The Artists of the Wonderland Way

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Carnegie Center for Art & History
a department of the New Albany-Floyd County Public Library
201 East Spring St., New Albany, IN 47150
Above: Ferdinand Graham Walker in his studio.

Right: James L. Russell and Lawrence Russell in front of the Art Shop.

Below left: Harvey Joiner drawn by newspaper artist Ruth Wimp.

Below right: Joseph Krementz's parlor.
The Artists of the Wonderland Way

The 1906 opening of James L. Russell’s Art Shop in New Albany, Indiana, created one of the most influential venues for regional art in the Southern Indiana-Louisville, Kentucky, area. The combination art-supply shop and gallery – a “gathering place for the artists and art-minded,” as Russell’s son, James J. Russell, put it – gave such artists as Joseph Krementz, Ferdinand Graham Walker, Harvey Joiner, Paul Plaschke, John Bauscher, Grover Page, Orville Carroll and the Russells themselves a place for camaraderie and improvement.

One of the inspirations for these painters was a picturesque network of roads going along the Ohio River from Cincinnati, Ohio, through New Albany, to Mount Vernon, Illinois. It was designated the Wonderland Way, and some of the artists created the Wonderland Way Art Club. The club itself had a short life, but the name serves as a convenient way to group the artists who frequented the Art Shop from the World War I era to the 1937 Ohio River flood.

The artists were ironworkers, laundry owners, commercial artists, “Sunday” artists and art enthusiasts. They had in common a strong sense of place and a love of capturing that place on canvas, board and paper. Bauscher’s 1930 painting of the Louisville locks shows how these local artists actually painted local scenes. Joiner found inspiration in the new Louisville parks system; Plaschke painted the house across the street from his own on Beharrell Avenue; and Krementz continued the strong German-immigrant tradition of portraying noble trees. They exhibited in the Art Shop, the Speed Art Museum in Louisville and in their homes. Many names are associated with the Wonderland Way Art Club. Twenty-five artists are gathered in this catalog. But there were more, among them Mary Anderson, Jane Barth, Gertrude Beck, Virginia Bissell and Virginia O’Fallon.

The history of art in the Southern Indiana-Louisville area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries has yet to be written, but a good place to start would be at the Art Shop. — Warren Payne, guest curator
Norvin Baker (1896-1966)

Norvin E. Baker was born in Aurora, Indiana, and raised in Crawfordsville, where local artist Ferdinand Louis “Fritz” Schlemmer took him under his wing. Schlemmer had attended Wabash College, studied in Chicago, fought in World War I and pursued his artistic training in Paris and in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Baker went on to study in Cincinnati, but at some point he decided to earn his living as a portrait photographer, working in Indianapolis, Louisville and New Albany. Baker did continue his artistic pursuits. “He painted consistently and often,” James J. Russell said in his 1984 talk on Local Paintings at the New Albany-Floyd County Public Library. Baker appears in the catalogs of the Fourth Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Southern Indiana Artists Under Auspices of the Federation of Women’s Clubs and the Second Annual Exhibit of the Wonderland Way Art Club. He retired from the art department of the Standard Gravure printing company in Louisville.

John Bauscher (1890-1951)

John Thomas Bauscher was a painting buddy of Paul Plaschke and James L. Russell. One of the best photographs of Wonderland Way artists together shows the Bauscher, Plaschke and Russell families at the J.J. King retreat on the Kentucky River outside Frankfort in 1930. Bauscher was a first-generation American, his father being German, his mother, Irish. He lived in Louisville and worked as an engraver at the Courier-Journal newspaper and then as a lithographer at the Courier-Journal Job Printing Co. He and Plaschke founded the Louisville Art Academy, and he listed himself as an art teacher in addition to his printing career. According to the catalog from the 2000 Louisville exhibition The Collectors’ Showcase: Artists of the Ohio Valley School and the Wonderland Way, 1883-1940, Bauscher’s “paintings and drawings were used by some of
the largest corporations in the country.” In 1910 his design for the official seal of Louisville was adopted after a competition, and that design was used until 1953. Bauscher was also involved with the Louisville Art School, which was run by well-known portraitist Sudduth Goff and etcher A.J. Van Leshout. He was active in the Louisville Art Association and showed in the group exhibitions at the Louisville Free Public Library and the Speed Art Museum in the 1920s and 1930s. In the catalog of the 1932 Speed show, he is listed as having shown a picture titled *Silver Creek*, and Wonderland Way artists Norvin Baker, Orville Carroll, R.M. Rasmussen and Plaschke were also in the exhibition.

**Orville Carroll (1912-1986)**

One of the iconic images of the *Artists of the Wonderland Way* exhibition is Carroll’s painting of a New Albany alley. He was a favorite of the early St. James Court Art Shows in Louisville, and many pictures in the area bear the Carroll frame-shop label. The New Albany native was one of the Wonderland Way “youngsters.” He became interested in art early. While a student at New Albany High School, Carroll was studying at the Louisville Art Center, where he would soon become a teacher of drawing as well as crafts and design – he had a lifelong interest in metalworking.

*The Alley (East from 11th Street Between Oak and Culbertson)*, 1950, oil on canvas. Collection of the New Albany-Floyd County Public Library.
wood carving and wood sculpture. While at the center, Carroll attracted the attention of Louisville artist and philanthropist Morris Burke Belknap Jr., who sponsored Carroll’s 1935 trip to New York City to study at the Art Students League with John Steuart Curry, John Sloan and Isabel Bishop, major figures in the Ashcan/American Regionalist movement. Carroll returned, taught painting at the Art Center and entered a mural competition for a Louisville hospital. The commission went to another artist, but Carroll’s drawings so impressed the officials that he was hired to decorate another area of the building. That led to other commissions under the Treasury Relief Art Project, a WPA-connected program to put artists to work decorating federal buildings, particularly post offices, during the Great Depression. Carroll did other murals in Louisville, and in Batesville, Indiana, Osceola, Arkansas, Atlanta, Georgia, and Harrodsburg, Kentucky. In 1939 a job beckoned, as a staff artist at the Courier-Journal, and Carroll worked at the newspaper until 1956, when he opened his framing business. A 35-year retrospective of his career was held in 1965 at the Southern Indiana Studio-Gallery in New Albany.

**Hundley Coolman (1890-1973)**

Hundley Love Wells Coolman was another Wonderland Way artist who showed artistic potential at an early age. She was born in New Albany, but the family moved to Georgia when she was 8. She began her formal instruction in art at 12 and by the age of 18 was a prize-winning exhibitor at the Georgia State Fair. In 1910 she married William Coolman of New Albany and returned to her hometown. She studied with Paul Plaschke at his Louisville Art Academy and for a time was the registrar at the school. Mrs. Coolman was the first president of the Wonderland Way Art Club; her home served as a gathering place and exhibition space for the club. She is in the typescript list of those showing at the *Second Annual Exhibit of the Wonderland Way Art Club*. 

*Flowers, 1940, oil on board. Collection of the New Albany-Floyd County Public Library.*
in 1936. She painted portraits, landscapes and still-lifes, and in the early 1950s began making eggshell sculptures. She moved to Louisville in 1963, where she was a member of the Little Study Club, the Speed Art Museum and the Filson Historical Society.

Sidney D. Crosier (1858-1930)

Harrison County, Indiana, native Sid Crosier received a one-man retrospective in 2008 at the Carnegie Center for Art & History in New Albany. The exhibition rightfully proclaimed Crosier a “Hoosier art pioneer.” Crosier was attracted to drawing at an early age. In the 1880s he moved to Seneca, New York, to live with relatives. There he worked as a house painter in order to finance his training at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. His success at school led to work as a portraitist in the Queen City. He showed with the Society of Western Artists and received a scholarship to travel to Europe. However, he returned to Indiana to care for his widowed mother. He worked as a drugstore clerk and continued to paint. He also sculpted. According to the catalog for the 2008 Carnegie show, “Crosier became a regular customer and trusted friend” of James L. Russell. The writer, Larry Ordner, describes Russell’s Art Shop as an “emotional haven” for Crosier. In 1918 Crosier’s mother, Matilda, died, and he began his own decline. But the Art Shop crew kept at him to exhibit, and he did, showing in the Fourth Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Southern Indiana Artists Under Auspices of the Federation of Women’s Clubs and the Paintings by Indiana Artists Sixth Annual Exhibition, both at the Art Shop. Crosier also taught art, one of his students being Katherine Adams Bulliet, a Wonderland Way member. Upon his death, C.J. Bulliet, the Chicago art critic and Katherine Adams’ husband, called Crosier “an Impressionist of much talent ... among the best of the Indiana art pioneers.”
William Hancock (1916-2003)

William “Bill” Hancock was one of the younger members of the Wonderland Way Art Club. The New Albany native studied at the Art Center School in Louisville and the Miami International University of Art & Design. During the Great Depression he received artistic training through the Famous Artists Course at the Institute of Commercial Art Inc., a correspondence school. His exhibition credits include the Hoosier Salon, the Art Center Association in Louisville, the Kentucky Watercolor Society and the Pastel Society of America. He worked as a commercial artist at the Girdler Process Equipment Division of Chemetron Corp. in Louisville. In 2009 he was the subject of an exhibition, Remembering William Hancock, New Albany Artist, at the Carnegie Center for Art & History.

Harvey Joiner (1852-1932)

Harvey Joiner is perhaps the most-collected and most well-known artist to emerge from the Louisville and Southern Indiana area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Clark County native lived in the Port Fulton area of Jeffersonville and maintained a studio in Louisville. He showed an interest in art at an early age and was largely self-taught, though it
is said that he received training from a portrait artist in St. Louis. Joiner enjoyed some success as a portrait painter during the first 20 years of his career, then turned to landscapes. That change may have been influenced, in part, by Louisville’s great landscape painter Carl Christian Brenner. Joiner was one of the seasoned artists in the Art Shop group and apparently very influential, judging by the number of artists who attempted to paint like him. He showed in the Fourth Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Southern Indiana Artists Under Auspices of the Federation of Women’s Clubs. In a 1929 Louisville Times interview, Joiner lamented the fact that, “unfortunately, our local artists do not receive the patronage to which they are entitled by the merits of their work and there is as much talent around the Ohio Falls as any area of similar size in the country.”

**Walter Kiser (1902-1980)**

New Albany native Walter Kiser had the distinction among the Wonderland Way artists of having a one-man exhibition at the Speed Art Museum in Louisville. That 1939 show, Original Sketches Kentucky Homes, Doorways and Other Historical Landmarks of the State by Walter H. Kiser, consisted of 160 pencil and pen-and-ink drawings. Kiser was a New Albany High School graduate and studied with Paul Plaschke at the Louisville Art Academy, at the John Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis and at Syracuse University in New York state. Kiser pursued a career as a commercial artist, working at the Louisville Times, where he wrote and illustrated a column called Neighborhood Sketches from 1934 to 1941. He was an active member of the Wonderland Way Art Club. He is listed among the attendees at the club’s first anniversary luncheon and exhibition in 1936, and the catalog for the 1939 Speed show describes him as the secretary-treasurer of the organization.

*Moremen’s Villa near Valley Station, about 1794, circa 1939, pencil on paper. Collection of Filson Historical Society.*
Joseph Krementz (1840-1928)

On his death the New Albany Tribune proclaimed Joseph Krementz the “dean of Southern Indiana’s artists.” Krementz was born before the Civil War but remained active into the 1920s. He shared this distinction with such fellow Southern Indiana artists as Harvey Joiner and Ferdinand Graham Walker. Krementz was a German native; his family came to America in 1851. He had displayed artistic talent as a child in Germany but apparently received more formal instruction from Carl Pfetsch, a native of Germany who was active in New York City in the 1840s and 1850s, then in Cincinnati, New Albany and Indianapolis, where he died in 1899. Pfetsch, who changed his name to Fetsch at some point, was a prize-winning portrait and genre painter who had been trained in photography. Krementz became a portrait and landscape painter and a professional photographer. Krementz worked in Louisville photo studios such as Klauber’s and for a time had his own business at Fourth and Jefferson streets. Photography also played a role in his friendship with Carl Christian Brenner, the German-born Louisville artist who also used a camera in his work. Krementz and Brenner “became inseparable companions,” the Tribune reported, “and together they sketched scenes in Southern Indiana and Kentucky.” Their camaraderie may have extended to trips into the American West, as there are Western paintings by both men. James J. Russell, in his remembrances of the New Albany art scene, described Krementz as a friend of his father for many years. “I well remember Mr. Krementz coming to the Art Shop,” the younger Russell wrote in 1981. “He was an excellent artist, an intelligent gentleman, a man of culture.” When the elder Russell had his First Annual Exhibition of Paintings by New Albany Artists at the Art Shop in 1914, Joseph Krementz was one of only six artists chosen. The Tribune obituary related a story about Krementz that may reflect his German Romantic background but

Untitled, 1898, oil on canvas. Private collection.
speaks to a major motif in landscape painting in the area. In 1917 a tornado ripped away a stand of beech trees along Silver Creek that had been a favorite subject. “With tears streaming down his cheeks, the veteran artist expressed his grief at having lost ‘my good friends.”’

**Marshall Lane (1908-2001)**

“A great group of people got together and worked together.” That’s how Marshall H. Lane summed up his youthful Art Shop experience in an essay published when he was 91. Lane was one of the young talent James L. Russell had hoped to attract to the Art Shop. Lane lived in his hometown of Jeffersonville, in the Port Fulton neighborhood, and had relatives in New Albany. One of his mentors was John Bauscher, who worked at the Courier-Journal Job Printing Co. as did Lane. Another was Paul Plaschke, who, with Bauscher, started the Louisville Art Academy, where Lane took classes. Lane also received instruction at the Louisville School of Art with Sudduth Goff and A.J. Van Leshout. He left the area in 1931 and eventually became the art director of the Coca-Cola Co. in Atlanta. “We were blessed with great topography,” Lane wrote in his catalog essay for the 2000 exhibition *Sharing a Feeling of Place: The Works of James L. & James J. Russell* at the Carnegie Center for Art & History. “The artists worked on developing a technique so that you could look at their art and say whose it was right away.” Could he have been thinking of Carl Lotick?

**Carl Lotick (1878-1958)**

Lotick, one of six artists in the first Art Shop exhibition of New Albany painters in 1914, developed one of the most distinctive palettes in the Wonderland Way group. Lotick was a native of Harrison County, Indiana, and came from a German-immigrant farming family. His parents moved to New Albany to run a grocery. The family name was
Lottich, as it appears in the catalog of that first Art Shop show. But at some point, perhaps in reaction to anti-German feeling during World War I, the artist changed his name to Lotick. The 1910 U.S. Census lists Lotick as a portrait painter working at the address of the family grocery. According to one obituary, he “was associated” with Ferdinand Walker at Walker’s Louisville studio and achieved “state-wide acclaim” when the New Albany Chamber of Commerce put on an exhibition of his work in the 1920s. Lotick studied at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago and became, as did several of these painters, a commercial artist. He was an illustrator for the *Indianapolis Star* and had a studio in Indianapolis. He exhibited in Chicago, St. Louis and Louisville. He retired to New Albany in the 1940s. His obituaries described him as “formerly a famous Southern Indiana landscape painter,” the “formerly” apparently the result of a debilitating heart ailment of several years.

**Harry Marquis (1877-1964)**

Census and city directory listings have Harry Marquis working as a paperhanger before World War I and as an interior decorator from then on. He showed in the *No-Jury Exhibition of Fine and Practical Arts by Kentucky and Southern Indiana Artists* at the Speed Art Museum in Louisville in 1934, along with a sizable group of fellow Wonderland Way artists, such as Paul Plaschke, John Bauscher, Katherine Bulliet, Walter Kiser, Grover Page Jr., Frederic Shrader and the
James Russells, as well as a large contingent of Brown County, Indiana, painters. He shows up the next year in the same show along with R.M. Rasmussen and others. And in 1936 Marquis was there for the Wonderland Way Art Club’s first anniversary luncheon and exhibition at Hundley Coolman’s house in New Albany.

**Chester Arthur Neeld (1907-1968)**

Chet Neeld, another Art Shop “youngster,” began his art training under James L. Russell. Neeld excelled in portraiture. He worked as a poster artist for the Loew’s United Artists Theatre in Louisville, now the Louisville Palace, and was a staff artist at Zimmer-McClaskey-Lewis Inc., then one of Louisville’s premier advertising agencies. His son, Ron, said there was a big easel set up in their home and his dad would come home from his job, and, “night after night,” do art, both for his work and for himself. A portrait the elder Neeld did of John Wayne was presented to the actor. Neeld, his son said, was “most happy when doing the artwork.”

![Father, 1959, mixed media on paper. Private collection.](image)

**The Pages**

In addition to the Russells, there was another Wonderland Way father-son duo: Grover Page (1892-1958) and Grover Page Jr. (1918-2004). Grover Page was a North Carolina native who came to Louisville in 1919 to work for the *Courier-Journal* as an editorial cartoonist, a post he held until 1956, when Hugh Haynie took the job. Before coming to the area Page had studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Among his fellow students were Billy Debeck, who created the *Barney Google* comic strip, and Frank King, of *Gasoline Alley* fame. Page was a charter member of the Wonderland Way Art Club and exhibited in the first Wonderland Way show in 1935. As celebrated as Page was for his newspaper cartooning, he was also well-known for his wood engravings. His *Noah*, also known as *Ohio River Noah*, took first prize in the 1940 Southern States Art League print competition. Page, described as an “amateur card-trick artist” in a
Courier-Journal article, was a member of the Magicians Club of Louisville and served as vice president and treasurer in the 1940s. The Carnegie Center for Art & History had an exhibition for both Pages in 2000, From the Headlines to the Frontlines: The Artwork of Grover Page and Grover Page Jr. The younger Page was a New Albany High School graduate. “His father,” according to Chicago art critic C.J. Bulliet, “was his mentor and guide.” At the age of 13, Page wrote in the 2000 Carnegie catalog for Sharing a Feeling of Place: The Works of James L. & James J. Russell, “I became a ‘regular’ among local artists and art lovers who frequented” the Russell Art Shop. Page was one of the 21 artists who showed in the First Annual Exhibit of Fine and Practical Arts by Wonderland Way Art Club in 1935. He always said that Paul Plaschke taught him to paint. Page went off to college in New York City, but exhibited in Chicago in 1939 and in Washington, D.C., in 1940. The latter show brought these words from Bulliet: “It confirmed a belief I had formed from watching his work from childhood that he had something distinctive and good.” Page served in World War II as an Army battlefield artist. After the war, Page continued his art studies in Chicago, where he was elected to the Palette and Chisel Club. He worked for the Kentucky Library Association.

Harvey Peake (1866-1958)

In 1937, a year after he had left the area, New Albany native Harvey Peake wrote a tribute to his “esteemed and valued friend” James L. Russell, who had died in October, for the New Albany Tribune. Peake was one of only six artists to show in Russell’s First Annual Exhibition of Paintings by New Albany Artists at the Art Shop in 1914. “Because he was an excellent artist himself,” Peake wrote of Russell, “he was able to understand and sympathize with his fellow artists in their troubles, as the ordinary person could not.” Those
fellow artists included several in the newspaper industry, and Peake made a career as a newspaper, magazine and book illustrator, doing work for such newspapers as the *Courier-Journal*, the *Indianapolis Star*, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Times*. He also wrote about music for the *Louisville Times* and the magazine *Musical America*. Peake was a member of the Louisville Arts Club along with painting companion Paul Plaschke, whom Peake described as “newspaper cartoonist and landscape painter extraordinary.” According to biographical material in the New Albany-Floyd County Public Library, Peake studied with Carolus Brenner, a son of Carl Brenner, Louisville’s legendary landscape painter, and with Fayette Barnum, a major force in the local Arts & Crafts movement. Peake moved to Virginia in 1936.

**Paul Plaschke (1880-1954)**

Paul Albert Plaschke said he was self-taught, and, if so, he did a pretty good job of it. In the years from World War I to the Great Depression, he was a major player in the art scenes of two cities and two states. He lived in New Albany, where James L. Russell’s Art Shop was a Mecca for local artists, and worked in Louisville, where he was at the center of a circle of commercial artists who also painted and made prints. He was, after Russell, perhaps the other major force behind the Wonderland Way group – before and after it had a more official name. Plaschke was a mentor to many artists; he started, with John Bauscher, the Louisville Art Academy; and he was instrumental in the beginnings of the Speed Art Museum. His reputation as an Impressionist landscapist earned him a place at major American exhibitions in the East and Midwest, including the Hoosier Salon. Plaschke was a native of Germany. His family came to the United States when he was 4 and settled in the New York City area. Plaschke studied art and was exposed to newspaper work at an early age. In 1898 he married a lady from Louisville and...
moved to Louisville, where he immediately found work as a cartoonist for the local papers, a career that lasted, in Louisville, until 1937, when he went to Chicago to become, as one source put it, “William Randolph Hearst’s favorite cartoonist.” He retired and came back to Louisville in 1950. Harvey Peake, a fellow Wonderland Way artist, wrote about painting with Plaschke in a 1954 letter to the Courier-Journal. “No matter how lonely the place might be, where we started painting a crowd somehow collected to observe our work.” And comment on it. “Paul’s study of a ‘blue tree’ provoked the derision of a man who knew there never was such a thing – but found one (while) looking about to reassure himself that there wasn’t any. He admitted it and apologized.” In 1914, when Russell had his First Annual Exhibition of Paintings by New Albany Artists at the Art Shop, Paul Plaschke was one of six artists chosen.

**Robert Martin Rasmussen (1875-1966)**

R.M. Rasmussen was a portraitist active in the Louisville area from the years just before World War I through the 1930s. He was involved in the Louisville Artists’ League, serving as secretary-treasurer in 1914 and 1916. The league was formed in 1910 to promote area artists through an annual public exhibition. The list of members reads like a Who’s Who of Louisville artists of the time. Among them were J.B. Alberts Jr., Alice Cane, George Lee, Frank Robbins, Nellie Schanzenbacher, Frederick Weygold and Charles Sneed Williams. Representing the Wonderland Way side of things were Harvey Joiner, Ferdinand Walker and Paul Plaschke. Rasmussen listed himself in the Louisville City Directory as an artist in 1916-1917 and 1920-1922,
with two locations given as studios. He showed in the 1933 *No-Jury Exhibition of Fine and Practical Arts by Louisville Artists*, the 1934 *No-Jury Exhibition of Fine and Practical Arts by Kentucky and Southern Indiana Artists* and the 1935 *No-Jury Exhibition of Fine and Practical Arts by Kentucky and Southern Indiana Artists*, all at the Speed Art Museum. Rasmussen earned his living as an optician and was the secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Optical Association in 1914.

**The Russells**

James L. Russell (1872-1937) and his son, James J. Russell (1911-1990), painted together and exhibited together. The elder Russell was born in New Albany of Irish ancestry. His first career was in stone, as a cutter, sculptor and chiseler. The names you see carved on the outside of the Carnegie Center for Art & History were carved by James L. Russell. James J. Russell, in a 1984 talk at the New Albany-Floyd County Public Library, said that his father’s “interest in color provoked him to get out of the stone business and into painting. ... He bought out an interior decorating business (and) called it the Art Shop.” Russell sold artist supplies and did framing. Collectors today are proud to point out a “Russell frame” on art from this era. In the 1930s Russell founded the Wonderland Way Art Club, in large part to encourage younger artists. The Ohio River flood of 1937 damaged more than property, and Russell died that year.
Grover Page Jr. described Russell as “the kindest and most gentle person I ever knew” in a catalog essay for the 2000 Carnegie exhibition *Sharing a Feeling of Place: The Works of James L. & James J. Russell*. “He was a special person.” It is telling that Russell did not exhibit in the first Art Shop show in 1914, giving others pride of place. The younger Russell worked for the Courier-Journal Job Printing Co. in the 1930s and studied at night at the Louisville Art Academy, the school Paul Plaschke and John Bauscher established. Russell went into commercial art and created the Wathen-Russell Art Studio with fellow Art Academy student Robert Wathen. He drew and painted throughout his life, and his prints of New Albany landmarks are well-known. He “liked architecture and was fascinated by old buildings,” his widow, Mary Tighe Russell, said in an interview for the 2000 Carnegie show. He was one of the founders of the Carnegie Center.

**Lawrence Russell (1875-1939)**

When John Lawrence Russell died in 1939, the obituary in the *New Albany Tribune* made no mention of his being an artist but did make much of his being a star outfielder for one of the “greatest semi-pro teams in Indiana,” the New Albany Glenwoods. Russell, whose nickname was “Runt,” was a contemporary and great friend of James L. Russell but not a relation. Lawrence Russell was an ironworker, and he loved to visit the Art Shop whenever he could, according to his son, Maurice. In 1923 four pieces by Lawrence Russell were hung at the Art Shop in the *Paintings by Indiana Artists Sixth Annual Exhibition*, right alongside works by Joseph Krementz, Paul Plaschke, Sid Crosier, Ferdinand Walker and others. Maurice Russell said that his father “almost died himself” when James Russell passed away in 1937. Lawrence Russell’s career was cut short by a freak accident on the job that resulted in epileptic seizures and an early retirement 10 years before his death. His paintings are extremely rare.
Frederic Shrader (1878-1965)

When James L. Russell held his First Annual Exhibition of Paintings by New Albany Artists at the Art Shop in 1914, Fred Shrader was one of six artists chosen. At that time Shrader was employed in a New Albany laundry, where he started out as a bookkeeper and eventually came to own the operation. He exhibited in Art Shop and Wonderland Way shows in the 1920s and 1930s, and in various other venues in the 1950s and 1960s.

A.J. Van Leshout (1868-1930)

Alexander J. Van Leshout almost single-handedly revived the art of etching in the Louisville area in the early 20th century. The Illinois native came to Louisville in 1914 to be a staff artist for the Courier-Journal and the Louisville Times. He arrived with some experience, having worked at newspapers in Chicago, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Washington, New York and Los Angeles. He had studied art at the Art Students League in New York City and at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He also spent time in Europe, particularly Paris and Holland, the latter being the country of his father. In 1921 Van Leshout left the papers to head the Louisville School of Art. The leading lights of the Louisville and
Southern Indiana art scene were involved in the school, including Paul Plaschke. Van Leshout installed an etching press at the school, and the area saw a flowering of printmaking that continued into the 1940s. He was a member of the Louisville Art Club, the Palette and Chisel Club of Chicago and the Southern States Art League, where one of his etchings won first prize in the organization’s 1929 show. He exhibited in the Art Institute of Chicago exhibitions of etchings through the 1920s and at the Speed Art Museum annual in 1928. At the time of his death Van Leshout was an instructor at the Louisville Conservatory of Music, a position he had held since 1927. Perhaps the best description of Van Leshout as an artist appeared in Edna Kohl’s *Land of the Burnt Thigh*. The 1938 book recounted the travails of women homesteaders in South Dakota in the early 1900s. Van Leshout is portrayed as a Milwaukee cartoonist with a “polished air about him. ... Only a city man and an artist could look like that.” Kohl writes that he had “made a success of his Indian art,” having come “to know these people (the Sioux) better than any of us. ... He was an artist ... seeing clearly and honestly the world about him.”

**Ferdinand Graham Walker (1859-1927)**

On the occasion of Ferdinand Walker’s removal of his studio from Louisville to New Albany in 1925, the *New Albany Tribune* described him as an artist “who studied under the masters of France and who painted pictures of some of the countries (*sic*) noted people.” Walker was a native of Mitchell, Indiana, the product of a middle-class, recent immigrant family who moved to New Albany while Walker was still young. A “born artist,” as the *Tribune* writer put it, Walker opened his first studio at the age of 24 in New Albany. According to a 1977 biographical entry by fellow New Albany artist Walter Kiser, Walker studied art at a local...
college while a teenager and “received instruction and criticisms” from Samuel Woodson Price, the celebrated Kentucky portrait painter. Walker made two extended trips to Europe to study and work, first in the 1880s and then in the early 1900s. Among his portrait subjects were newspaper editor Henry Watterson and John Breckinridge Castleman, a major force in the Louisville parks system. He also did posthumous portraits of Kentucky governors and even one of Daniel Boone. Of all the older Wonderland Way artists, Walker was probably the most schooled in his profession, and his French training separates him stylistically from those more well-known Hoosier artists who studied in Munich, Germany. Ferdinand Walker was one of six artists chosen for the First Annual Exhibition of Paintings by New Albany Artists at the Art Shop in 1914.

Cora Wemyss (1856-1941)

The work of Cora M. Wemyss came to the attention of local collectors in the 2000 Louisville exhibition The Collectors’ Showcase: Artists of the Ohio Valley School and the Wonderland Way, 1883-1940. That catalog describes the New Albany native as working in real estate. Records show that she had a house built on Cedar Bough Place in New Albany as rental property in 1905, and her first tenant was Paul Plaschke. Miss Wemyss showed at the Art Shop in the Fourth Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Southern Indiana Artists Under Auspices of the Federation of Women’s Clubs (the catalog in the New Albany-Floyd County Public Library bears no date as to year). Interestingly, a Mrs. R. Matheny is also listed in the catalog. The daughter-in-law of Cora’s sister Isabelle was a Mrs. Roland Matheny, and she and her husband lived next door. Cora Wemyss is said to have studied in Cincinnati and Chicago. The Collectors’ Showcase catalog says that she rarely sold her artwork and that a large collection of her work was found in a New Albany mansion in 1994. Her name is sometimes misspelled Wemys and Weymss, and it is pronounced Weems.
AS WE BEGIN our celebration of New Albany’s bicentennial, this exhibition, *The Artists of the Wonderland Way*, brings together for the first time in over 50 years the works of these local artists, many of them underappreciated. The exhibition wouldn’t have been possible without the generous financial support of the Carnegie Center Inc., the New Albany Bicentennial Commission and the Community Foundation of Southern Indiana. The Carnegie Center for Art & History gratefully acknowledges the following contributors to the exhibition:

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*Inside cover photo credits:*

Ferdinand Walker in his studio, Joseph Krementz’s parlor, Walter Kiser, William Hancock, Harvey Peake and family: New Albany-Floyd County Public Library

James L. Russell and Lawrence Russell in front of the Art Shop, Bauscher, Plaschke, Russell families at the King retreat: Don and Kathy Smith

Harvey Joiner drawn by newspaper artist Ruth Wimp: Louisville Free Public Library

Grover Page self-portrait: Warren and Julie Payne

Far left: Walter Kiser.
Left: William Hancock.

Right: Grover Page self-portrait.
Below: Harvey Peake and family.