



PALMER HAYDEN

*With love and
very best wishes
to Julia and Family
From
Uncle Peyton*

THE JOHN HENRY
SERIES
and
PAINTINGS
REFLECTING THE THEME
OF
AFRO-AMERICAN
FOLKLORE

Mar. 1st *30*
~~February 22~~-March 20, 1970

THE ART GALLERY
Fisk University
Nashville, Tenn.

See Foreword inside

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by
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Foreword

Palmer C. Hayden was born on January 15, 1890 in the town of Widewater, Virginia, and christened Peyton Cole Hedgeman, son of Nancy and James Hedgeman. He was educated in the public schools of that state, and took his first drawing lessons from a correspondence school while serving in the United States Army during World War I. After his period of enlistment, during which he saw service in the Philippines and at West Point and kept up the drawing he had begun as a child, he returned to New York and took part-time work in Greenwich Village to earn a livelihood while studying art with Victor Perard, Art Instructor at Cooper Union.

In 1925 he studied painting at the Boothbay Art Colony in Maine under Asa G. Randall on a working fellowship doing chiefly boats and marine subjects. These works he exhibited the following year at the Civic Club in New York, and won the William E. Harmon Award of gold medal and \$400 with a painting of the Portland water-front. As a result of this recognition he was given an additional sum of \$3000 by a friend who was a patron of the arts to enable him to continue his studies abroad.

He went to France in 1927 where he studied in Paris and in Brittany under private instruction from M. Clivette Lefevre, Art Instructor at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. He gave a one-man show at the Galerie Bernheim Jeune in Paris in November, 1928, and exhibited in the group shows: Salon des Tuilleries, Paris in 1930, and the American Legion Exhibition, Paris, 1931. In the latter he showed paintings of Negro subjects, somewhat unusual at the time, of which two were sold.

He was also represented in the Harmon exhibitions of 1928 to 1933. In the exhibition of 1933 he won Mrs. John D. Rockefeller's Prize for painting with his "Fetiché et Fleurs." His work was shown in the Harmon Foundation College Art Traveling Exhibitions of 1934-1935; in the New Jersey State Museum 1935; and the Roerich Museum, New York, 1935. Paintings were sold to Atlanta University and to various individuals, including Monsignor William Cashin, who purchased the painting of St. Andrews Church; and to Mr. Trevor Arnett, "Marronniers en Fleurs."



He worked on the United States Treasury Art Project and the WPA Art Project from 1934-1940, doing easel paintings of the New York water-front and other local subjects.

Since 1940 he has been chiefly painting Negro life in the United States. "The Baptizing" included in the exhibition "Negro Art Comes of Age" presented by the Albany Museum of Art and Science in 1945 was represented in *LIFE MAGAZINE* in the issue of July 22, 1946. The culmination of ten years' work was the showing in the Argent Gallery on 57th street in New York of the John Henry paintings, which presented in a series of twelve vivid scenes the life and death of the folk hero immortalized in the *Ballad of John Henry*. A special showing of these paintings and others dealing with Negro folklore was held at the Countee Cullen Library in New York in 1952. Of his *John Henry Series* which highlights this exhibition, the artist made the following statement:

The song of John Henry, the steel-driving man, I first heard when a boy in my early teens at home in Virginia. At that age whenever I heard the ballad sung by older boys or men at work, it appealed to me chiefly because it told in sober words and tune the life and tragic death of a powerful and popular working man who belonged to my section of the country and to my own race.

As I grew older, I came to realize the deeper significance of the story

and the literary value of the ballad. To the Negroes in our country at the time of the building of the Big Bend Tunnel, their physical strength and ability, and willingness to use it was their chief asset in the struggle for economic survival. Hence, to them, John Henry became a symbol of greatness and so popular a folk hero that during his day and for several generations following many Negro babies in the Southern States were christened for him.

The epic also, through the personality of John Henry, dramatizes the beginning of the movement of the Negro from agricultural into industrial labor, and the practical use of machinery in place of hand labor in the development of industrial America.

John Henry was not made up of the whole cloth nor was he the Negro counterpart of the mythical Paul Bunyan, but did live and work in the Big Bend Tunnel in West Virginia.

Recent showings have been with the annual exhibitions of the American Veterans' Society of Artists held in New York, a watercolor "Old Paris Prison" receiving an Honorable Mention in 1965 show. He was represented in the large exhibition "The Evolution of the Afro-American Artist" sponsored by the City University of New York, the Urban League, and the Harlem Cultural Council and presented in the fall of 1967 in the great hall of the City University. Two of his paintings were shown: a French fishing Village scene, "The Quai at Concarneau," and an early work "The Janitor who Paints" loaned for the occasion by the Smithsonian Institute from its Permanent Collection of Fine Arts.

At present he is engaged in painting scenes which suggest racial cosmopolitanism. A very successful showing of the *John Henry Series* was recently held at The Fine Arts Gallery of the University of Pittsburgh in the Frick Fine Arts Gallery in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and was well received by art patrons, and the general public alike.

The Department of Art is profoundly happy to present the works of Palmer Hayden as a part of its important Afro-American series and numbers the artist foremost among the many contributors to African-American folklore.

DAVID C. DRISKELL
Chairman
Department of Art



When John Henry was a Baby

Oil

Catalogue

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|---|---------------|
| 1. When John Henry was a Baby | Oil 30" x 40" |
| 2. He Laid Down His Hammer and Cried | Oil 30" x 40" |
| 3. The Dress She Wore Was Blue | Oil 30" x 40" |
| 4. John Henry Was the Best in the Land | Oil 30" x 40" |
| 5. Where'd You Git Them Hightop Shoes? | Oil 30" x 40" |
| 6. My Hammer in the Wind | Oil 30" x 40" |
| 7. A Man Ain't Nothin' But a Man | Oil 30" x 40" |
| 8. John Henry on The Right.
Steam Drill on The Left. | Oil 30" x 40" |

9. Died Wid His Hammer in His Hand	Oil 30" x 40"
10. Going Where Her Man Fell Dead	Oil 30" x 40"
11. There Lies That Steel-drivin' Man	Oil 30" x 40"
12. John Henry	Oil 30" x 40"
13. Baptizing Day	Oil 27½" x 34½"
14. Locomotive	Oil 27" x 35"
15. The Blue Nile	Watercolor 19" x 26½"
16. When Tricky Sam Shot Father Lamb	Oil 39" x 29½"
17. Baltimore, Maryland	Watercolor 22" x 29½"
18. No Easy Rider	Oil 35" x 26½"
19. The Blues Singer	Oil 30" x 40"
20. Song and Dance Boy	Oil 21½" x 27½"
21. Cavalry Man	Watercolor 30" x 22"
22. Milking Time	Watercolor 29" x 30"



Midsummer Night in Harlem

Oil

**PARTIAL LIST OF EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH
PALMER C. HAYDEN
HAS BEEN REPRESENTED**

GALLERIE BERNHEIM JEUNE—Paris, November, 1928—One-man Show

SALON DES TUILLERIES—Paris, 1930—Group Show

AMERICAN LEGION EXHIBITION—Paris, 1931—Group Show

HARMON FOUNDATION EXHIBITIONS AND
TRAVELING SHOWS SENT TO COLLEGES—The United States—1928-1933

NEW JERSEY STATE MUSEUM—1935

ROERICH MUSEUM—New York—1935

HARMON FOUNDATION AND
FEDERAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
COMMISSION ON RACE RELATIONS

January 1928

"American Negro Artists" International House, N.Y. "The Schooners" (in catalogue). First Award in Fine Arts: "Harmon Foundation Awards for Distinguished Achievements Among Negroes." 1926

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE

*"Paintings and Sculpture by
American Negro Artists" May
1929, Washington, D.C.*

TEXAS CENTENNIAL HALL OF
NEGRO LIFE
Dallas, Texas
June-November, 1936

*"Fine Arts Productions by Ameri-
can Negroes"
"Cafe St. Servan"
"The Carrousel"
"Fetiché et Fleur"
"Port at Sunset"*

AN AMERICAN GROUP, INC.

*"Roofs for 40 Millions"
Rockefeller Galleries Center
"Midsummer Night in Harlem"*

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART
Baltimore
February, 1939

*"Contemporary Negro Art"
"The Janitor Who Paints"
"Midsummer Night in Harlem"
"Checker Players"*

AMERICAN NEGRO EXPOSITION
Chicago
July-September 1, 1940

*"The Art of the American Negro"
"African Fetiché and Flower"
"Cavalry Stables, Versailles"
"The Shooting of Father Lamb"
"Harmon Exhibit"
"Brittany Marine"
"Cafe. St. Servan, Paris"*

POWELL HOUSE
New York—April 1945

*"Exhibition of Contemporary
American Art"*

THE AMERICAN COMMON
COUNCIL FOR
AMERICAN UNITY
New York 1945

"Art for the Home"

THE DOWNTOWN GALLERY
New York
December 9-January 3, 1942

*"American Negro Art"
"Midsummer Night in Harlem"
"The Janitor Who Paints"*

THE G PLACE GALLERY
Washington, D.C.

*"New Names in American Art"
"The Berry Pickers"*

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Atlanta, Georgia, April 1946

*"Fifth Annual Exhibition of
Paintings, Sculpture, and Prints
by Negro Artists"*

ARGENT GALLERY
New York, January 1947

*"The Ballad of John Henry in
Paintings"*

AMERICAN VETERANS SOCIETY OF
ARTISTS
New York 1955-1947

Annual Exhibitions



He Laid Down His Hammer and Cried

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
THE URBAN LEAGUE
THE HARLEM CULTURAL COUNCIL
City University of New York
October 15-November 6, 1967

*"The Evolution of Afro-American
Artists"*
"Quai at Concarneau"
"The Janitor Who Paints"

THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM
New York 1968

"Black Artists of the 30's"

THE FRICK FINE ARTS GALLERY
THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Pittsburgh—November 1969

"The Legend of John Henry"