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William Moulis, an artist in Geneva's back yard

by Sue Cherney

A chair painted by William Moulis is now in the collection of the Geneva History Center



In 1939, Kate Raftery, founder and director of The Little Traveler, commissioned Mr. William Moulis to paint murals for the Traveler. Some of these murals still adorn The Little Traveler today. The partnership between Mrs. Raftery and the artist was significant. His interest in Geneva, then a town of 800, as a place to work and live stemmed from this time. Moulis established a studio on River Lane from which he worked until 1942 when he entered the Army Air Corps and served until 1945.

Upon his discharge from the Army Air Corps, Moulis began his lifelong residence in Geneva ending up at a home on South Bennett Street. He became a famous muralist, raconteur, fabric designer, and oil and watercolor painter, and he was often seen pedaling his bicycle through town or paddling his kayak down the Fox River.



Though Moulis had chosen Geneva as his permanent home, travel to exotic destinations such as Marrakesh, Bali, Majorca, and Mandalay was a staple of his life. He painted and had one-man shows in Paris, Bangkok, Marrakesh, and Rabat. One of his murals decorated the ballroom of the Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong. Moulis also painted murals in the Waldorf Astoria, Bonwit Teller, Four Seasons Restaurant, El Morocco in New York City, the chapel at Children's Memorial Hospital, Marshall Field's, Palmer House in Chicago, and more.

A consummate colorist, versatile in many media, William Moulis is a recognized artist among professionals. Countless residents of the Fox River Valley know of and admire the quality of his work. Moulis was born in Chicago in 1919 and died in 1989. He is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Forest Park, IL.

A window treatment at The Little Traveler—artwork by William Moulis



William Moulis with his mother, Stella Moulis in 1973

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