

AAF - Chittenden, Alice

original in Scrapbooks Aug. 1941.

# ALICE CHITTENDEN AND THE ART SCHOOL

by Mildred Rosenthal



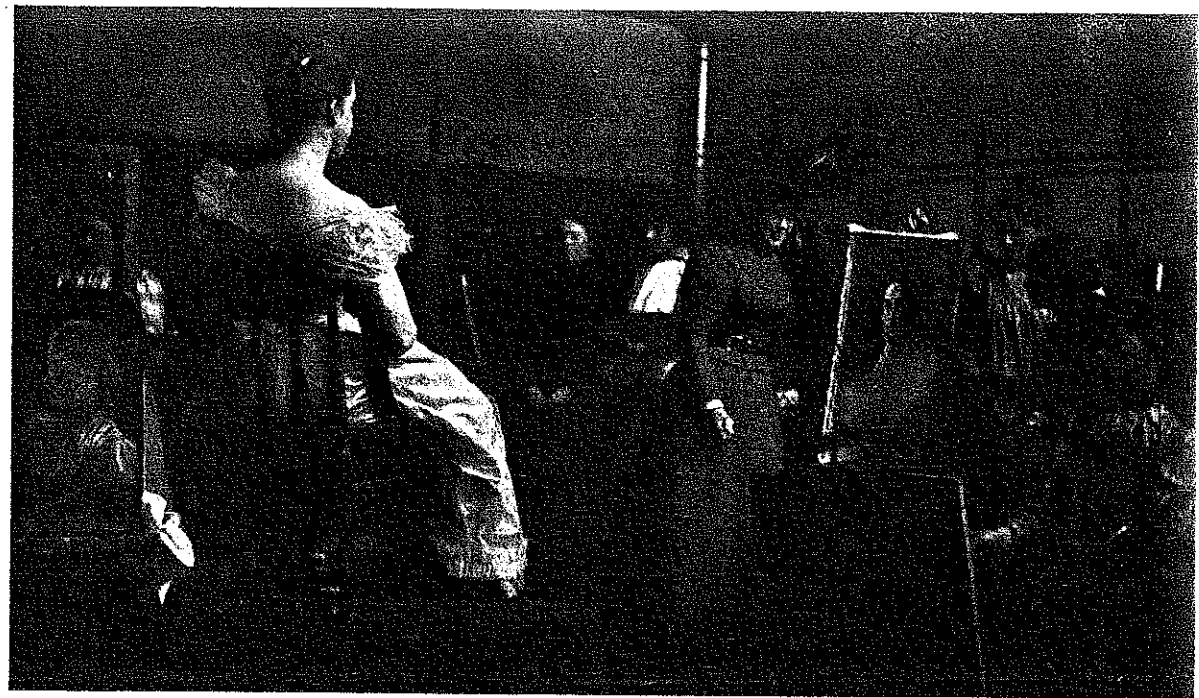
Few California artists have been as intimately associated with the growth of this state's cultural activities as has Alice Chittenden. A student of the *School of Design*, (later to be known as the California School of Fine Arts) in 1878; early member of the San Francisco Art Association and one of the first women to serve as juror in Art Association shows; teacher in the Saturday Classes of the Art School since 1897, and for years previous a member of its School Board, her recent severance as teacher in the Art School climaxes a career of unusual interest.

When Alice Chittenden enrolled in the *School of Design*, established in 1874 by the San Francisco Art Association, it was housed in a loft over the California Market on Pine Street; Virgil Williams was the sole instructor. The institution that was to become one of the important art schools in America was just being developed. The San Francisco Art

Association, organized in 1871, was then concentrating on the need for art education, and the school was beginning to share the interest of an already established Art Association gallery and library.

San Francisco as a center of business and social activity had been steadily growing, and a need for the cultivation of art was beginning to be felt. To quote Marian Hartwell in the Art Association Bulletin for May, 1937: "Thirty years charged with the drama of Western development lay behind . . . years in which a vigorous and colorful life had found its focus in San Francisco.

Wealth was increasing with fabulous rapidity. The Fairs, Stanfords, and Hopkins occupied Nob Hill, and other mansions were being built that needed elegance of decoration. In fact, art was in demand. Of lithographs and painting there was already a supply. (Continued on page 17)



Portrait Class when the school occupied the old Mark Hopkins residence. Arthur Mathews, Instructor, 1897.

## Chittenden and The Art School

(Continued from page 9)

The time was ripe for the development of a salon. . . . An isolated community with unlimited resources needed its own center of art."

Alice Chittenden soon became one of Virgil Williams' prize students. Medals for both drawing and painting establish his recognition of her ability. The school grew in scope, and Alice Chittenden matured with it. The activities of the Art Association had captured the imagination of San Franciscans, and their response to the school was immediate.

In 1893 Edward F. Scarles deeded the magnificent Mark Hopkins residence to the University of California, in trust for the San Francisco Art Association. The School became known as the *Mark Hopkins Institute of Art*, and although the old residence was better suited to the brilliant receptions and soirees of the period than for use as an institute of art education, the school flourished and the teaching staff grew. Yelland, Carlson, Narjot joined the faculty and left their impressions; Fred Yates and other early California painters served as instructors. Later, when Arthur Mathews became Dean, assisted by Amedie Jouillin and John Stanton, the school had earned its place as a recognized center of art instruction. It was in these days that Alice Chittenden served on the school board.

Then came the historic earthquake and fire of 1906, and the mansions of Nob Hill, with the school that was a landmark, were laid in ashes. On the same location a simple structure, less pretentious but better fitted to the needs of an art institute, appeared, and the school's present name was established. Swept away with the ruins were the taboos of the earlier period and a School of Fine Arts, reflecting the vitality of a new era, emerged.

The School has occupied its present location on Chestnut Street for fourteen years. It is too well known to San Franciscans and too well recognized in America to necessitate discussion in this article.

Throughout these years of growth and change, Alice Chittenden continued to play her part. She has observed the broadening of vision and approach to art teaching from her own student years, when a life class would have horrified the parents of the sentimental young ladies who studied with her, through the years of separate life classes for men and women, and on to the

large mixed classes of today. She has witnessed the transitions and modes of painting, the changes in international relationships among the artists, the powerful influence of traveling exhibitions, and through it all she has retained her enthusiasm and vitality. Indeed, she is, at present, an important member of the committee that is handling the first exhibition of the *Alumni Association of the California School of Fine Arts*, to be held in the *San Francisco Museum of Art* in the Fall.

Alice Chittenden has traveled and studied in Europe, exhibiting in Paris as well as in most of the important American exhibitions. She has won prizes, which include:

Gold Medal for Flower Painting: San Francisco Exposition of Arts and Industries, 1891.

Two Silver Medals: California State Fair, 1891-92.

Silver Medal: San Francisco Industrial Exposition, 1893.

Silver Medal: California Mid-Winter International Exposition, 1894.

Silver Medal: World Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1902-03.

Silver Medal: Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition of Seattle, 1909.

Silver Medal: Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition of Portland, 1905.

Although most San Franciscans recognize Alice Chittenden as a painter of portraits and still life, she has devoted part of her life, these past fifty years, to the painting of California wildflowers. Exploring the High Sierra country by stage and horseback, decades before our present highways were constructed, Mrs. Chittenden collected dozens of rare and little-known varieties, all of which have been named by Alice Eastwood, California scientist. Beautifully drawn, Mrs. Chittenden's wildflower portfolios represent a valuable contribution both as art and science. An exhibition of the collection at a local museum is being arranged for this Fall.

### The Care and Preservation of Cut Flowers

✿ A booklet, giving general rules and special treatment for plant material used in Flower Arrangement, published by The San Francisco Garden Club, Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, fifty-five cents post-paid anywhere in the United States. The proceeds will be given to The American Red Cross.

## RHODA ON THE ROOF

H  
A  
T  
S



## HATS

RHODA ON THE ROOF

233 POST STREET

DOUGLAS 8476

## TREASURES for VISITORS

The captivating Shop of Madame Butterfly at 430 Grant Avenue is one of the real points of interest in San Francisco with its truly colorful reflections of the Far East. Late arrivals from the Orient include an unusual selection of carvings—Birds of all kinds—Parrots, Kingfishers, Macaws, Canaries and every imaginable kind of bird beautifully carved and delicately hand painted. Figurines of the Seven Deities, all exquisitely carved in ivory. Also Jade Urns, Jade and Rose Quartz Figurines and Objects of Art ranging in price from \$35.00 to \$1500. And above all, the exquisite lounging robes, kimonoes, night gowns and pajamas, all beautifully tailored from the finest silks. So be sure to include the captivating Shop of Madame Butterfly in your next shopping tour.

Madame Butterfly

430 Grant Avenue — San Francisco