

Subject: Spotlight on Anton

LINDSBORG

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SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE
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For Immediate Release
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Anton Pearson

Three Generations of Woodcarvers

LINDSBORG, KANSAS - 09/22/2011 - In 1912, Anton Pearson unsuccessfully tried to book a passage on the RMS Titanic as the ship was already filled to capacity. Within this failure, Lindsborg eventually received one of its most talented carvers who would shape the artistic community as it is known today.

Pearson was born in Lund, Sweden on May 23, 1892 and started experimenting with carving by the age of nine. After studying at the Technical School in Lund, Pearson eventually immigrated to America. On his way to San Francisco, Pearson stopped in Lindsborg and met Swedish painter Birger Sandzén. Studying painting under Sandzén, at Bethany College, Pearson still created carvings on the side. After graduation, he saw a niche for woodcarving.

In true adventuring immigrant style, Pearson decided to travel by horse and buggy through the Midwest, landing in Dubuque, Iowa. Pearson then somehow turned the buggy roof into a boat to float down the Mississippi.

On his eventual return to Lindsborg, Pearson met Grace Lane, who studied piano at Bethany College. In August of 1929, Anton and Grace married. They had their home built at 505 S. Main Street which was completed in 1929 with extensive gardens and a lily pond. A detached studio was added later to the rear of the property. The house and studio are two of the most distinctive and delightful buildings in Lindsborg and currently the base for the Lindsborg Arts Council.



Carving by Anton Pearson

Carving almost exclusively for the rest of his life, Pearson built all of his own knives. He worked in redwood, catalpa, walnut, bass, cottonwood, gum and limestone. He had to quit the redwood and limestone as he eventually became sensitive to the dust. He used logs that aged for several years until the possibility of splintering passed. To Pearson, one could die waiting for inspiration, he had faith in ambition.

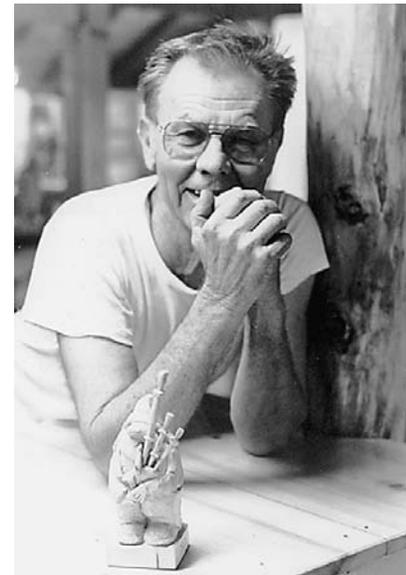


Carvings by Anton Pearson

Pearson's carved figures are of the pioneer stock that settled the Smoky Valley area. Tough, a bit rough with hands sometimes in pockets and exaggerated feet, hunched backs, scrunched, weathered patient faces, his figures epitomized the strength and character of the immigrants. He also carved animals of all shapes and sizes, primarily from a single piece of wood.

Pearson believed in Lindsborg. He was the first person to donate money, \$100 to be exact, to Max Muller for the creation of Broadway RFD which is to this day remains the longest running outdoor theatre in Kansas. It was Pearson's idea to plant trees instead of parking meters on Main Street. He welcomed busload after busload of children to visit his studio. Even as many of his carvings celebrated the past of pioneer life, Pearson looked to the future. He embraced the thousands of youths that visited his studio over the years.

Anton Pearson passed away on March 5, 1967. His carvings reside in every state of the US and in Europe. The studio was then handed over to Norman Malm, Pearson's son-in-law who descended from a notable artistic family. Malm was born in November, 1928. He married Rosemary Pearson in November 1952. A talented woodcarver, painter and cartoonist, Malm was a perfect fit for continuing the studio. When asked where Malm's cartoon muse came from, his wife Rosemary answered, "His heart, his head and his wicked personality!" Tomtes, mythical Scandinavian figures, were another one of Malm's signature icons. He worked in various woods, pine being his favorite. In February 2007, Malm was the recipient of the Lindsborg Arts Council's Arts and Humanities Award for his outstanding contributions to the community. Norman Malm passed away August 10, 2011.



Norman Malm and Tomte

Both men, even though not related by blood, were known for their wit, welcoming natures and contributing their talents to Lindsborg. Their legacy continues as Jim Malm, grandson to Anton and son of Norman exhibits his carvings as well at the Anton Pearson Studio.

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