



As the nation observes the 100th anniversary of entry into The Great War, the Museum at the Portage recalls the war years with a display of memorabilia from several families of men who served in the war, Dr. William Taylor, Maynard Whitney, Francis Sweeney, and William Tanke. The artifacts will be on display through 2018 at the Museum.

The Museum at the Portage will host the 27th annual "Zona Gale Celebrates Friendship Village" event when it opens its doors at 10 am on Saturday August 18. Also included with the day's activities will be the traditional pie and ice cream social on the lawn at the Women's Civic League clubhouse from 2-4 p.m.

Portage Historical Society
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August 2018



Portage Historical Society Museum at the Portage

804 MacFarlane Rd., Portage, WI

Promising career cut short for Portage artist

A promising career in art was cut short when Forrest Flower died in 1948. A Portage native, his talent was recognized by Zona Gale who encouraged him to attend art school after graduating from Portage High School. He graduated from Layton School of Art in Milwaukee in 1934. Flower was one of eight children. One of his sisters was Emma Selbach, mother of Museum docent Sarah Mautz.



Forrest Flower, high school senior

An article from the Milwaukee Journal in May, 1936, reports that Holger Cahill, then director of the Federal Arts Project, was among those who believed that in Flower he had a glimpse of a future artist of the first rank. According to

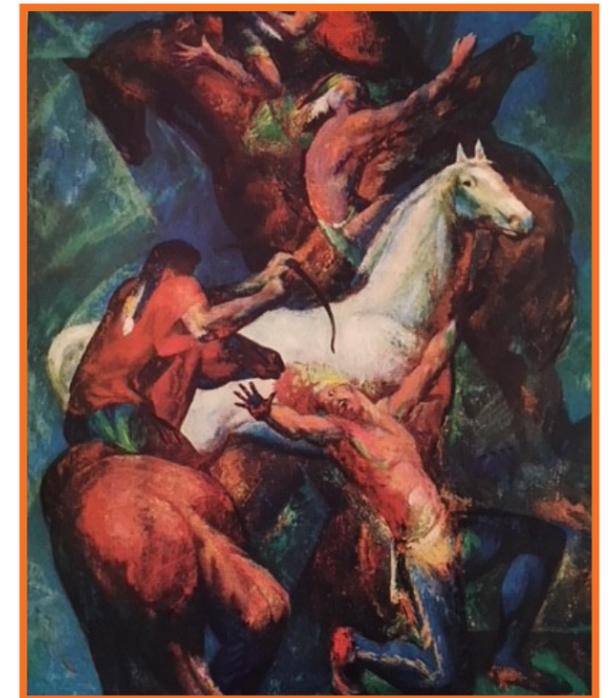


This painting is owned by Portage Historical Society and on exhibit at the Museum.

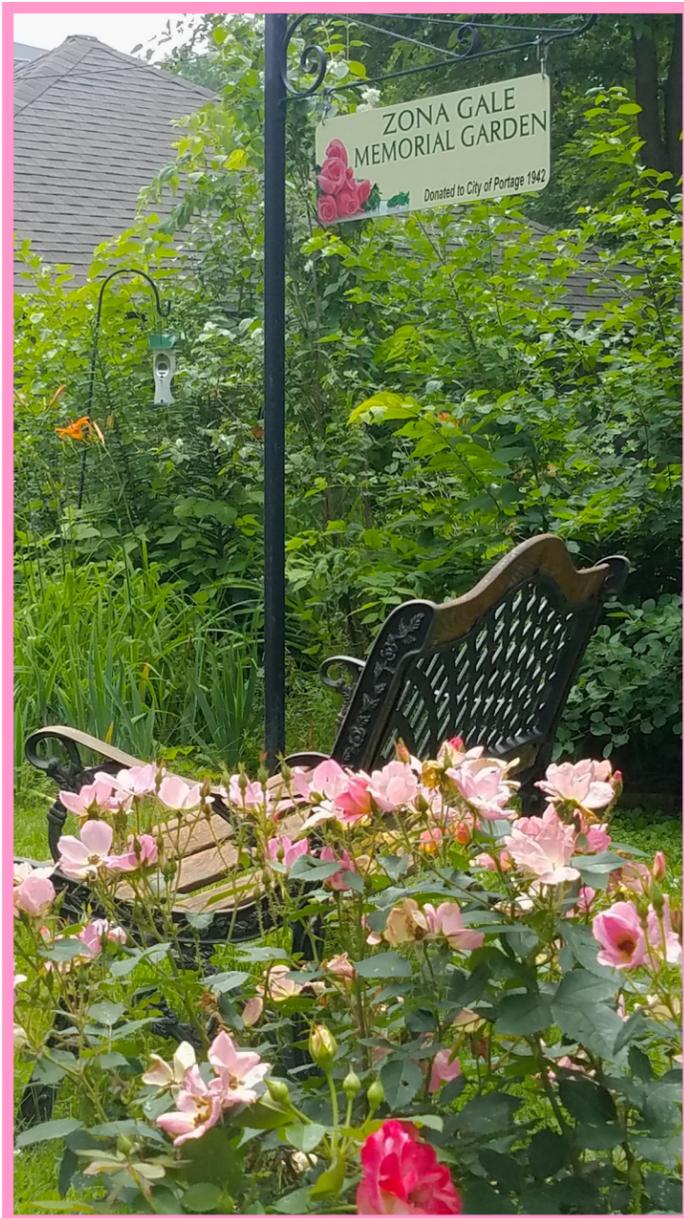
the article, Flower was "painting for the government" at the time. He received commissions from the Treasury Department to paint murals at the Viroqua and Rice Lake post offices, and also painted murals at a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in Michigan when employed by the Federal Arts Project. The Federal Arts Project (like other New Deal programs created during the depths of the Great Depression) provided work for unskilled workers as well as highly skilled artists, crafts-

men and technicians. The artist also completed a mural at the University of Wisconsin law library.

Flower was a prolific artist and his work was exhibited at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., Rockefeller Center in New York, The Art Institute of Chicago and the Boston Museum. In 1939, his painting, "The White Hat,"



This painting by Forrest Flower was one of four by Wisconsin artists illustrating an article in Life magazine (Nov. 1948) about the Centennial Exhibit at Gimble's for which artists used media of their choice to depict a moment from the state's past. In this painting Native Americans are capturing horses from the Army during the Blackhawk War. This theme is also the subject of the mural at the Viroqua Post Office, commissioned by the Department of the Treasury in 1942.



Next time you see Ann Marie Fuerst, or John and Lila Waldman, thank them for tending the Memorial Garden at the Museum at the Portage. Their hard work is appreciated!

Member Appreciation Night September 12, invite a guest

Peter Shrake a lifelong Wisconsin resident and currently the archivist at Circus World Museum in Baraboo, will provide the program for the annual Member Appreciation Night on Sept. 12. He is the author of *The Silver Man: The Life and Times of Indian Agent John Kinzie*, and has written numerous articles relating to Wisconsin and Upper Midwest history. He earned his master's degree in history from UW-Eau Claire, and master's degree in library and information studies from UW—Madison.



The event will be from 4:30—7 pm at the Museum, and appetizers and refreshments will be served. Shrake's presentation will be from 5:30—6:30 pm. Current supporters of Portage Historical Society are encouraged to attend, and also to bring a guest. Reservations are requested to assist with planning for the event. Reservations may be made with a call to Melody 742-6082 or to Sarah at 742-1319.

Forrest Flower (cont'd from page 1)

took top honors in the oil class at the University of Wisconsin Memorial Union's sixth annual Salon of Wisconsin Art. As one observer noted "he seems to be able to go into a mood suited to the subject." For instance, the large mural executed for the Beaver Dam High School, "Power" is a thing of action," reports the Milwaukee Journal. "It does not take much imagination to feel the whirl of the gigantic flywheel" as witnessed by the nearby machinist. Similarly, the mural at the Viroqua post office depicts muscular Sac and Fox Native Americans riding off with Cavalry horses during the Blackhawk War. But the same artist also painted a watercolor of a gladioli, and several in soft pastel shades, including one owned and on exhibit at the Museum at the Portage.

In December, 1948, cancer took the life of this versatile artist who is said to have had portrait commissions valued at \$17,000 at the time of his death.

Thanks to Sarah Mautz, a niece of Forrest Flower, for providing information for this article.



Jim Gorman (left) of Gorman Contracting Renovation and Restoration Specialists observes as a worker installs new storm windows for the Museum at the Portage. The new custom storm windows will protect the vintage original windows of the building from water damage. Gorman spearheaded the restoration of the building in 2014 after an electrical short caused a small fire, resulting in smoke and water damage to the building and artifacts.

Happening nearby for history lovers

Aug. 18, 19, All students, teachers and their families get \$5 admission to **Circus World Museum**, 9 am – 4 pm

Sept. 15: "A Funeral at the Fort;" Living History **Reenactment**; 9 am—4 pm, Historic Indian Agency House. Call 742-6362 for details.

Sept 23, at 1:30 pm Jessica Michna as Laura Ingalls Wilder **Road to the Little House** at Marquette County Historical Society, 125 Lawrence St., Westfield.

Midcontinent Railway Museum, North Freedom **Wine on the Rails**, Sept 16; **Beer Train**, Oct. 6; **Elegant Dinner Train**, Oct. 6, 13 & 20; Call 608-522-4261 for more information, reservations.

Guided tour with archeologist of **effigy mounds, pictographs, and petroglyphs** at Mound Mound (Sauk Co.) and Roche a Cri State Park, (Adams Co.) Oct. 3, 9:30 am –1:30 pm.; \$30/person. Reservation required, Call Jane Considine, 608-697-7358 for more information.

Holiday events scheduled for Portage Historical Society

The Museum at the Portage will be closed for the season at the end of October, but that doesn't mean the Historical Society won't be busy. On November 23, the Society will have an entry in the Holiday Parade (4-6 pm), and on December 8, you'll see the Society represented with an entry in the Living Windows event downtown. Stroll through downtown Portage to see vignettes from the past in store windows, and enjoy a warm beverage and some treats. It's a great event for the whole family.

Portage Historical Society

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To mark National Fire Prevention Month, Chief Clayton Simonson of the Portage Fire Department will provide a program about the history of the department at program at 6 pm on October 10 at the Museum. We hope to see you there!

