

## TOWN HALL HISTORICAL FACTS



- Town Hall opened on November 1, 1871
  - It was a red brick building in Second Empire and Victorian Gothic style
  - In February of 1904, a fire burned it to the ground
  - In 1905, Town Hall was rebuilt in Beaux Arts Style.
    - *Limestone-faced, topped with a massive clock, and floor to ceiling windows*
    - **NOTE - Beaux Arts Style consists of: (Flat roof, Rusticated and raised first story, hierarchy of spaces, from "noble spaces"—grand entrances and staircases, arched windows, symmetry, murals, mosaics, and other artwork, all coordinated in theme to assert the identity of the building).**
  - At one time the basement of the Town Hall served as a jail house.
  - The town hall was unoccupied since 1988 up until 2010 when the state of CT provided funding to renovate the building and create Stamford's very first fine art museum. The building is a historic landmark and was refurbished according to guidelines. In lieu of opening its doors the museum only stayed open for two weeks before having to close due to lack of funding.
- This past September (2012) thanks to a very generous Philanthropist, Bob and Pat Phillips, we have re-opened to the public to showcase our *A Persistent Passion: The Art of Lora Eberly Ballou: 1870-1976* collection.
  - Although small the town hall has a permanent collection of four WPA murals. Three are on the first floor, one is upstairs. 2 New Yorker prints by Vernon Hone Bailey, one depicting Stamford High School the other, Veteran's Park just across the street. Outdoor sculpture by James Knowles, "Dancing Girl" and the "Sea Odyssey" by Reubin Nakian.

## Timeline Overview 1870-1970

*The timeline was created to highlight Lora Ballou's life, but also to give an overview what was occurring in the art world and simultaneously in the country and world at large.*

**Art History – 1870** - The Metropolitan Museum of Art is established.

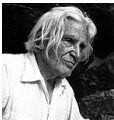
**Lora Eberly Ballou – 1870** - Lora Eberly born in Bowling Green, OH to W.S Eberly and Hattie A. Chubb.

**Historical Events - 1871** - Stamford's original Town Hall is established in Connecticut

**Art History – 1899** – Russian-American sculptor Louise Nevelson is born in Czarist Russia.

**Lora Eberly Ballou – 1899** – Lora Eberly, marries John B. Ballou in Bowling Green, OH.

**Historical Events – 1897** – Sculptor Reubin Nakian is born.



REUBIN NAKIAN

- Stamford native born August 10, 1897 was an American sculptor whose works were based of Greek and Roman mythology.
- You can find other sculptures by him around downtown at the Palace Theater.
- He died on December 4, 1986.

**Art History – 1905** – African-American painter Lois Mailou Jones is born. She was a very influential artist to the Harlem Renaissance.

**Lora Eberly Ballou – 1902 & 1905** – Lora's daughter Harriet is born (1902) & her daughter Margaret (1905).

**Historical Events – 1905** – Town Hall is rebuilt after the original burnt down in 1904.

**Art History – 1939** – The Guggenheim Museum in New York City is established.

**Lora Eberly Ballou – 1938** - Lora's grandson, Robert M. Phillips is born.

**Historical Events – 1939** – Germany invades Poland to start World War II.

**Art History – 1977** - Japanese photographer and artist Hiromi Toshikawa is born in Tokeyo.

**Lora Eberly Ballou – 1976** - Lora passes away at 106 years old.

**Historical Events - 1976** – Viking Spacecrafts 1 & 2 land on Mars.

## DAVENPORT (ROOM #1)



**CABIN IN THE WOODS** - If you look at your catalogue cover you will see Lora on a scaffold painting. This is what she is painting. This is the only dated piece in the collection, 1937. The family cabin was in Oakland, New Jersey and has since been moved to Vermont.



**CHANGE OF SEASON** - The color scheme used in this piece suggests autumn has arrived. The dark background pushes the white and yellow chrysanthemums forward and they appear almost to be floating, however, it appears to be floating but it is grounded by the vase and the positioning of the statue figurine on the left. The darkness on the bottom of the statue sets us in space.

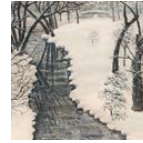


**SOUTH PACIFIC** – This painting is of a Samoan hut that was inspired by Lora’s trip to the South Pacific. A photograph of the hut was found in an album and was the foundation for the composition.



**DOCK IN ORLANDO** – Lora often wintered in Florida and we have several paintings from those times throughout the exhibit. Her style here is much more gestural, almost

impressionistic and one can sense a heavy and languid feel of summer.



**TONEY’S BROOK** – This piece has a high contrast next *Dock in Orlando* and *Small Boats in Orlando*. The piece uses mainly black and white, but has so much color that is incorporated as well. There is a full range of color and though it is white is mainly used, notice blue and pink undertone to it.



Northern Autumn, Small Boats in Orlando, Oval Arrangement

- \* Refer to the WPA Mural (**Dark Day or Yellow Friday**)
- Painted in 1934 by Delus Palmer (Stamford native)
- Inspired by the poem “Abraham Davenport”
- Dedicated at a ceremony in 1934



**\*Additional information of this mural on next page**

## WPA MURALS (*DARK DAY* or *YELLOW FRIDAY*)

### LOCATION: DAVENPORT ROOM



- Painted in 1934 by Delos Palmer (Stamford native)
- Inspired by lines in John Greenleaf Whittier's poem "Abraham Davenport."
- **ABOUT THE PAINTING:** It is a three-paneled mural on Masonite board, dedicated during a ceremony at Old Town Hall on December 15, 1934.
- **ON THE LEFT: (1780 – during the Revolution)** Depicts Colonel Abraham Davenport of Stamford, a member of the Council, during his address to Governor Jonathan Trumbull.
- **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Many thought the end of the world was upon them due to the darkness. Abraham Davenport spoke about how the 'Day of Judgment' was either approaching or not and if anyone was to find him he would want to be doing his duty. It was he who wanted the candles lit. Eventually, in the afternoon, the darkness would fade. No one ever found out the reason of the darkness.

## WPA MURALS

### (Work's Progress Administration)

- The Federal Art Project was one of the divisions of the W.P.A. created under Federal Project One.
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt had made several attempts prior to the F.A.P. to provide employment for artists on relief, namely the Public Works of Art Project (P.W.A.P.) which operated from 1933 to 1934 and the Treasury Department Section of Painting and Sculpture which was created in 1934 after the demise of the P.W.A.P.
- However, it was the F.A.P. which provided the widest reach, creating over 5,000 jobs for artists and producing over 225,000 works of art for the American people.
- Four W.P.A works can be found in this very building. 'The Dark Day' located in our Davenport Room, 'Justice' located upstairs, and in our Rippowam room, 'The Purchase of Stamford' and 'Stamford Charter Deed'.

**NOTE: 'JUSTICE' (WPA Mural) CAN'T BE VIEWED DURING TOUR, BECAUSE IT IS RENTED TO A PRIVATE TENANTS AND ARE OFF LIMITS ON THE UPPER LEVEL OF BUILDING WHERE IT IS LOCATED.**



## RIPPOWAM (#2 ROOM)



**WOODED RIVERBANK** - This piece is very powerful by its use of colors. It almost looks as if the season is changing by the red hues among the green leaves on the trees. Notice the use of the palette knife being used in this piece. It is rather interesting why the water would be very dark, but if you look at the color riverbank it is a mahogany brown color which can be referred back to the title of the piece.



**URN WITH DOG FIGURINE** – Propped on a wooden table with a cloth as its backdrop is a brass vase with Amaryllis flowers them. The flowers themselves represent pride which is well represented through the flowers colors which are red, white, and blue just as our American Flag has.



**MIDDAY VERMONT SUMMER** - On a trip with a family friend named William to her husband John's birthplace, Lora, was inspired to paint this piece. If you look closely you can see a self-portrait of Lora painting under an umbrella in the piece between the grass and an array of brightly colored flowers.



**EARLY SUMMER GARDEN**- Lora had a passion for not only art but also had a taste for floral. She would cut flowers from her garden to create arrangements that she would paint. This painting is a prime example a freshly cut arrangement.



**LAKESIDE HOME** – Along the side of a lake lays a home surrounded by trees. Lora's whose husband, John, was a very wealthy business man who could afford lavishing things such as a home away from home for both Lora and he.



**WINDOW VIEW** - Your eyes may fall to the array of flowers in the piece, but notice the intricately painted vase with great detail off to the side as well as Lora's use of drapes in the background. The elephant on the desk is a representation of her love of travels around the world. Though the focal point may be the flowers (*roses both white and pink and lilies*) make sure to notice the smaller details of the piece.



Landscape with Couple, Landscape with Colonial Figures, and Fall River.

\* Refer to the WPA Mural (**The Purchase of Rippowam and Indian Deed of 1701**).

- Both painted in 1934 by Arthur Gibson Hall (Norwalk resident).
- Dedicated at a ceremony in 1934



**\*Additional information of these murals as well as key point regarding Stamford (Room 3) on next page.**

**WPA MURALS (*THE PURCHASE OF STAMFORD*)****LOCATION: RIPPOWAM ROOM**

- Painted in 1934 by Arthur Gibson (Norwalk resident)
- **ABOUT THE PAINTING:** “The Purchase of Stamford”, originally created as a 12’ x 8’ canvas, was dedicated during a ceremony at Old Town Hall on December 15, 1934.
- Bought under the Indian name of Rippowam for the New Haven Society in the summer of 1640 by Capt. Nathaniel Turner and sold in the fall of the same year to a group from Wethersfield who started a settlement the following year.
- **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Shows Indian chiefs (left) facing white men (right) between a large map of the territory purchased, surmounted by the old coat of arms or seal of the Connecticut colony, bearing 15 grape vines on its field instead of three as at present. Below are grouped the knives, hatchets, hoes, kettles, coats and wampum which formed the purchase price. A forest background of pines and hard woods, together with a balanced and even distribution of design, and rich, but subdued colors, tend to give this mural something of an antique tapestry effect.

**WPA MURALS (*INDIAN DEED OF 1701*)****LOCATION: RIPPOWAM ROOM**

- Painted in 1934 by Arthur Gibson Hull (Norwalk resident)
- **ABOUT THE PAINTING:** “The Indian Deed of 1701”, originally created on canvas, was dedicated during a ceremony at Old Town Hall on December 15, 1934.
- **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Purchase of Stamford, or Rippowams, as it was called by the Indians, which was effected July 16, 1640. The purchase of Stamford agreement was made between Captain Nathaniel Turner and two Indian sagamores: Ponus, sagamore of Toquams; and Wascussue, sagamore of Shippan. The sagamore was a tribal chieftain probably slightly inferior in rank to the sachem.
- One of the six original grants or agreements between the New Haven Colony and the Pequots which remain to show the terms on which the Indian traded his fertile and valuable lands.

**NOTE: You will notice when entering or exiting our Stamford Room the heavy iron looking doors. That is where the safe for the Stamford Savings Bank was (1946)**



**STAMFORD (ROOM #3)**

**FALL BOUNTY** - The contrast of colors used in the piece really catches the eye. Lora uses fall colors (red, orange, and yellow) as well as white to create her piece chrysanthemum daisies. She really adds detail by painting doilies as well as fruits in the piece.



Roses and Mums, Arrangement in Yellow, Gladiolas



Lilies and Mums, Yellow Chrysanthemums, Arrangement with Star Lilies



**NYC PARK** - Is a view of Madison Square Park with skyscrapers in the distance. Lora painted this from her New York apartment that the couple rented in the winter months of 1944.



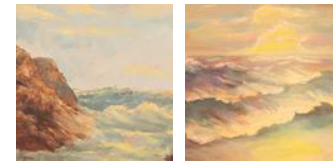
**ORLANDO BIRDS** - During winter months Lora stayed in Florida. This piece was inspired by her stay. If you look at palm trees as well as the background trees and scenery you can see Lora uses great color detail to make the piece very calming and serene. Lora used a palette knife for this piece. Bob (Lora's grandson) said that she was fascinated by the knife, but it was not something that came natural to her.



**EXPRESSIVE BRANCHES** - Lora was not only very passionate about her floral paintings, but also her landscapes. 'Expressive Branches' is very whimsical piece. However this is a painting of great structure and composition and it beautifully demonstrates perspective and depth, from its line, color and composition. This piece and SERENE GREEN WATERSIDE appear to have been painted from two vantage points.



**SERENE GREEN WATERSIDE** - It captures the beauty and essence of life. Lora used a really colorful paint palate as well as detail when creating this piece. Notice her use of say the trees in the background how they go from light to almost translucent looking giving the impression they are far away—fading into the background.



**NORTHERN COAST, FLORIDA WAVES** - Notice the contrast; Northern Coast with loose strokes, some palette knife – crashing waves and Florida Waves; pastel, yet conveys the power of a tropical ocean. \*\*Lina Morelli, the curator of the show did both the catalogue and the placement of Lora's paintings throughout the museum. Ironically, she put these two pieces side by side just as she put them in the catalogue without even realizing until after the opening of *Lora Ballou*.

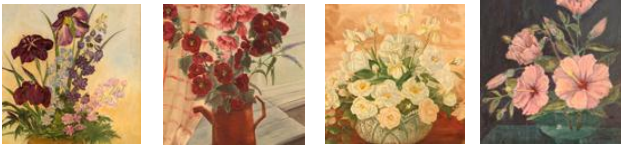


River Bank with Red Chimney

## STAMFORD (ROOM #4)



**Untitled** – Upon learning about ‘*A Persistent Passion*,’ Judy Black made contact with curators and graciously has let the museum showcase ‘Untitled’ in our Lora Ballou collection. She had come across the piece when her and her husband received it as an anniversary gift in 1973. We know that Lora donated many paints to hospitals and friends and also that many were sold. But Lora kept no record of donations or sales. Since the exhibit opened we have heard from another person, via internet, who has a Lora Ballou painting. We hope that as we continue to exhibit the work more people will come forward.



Bell Flowers, Water Can Arrangement,  
Table Top Roses and Irises, Green Glass Bowl



## STAMFORD (Room #5)

### Places in a One Hundred Six Year Life

#### *Photographs and Personal Effects*

Displayed are a select sampling of family photographs and personal effects that Lora Eberly Ballou left to her family.

Bob Phillips' mother, Margaret, took on the enormous task of archiving (into many albums) the hundreds of photographs and memorabilia that documented the span of Lora's long and extraordinary life. However, it was Bob and his wife, Pat who made the effort to collect and store the albums and other objects of family history along with Lora's art.

We have also included a series of floral colored pencil drawings from a sketch book Lora worked on while travelling in the South Pacific, a newspaper article celebrating her 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday, as well as a congratulatory birthday letter from President Nixon.

The album pages chosen by Lina Morielli gives us an overview of Lora's life and times and demonstrates the enormous changes that took place from 1870 – 1976 as indicated in our Timeline, by Valerie Cooper. The images further tell the story of how she lived, where she travelled, her relationships with family and friends, but most importantly, how all of it influenced what she painted.

## LORA EBERLY BALLOU (1870-1976)

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FACTS

- Lora Eberly Ballou was born in Bowling Green, OH in 1870.
- She married John B. Ballou in her native town of Bowling Green, OH in 1899.
- She attended college and took liberal arts classes.
- She had two daughters Harriet (1902 in Cleveland, OH) and Margaret (1905 in Coshocton, OH).
- Her husband John was a business man and owned a very successful book publishing company (1907 – Vail & Co.)
- Her pieces do not have dates on them so one can only assume when she painted them.
- In 1914 the Ballou's move to Montclair, NJ where Lora began taking classes at the Montclair Museum at the age of 44.
- She traveled extensively with her husband to Tunis, Egypt, Algiers, Greece, Italy and the island of Malta and Sicily, included a return trip through Paris to London.
- All her paintings are made of oil on canvas.
- At 103 when she was no longer able to paint, Lora created small yarn dolls that were sold to benefit Greystone Hospital in New Jersey.
- She died in 1976 at the age of 106.

### ADDITIONAL FACTS

- Known as *Gam* to her grandson's John and Bob Phillips.
- Bob along with his wife Pat went through much effort to collect, store, and maintain Lora's paintings throughout the years.
- The idea to create this exhibition was sparked at the restoration ceremony of the Old Town Hall in 2010.
- Bob has seen his vision come to life having his grandmother's story come to life for all to see through her paintings.
- It is not known how many Lora Ballou paintings have been produced, but if by fate some have found their way back home.