

Arthurs, Stanley Massey (1877-1950)

Stanley Massey Arthurs was one of Howard Pyle's few students who were native Delawareans. He was born November 24, 1877, to Nancy and Joshua Arthurs, in Kenton, Delaware, where Joshua Arthurs owned a general store. Arthurs was interested in art as a boy, and, after leaving school, he studied in Wilmington with Clawson Hammit, who urged him to study with Pyle. Convinced of his talent, Pyle enthusiastically accepted him as a student. In 1897 Arthurs joined the classes Pyle was teaching at Drexel Institute, and in 1898 he was invited to attend the summer scholarship classes at Chadds Ford. His first illustration was published in the December 2, 1899, issue of Harper's Weekly. When Pyle left Drexel to open his own school in Wilmington, Arthurs went with him and worked in one of the studios Pyle had built for the school. When Pyle died in 1911, Arthurs purchased his studio and, until he died, led a quiet, solitary life there, dedicated to his work. He lectured occasionally at the Wilmington Academy and did some teaching in his studio. Although Arthurs illustrated a great deal of popular literature, his real specialty was illustrating historical texts. His pictures were as historically accurate as he could make them. He did several murals of historical subjects for the State House in Dover, Delaware, and for the Minnesota State capitol building and produced a long series of historical paintings for DuPont Company calendars and the DuPont Magazine. Many of these were published in book form in the American Historical Scene in 1938. the historical illustrations occupied most of Arthur's attention after 1920, but he also painted landscapes, not only of local scenes but also in Florida, the Western states, and Europe.

Arthurs preferred to work in full color, even though he knew that the work would be reproduced in black and white. In his magazine work he frequently adopted the vignette style.

References: Elzea. Diversity; Stanley Arthurs. Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum, 1974; Sunday Star (Wilmington), Nov. 7, 1909; DAM files; Interview with Blanche Swayne, Sept. 28, 1979.