

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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'The End of the Trail'

Those of our readers who had the joy of attending the Panama-Pacific International exposition in San Francisco in 1915, will remember the statue of "The End of the Trail" which was so photographed and so greatly admired during the days of that memorable observation of the completion of the Panama Canal. We wonder how many of our readers know where the figure of the Indian and his horse is now?

Probably few of the thousands who have seen the statue know the name of the sculptor or the history of its creation. "The End of the Trail" is beautifully preserved in Mooney Grove, a public park in Tulare County, between Visalia and Tulare, where it has been since the lights went out on the Tower of Jewels on the Marina, in the City by the Golden Gate, at the close of 1915.

James Earle Fraser, the sculptor, was born in Winona, Minn., in 1876. During his early boyhood Fraser came in close contact with the Sioux Indians in the Dakota Territory (1880 to 1888), where his father was head of motive power on the then being built, Chicago and Milwaukee Railroad.

Harold G. Schutt of Lindsay, the editor of the Tulare County Historical Society quarterly bulletin "Los Tulares," became interested in acquiring all the knowledge he could about the statue and its creator. He wrote to the sculptor at his home "Eleven o'Clock Roads." Westport, Conn, and in a return mail Aug. 17, received his answer which Mr. Schutt published in the quarterly and we will repeat it here knowing that it will interest many of our readers.

"As a small boy living in Dakota Territory I played with Indian children and liked them and their games very much. Often hunters, wintering with the Indians, stopped over to visit my grandfather on their way South, and in that way I heard many stories of Indians. On one occasion a fine fuzzy bearded old hunter remarked with such bitterness in his voice, "The Injuns will all be driven into the Pacific Ocean." The thought so impressed me that I could not forget it, in fact, it created a picture in my mind which eventually became "The End of the Trail." I liked the Indians and couldn't

understand why they were to be pushed into the Pacific.

"My father, in his work, often made drawings of machinery. I followed him and drew too, but my drawings were of animals. Then I found chalk-rock and began carving animals at the same time. Eventually we went to Minneapolis, and the 'Soo' Railroad. Then to Chicago, and there shortly after through my father, I began working in a sculptor's studio. The sculptor, Richard Bock, had much work to do and I fell in with his plans. At the age of 15 I was working with him on work for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, where beautiful buildings and good sculpture were on all sides. It was wonderful training for an art minded youth.

"I made many sketches and some finished work, and at the age of 17, in 1894, I created the first model of 'The End of the Trail,' the thought that had been in my mind since my boyhood in Dakota.

"At 20 years old I went to Paris and took my model of 'The End of the Trail' with me; and it won for me, along with my other things, a \$1,000 prize for the best work of art, painting or sculpture, in an exhibition of works by Americans.

"It was the means, too, of my meeting with the great sculptor Saint-Gaudens. Saint-Gaudens was on the jury, along with painter, James McNeil Whistler. Saint-Gaudens wrote me a letter and asked me to come to see him, and finally asked me to be his assistant on his Sherman status. After that wonderful training of about three years I came to New York, and never since have I been without important commissions.

"I was asked by Karl Bitter to make a reproduction of the equestrian 'End of the Trail' for the San Francisco World Fair in 1915, where it, with my other work, got the gold medal. I was told \$250,000 worth of photographs were sold of the statue. Who got the money I don't know. I do know I did not get any of it. As a matter of fact everyone knew the statue but no one knew the sculptor. I'm afraid I was too busy to take advantage of how much it was liked.

"A few years ago I was given, for sculpture, the gold medal of the Academy of Art and Letters. That brought out in magazines and newspaper, several important articles, since which I have been deluged with enquiries about 'The End of the Trail,' the Buffalo nickel, the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial, the Mayo Brothers, the Pioneer Woman, and so forth. Finally I could not answer

them all so I had to refer them to 'Who's Who in America.' However this is the story of 'The End of the Trail.'"

(To Be Continued)