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Minerva Teichert: Scriptorian and Artist

Marian Ashby Johnson

Minerva Kolhepp Teichert (1888–1976) lived most of her life in rural Idaho and Wyoming. From these rather unlikely foundations, she pushed herself out to fulfill her desire to become an artist with an excellent academic training at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students' League in New York City.

Included in this issue are six of the more than forty Book of Mormon paintings which she felt were her most important work. By the time she painted them, she had reared five children, pitched hay, broken horses, raised chickens, homesteaded by herself, and all the while had painted in her living room and recited Book of Mormon scriptures on almost any given occasion.

As a scriptorian, Teichert tried to pick out instances which would illustrate stories of the Book of Mormon. She was especially interested in subjects which depicted women. For example, *Morianton's Little Servant*, relates the story of Morianton's servant girl who has been punished unjustly and to retaliate has come to tell Nephi's guards what she knows about Morianton's military plans. Teichert has given strong emphasis to this painting with the firelight as a radiant exclamation point to the girl's message.

The painting entitled *Lamanite Maidens* depicts women dressed in white who dance and sing as they enjoy a beautiful day together by a stream. The movement and grace of this painting is highlighted with characteristic touches of red to add to the zest of a day without work.

Nephi and His Followers Traveling through the Wilderness is an example of Teichert's skill with monumental paintings. Figures, landscape, and animals are balanced in an academic composition revealing her excellent training. The women who carry their pots on their heads serve as a focal point emphasizing the realistic and tedious conditions of travel at that time.

Alma Baptizing is a sketch for a later painting. The spiritual quality of Teichert's paintings comes to fruition through the storytelling (the sum total of the figures and their actions) rather than by the expressions on the faces of her figures. The scene is serene and quiet, drawing the viewer in to experience this sacred event.

On the covers are two more Teichert paintings. *Look to Your Children* has a unique format filled with the radiance of ministering angels and children. On closer inspection, it is women who have the precious occupation as "mothering" angels—a Teichert touch. In *Christ Is the God of That Land*, Teichert has painted Christ in all his glory and power, yet with the sensitivity of a man understanding the human condition. Teichert was deeply concerned with the spiritual message of her paintings.

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Minerva H. Teichert, *Morianton's Little Servant*

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Minerva H. Teichert, *Lamanite Maidens*

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Minerva H. Teichert, Nephi and His Followers Traveling through the Wilderness

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Minerva H. Teichert, Alma Baptizing