its founder, Harriet Monroe, was a friend, Helen's first submission to the magazine was sent in 1917 under a fictitious name. *Capricious Winds*, a book of her collected poems, was published posthumously in 1927.

Helen Birch and Frederic Bartlett (fig. 7) were married January 22, 1919, in Boston at a private ceremony attended only by Senator and Mrs. Albert

FIGURE 6 Title page of sheet music by Helen Louise Birch, 1915. Photo: Janet Fairbank Collection, The New-berry Library, Chicago.
Used by permission of Summy Birchard Music Division of Birch Tree Group, Ltd., successor to Clayton E Summy Co.

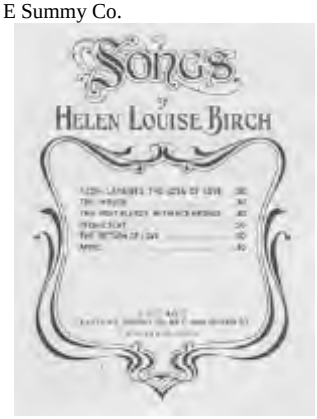

FIGURE 7 Frederic Clay and Helen Birch Bartlett,
c. 1923. Photo: courtesy of the late John Gregg Allerton

FIGURE 8 Frederic Clay Bartlett. *Great Walls:*
The Great Wall of China, 1920.
Mural lunette in Ryerson and Burnham Libraries,
The Art Institute of Chicago. 144 x 138 cm.
Gift of Frederic Clay Bartlett (l^{92}1.106a). (No longer visible.)

Beveridge and Mrs. Marshall Field, Sr., relatives of Helen's. A widower for two years, Frederic was forty-five and Helen, who had never before been married, was thirty-six. Helen's father called Frederic Bartlett a "splendid son-in-law,"[t9] and, indeed, the couple was well suited, alike in their cosmopolitan experiences and in their tastes for music and art in many forms. They spent their honeymoon in the Orient, traveling to Japan, China, and the Philippines. The trip inspired paintings by Frederic that were shown in the Art Institute's American Exhibitions of 1919 and 1920, as well as in his one-man exhibition at the Montross Gallery in New York in 1921. The twenty-one paintings in this exhibition included landscapes of Hong Kong, Canton, Shanghai, Soochow, Peking, and Manila and formed the core of exhibitions held latefthat year at the Art Institute and at the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, New York. Perhaps the most dramatic outcome of Bartlett's Chinese experience were two large lunettes he did for the Art Institute's Ryerson Library in 1920. Entitled *Great Walls: The Great Wall of China* (fig. 8) and *Great Walls: Walls of Steel Scraping the Sky*, these murals were covered in later remodeling.

During their brief marriage, which lasted only six-and-one-half years before Helen's death in 1925, the Bartletts actually spent little time in Chicago, leading instead a rather nomadic life. Their many trips to Europe alternated with stays in their residences in New York City, Massachusetts, and Fort Lauderdale.[20] Frederic continued to paint and exhibit in these years, showing one painting in each of the 1921, 1922, 1924, and 1925 American Exhibitions at the Art Institute.

While he had been eclectic in his collecting tastes in prior years, in the 1920's, after his marriage to Helen, Frederic turned his attention to works of avantgarde, mainly French, artists. There is no written evidence that indicates why this focus occurred, whether it was due to Frederic, Helen, or to the influence of an outside advisor. As we have seen, Frederic was no stranger to experiencing the new. He was in Paris when the Durand-Ruel Gallery showed an exhibition of the Impressionists in 1896. He later wrote: "Looking back on it, it hardly seems possible that such an uproar could be created because a small group of men, banded together by a common creed, saw vibration in sunlight and blue and purple in shadows."21 As for Helen, a friend said that "contemporary experience and expression enthralled her."[22] Family sources suggest that Helen played an active role in their collecting activities.

Helen wrote a friend in 1922 that, after a trip to Europe, "Frederic brought away treasures of painting and sketches which someday not far in the future will be seen."[23] This statement reflects an idea that made the Bartletts somewhat unusual among collectors at the time: their clear intent to share the contemporary art they were collecting with a public audience. Despite its small size, the Bartletts' collection soon amounted to one of the most adventurous and radical groups of work by Post-Impressionist artists to have come to America, rivaled only perhaps by the collections assembled by the New York lawyer John Quinn and by Albert Barnes in Philadelphia. The article "The Bartletts and the *Grande fate,"* by Richard R. Brettell (pp. 103—13), details the history of the formation of the Bartlett Collection and the climate in which it was assembled.

In 1929, Frederic was a guest speaker at a meeting of the Art Institute's Antiquarian Society, where, according to the museum's newsletter, he "told of interesting experiences he and his wife had while acquiring the ... collection, which was gathered in France, one at a time, and at much labor and expense."[24] Regrettably, a more detailed record of this talk does not exist, and much of the history of the collection's formation remains unknown.[25] Prior to the memorial gift, the Birch-Bartlett Collection was exhibited five times. When it was first shown at the Art Institute, in September 1923, the museum's newsletter carried the following announcement:

Studying a group of paintings thoroughly for weeks at a time, going back and forth each time to gain a fresh viewpoint, is a good way to find out whether a picture wears well or not. That is the method pursued by Mr. Frederic Clay Bartlett, who collected the modern French paintings of the Birch-Bartlett Collection now being shown in Gallery G.60, in the Art Institute. Mr. Bartlett has just returned from Paris, Where the paintings were purchased, and many of them are now being shown in a public gallery for the first time. Mr. Bartlett, who is a painter of widely established reputation, has acquired some of the canvases, not because he is a convert to the revolutionary theories of the post-impressionists, but because jewished to make a thorough study of their methods at first hand. Examples of practically all of the French artists of the modern school are in the Birch-Bartlett Collection, which will remain on view through October.[26]

The some what apologetic tone of this statement indicates a need on the part of the museum to justify the display of "revolutionary" art in 1923. In that year, Frederic, like his father before him, became a trustee of the Art Institute, a role he filled until 1949, when he was made an honorary trustee. Helen Birch Bartlett died of cancer on October 24, 1925, in New York at the age of forty-three. Her personality and philosophy were described by a friend in the introduction to Helen's book of poetry:

The delight of life! That was Helen Birch Bartlett's precious gift, both to give and to receive. In the few years of her marriage her quickened interest in existence led her into new fields. . . . Modern art made an irresistible appeal to her. She had always wanted people to express life as they really saw it, unsentimentalized and unshadowed by tradition, and this at once made rational to her the new forms in music, letters and painting. 27

Newspaper reports of her death listed monetary bequests to relatives and friends and said that the art collection would go to the Art Institute.[28] The deed of gift was proposed in December 1925 and accepted by the museum's Painting and Sculpture Committee on January 26, 1926, as elaborated further by Frederic. One of the conditions he asked for in making the gift was that "the ... collection of pictures shall, when exhibited, always be hung as a unit with certain exceptions, and designated as the 'Helen Birch-Bartlett Memorial.'29 Another was the stipulation that Frederic be allowed, with trustee approval, to make additions to the collection that would either exemplify the newest trends or be works of an earlier period that influenced the modern movement.[29] In making this stipulation, Frederic seems to have been influenced by the flexible nature of a gift presented to the Art Institute by Chicago businessman Joseph Winterbotham. In 1921, Winterbotham had established a fund for the purchase of thirty-five paintings by foreign artists, chosen by the trustees and a Winterbotham Committee, on which Frederic actively served as trustee chairman for several years. A unique provision of the Winterbotham Plan allows for sale or exchange of paintings taken into the collection based on curatorial and committee decision.[30] Accompanying the deed of gift was a letter from Frederic that ends with the following: "I trust that the simple fact may shine through that along with those

who have made gifts for contemporary art at the Institute, our thought has been that Chicago, the most forward-looking and advancing of all cities, should have an adequate expression of modern art."[31]

It is likely that the acceptance of the Birch Bartlett gift was not easy or unanimous. In considering the gift, the museum's trustees were in effect being asked to trust the instincts of a private collector and a director, Robert Harshe, who favored the modernists. In several articles about the reception of the collection, phrases can be found such as "finally accepted after seriously debating the acquisition," "accepted, a bit grudgingly," and "rather reluctantly, at first."32 In a 1935 newspaper article, Harshe is described as nearly having had to go down on his knees to beg for acceptance by skeptical trustees of the paintings, prophesying that within ten years the collection would be the "glory of Chicago." Acceptance was by "narrow vote, probably more out of deference to the Bartlett family than for any convictions about the paintings."[33]

The Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection was permanently installed at the Art Institute on May *4,* 1926. This event was recorded in newspapers from Fort Worth and Pittsburgh to Des Moines and in periodicals such as *Art News,* where it was featured as a front-page story in the May 8, 1926, issue. A heavily illustrated article appeared in the June 1926 issue of *The Arts* and others followed in different publications. A small catalogue of the collection was published in 1926 with reprinted editions in 1929 and 1946.

In accordance with Frederic Bartlett's intention to "build up the quality rather than the quantity of the collection to the highest point within [his] means and ability during [his] lifetime,"[35] several changes in the content of the collection occurred in the late twenties, with the final addition being made in 1932 (see below). Friesz's *La Myrka* (fig. 9), a painting that was included in the original gift, was returned to Paris and sold; Maurice Utrillo's *Rue d'Orchamps* was also removed.

FIGURE9 Emile Othon Friesz (French,1879—1949).*La Myrka (Nlide),* 1924. Oil on canvas; 116.8 X 81.3cm.Present whereabouts unknown. Photo: *Modern Paintings in the Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial from the Birch-Bartlett Collection* (Chicago, 1926), p. 29.

When the collection was unveiled, one newspaper called **it** "the best and most representative collection in the United States, if not in all Europe."[36] The headline of an editorial in a New York paper read: "Chicago Leads the Way." The editorial said, "Americans who wish to enjoy the acquaintance of the leading European modernist artists must make the journey to the metropolis of the Middle West, for since the disposal of the John Quinn collection here, there is no representative aggregation of their work in this neighborhood."[37]

That Chicago, rather than New York, had the first collection of works by Post-Impressionists and first-generation modern artists on permanent display in a public gallery was a major event. But **it** should be remembered that Chicago was consistently in the forefront of adventurous exhibiting and collecting. The Potter Palmers and

Martin Ryersons, founding members of the Art Institute, traveled widely and collected paintings by Monet, Renoir, and other Impressionists before they were widely accepted and later presented their collections to the museum. In 1913, the Art Institute hosted the famous Armory Show.[38] Forty years old at that time, Frederic Bartlett would have seen represented there many of the avant-garde artists whose works he later purchased: Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, Matisse, and Picasso.

While Bartlett did not buy work from the Armory Show, several Chicagoans did. One of them, Arthur Jerome Eddy, a lawyer, published in 1914 the first book in English on modern art.[39] The Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection was established in Chicago three years before the founding of New York's Museum of Modern Art. It is not surprising that Frederic was asked to join the board of directors of that new museum, which he served as a trustee from 1929 to 1935, when he was elected an honorary trustee.

As he had done for so many of his own interiors, Bartlett personally oversaw the initial installation of his collection at the Art Institute, specifying that the

FIGURE 10 The HelenBirch Bartlett MemorialCollection, installed with frames designed byFrederic Clay Bartlett, The Art Institute of Chicago, c. **1931.**

woodwork and frames of the paintings be uniform in style (see fig. 10) and done in white, an effect that was described at the time as "a novel setting of ivory."[40] The room was stripped of extraneous decorative moldings and ample space was provided between the works of art. With this neutral, modernist environment, Bartlett sought to provide a harmonious and unified arrangement. [41]

Over the years, changes have been made at the Art Institute in the location of the

gallery and in the framing of the collection. One drastic change came about as a result of the Art Institute's "Century of Progress" exhibitions, monumental loan shows held in conjunction with the World's Fair in 1933 and 1934. Since the exhibitions used almost all the museum space and also since many of the Birch Bartlett pictures were included, juxtaposed with other paintings by the same artists (see fig. 11), the collection's display as a unit was disturbed. When it was proposed to keep the chronological arrangement of the museum's collections after the "Century of Progress" exhibitions closed, Frederic objected to Harshe: "... a very strong point for keeping this particular collection as a unit is that it covers one period only Cézanne to Matisse. ... To be very concrete I believe the value to the Art Institute, in which I am primarily interested, of the Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial room as a unit is far greater than could ever be scattered historically through various rooms."[42] Frederic Bartlett's wishes were followed, and the collection today, as it has for many years, hangs together in one room (see fig. 12).

FIGURE 11 "Century of Progress" exhibition installation, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1933, showing Picasso's *Old G~dtarist* (third from the left), from the Bartlett Collection, integrated with other paintings by Picasso and Matisse lent to the exhibition.

FIGURE 12 The Helen Birch Bartlett
Memorial Collection,
The Art Institute of Chicago, as installed in 1986.

In 1931, when he was in his late fifties, Frederic married Evelyn Fortune Lilly (b. 1887), of Indianapolis (fig. 2, p. 83). They had first met while Helen was still alive, and their paths crossed again, after Helen's death, in Beverly, Massachusetts. Frederic's ties to Chicago loosened with this marriage, as he gave up his apartment on Astor Street and studio in the Fine Arts Building to live instead in Massachusetts and Florida. A cataract operation in 1932 curtailed his own painting career but propelled Evelyn Bartlett toward one of her own.

Even though Frederic was unable to paint because of his failing eyesight, they took a studio in Munich, where he wrote his memoirs[43] and where Evelyn, with her husband's encouragement, took up painting. Her work in watercolor and oil, mainly still lifes and portraits, rapidly developed and she began to exhibit. An *Art News* review of her solo exhibition at New York's Wildenstein Galleries in 1935 described her work as "sophisticated paintings, clever in their color harmonies and contrasting patterns.""

Toulouse-Lautrec's *Ballet Dancers*, purchased in 1932, was not only the final addition to the Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection but also the last painting acquired by Bartlett. His intense involvement in collecting was over.

In the years that followed, no other institution ever received a gift from Bartlett of the magnitude of the Art Institute's. The Indianapolis Museum of Art was presented with a bust by Paul Manship of Senator Beveridge, and The Museum of Modern Art was given Amedeo Modigliani's *Bride and Groom* of 1916 in 1942 (see fig. 2, p. 190). In the last decades of his life, Frederic indulged his interest in beautifying his Florida estate. He suffered a partially disabling stroke four years before his death in 1953. In May 1954, the Art Institute staged a memorial exhibition comprising nearly twenty of his paintings.

In his letter proposing his memorial gift, Frederic stated, "With the Potter Palmer and Martin Ryerson collection of Impressionists and Mr. Winterbotham and Mr. Ryerson's examples of the moderns, and the Birch-Bartlett Collection . . . I think that we can justly feel that we have a stronger collection of modern art along these lines than any other museum."[46] The Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection brought to the Art Institute's permanent collection its first paintings by Picasso, van Gogh, and C6zanne. In fact, the only other works by modern European artists in the museum prior to this gift were by Matisse and Gauguin, both part of the Joseph Winterbotham Collection. Even though Bartlett's own art never reflected the influence of the artists he later sought to acquire, the contribution he made as a collector to furthering the acceptance of modern art cannot be underestimated. As the permanent home of the magnificent paintings collected by Helen and Frederic Bartlett, the Art Institute continues to enrich its visitors with this public legacy of the finest sort.

NOTES

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1. Isabel McDougall, "An Artist's House," *The House Beautiful* 12 (Sept. 1902), p. **199.**

2. Frederic had two sisters and a brother (who died before he graduated from Harvard College), as well as a half-sister through his father's second marriage. His two sisters were active art collectors, but their interests differed from Frederic's and from each other's. Maie Pitkin Bartlett married Dwight B. Heard and in 1929 founded with him the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. This was originally an art and anthropology museum based on their collection of American Indian art and native art from other parts of the world and is now devoted particularly to Southwest Indian art. Florence Dibell Bartlett gave many works to the Art Institute's collections of decorative arts and textiles and established the International Museum of Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in
1953.

3. Frederic Clay Bartlett, *Sort ofa Kindofa Journal of My Own* (Chicago and Crawfordsville, Ind., 1965), p. 4.

4. Ibid., p. 53.

5. Ibid., pp. 65ff. Because of its skylights and other features, the tenth floor of the Fine Arts Building was where artists established their studios. John T. McCutcheon, a cartoonist for Chicago newspapers, occupied the studio next to Frederic's. Others who shared the floor were mainly conservative and successful artists such as Frank Peyraud, Ralph Clarkson, Charles Francis Browne, and the sculptor Mario Korbel. Perhaps the most illustrious tenant was sculptor Lorado Taft. Studios were used in common when social events were held on .the floor, and a salon of sorts, called the Little Room, w~s established in 1892 and lasted until World War I. Members met to share ideas after the Friday afternoon Chicago Symphony concerts. Murals by seven of the artists, including Bartlett, were painted to decorate the tenth-floor lobby and are extant.

6. Granger later wrote an article on Bartlett. See Alfred Hoyt Granger, "Frederick Clay Bartlett, Painter: An Appreciation—not an Analysis," *The Sketch Book* 5 (Feb. 1906), pp. 247—53.

7. McDougall (note 1), pp. 199—210.

8. See Henry H. Saylor, "The Best Twelve Country Houses in America: XI: The House in the Woods, The Home of A. C. Bartlett, Lake Geneva, Wis., Howard Shaw, Architect," *Country Life in America* 29 (Mar. 1916), pp. 38—41

9. See Virginia Robie, "Church Decorations by Frederic C. Bartlett," *The House Beautiful* 17 (Dec. 1904), pp. 8—10.

10. Exhibitions of Bartlett's work were held at the Art Institute in 1907, 1919, 1921 (paintings of China), 1954 (memorial exhibition), and 1982 (with Evelyn Fortune Bartlett; the last exhibition was first shown at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.); at the Cincinnati Museum in 1918; the Memorial Gallery, Rochester, New York, in 1921 (with Truman E. Eassett and William J. Potter); and the Montross Gallery, New York, in 1921 (paintings of China).

In addition to the murals mentioned in this article, extant examples include those in the Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago (geometric designs and angels painted in the ceiling arches of the main sanctuary), 1914; and in his own residences in Florida (Bonnet House), Chicago (Astor Street apartment occupied in the early 1930s), and Lake Geneva (restored). Murals executed in the Chicago area and no longer existing included a series for the George Howland Memorial Hall, McKinley High School, 1904 (Music, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Science); an altarpiece, "Vision of Angels," for the Trinity Episcopal Church, Highland Park, 1905; an extensive series showing the rise of commerce for the Council Chamber, Chicago City Hall, 1911; a group for the Hofbrau Restaurant, and decoration for the New Theater, as well as a number of undocumented murals for private residences.

11. Starting in 1905, he was listed as a member of the Art Committee of the Art Institute, a small, six-man group when **it** began. His close allegiance with the Art Institute took many forms: he first served on the Jury of Selection and Hanging for the "12th Chicago Artists Exhibition" in 1908. He was asked to serve in 1909 on the State Art Commission of Illinois and was invited to be on the Jury of Selection for the Art Institute's "22nd Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture by American Artists" and the "21st Exhibition of Water-Colors, Pastels and Miniatures by American Artists" of that year. He was the President of the Chicago Society of the Archeological Institute of America. He was in demand as a lecturer. In 1916, Frederic was asked to become a member of the prestigious National Institute of Arts and Letters. Also, in 1916, he began his long association with the Arts Club of Chicago, as a founding member and director of this pioneer organization dedicated to bringing all forms of contemporary

art—musical, literary, and artistic—to its membership and the city of I Chicago.

12. Clay Bartlett (1907—1955) also became an artist who showed numerous times in Art Institute exhibitions and elsewhere.

13. Joan Landour, "In the World of Society," clipping from unidentified newspaper, *Bartlett Scrapbooks,* The Art Institute of Chicago, Ryerson and Burnham Libraries.

14. Marion Wieman, "Antioch Benefactor Known for Donations," *The Springfield News-Sun,* Springfield, Ohio, Jan. 17, 1943.

15. Hugh Birch also donated land for the Orton State Park in Ohio named in honor of geologist Edward Orton, and for the Sally Milligan Park in Beverly, Massachusetts, named in honor of his mother. He reclaimed and beautified much old farmland around Chicago that was later developed and sold as residential property and golf courses.

16. Lucy G. Morgan, comp., *The Story of Glen Helen: The Enlarged Campus of Antioch College* (Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1931), ch. 3, n. pag.

17. As **it** turned out, Hugh Birch outlived both his wife and his daughter by several decades. In 1929, the name Glen Helen was given to eight hundred acres of land Birch presented in Helen's memory to Antioch College for its extended campus. Hugh Birch's plot in Chicago's Graceland Cemetery is not only the burial place for his family but also for Frederic, Dora, and Clay Bartlett.

18. The following were published in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse:* Helen Birch, "Pale Colors: *Minna and Myself* by Maxwell Bodenheim," book review, 13 (Mar. 1919), pp. 342—44; Helen Birch-Bartlett, "Koral Grisaille: *Kora in Hell: Improvisations,* by William Carlos Williams," book review, 17 (Mar. 1921), pp. 329—32; Helen Birch Bartlett, "Four Poems," 29 (Oct. 1926), pp. 18—19. A review of her book of poetry, *Capricious Winds* (see note 22), appeared in vol. 31 (Nov. 1927), pp. 94—96. It is interesting that both Frederic and Helen were founding guarantors of *Poetry* magazine in 1912, seven years before they married.

19. See Joy Elmer Morgan, *Horace Mann at Antioch* (Washington, D.C., 1938), p. 134.

20. Hugh Birch had given the couple some land in Fort Lauderdale as a wedding gift. When asked the dimensions of this lot, he described **it** as "about as far as you can swing a cat." See Carl J. Weinhardt, Jr., "Bonnet House," *Connoisseur* 215, 875 (Jan. 1985), p. 101. The lot actually measured about seven hundred feet along the Atlantic Ocean and extended thirty-five acres inland. Today, this is the last undeveloped area of land on the Fort Lauderdale beach and surrounds a residence designed, built, and decorated in 1921 by Frederic for Helen and himself. This home, called Bonnet House (for the Bonnet lilies found growing nearby), and its surrounding land have recently come under the protection of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. The Bartlett homes in Beverly, Massachusetts, and in Florida are presently occupied by Evelyn Fortune Bartlett, Frederic's third wife.

21. Bartlett (note 3), p. 25.

22. Helen Birch Bartlett, *Capricious Winds* (Boston and New York, 1927), intro, by Janet A. Fairbank, p. xiii.

23. Letter from Helen Birch Bartlett to Harriet Monroe, Nov. 7, 1922, *Poetry* Magazine Papers, Box 1, Folder 37, University of Chicago, Regenstein Library, Department of Special Collections.

24. *Chicago Art Institute Newsletter,* Jan. 26, 1929.

25. In addition to the paintings in the Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, the Bartletts' private collection contained paintings (rarely sculpture) by other modern European artists, among them Vlaminck, Dufy, Herbin, Foujita, de la Fresnaye, Valadon, Dufresne, Marcoussis, Severini, and Pascin, which were not part of the final donation to the Art Institute. Still others were by artists whose names are no longer easily recognized, such as Lotiron, Beaudin, Waroquier, Pruna, and Marmorek. Among the few Americans represented in the collection were John Mann and Charles Demuth, whose
watercolors *The Brook* and *Flowers,* respectively, the Bartletts acquired in 1924. (While the present whereabouts of most of these works is not known, the aforementioned watercolors are in the Art Institute.) The Bartletts' lack of interest in collecting modern American art occurred despite the fact that Frederic was a founding member of the Art Institute's Friends of American Art, established in 1910 as the first organization in any museum to purchase current work by American artists for the collection. This group, which lasted into the 1940s, provided the Art Institute with the substance of its collection of twentieth-century American painting and sculpture but **it** tended to overlook the work of the American avant-garde.

26. *Chicago Art Institute Newsletter,* Oct. 13, 1923.

27. See note 22.

28. *The Art Institute of Chicago Scrapbooks* 50, microfilm reel no. 8 (June 9, 1925—Jan. 16, 1926), pp. 84, 107, 109.

29. Trustee minutes, Jan. 26, 1926, The Art Institute of Chicago, Archives.

30. In 1929, Bartlett, as trustee chairman of the Winterbotham Committee, purchased in Paris five paintings for the Art Institute's Winterbotham Collection, of which Braque's 1919 *Still Life* remains an important component today. See The Art Institute of Chicago, *The Joseph Winterbotham Collection: A Living Tradition,* essay by Lyn DelliQuadri (Chicago, 1986).

31. See note 29.

32. These articles were written by the museum's manager of publications Walter J. Sherwood, "The Famous Birch Bartlett Collection," *Chicago Visitor* (Oct. 1932), pp. 17, 40; and by a later director, Daniel Catton Rich, "The Windy City, Storm Center of Many Contemporary Art Movements," *Art Digest* 26 (Nov. 1, 1951), p. 28; idem, "The Art Institute of Chicago—And Chicago," *Art in America* 32 (Oct. 1944), p. 250.

33. Frank Holland, "How Bartlett Won Fame As Collector," *Chicago Sun-Times,* July 12, 1935.

34. See Forbes Watson, "A Note on the Birch-Bartlett Collection," *The Arts* **9** (June 1926), pp. 303—12; and Morton Dauwen Zabel, "An American Gallery of Modern Painting," *Art and Archeology* (Dec. 1928), pp. 227—35, 245. In 1926, vol. 20 of the *Bulletin of The Art Institute of Chicago* carried the following announcement and articles: "Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial" (Apr.), p. 53; "C&anne, Rousseau, Picasso" (May), pp. 62—64; "Van Gogh in ArIes" (Oct.), pp. 92—94. The collection's catalogue is *Modern Paintings in the Helen Birch-Bartlett Memorial Collection* (Chicago, 1926; 2d ed. 1929; 3d ed. 1946).

35. See note 29.

36. Unidentified newspaper article, *The Art Institute of Chicago Scrapbooks* 51, microfilm reel no. 8 (Jan. 17—June 16, 1926), p. 126.

37. Unidentified newspaper article, May 8, 1926, *The Art Institute of Chicago Scrapbooks* 51,

microfilm reel no. 8 (Jan. 17—June 16, 1926), p. 143. John Quinn died in 1924; his collection was sold at auctions in 1926 and 1927.

38. The Chicago portion of the "International Exhibition of Modern Art" (Armory Show), on view Mar. 24—Apr. 15, 1913, attracted 180,000 visitors in three weeks and much public controversy. For example, students at the Art Institute's School burned an effigy of Henri Matisse, whom they named "Henry Hair-Mattress."

39. Arthur Jerome Eddy, *Cubists and Post-Impressionism* (Chicago, 1914; rev. ed. 1919). Eddy was a major early collector of German Expressionism.

40. Unidentified newspaper article, *The Art Instii~ute of Chicago Scrapbooks* 51, microfilm reel no. 8 (Jan. 17—June 16, 1926), p. 101.

41. No pictures exist of the Birch Bartlett paintings as they were installed in their home. Not only does it seem that Frederic and Helen were continually traveling, with their only permanent residences in Florida and an estate, White Hall, in Beverly, Massachusetts, purchased early in the year Helen died, but their collections seem to have been on continuous loan beginning in 1923.

42. Letter from Frederic Clay Bartlett to Robert Harshe, July 12, 1933, The Art Institute of Chicago, Archives.

43. See Bartlett (note 3).

44. "Evelyn Bartlett: Wildenstein Galleries," *Art News* 34 (Dec. 7, 1935), p. 8. See the informative essay by Anne Cannon Palumbo in the brochure accompanying the exhibition "The Paintings of Frederic Clay Bartlett and Evelyn Fortune Bartlett," Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Sept. 17—Nov. 17, 1982.

45. Conversation between Evelyn Fortune Bartlett and author, May 29, 1986.

46. See note 29. The Potter Palmer Collection was given to the Art Institute in 1922. The Martin Ryerson Collection was often on loan to the museum before it was bequeathed in 1933.