

ARTISTS OF CHICAGO

Past and Present

By C. J. Bulliet

WHEN Eugenie Fish, ranch-girl artist from Kansas, came to the Chicago world's fair in 1893 to see oil paintings for the first time, she felt her heart sink on confronting

**No. 34
Eugenie
Glaman**

a canvas of sheep by Josef Israels. They had the appearance of sheep, well enough, but when

she looked into their eyes they said nothing to her. Each sheep had the same face as every other sheep.

Eugenie Fish knew that that shouldn't be. For five years on her father's ranch in Kansas she had lived with his sheep. In the daytime she herded them over the wide range. Those were days when there were no fences, when Kansas bordered on the wild territory of the Indians, and wolves and coyotes roamed the plains. At nightfall she helped corral them in a big enclosure, secure from the coyotes and the wolves, and she lingered by lantern light to watch the lambs play.

...

She had made friends with the sheep, and the sheep she knew were not the vacant-eyed creatures Israels painted.

Nor, ten years later, when she went to London to see the sheep of the renowned Landseer was she any more impressed. They, too, were soulless.

Nor in Paris, in the paintings of the pastoral Barbizons in the Louvre and the Luxembourg, did she find a match for the sheep she knew on her Kansas ranch. They were too soft and sentimental, too senseless—not one among them would have had sense enough to appreciate being rescued from a prowling coyote.

Millet's sheep she recognizes just as fine color spots in his enchanting decorations—they're not sheep, just so much effective design, tending toward the sculptural.

Troyon occasionally gave her a thrill with his farm animals—the Troyon who painted the oxen going to work. He painted sheep, too, sometimes, but they impressed her as cute toys. Eugenie Glaman (who is now Miss Fish grown up) thinks he must have had personal friends among the other animals.

Eugenie Fish sometimes rode a long way from home on one of her father's horses, herding her sheep, despite the proximity of the Indians, who frequently filed past her father's ranch. But Indians to her were just people, and she wasn't any more afraid of people than she was of wolves and coyotes. Like Rosa Bonheur, she thought of herself as a boy, not a timid, shrinking girl. Sheep were her playmates, instead of dolls.

...

She was 5 when she went to the Kansas ranch from her birthplace, St. Joseph, Mo., and she went back to St. Joe at 10 to her grandmother's to go to school, so that her adventures with the sheep covered a very impressionable period of her girlhood.

No, only did she herd them and watch over them at night but she sketched them, too, with an untutored pencil. Her father was a ranchman of better than early Kansas rustic education, and he had a library of books telling about sheep and their breeds and what to do with them when they were ailing. That he was an indulgent father is indicated by the fact he let the little Eugenie draw pictures all over the margins of his books—pictures of sheep.

His name was Henry Fish, and he was of the Fish family, New York, to which the celebrated Stuyvesant also belongs.

At 15 he left New York to go to California, excited by the gold rush. He was one of the forty-niners who made the trip by sailship around the Horn. He found some gold, but didn't get rich. Horses, cattle and sheep, he discovered, were more to his liking than gold ore, so in the late '60s he started eastward across the Rocky mountains to find grazing land.

He went to Missouri, where he met and married a Kentucky girl of Virginia and Scotch ancestry. Eugenie Glaman thinks maybe she inherited her passion for sheep from her Highland grandfather.

Presently Henry Fish set out for wilder Kansas, taking his wife and small daughter, and obtaining from the government his huge stretch of ranchland. Besides sheep, he raised fine horses, and some of these he took to Saratoga, but he never aspired himself to develop a string of race horses.

...

Henry Fish was afflicted with "wanderlust." By the time Eugenie had finished her schooling in St. Joseph, he had gone to Wellington, Kas., and there she got her first formal instruction in art.

But, as she recalls it, it was very primitive instruction. Her teacher taught her to copy pictures from books, and the ambition of this "master's" pupils was to ornament for Wellington homes such articles as bottles, plates and shovels. Sometimes a shovel, which offered a comparatively broad expanse for the artist's brush, turned out such a masterpiece that it no longer was parked at night in the woodshed but was given a permanent installation in the front parlor.

Eugenie Fish's first "works" were such. Her specialty was wooden butter plates, which she painted, on order, for her neighbors. They selected the subjects, and didn't want anything so commonplace as sheep. So Eugenie painted old-world castles to serve as foundation for a pound of molded butter.

After learning her "art" in Wellington, she went to Texas to teach shovel and butter-dish decorating to young ladies along the Rio Grande. It was from Texas that

she journeyed, direct, to the Columbian fair.

...

She stayed in Chicago only ten days, and all those days were spent in the Fine Arts building at the fair. But the next year she came back, and this time for good. She married a girlhood sweetheart, who had also immigrated here from Wellington, Kas., a young cigar maker, and it was as Eugenie Glaman that she henceforth pursued her personal and her art career.

She entered the Art Institute of Chicago in 1894, and was a student there until 1900. The final year she was an instructor in a spring class.

But, hearing of a marvelous sheep ranch near Montgomery, Ala., and having more of an urge to paint than to teach, she left her class before the term was out.

At Montgomery she painted, among other pictures, "The Old Sheep Fold," which was exhibited at the St. Louis exposition, just ten years after she had seen oil paints for the first time at another world's fair and tiptoed, awed, through the galleries. Had anybody told her then she'd be exhibiting within a decade at another world's fair herself, and not only that, but would be taking a bronze medal, she would have thrown him to the coyotes. After St. Louis, her painting went, in 1905, to the tenth international annual at Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. The city of Chicago now

owns "The Old Sheep Fold," purchased by the Chicago commission.

Upon finishing at the Art Institute Eugenie Glaman was sure now she wanted to be an animal painter. So she went to Paris, where she studied drawing with the animal sculptor, Fremiet, and painting with Lawton Parker, a pupil of Cottet.

As a part of her work with Fremiet she sketched lions and tigers in the zoo in the Jardin des Plantes. She found these wild beasts somewhat fearful after her sheep, and admired their grandeur. But the memory of them bothers her when she tries now to do cats.

Cats are a small edition of the jungle felines, but have a psychology of their own. She doesn't seem quite to grasp what they are thinking about.

Cows, however, and horses, are more like her sheep, but she likes heavy draft horses, instead of fleet racers. She is mixed in her feelings for dogs. She likes them for themselves, but they are akin to the wolves and the coyotes that used to worry her Kansas sheep, and they are responsible, she finds, for the scarcity now of sheep in this part of the country. Farmers can't have them because prowling dogs kill them.

...

After Paris, she went to London, where Frank Calderon had a school of animal painting in Baker street. There he posed living models, and he also had an extensive studio of

anatomy, with all sorts of animal skeletons.

Back in Chicago, Mrs. Glaman has been working ever since in oil and water colors, and adding, about 1925, etching. Her etchings, in late years, have claimed more of her attention than her older mediums, and she has done a rather extensive number of plates, some from old paintings and sketches, but most of new subjects.

She goes to all the stock shows, and is a frequenter of the stockyards. One autumn she bought two ewes, and kept them all winter in a barn at Lawndale. Both gave birth to lambs during the winter, so she had four "models," which she painted and etched industriously, despite the cold.

She made an excursion into the Rocky mountains not long ago to see with her own eyes the wonders her father had described to her, and she etched some of the peaks. Another dash was into Nova Scotia.

She lives, since the death of her husband, at the Tree building with her daughter. There is a cat, too, now growing old—sole survivor of a once rather extensive feline menagerie. In her efforts to penetrate into the souls of cats she collected quite a number from the alleys around her former home. But she never succeeded in grasping their inmost secrets. She still prefers sheep, but her neighbors in the Tree building, ignorant of Spanish customs, won't stand for them living in her studio.

Next week—John Howard Raftery.