

Memorial Exhibition

THE WORKS OF
CARLOS VIERRA



THE GREAT DIVIDE

JANUARY, 1938

SCHOOL OF AMERICAN RESEARCH

SANTA FE, N. M.

MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO

CARLOS VIERRA, 1876-1937

Carlos Vierra, who died in Santa Fe on December 20, 1937, was a native of California, of Portuguese descent, born near Monterey, October 3, 1876. He studied art under Gittardo Piazzoni in San Francisco. Before he was 21 he had voyaged around the Horn in a sail boat, and arrived in New York to continue his studies. There he became well known as a marine painter and cartoonist. Ill health brought him to New Mexico in 1904 and he was among the early painters who attracted visitors from all the world to the Old Capital. He was married, in 1910, to Ada T. Ogle, who survives him.

"Soldier, sailor, painter, archaeologist, architect and builder, Carlos Vierra left an imprint on Santa Fe that will endure for ages. His was a brave soul. His thirty years in Santa Fe were a constant battle for what is true in art and architecture. To him we owe the most complete photographic record of Indian pueblos and Franciscan missions and churches in New Mexico with a wealth of design which is serving students, scholars, and builders in manifold ways. Out of these grew the fine series of paintings of New Mexico missions which, through the generosity of the late Frank Springer and the artist himself, are a permanent heritage of the people of New Mexico. They have a place of honor in the entrance hall of the Art Museum.

"However, it was his association with the School of American Research, with its director, Edgar L. Hewett, and its staff, especially such members as Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley, Kenneth M. Chapman, and Jesse L. Nusbaum, which gave eagerly seized opportunities to Vierra to take a decisive part in the remodeling of the long neglected Palace of the Governors, the building of the Art Museum, embodying in its architecture most of the salient features of the New Mexico missions, in the renaissance of Santa Fe architecturally.

"It was Vierra's insistence upon purity of style that saved Santa Fe from many an architectural monstrosity which sought actuality under false pretenses. Up to the time of his death he guarded the integrity of the Pueblo and the Spanish Colonial architecture with a zeal often leading to heated controversy. That Santa Fe is not only a 'city different' but also a 'city beautiful' is more largely owing to him, perhaps, than to any other one individual.

"In the Guatemala jungle and on the Yucatan uplands he followed this bent for art and architectural study. As a member of the expeditions of the School of American Research, he made the notes which blossomed into great murals of the Maya cities as he visualized them in their pristine glory. Chichen Itza, Uxmal, Quirigua, Copan, and Palenque were thus represented, not from imagination but from intensive study on the ground. They are the pride of the California building in Balboa Park, San Diego. His enthusiasm for

archaeological research led him to be the pioneer in aerial photography of prehistoric ruins in the United States. He photographed the Chaco Canyon a short time before Lindbergh made his famous photographic flight over the same section of New Mexico.

"Vierra painted the sea and the American scene with an adherence to classic precepts. This won him the friendship of the late Frank Springer, a generous patron of art and architecture in Santa Fe. It was for him that Vierra built the remarkable home on the southern loma overlooking Santa Fe in which he exemplified with exactness the principles of Pueblo architecture as adapted to modern residence and studio needs.

"The St. Francis murals, planned by the late Donald Beauregard, three of which were painted by Vierra, create much of the atmosphere that makes the auditorium a joy to every visitor. The mural of Columbus at the Franciscan convent at La Rabida, with the vision of the three caravels riding on the sea, so characteristic of Vierra's art, meets the eyes of those who come to hear the great organ. On the east wall are his other two murals, The "Building of the Pecos Mission," and the "Pleading of the Franciscans for the Mayas," beautiful memorials to the artist and his patron.

"Vierra loved Santa Fe passionately. He watched solicitously over its architecture, over every historic landmark, over every tree and hedge of chamisa. He reveled in the grandeur of the mountains and forests, he sought to place them

upon canvas in all their colorfulness and form. It is marvelous as one recalls his many achievements, his tirelessness, his zeal, and contrasts them with the weakness of ill health, with the formidable obstacles Vierra had to overcome.

"Vierra cannot be replaced. He was *sui generis*, a genius of whom Santa Fe had reason to be proud and to whose memory it must be grateful. Of such it was that the poet wrote:

Far trails await me; valleys vast and still
Vistas undreamed of, canyon-guarded streams,
Lowland and range, fair meadow, flower-girt hill
Forest enchanted, filled with magic dreams.

And I shall find brave comrades on the way;
None shall be lonely in adventuring.
For each a chosen task to round the day,
New glories to amaze, new songs to sing."

GROUP NO. I

Mission Churches of New Mexico

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| Sandia | Tesuque |
| Acoma | Laguna |
| Taos | Santa Clara |
| Jemez | Zia |
| Cochiti | San Felipe |
| San Juan | San Ildefonso |
| Picuris | Zia |

As the Sky Father Builds
Early Morning at Jemez Pueblo

GROUP NO. II

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|---|------------------------|
| Black Mesa | Nambe |
| Portrait of Carlos Vierra by Carl Lotave (Loaned by Mrs. A. B. Renchan) | Walpi |
| Canyoncito | Rio en Medio |
| Rio en Medio | The Mayor of Alcalde |
| Walpi | Hopi Ceremony |
| The Great Divide | Taos Meadows |
| San Juan | (Under the Stairs) |
| Cottonwoods | Nambe |
| | Sunrise ceremony, Hopi |
| | Chama |

GROUP NO. III

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| La Cienega, No. 1 | Ranchito Rio Grande |
| Chimayo, No. 1 | Rio en Medio |
| Santa Fe Canyon | |
| La Cienega, No. 2 | Summer |
| Chimayo, No. 2 | Oraibi |
| Spring Snow | Barranca |



LA CIENEGA
(A Small Village Near Santa Fe)