

Colista Murray Dowling
(1881, Waverly, KS – 1968, Portland, OR)

Born in Waverly, Kansas in 1881, Colista Murray Dowling studied art at the Art Students League in New York, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia. When she moved to Oregon in 1890 she continued her art training at the University of Oregon, Oregon State University and the Museum Art School in Portland.

Notably among her early endeavors, she became active in several important art organizations. Dowling was a charter member in the historic, but short-lived, Society of Oregon Artists in 1912 and then joined the Oregon Society of Artists, also as a charter member, in 1926. Here she participated in exhibitions and won awards as well as serving as officer in 1929 and 1940. She also belonged to the Attic Club, originally established by newspaper and commercial artists, and served as president of the Women's Press Club. Her work was also shown at the Portland and Seattle Art Museums.

Dowling was a successful commercial artist in Portland for sixty years. She painted small city scenes and coast landscapes as well as large murals for clubs, hotels and churches. Her floor to ceiling murals in the Woman's Club building (1220 SW Taylor, Portland) were painted in pastel colors evoking a feeling of classical architecture and nature. Her portrait of *John McLoughlin* is owned by Milton High School in Milton, Oregon and *the Philosopher (Wm. J. Standley)* was owned by Portland Public Schools, now in a private collection. Her altarpiece *The Lord is my Shepherd* for St. Paul's Evangelical and Reform Lutheran Church in NE Portland has recently been restored and relocated to Concordia University after the sale of the church.

She reached an even greater audience through her illustrations in *The Pacific Monthly* (which later became *Sunset* magazine), and she contributed to the caricature book *As We See 'Em*, published in 1906 under her maiden name Murray. Her work can also be seen in the illustrations reproduced from her pen drawings for *Ox Bows and Bare Feet* by John Leach in 1952 and in several children's books and book plates. She died in Portland in 1968. Her work was included posthumously in exhibitions at the Oregon Historical Society in 1990 and at the Clatsop County Historical Society in 1994.

Compiled by Ginny Allen, October 17, 2016