

FELLOWSHIPS

Shannon, Chas

637 South Court Street
Montgomery, Alabama
October 15, 1939

Rept

Mr. George M. Reynolds
4901 Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

Enclosed is a report on the progress I have made with my work since I requested a renewal of my fellowship.

I should like to have the newspaper and magazine clippings which I included in my last application for a fellowship. Would you send them to me when it is convenient?

MS

returned

Very truly yours,

11/30/4

Charles Shannon

Charles Shannon

CS/jnl

REPORT OF PROGRESS

My work, as I outlined the first of the year, has been divided principally between painting and doing what I could to help plan, organize and develop New South. I enclose the constitution and prospectus of New South.

The latter project, an art center we shall call it (though it is much more than that) has been very important for two reasons. First, because I have felt the artists' needs to be needed, and to become a part of society instead of some strange being apart from the people. Second, because I have felt the layman's need of a fuller cultural life, the backbone of which should be native work; and, in some cases, for some sort of expression in the arts. The work has been carried on in a truly democratic spirit and has been satisfying and successful.

Our policy has been to create interest and start activity first -- money, second. This has seemed to us more real than raising money, then presenting things to the people.

Now, we have three art classes; two at night, one of which I teach; and a Saturday morning class comprised mostly of children which is also mine. A German class meets once a week. A discussion group meets once a week. A writers group has been formed and meets every Monday night to read and criticize each

others work; a publication is its aim. An English literature class begins soon. Sunday night phonograph concerts followed by discussion are part of the Music Group's activity. They also are planning other musical programs. A Theater Group has been organized and is now searching for plays written by Southern people. Next week we begin our first play to be directed and carried out by the group.

Since June we have had exhibitions of Southern pottery and of several Southern painters. In July I designed and, with assistance, executed an exhibit, "Growth of Corn". A whole room was designed, using papier-mache sculpture, posters, paintings, mobiles (after Alexander Calder) etc. -- attempting to express with art forms an idea, the cycle of growth.

Next month we bring to Montgomery an exhibit of Highland Handicrafts. Following that, New South will show drawings by an old Negro man whom I have been supplying with materials, and whose work I have been buying for some time.

New South should be a real force in making art a part of everyday life here.

Since I requested a renewal of my fellowship, I have done much painting. I have completed several canvases: some landscapes, some concerning the Negro and his environment. I have made many watercolors and drawings: landscapes, poor Negroes and poor white people. I painted my first fresco, a mural eight by four feet, in New South. It depicts the old Negro artist, of

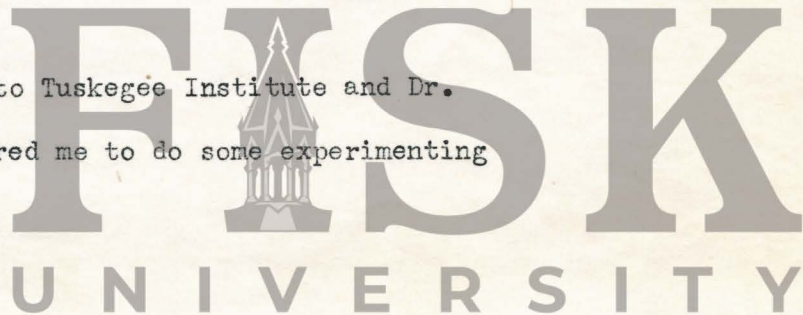
whom I spoke, and some of his work. Recently I entered a design in the W. P. A. competition for the Eutaw, Alabama, post office mural job. This design showed cotton pickers laboring before an old plantation house.

A few weeks ago, I sent a canvas "Boy with Book" (a Negro worker studying) to the Carnegie International Exhibit in Pittsburg. My painting, "The Lover", has been in the Golden Gate Exposition international show and won third prize. It has been one of the fifty paintings selected from that show to tour Canada. I have been invited to send a painting to the American exhibit at the Whitney Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Now, I am living here in my cabin studio in the country, painting five days a week and giving the other two days (and nights) to New South. If I have enough paintings finished by the first of the year, I will have a one-man show at the Gallery of Mrs. Cornelius Sullivan in New York. It is important to me that my work be shown in the South -- and that it remain here. I propose to work toward that end.

In the spring, I gave a talk in Birmingham at the Southeastern Art Conference on "The Artist Interprets Problems of Society". I served on the jury for the Birmingham Art Club's annual exhibit.

Repeated visits to Tuskegee Institute and Dr. Carver's Museum there have stirred me to do some experimenting



with clay paints and weaving with plant fibres. I am planning some work for the students in our community school here. They are now bringing samples of colored clays. They will mix their own paints and use them in making friezes for their classrooms.

Charles E. Shannon
Charles E. Shannon

October 15, 1939

FISK

UNIVERSITY