It's Time for Watercoloring
by Bayou Lafourche Waters

New York Artist Whitney Visiting Madewood

By CLAIRE PUNEKY
(Napoleonville, La.)

It's watercolor time beside the waters of Bayou Lafourche, and the setting is the historic and romantic mansion called "Madewood," with its spacious grounds and live oaks.

Here for these past four days has been New York watercolorist Edgar A. Whitney, and he has taken the brush to some lovely views of the estate, and there are a number of artists who are "brushing up" on their brushwork.

"Madewood" is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Marshall of New Orleans. Their son Keith has inaugurated the local watercolor wonderland and plans to continue it as an annual event. It originated last year, and many of those who were here then have returned.

The weather was threatening Thursday morning when the painting sessions began, but it apparently meant nothing to those interested in sketching and coloring the "Madewood" scene. On stools on the lawn they sat around the 81-year-old noted painter.

BRIGHT EXAMPLES

They laughed at his ready wit and absorbed the seriousness of what he was telling them along with the bright verbal examples. Earlier, they had been fortified with hot coffee and biscuits in the old plantation kitchen.

This was the procedure for the first three days of the weekend, with a typically Southern style lunch at 1, and lots of painting and instruction in between.

At the outset, Whitney had this to say to the group surrounding him, some from Louisiana, others from other states.

"There's no mystery about art." Then he added, "Art is rational." This is his thesis, and he hobbies for ease, calling tension the artist's worst enemy.

Among the group that will fold its easels and camp stools and slip away to their homes and occupations at the end of this Sunday's daylight are some professionals, some amateurs and some would-be artists who are.

Mrs. Lawrence B. Martin, who has taught art at a small college, Stanley Rames, who teaches watercolor at Tulane University in New Orleans, said he has come to "brush up."

Mrs. Helen C. Lapeyrouse of Houma had come last year and said she knew nothing about watercoloring when she began. With her it was an enjoyable hobby.

Mrs. Claire de la Vergne Rault of New Orleans was on her second watercolor stint here and was looking forward to her daughter Kit's arrival on Sunday morning.

So was Keith Marshall, who said that Miss Rault and a friend, Elizabeth McRoberts, had a special program of their own scheduled for 10 a.m. Sunday, that of launching Miss Rault's new Christmas present canoe in front of "Madewood" in Bayou Lafourche.

FRESHENING UP

From Hattiesburg, Miss., Peter Potter, owner of a hobby shop, said he was here to freshen up on watercolor.

Charles J. Cody of Terre Haute, Indiana, who paints professionally, said he had studied under Whitney in Maine. There were others from Kentucky and other areas assembling at the outset.

Whitney, who has Jackie Onassis among his New York students, was accompanied to this area by his wife, a retired remedial reading specialist and a writer.

It takes a lot of energy to keep an activity such as the watercolor weekend going full tilt and Keith Marshall has plenty of that.

After the day of painting the group daily gets in cars and travels to some restaurant in the vicinity for dinner.

Sunday's schedule calls for a brunch at 12:30, in addition to the painting routine. Then there will be a lecture-demonstration at 3. The weekend will close with a reception following the lecture.

Then everybody will leave. But along with those who have been here the four days will go watercolored remembrances of a rewarding period.

This antebellum home built long generations ago by the Pugh family is a perfect setting for a painting of a countryside that is rich historic lore.

EDGAR A. WHITNEY Discusses art.

In their first attempt at it.

PRATT INSTITUTE

From St. Charles, Illinois, came John E. Vawter, who was also a member of last year's local group. Asked why he comes down to Louisiana for these weekends, he said that he had been at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y., when Whitney taught there.

He said that he had not been so fortunate as to have Whitney for a teacher then and there but now he has the opportunity to do some studying under him.

Vawter is a graduate architectural engineer who mastered his fine arts. In addition to Pratt, he studied at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. In everyday life he is a railroad specialist, selling chemical herbicides to railroads.

A large number came from New Iberia in the heart of Louisiana's Teche country. One was Carl Groh, 17, a Catholic High School student, who has been drawing and painting since he was six.

His teacher, Mrs. Bill Rimes, was in her second year here. Mrs. Betty Broussard of New Iberia, who started a year ago, liked what she learned and returned.

CHOOSE AS HOBBY

Mrs. Broussard, a former teacher, said of the watercoloring that she is doing something she always wanted to do. Mrs. Marshall B. Ewing of Alexandria, La., a former teacher also, now is a housewife and has chosen this field as a hobby.

From Jackson, Miss., came Mrs. Dwight G. Harris, who has taught art at a small college. Stanley Rames, who teaches watercolor at Tulane University in New Orleans, said he has come to "brush up."

Mrs. Helen C. Lapeyrouse of Houma had come last year and said she knew nothing about watercoloring when she began. With her it was an enjoyable hobby.

Mrs. Claire de la Vergne Rault of New Orleans was on her second watercolor stint here and was looking forward to her daughter Kit's arrival on Sunday morning.