

IMAGES

... then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

Remembering George Yostel, Artist

George Frederick Yostel, a former Indian Hill resident, was born in Germany, and received his Master of Fine Arts in Munich. He was sponsored by a Cincinnati manufacturer of ecclesiastical silver art and moved to Ohio. Because work was slow, he was employed at a meat market, but later studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Philadelphia.



Once back in the Queen City, he worked for local bronze companies. One of his earliest commissions was a 6' WWI "Doughboy". In between projects he studied Metallurgy at U.K. and Engineering at U.C. A member of the U.S. Calvary, he rode through Miamiville and Indian Hill in the 1930's. In WWII Yostel worked on bombsights in Oklahoma, and after the war opened his first studio: Arts Crafts Company on Central Parkway. He and his wife Dorothy Randals had a son and a daughter.

Early commissions included war memorials ordered from around the country. He worked in repousse, a technique he had learned in Munich. After several break-ins at his downtown studio, the Yostels moved to Indian Hill, living on several streets and finally on Given Rd., where a studio/barn was erected behind the family residence. The building had a 3-stall horse barn and an attached workspace with a high sloping ceiling, perfect for Yostel's larger works. There were no windows, but a large skylight on the north provided illumination.

Most of his early studio work was ecclesiastical (candlesticks, chalices, ciboria, crucifixes, statuary, "Stations of the Cross," and panels of Jesus, Mary, the Apostles, and local Archbishops.) His work can be seen in churches throughout the Tri-State – including Madeira's St. Gertrude Church. His bronze church pieces were cast at the Mueller Foundry in Munich, and occasional trips back to his homeland reunited George with his family.

When ecclesiastical work waned, Yostel was sought after for commemorative portraiture. He worked mostly from photographs because many of his plaques were surprise gifts to their subjects or memorials. After composing at his drafting table, Yostel made impressions into which molten bronze was poured. He had more than 500 sculpting tools, many of which he made himself. Subjects included Truman, Kennedy and Nixon, as well as 54 Hall of Fame figures for the University of Michigan and all the plaques for the Sports Hall of Fame in Charleston, W.V. He also created insignia plaques for major U.S. nuclear battleships and trophies and awards for the Naval Academy and the Pentagon.

Yostel taught for 5 years at Villa Madonna College and later gave private lessons in sculpture, sketching, painting, and metal sculpture in silver and gold. He continued riding, using a rink with jumps in his yard and traversing local trails. George formed the Trotting Equestrian Group for youths under 16, and his daughter participated in the group's shows in the Village and at Cincinnati Gardens.

Mrs. Yostel did the accounting, as commissions poured in for her husband's intricate works of bronze, aluminum, silver, stone, and plaster. Once during the Eisenhower Presidency, he was asked to duplicate an exquisite soup tureen that was a gift of the Shah of Iran. Local jewelers engaged him to fashion elegant original ornaments for clients – he even completed a faux Faberge egg from a photograph. His last major commission was 56 bronze portraits of the Kentucky governors and life size figures of the State Seal's Statesman and Frontiersman shaking hands. Yostel died the day after this work was dedicated, June 2, 1982.

Over the years Yostel held two solo exhibits – at the Village Administrative Office and at the Cincinnati Art Club. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters and Humanities from Great Lakes College for outstanding work in Fine Arts. After his death, professional sculptors sought to learn his special technique of portraying the eyes of his subjects in portraiture.

George Yostel captured emotions in his works. His attention to detail, work ethic, and precise touch is evident in all his pieces. He had a unique flair, a rare talent, a sensitive touch; and his legacy still endures for all who witness his surviving art.

