

BURTON CALLICOTT AND THE DE SOTO MURALS\*  
MARY E. MONTGOMERY, ROBERT E. DALTON, AND RONALD  
C. BRISTER

For over fifty years, few visitors to the original building of the Memphis Pink Palace Museum have failed to notice the three large murals over the staircase in the lobby. There, in bold oranges and greens and in a dramatic style, is depicted the coming of Hernando De Soto to West Tennessee. The first mural (back cover) is filled with fighting figures of Indians and Spaniards. The second (Fig 1.) shows the march of De Soto's band through the Southeast, and the third (front cover) depicts the sighting of the Mississippi River. The murals have impressed some, distressed others, and even frightened small children, at least one of whom learned how to climb all the way up the stairs without looking at them.<sup>1</sup>

Clarence Saunders, Memphis entrepreneur and founder of the Piggly Wiggly stores, had commissioned architect Hubert T. McGee in 1922 to prepare plans for a residence to be erected on a 155-acre parcel of land located near the Memphis Country Club. Veneered with Georgian marble, the sprawling mansion was dubbed the Pink Palace by Memphians. It has been estimated that Saunders spent over one million dollars for the building and land. Construction began in 1922 but all work on the project stopped after Saunders waged a losing battle to retain control of his grocery-store chain in May of the following year. He declared bankruptcy and the structure was sold as part of the settlement.<sup>2</sup> Garden Communities Corporation, a Louisville, Kentucky, real estate firm, acquired the land and unfinished mansion, and in August 1926 donated the building and four acres to the city of Memphis for development as a public cultural center. The Memphis Park Commission spent three years and \$150,000 to transform the 35,223 square-foot building into a museum.<sup>3</sup> A Memphis architectural firm headed by George Mahan, Jr., prepared the plans and specifications for the conversion. Revising the design for the lobby was assigned to Mahan's associate Everett Woods, who was assisted by draftsman, later architect, Robert Eugene Brown.<sup>4</sup> The Museum of Natural History and Industrial Arts opened 4 years later.

---

\*Research for this project was funded in part by the Memphis Park Commission and Memphis Museums, Inc.

<sup>1</sup> Edna Bomar, personal communication.

<sup>2</sup> James Robert Chumney, "The Pink Palace: Clarence Saunders and the Memphis Museum," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, pp. 6-8, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Chumney, *ibid.*, pp. 15, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Tapes and transcripts of an interview with Robert E. Brown (January 25, 1984) are on file at the Memphis Pink Palace Museum.

The early days of the museum coincided with the darkest period of the Depression. Memphis, like the rest of the country, had high levels of unemployment. One of the many young people looking for work was Burton Callicott. He was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, in 1907. Callicott's family moved to Memphis when he was four. His mother's second marriage was to Mike Abt, a sculptor and display designer, who taught art at Memphis Technical High School. Callicott attended Tech High School and during his senior year began working with his stepfather building floats for the Cotton Carnival and Christmas parades. They also modeled architectural ornaments to be cast in concrete for many office buildings erected in the city during the building boom of the 1920s. "Up to that point," he recalls, "I was completely unaware of any artistic potential."<sup>5</sup>

The 1920s had been an exciting time to be an American artist. The movement known as the "American Scene" was developing, partly in reaction against both the experimental or abstract and the traditional styles of that time. The former was considered to be too European, and both were viewed as academic and elitist.

American Scene artists celebrated the familiar in American life and culture. Their style was vigorous and, in the main, realistic. Some looked to the Mexican muralists, Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco, for inspiration. Most American Scene artists felt that art should be accessible to ordinary people in their everyday lives.

Painting in the 1920s actually moved in two directions. Regionalists such as Thomas Hart Benton portrayed American life and folklore in rural settings, frequently with strong nostalgic overtones. Ben Shahn, Reginald Marsh, and other Social Realists dealt with unemployment, urban poverty, and other socially charged subjects. They hoped that society would react to their work and strive to eliminate these ills.

After completing high school Callicott entered the four-year program at the Cleveland School of Art. Against his stepfather's wishes he chose the fine arts program and majored in sculpture, "having no thought whatever," he adds, "what I was going to do for a living." He returned to Memphis in 1931, and Abt helped him locate a position as an art teacher at Fairview Junior High School. Callicott describes his brief career as a teacher as a "complete failure," but from studying the children's artwork he learned some of the possibilities of modern painting. This was his last steady job for five years. His frustrations were identical to those of the thousands of unemployed across the nation:

I was angry—I was really angry. . . . I had been through art school, had this education, came home, and couldn't get a job. I even walked up and down Main Street trying to get a job as an usher in a movie house. Anything. I would have taken any kind of job.

---

<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all quotations in this paper are from a 1984 taped interview and subsequent conversations with Mr. Callicott. Tapes and transcripts are on file at the Memphis Pink Palace Museum.

Employment for artists was virtually non-existent; with so many people at all levels of society out of work, there were few chances for sales or exhibitions. With the end of the building boom in Memphis there were no more projects requiring cast-concrete ornamentation. Callicott married Evelyne Baird in 1932; they lived on \$22.50 a week—\$10.00 from his seasonal work with the parade floats and \$12.50 from her job at Sears.

Starting about 1930 there had been various schemes for programs to aid artists, but it was not until Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president in 1933 that anything was done on the federal level. The first federally funded program, the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), began in December 1933. Eleanor Roosevelt attended the planning meetings and gave her enthusiastic support to the program. The PWAP funded art projects through the work relief agency known as the Civil Works Administration (CWA) which had commenced a month earlier. Although the CWA/PWAP operated less than six months, some 3,750 artists created over 15,660 works of art in 32 categories, including 400 or more murals.<sup>6</sup> This was the first time the taxpayers' money had been spent for art programs. The success of the project prepared the way for future federal funding both during the Depression and down to the present. In Tennessee forty painters, sculptors, and printmakers were commissioned to execute murals, portraits, "regional industrial scenes," and pictures of historic streets and buildings.<sup>7</sup> New Deal planners favored the American Scene artists in these projects because the movement was inspired by things American. The administration hoped that the work of these artists would bolster national pride by appealing to the country's hopes and aspirations for a better future.

Soon after CWA/PWAP was organized in Washington, *The Commercial Appeal* announced: "Artists in Memphis to Receive C. W. A. Aid." The article further stated that Mike Abt had been named to head the Fine Arts Division of the CWA for West Tennessee. Abt called for applications from painters and sculptors and described a two-tier pay scheme which was based on ability, training, and past work.<sup>8</sup> About a week later, both newspapers in the city announced that ten unnamed Memphis artists had been chosen for a variety of CWA projects. Four including Callicott were classified as "A" artists and six as "B" artists; four of the "B" artists were women. Class "A" artists were to be paid \$42.50 per week while Class "B" artists were to be paid \$26.50 per week.<sup>9</sup>

Artists were expected to pay for the materials used in the project. When interviewed by a *Commercial Appeal* reporter, Mike Abt said that there would be

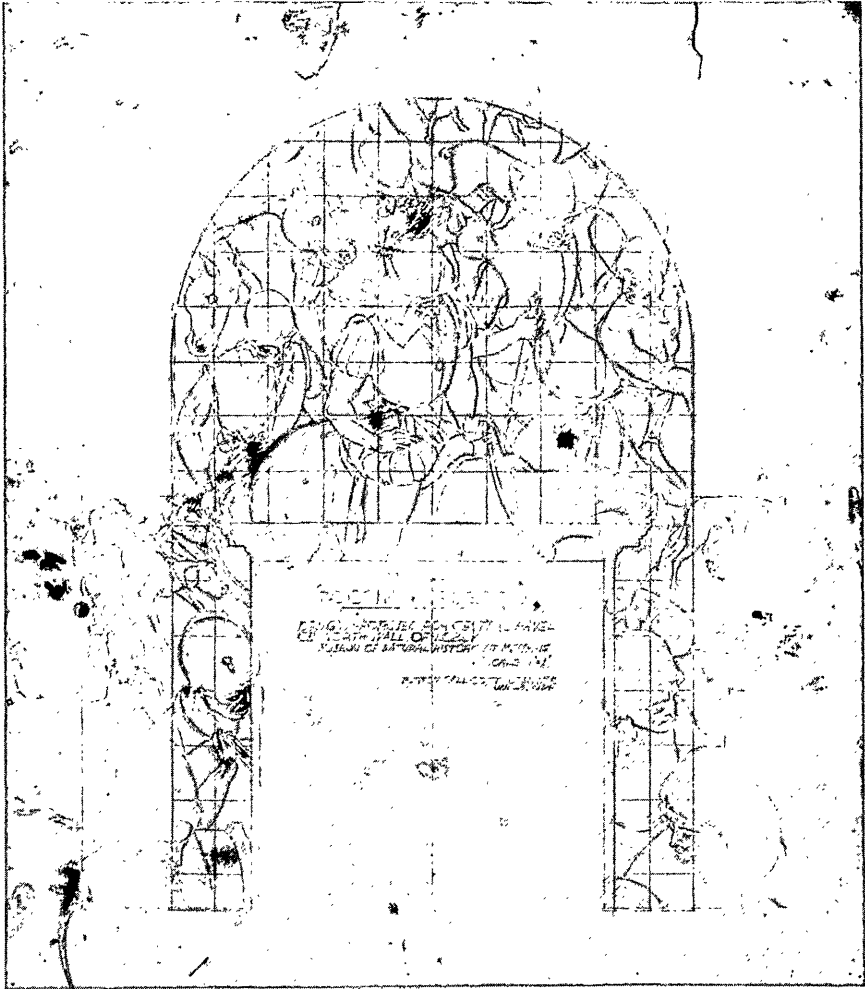
---

<sup>6</sup> Richard McKinzie, *The New Deal For Artists*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973) contains much detail on this and other programs. The "alphabet soup" terminology can be confusing. Because the first art program in Memphis was referred to by local newspapers as the CWA, we will refer to it as the CWA/PWAP. Matthew Baigell, *The American Scene: American Painting of the 1930's* (New York, Praeger, 1974), p. 46ff gives a concise description of the various government programs from which much of this summary is taken.

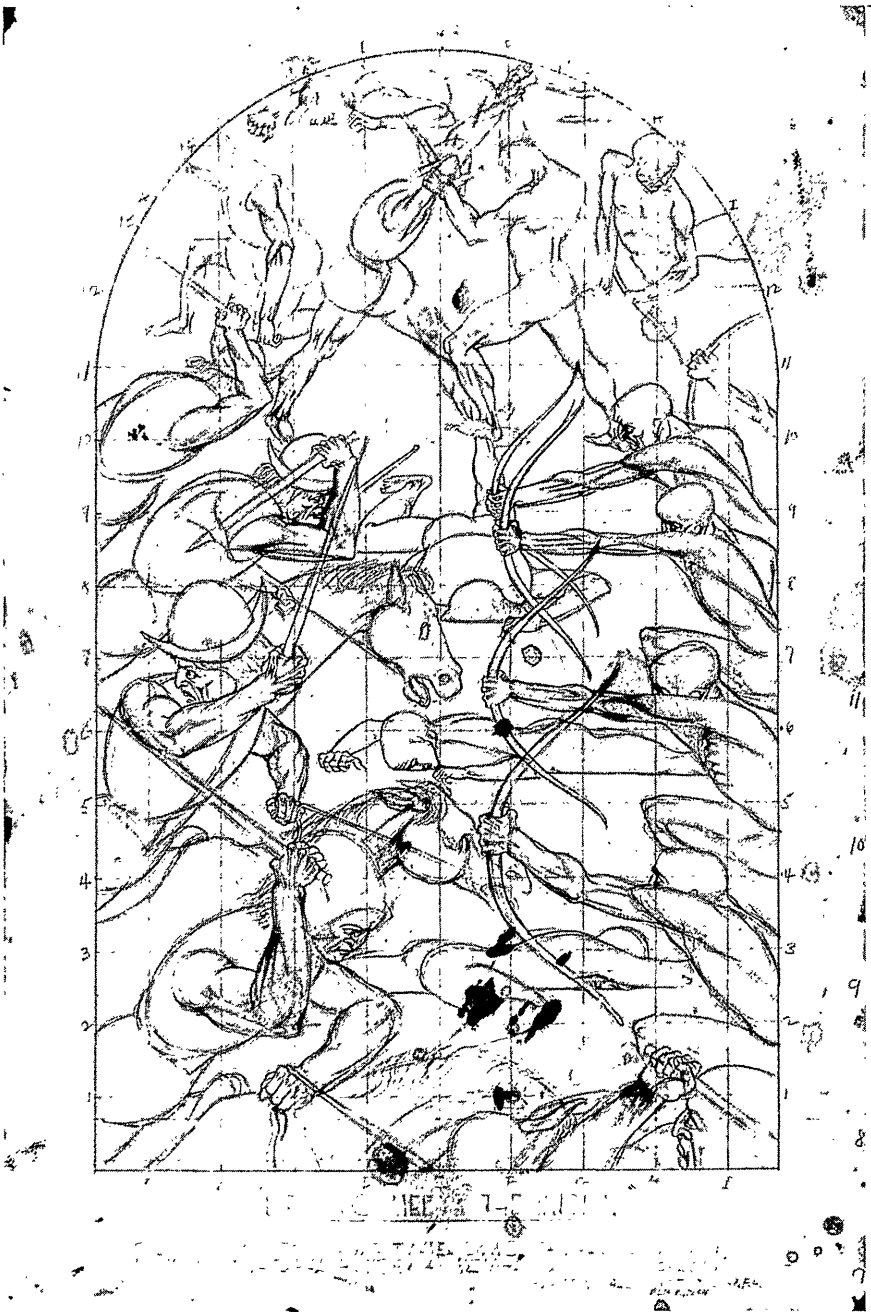
<sup>7</sup> Federal Writers Project of the Work Projects Administration for the State of Tennessee, *Tennessee: A Guide to the State* (State of Tennessee, 1939) pp. 169, 170.

<sup>8</sup> *The Commercial Appeal*, January 8, 1934.

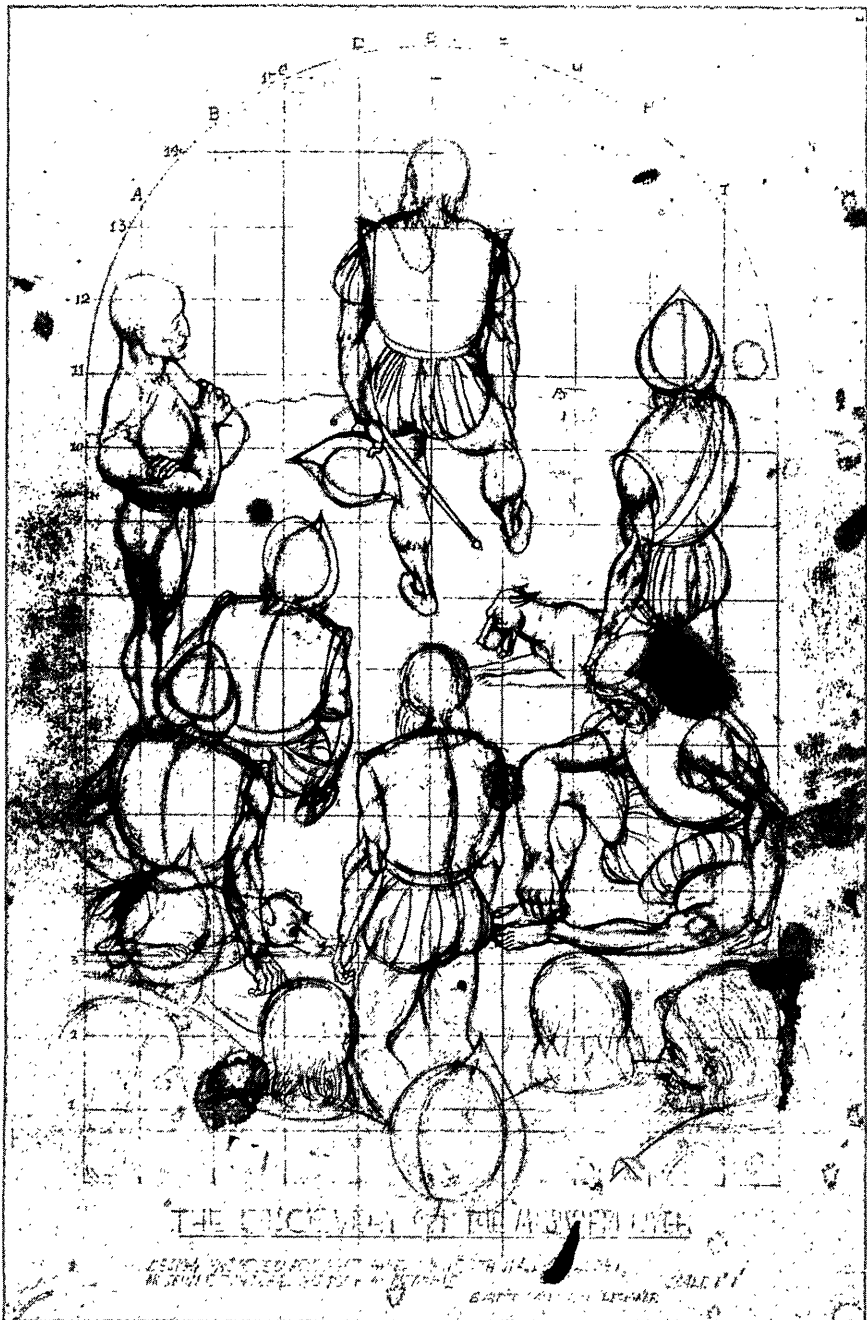
<sup>9</sup> *The Commercial Appeal*, February 2, 1934.



One-inch scale pencil drawing for *The Coming of De Soto*; January 1934, showing shape of door frame and cornice. Callicott collection. Photo by William Cupo.



One-inch scale pencil drawing for *Conflict with the Indians*, February 1934. Callicott collection. Photo by William Cupo.



One-inch scale pencil drawing for *The Discovery of the Mississippi River*, undated. Callicott collection. Photo by William Cupo.



Burton Callicott and *The Gleaners*. Photo by William Cupo.

no strict watchdog on the artists; they were expected to spend the time necessary to complete their projects. He added that there would be “no haphazard splashing of paint on walls, either. All murals will be submitted first in design for approval. All work will become the property of the government. . . .”<sup>10</sup>

The newspapers announced various local projects. Two sculptors received commissions to produce column models of the Greek orders for school art classes. Other planned projects included easel paintings of early settlers and famous Memphis and Bolivar homes, an “industrial scene” of either cotton or lumber, and two murals. The first mural was assigned to the Pink Palace Museum; the other was planned for the Administrative Building of West Tennessee State Teachers’ College (now Memphis State University).<sup>11</sup>

Burton Callicott does not remember any rigorous application procedure for the Pink Palace project. The two people he dealt with most closely during the planning stages were Mike Abt and architect Everett Woods, who by 1934 was chairman of the museum’s Advisory Committee.<sup>12</sup> The local CWA/PWAP committee, chaired by Abt, authorized a single-panel mural depicting De Soto’s exploration of West Tennessee for the center alcove above the landing of the lobby staircase. Curiously, the minutes of neither the Memphis Park Commission nor the museum’s Advisory Committee mention this decision. In fact, no reference to the mural appears in either set of minutes until the following July and August.

At one point Callicott considered painting a fresco and suggested this to the committee. He had read up on the process and, like many of his contemporaries, was influenced by the Mexican muralists and American artist Thomas Hart Benton who worked in that medium. The committee, however, decided that the mural should be done on canvas, which suggests that they preferred the option of easy removal if the finished work was not to their liking.

Once the project was approved Callicott began his research. Historical information on De Soto’s travels was sparse, limited to reminiscences of individuals who had accompanied the explorer. The artist translated his understanding of De Soto’s march into a concept for the center panel, which he titled, *The Coming of De Soto* (Fig. 1).

It was a long, rigorous, difficult march from Florida all the way up into Tennessee. I found that the officers were on horseback, but there were many foot soldiers with them. They had Indian guides, they had some Negro slaves, they had dogs, they drove pigs that they would use for food as they went along. And I included many of those elements. I used a design, a diagonal design from upper left down into the right, with a strong emphasis in that movement

<sup>10</sup> *The Commercial Appeal*, January 16, 1934.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> The museum’s Advisory Committee, selected by the Memphis Park Commission, was the forerunner of today’s Board of Trustees.



trying to suggest the march . . . as they were coming up to this area.

Death accompanied the men as well, symbolized by the figure with the skeletal hand above and to the left of De Soto.

The artist worked for several weeks preparing pencil drawings for the panel in a little apartment at 509 North Bellevue that he and his wife shared with his drawing table. He drew from memory without using models for the figures. Callicott comments further on his design approach: "I had one concept—one conception; that's what I put down. I made no other trial sketches with other arrangements or other ideas. I tended to be that way, in fact, the rest of my life." Callicott completed the pencil drawings for the center panel in January 1934. The committee then asked him to prepare drawings for two more panels. Regarding the center panel; he says, "[It] was not designed with any others in mind, which I like to give as the excuse for there not being great harmony in scale between [the panels]."

The door in the lower part of the wall on which he placed the center panel caused important design problems for Callicott. He managed to work part of the design into the narrow flanking panels. The original drawing showed "wings" on either side of the panel, but these were eliminated. Later, using the artist's dimension drawings, Martin J. Bradley, a manual arts teacher at Tech High School, cut the stretcher pieces. A plaster cast of the door cornice was made, and Bradley shaped blocks, which, when attached to the stretchers, ensured a flush fit.

The drawing for the left panel, which the artist titled, *Conflict with the Indians*, (Fig. 2) was completed in February.<sup>13</sup> Callicott envisioned the Indians combatting the invading Spaniards and designed the panel as a symbolic representation of conflict, rather than a depiction of any specific confrontation. He prepared a two-inch scale, poster-paint version of this panel to give an idea of the colors and submitted it, along with the drawing, to the committee for approval. While Everett Woods did not particularly care for the design, it was approved. A picture of the artist and the small painting appeared in *The Commercial Appeal*, but the location of the original is now, unfortunately, unknown.<sup>14</sup>

The pencil drawing for *The Discovery of the Mississippi River*, the right panel (Fig. 3), is undated but was undoubtedly also completed in spring 1934. Callicott's conception of the event differed considerably from the image that had prevailed in the minds of Memphians for generations:

In the old Gayoso Hotel was a whole series of murals on the De Soto subject. The discovery was shown as a great sort of ceremonial celebration. Men were riding up on horseback, fully costumed.

<sup>13</sup> The original title, shown on the pencil drawing (Fig. 2), was *De Soto Meets the Indians*. The artist feels that the revised title is more in keeping with his original concept.

<sup>14</sup> *The Commercial Appeal*, March 23, 1934.

There was a sort of a feeling of triumph and gaiety, waving banners and flags. I didn't see it that way at all. I saw this as a group of very tired [men], some sick, some wounded, who had marched all this way up from Florida and came across this river, this great river, and were not only amazed by its great size but saw it also as a barrier to their westward movement. . . . So I saw it as a fairly sober, contemplative event. . . .

De Soto's eventual death on the other side of the river is portrayed symbolically; the shape of the treeline on the Arkansas shore echoes the shape of the prone figure at the top of the left panel.

While the CWA had been set up to run only until February 15, it was later extended through April. Uncertainty about the program's survival must have frustrated Callicott and the other artists, to say nothing of the 7000 other Shelby County people employed on civic projects under other divisions of the CWA.<sup>15</sup> There was much confusion as to what would happen to unfinished projects.<sup>16</sup> Early in April, Mike Abt traveled to Nashville and obtained approval from state CWA officials for the Pink Palace mural project to proceed. According to Abt, "Edward Dougherty, Tennessee chairman, is so enthusiastic over these panel sketches that he has virtually shut down art projects in other parts of the state to make this work in Memphis possible."<sup>17</sup>

Abt told the *Press-Scimitar*, "The murals will be 14 feet tall and eight feet wide. The modern style will be followed throughout and the beauty of the walls will be enhanced."<sup>18</sup> There was also a possibility that four additional panels might be done later if funding could be found. Both newspapers reported that the Park Commission had "donated" \$500 for materials. Interestingly, no mention of this appears in either the Park Commission or the museum's Advisory Committee minutes.<sup>19</sup>

Callicott and his assistant Harry Dixon started work on the first panel in early summer 1934. Dixon's early career paralleled Callicott's. He attended Tech High and the Cleveland School of Art and had worked with Mike Abt. Before working on the mural he had been assigned to easel projects. A third artist, Albert Hamilton, worked with them briefly after preparing plans for the mural at Memphis State.<sup>20</sup>

This was heavy work. The wood stretchers were assembled on the lobby floor; then the canvas was stretched and the panels attached to the wall. Fischer Lime & Cement Company provided the necessary scaffolding and had an employee assist in erecting it. Mounting the panels proved to be simple. The

<sup>15</sup> Memphis & Shelby County Public Library newspaper clipping files: "Memphis—Federal Projects—CWA" and "Memphis—CWA"; *The Commercial Appeal*, February 15, 1934.

<sup>16</sup> McKinzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 18, 32.

<sup>17</sup> *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, April 3, 1934.

<sup>18</sup> *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, *ibid.*; *The Commercial Appeal*, April 4, 1934.

<sup>20</sup> To our knowledge, the mural at Memphis State University was never executed.

men punched holes through the plaster and hollow tile and anchored the stretchers in the wall with heavy wire. Small wooden legs supported the panels underneath. Callicott squared off the canvas in one-foot sections using a snap line. Following his one-inch squared pencil drawing he enlarged the design as he transferred it to the canvas in charcoal. This was an unusual method; most muralists generally made full-size cartoons first. After transferring the design the painting began. Colors had been chosen to harmonize with the lobby's painted plasterwork. Because of the size of the project, the artists needed to mix large quantities of paint ahead of time. Dixon was responsible for mixing the paint and storing it in empty toothpaste tubes to keep it from drying out. They finished the mural in about six weeks.

On July 5, Mike Abt reported to the museum's Advisory Committee (of which he had recently become a member) that the first panel was completed. He asked that three recognized artists examine the finished mural. If they approved he felt the Committee should recommend to the Park Commission that the project be continued.<sup>21</sup> In August, Abt asked the Park Commission for permission to start the two remaining murals. The federal government would pay the artists, he said, and the cost to the city would be "about \$300." The park board agreed to look at the first mural and consider the matter.<sup>22</sup>

Apparently the Park Commission acted fairly promptly. On August 28, the artists made their first entry on a list of materials purchased for the last two panels. They eventually spent a total of \$167.80 for paint, canvas, stretcher materials, and other supplies.<sup>23</sup> Contrary to what the artists understood, however, the Park Commission chose not to reimburse them, and they paid for everything out of their government stipends. As a result they felt forced to buy the cheapest paints and canvas they could find.

Despite his problems with the city, Callicott was pleased with the day-to-day work on the mural and he enjoyed his surroundings as much as he did the project.

I'd come [to work] every morning on the bus; I had no car. I'd have my work clothes wrapped up in a bundle and a sack lunch with me, and just couldn't get there soon enough—just so fascinated—absolutely loved doing this. Being up on scaffolding, doing big work, a mural. . . . I remember it as such a pleasant place to be. Part of the work was being done in the summer, the later pieces, and we'd sit on the lawn and eat lunch, Harry and I. And I still love the place very much.

Memphians who visited the museum watched the mural develop, but no one had more opportunity to observe the process than Julia Cummins, the director of the museum. Callicott fondly recalls her appreciation for his work.:

<sup>21</sup> Minutes of the Advisory Committee, Museum of Natural History and Industrial Arts, July 5, 1934. To our knowledge this is the *only* time the murals are mentioned in museum board minutes.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of the Memphis Park Commission, August 7, 1934.

<sup>23</sup> Burton Callicott, personal communication—copy of cost breakdown.

Mrs. Cummins . . . would come out and look and was just delighted with it and very complimentary and very interested. She would ask me questions about it. . . . I would have thought she wouldn't like it and would be very critical of it, but she wasn't. She was very accepting and pleasant.

One visitor was not so accepting and pleasant.

I was up high on the scaffolding one day and a visitor came into the lobby downstairs. It was an elderly lady and she yelled up at me. . . . She was shaking her fist at me and she was saying, "You are ruining that wall!" I recognized her. . . . [but] she didn't recognize me, She knew me; we were friends. It was Ella Raines, an art teacher here in the city. She was a retired art teacher, a very nice little lady, but, of course, very conservative.

Each painting took about six weeks to complete; counting the time spent on the original drawings and in administrative delays, the entire project took about a year. The artists, of course, were paid only while they were actually working. When the first panel was finished early in 1935, the last day ended as all the others had. Callicott recalls:

I wrapped up my work clothes and took my sack and went home. There was no ceremony, no nothing, no unveiling. Nothing like that. . . . I don't remember being disappointed in that. I loved doing it and was so fortunate to get this opportunity. . . . I was hopeful at that point of getting more commissions, other mural commissions. . . .

Both the artist and the committee felt that the murals should be framed. Everett Woods designed a molding for the panels, and a millwork company quoted a price of \$78 per frame to make them. Callicott wrote Mrs. Cummins about this in the fall of 1937, over two years after the paintings were finished. She referred the matter to the Park Commission. The artist had offered to donate his services but asked the city to pay for materials and an assistant. The board agreed to look into it.<sup>24</sup> After a delay of several months, the museum again approached the Park Commission, this time armed with a letter of commendation from Phillip W. Youtz, director of the American Federation of the Arts. "It seems to me," Youtz writes, "that the artists on this project have done a very creditable work and that the murals give just the color and interest which is needed for your imposing entrance hall." The left panel, "with its fine rhythm and brown Indian figures," especially pleased him.<sup>25</sup> At its January 1938 meeting the Park Commission authorized the superintendent to spend \$250 to back the murals with canvas and frame them.<sup>26</sup> Nothing, however, was ever done.

<sup>24</sup> Minutes of the Memphis Park Commission, October 5, 1937.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from Phillip W. Youtz to Mrs. Lee Cummins, Museum Director, November 18, 1937. Parts of the letter are quoted in *The Commercial Appeal*, December 31, 1937.

<sup>26</sup> Minutes of the Memphis Park Commission, January 6, 1938. A search of the minute books through 1948 found no further reference to the murals.

In May 1935, several months after the completion of the murals, the Federal Arts Project (FAP) of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) began to sponsor programs in art production, education, and design and materials research. On a much larger scale than the CWA/PWAP, it became the most famous federal arts program of its time. Indeed, today the term "WPA art" is applied by many to describe all government-funded art of the period regardless of the sponsoring agency.

In hopes of getting mural commissions under the FAP, Callicott wrote to Thomas Hart Benton whom he had met when he lectured in Memphis. Benton, who had seen the Pink Palace murals and liked them, was encouraging but was unsure his recommendation would help much. "My popularity with many people is not very far up the ladder, and I am uncertain on what rung I stand in Washington," he wrote.<sup>27</sup>

Callicott continued working with Abt on the Cotton Carnival and Christmas parades. In May of 1935 Callicott designed and helped execute two large sculptured panels titled *Labor* and *Science* for a convention of the Cottonseed Crushers Association held at the fairgrounds. In addition, Callicott competed for chances to paint or install murals in the federal courthouse in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and in the new post office in Ripley, Tennessee. He won neither commission but did both installations. In 1937, there was a vacancy at the Memphis Academy of Arts for an assistant to the sculptor. Callicott was hired largely on the strength of his experience with the commercial sculpture and parade figures. He remained there teaching sculpture, and later drawing, lettering, and art history until his retirement in 1973.

During the decades that followed, Callicott's style evolved away from the figurative. Although at first he taught sculpture and did commercial display work, he found that his primary interest was painting. His awareness of his natural surroundings was greatly stimulated by his family's move to a home on Raleigh Road in 1924. Whenever he could, he went out to sketch and paint.

After the Pink Palace project, Callicott did three smaller paintings in a style similar to the murals. Two of these now hang in his Memphis home. One, reminiscent of Jean-Francois Millet's, *The Gleaners* and sharing its title, comments on the despair of poverty (Fig. 4). Callicott remembers:

At that point I might have gone on into what one might call social comment painting which was a very strong movement at that time. . . . I had thought about doing more so-called social comment, particularly in respect to the blacks because I had tremendous sympathy for them as that painting [*The Gleaners*] should reveal. These poor blacks picking up coal on the railroad behind Sears in the depth of the Depression—ragged, thin. . . .

It was sunlight on the landscape that proved to be Callicott's greatest inspiration—one that has occupied the major part of his career. It has led to many

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Thomas Hart Benton to Burton Callicott, May 31, 1935.

shows and commissions, including the 1983 Memphis in May poster. He is now one of Memphis' most respected artists.

Once the Depression was over many of the artworks sponsored by the government were neglected or destroyed. Some simply disappeared. Not only was it a period that people preferred to forget, but art styles changed dramatically. In Memphis, Maysie Dimond's 1940 mural done under WPA auspices in Ellis Auditorium was covered over with marble slabs.<sup>28</sup> The Callicott murals were not immune. That the committee had not wanted a fresco and the city had refused to pay for paint, canvas, and proper framing and attachment certainly indicated uncertainty as to the permanence of the murals. According to Callicott, Robert Sullivan, director of the museum from 1967 to 1979, considered removing the murals because he did not feel they were consistent with the uses of the building.<sup>29</sup> The threat to dismantle the murals passed, however, and they continued to attract attention and also to deteriorate, due in part to poor climate control in the Pink Palace. The museum's exhibits were moved to a new wing in 1977, and the old building provided space for offices and classrooms. The murals stayed in place—an imposing statement in a room few recent visitors have been able to see.

The current museum director, Douglas R. Noble, has expressed an appreciation for the murals and the building which houses them. The museum is developing plans to renovate and reopen areas of the Pink Palace to the public. As the architectural centerpoint of the building, the lobby would be carefully restored to their original appearance. The ornate plasterwork on the stairs and balcony would be repainted in their original warm colors, and the marble floors and walls cleaned of years of grime. As an integral part of the project, the museum plans to seek grants for the restoration of the Callicott murals. Once again hundreds of thousands of visitors could view the epic portrayal of De Soto's exploration.

## POSTSCRIPT

On November 14, 1984, the Memphis Pink Palace Museum honored Burton Callicott at a reception. As part of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the painting of the De Soto murals, Memphis Museums, Inc. presented the artist with a check for the cost of the materials bought in 1934. Mr. Callicott returned the check to the museum to start a fund for the restoration of the murals.

---

<sup>28</sup> William L. Huettle, Cook Convention Center Commission, personal communication.

<sup>29</sup> There is no mention of this in the museum board minutes.