

Courtesy Victor J. Rasmussen

Fig. 1. The front of the Manti Temple, ca. 1988.



# Minerva Teichert's Manti Temple Murals

Doris R. Dant

*President Gordon B. Hinckley's initiative to build many more temples around the world underscores how far many Latter-day Saints reside from their sacred buildings. In particular, travel to Utah's pioneer temples is frequently prohibitive. In the spirit of making temples accessible to all Latter-day Saints, this article brings to Saints worldwide an appreciative view of some of the Manti Temple murals.*

In April 1947, a slight, white-haired grandmother installed herself in a Manti, Utah, motel. At fifty-nine years of age, Minerva Teichert could still keep pace with any Scandinavian farmer in Sanpete County and probably outwork many. After all, she was a rancher's wife who toiled long hours to meet the demands of garden, flocks, dairy, and family. Now for one month, all her drive would be devoted to an undertaking that daunted even her—painting enormous murals for the world room of the Manti Temple. Sustained by prayer and a sole assistant, she covered four walls several times her height with scenes whose conception is at once unique and spiritually profound.

This article tells that story, much of it taken from Teichert's letters and from interviews with her assistant. It also includes reproductions of her world room murals. Although individual Manti murals have been published previously, this is the first time these beautiful works have been printed together. BYU Studies is grateful to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for permission to offer them to our readers.

## THE ARTIST

Teichert brought to the world room murals an artistic ability honed through study at the Chicago Art Institute and the Art Students' League in New York City. One of her New York teachers, Robert Henri, challenged her to paint the Mormon story she felt so keenly. This she did, working at night after her family went to sleep and creating time during her crowded days. Many of her works were displayed in LDS chapels and tabernacles, public schools, and Brigham Young University.

But her more significant qualifications stemmed from her faith. A keen student of the scriptures, Teichert was on quoting terms with the Old Testament prophets, and over the years, she had read the Book of Mormon several times through to her family while they ate dinner. She was a deeply

spiritual person who drew upon the Lord's inspiration and healing power as a matter of course in her daily life. "Pray," she once exhorted a family member. "We have done a lot of that. Don't worry." Her own self-assessment was, "Most that I have ever done has been thro faith, prayer and study."<sup>1</sup>

An avid genealogist, she also attended the Logan Temple—the one closest to her Cokeville, Wyoming, home (eighty-eight miles away)—whenever possible. In November 1942, for instance, she recorded, "Just home from temple excursion. It snowed all the way down and most the way back."<sup>2</sup> Temple attendance was more than duty to the dead; it was spiritually refreshing and hallowed by memories of her first visit, a watershed experience. In a 1943 letter to her daughter, she wrote that her temple endowment and sealing to her husband ten years earlier was "so striking a thing that everything in my life dates before and after." Then she added, "Excuse me dear, if I cut your letter short. I have just been informed that I must talk on temples tonight."<sup>3</sup>

### THE STORY BEHIND THE MURALS

Given her devotion to the temple and things spiritual, it is no surprise that Minerva Teichert viewed painting a mural for a Latter-day Saint temple as an artistic and religious pinnacle. She was disappointed at not being selected to do a mural for the Swiss or Los Angeles Temples, which were in the planning stages at that time, but saw opportunity open when the Church decided to refurbish areas of the Manti Temple. The plaster in the garden and world rooms had deteriorated so much that the valiant efforts to save the murals by Danquart Weggeland and C. C. A. Christensen failed. The rooms were replastered and high-quality sail canvas applied to the walls, the renovation in the world room being completed August 1946. Robert L. Shepherd of Salt Lake City had finished the garden room murals the previous year, but the world room's walls were still bare.<sup>4</sup>



**Fig. 2. Minerva Teichert** (1888–1976), at age 59. Teichert was the artist primarily responsible for the pageant of nations murals in the Manti Temple.



## **Approval of the Design**

Teichert reports being in the Church architect's office that August. Accounts differ on who initiated the possibility of her receiving the world room commission—she or Edward O. Anderson, the architect—but at some point she presented a new concept for the world room murals. On the basis of their discussion and Anderson's recognition of her ability, she was selected. "I was so happy when they offered [the world room] to me," she wrote in November 1946, "I almost had a heart attack."<sup>5</sup> "I think," her son Robert has said, "she had a great deal of joy in knowing that President George Albert Smith trusted her to paint that world room in the Manti Temple."<sup>6</sup> Teichert was the first woman in the Church to be given such a commission.<sup>7</sup>

Because Teichert had "an entirely new attack on the subject, a pageantry of nations," she was asked to submit sketches to obtain approval of her ideas from Church officials. To determine just what she would be dealing with, she went to Manti on November 13, 1946, to "look over" the world room. What she saw overwhelmed her: "I have the hardest Temple room I have ever seen to do, 21 ft. high, 60 ft. long, and abt. 24 wide. The north side wall looks gigantic." (More precisely, the room is 28' high, 50' long, and 25' wide, large enough to intimidate her assistant, who realized "what a big place it was to paint if you did it like a barn, let alone to put a story out there.") The rest of the month she vacillated between fright at the immensity of the task and determination to prove herself to "all the artists and architects" by not backing down. "I was scared," she wrote. "I'm sure they expected me to crawl out. I didn't."<sup>8</sup>

Teichert's concern focused on two issues. The problem of how to set up and move the requisite scaffolding was temporarily resolved when her husband, Herman, agreed to go with her as handyman and model. The second issue was whether her eyesight and health were up to the task, for she suffered from recurrent bouts of acute lead poisoning, which can produce optic neuritis, abdominal pain, and nausea. Her solution was typical: "Pray for me," she asked her daughter. "I need it. I want health, eyesight, and inspiration."<sup>9</sup>

Inspiration was not long in coming. Five days later, she reported, "I've been busy almost night and day making sketches for Manti. Poor dad says he [is] fed up on soup. They still don't suit me, but Shirley [a daughter-in-law] and her babes are here." By Thanksgiving she had worked nine days on the plans and soon moved on to other projects while awaiting approval.<sup>10</sup>

In February 1947, Teichert began to worry: "It's getting towards time for the little young things [chickens, calves, etc.] to come into the world and will be harder and harder for us to leave home." Finally, in a March meeting with Church officials, Teichert was asked to redesign one of the walls. Approval was granted either in that meeting or soon thereafter. She would be provided approximately \$4,000 for the project; out of those funds, she was to pay her expenses, buy paint and other supplies, and hire



an assistant to help in painting and moving the scaffolding. For their part, the authorities contracted to supply the steel scaffolding.<sup>11</sup>

### **Preparations and Arrival**

During the long winter's wait, Bennett Paint from Utah County had treated the canvas in the world room with casein and beeswax. At Teichert's insistence, they next applied a base coat of yellow ocher mixed with white lead and raw linseed oil. Teichert wanted an earth tone that would give a warm feeling to the room.<sup>12</sup>

Because of the spring work required on the ranch, Herman could not stay in Manti with Minerva, but this change in plans did not diminish her husband's support. Minerva was grateful. "Bless his heart," she remarked to her daughter. "He's pretty good to get along and let me come!" A daughter-in-law living in Cokeville, Buhla Brady Teichert, agreed to take over many of Minerva's home duties. Again, this sacrifice was not lost on Minerva: "Buhla is grand. She is surely going to have her hands full with egg washing, butter making and washing Dad's things even if he doesn't eat with them."<sup>13</sup>

In Herman's place, Minerva hired Frank Stevens to paint the "big spaces" and move the scaffolding.<sup>14</sup> Stevens, age thirty, was an amateur artist living in Green River, Wyoming. He had become acquainted with Minerva through his wife, who had lived in Cokeville and was related to friends of the Teicherts. During each family visit to Cokeville in the 1940s, he had spent time drawing and painting under Minerva's tutelage.<sup>15</sup>

To obtain Frank's services, Minerva mailed him \$100 and set a date for him to meet her. Expecting that the money would induce him to make serious plans, she assumed that because he was in a family dairy business his partners would be willing to release him for a month. She was right on both counts. Frank was "pleased and scared and flattered" and immediately began to make arrangements.<sup>16</sup>

The week before leaving, Minerva worked on the maquettes (sketches serving as models for the murals), drawing them on plywood to a scale of an inch to the foot. The five-foot maquettes for the long walls, she believed, "should be easy to work from." But preparations for an extended painting stint in Manti did not deter Minerva from indulging in her other passion right to the last moment. On her last night at home, with family assisting her, she stayed up until eleven to work on genealogy.<sup>17</sup>

April 17, 1947, Minerva and Herman drove to Salt Lake City, where she met with Presiding Bishop LeGrand Richards, signed her contract, and bought paints, brushes, and other supplies. That night they arrived in Manti, and Minerva settled into a motel, although she fretted over the expense: "I haven't found any other place to stay. It costs me \$2 a day just for my apartment. I have shower, steam heat, and kitchenette. It is quiet and comfortable and near the temple." Despite the late hours the night



before, she took advantage of Herman's presence to deliver supplies to the temple. Now, though she would be without an assistant for another six days, Minerva was ready to embark on this grand project.<sup>18</sup>

### **Schedule and Procedure**

After two days on the job, Teichert was painfully aware of the rigors of painting a world room solo:

Since my scaffold isn't here yet from Salt Lake, I have been working on the north wall. . . . I can reach higher from ladders but so far have only worked on figures within ten feet of floor. . . . My legs are terribly sore from climbing up and down ladders so much the last two days but a hot shower helps a lot.<sup>19</sup>

She would continue to work alone and without scaffolding for four more days, sketching in figures from six in the morning until six at night, taking a break and putting away her gear only when a company would come through the temple at ten and two. The grueling schedule fatigued her: "When I get down to my room, I just fall. I don't care whether I eat or not."<sup>20</sup>

She was impelled by a sense of urgency apparently stemming from her desire to return home quickly as well as from the pressure of wanting to please Church authorities. Certainly she was encouraged to work quickly, but all indications are that she alone was responsible for setting herself a deadline of a month. "These people expected me to be working on these gigantic murals for a year," she commented. "Dad was afraid I'd be several months since Robert Shepherd, the artist who did that lovely 'Garden of Eden' in Idaho Falls was six months on the garden room here but I expect to be a month if the Lord gives me health and eye sight."<sup>21</sup> Even so, at times during the project, she and Stevens would give a whole day to a small section.<sup>22</sup>

When Stevens joined her in the world room on April 24, Minerva equipped him with charcoal, rags, brushes, and a plywood palette about fifteen by twenty inches in size. To free his hands for climbing around the scaffold, she also gave him an apron she had fashioned to hold his equipment. At first he recoiled at the thought of wearing an apron but was soon convinced by its practicality.

They worked six days a week. Every morning began with prayer, work began with prayer, and whenever Teichert encountered a problem, they would resort to another prayer. If they became so excited they forgot to pray before painting, they would kneel the moment they remembered. Stevens remembers those prayers vividly. Teichert would express gratitude for the opportunity to create the murals and "always prayed for safety" and inspiration to depict the subject properly. She would add, "May even Frank be inspired along with me to do the thing and put the color in the depth of it and all so that we will really tell this story as it should be told." Regardless of who was mouth for a prayer for assistance, Teichert would inject a very

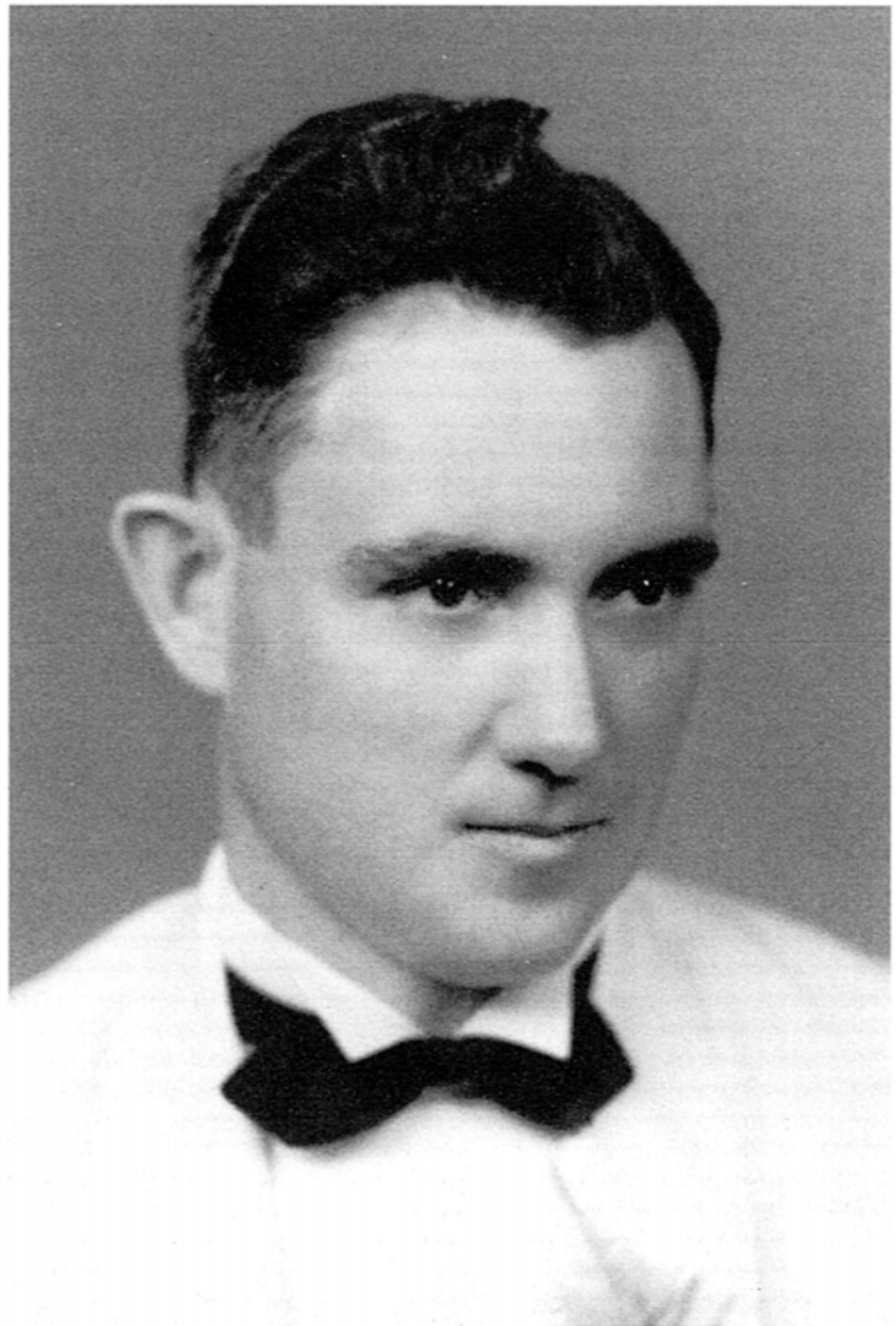


specific plea: “Lord, help us get those people on top of that mountain” or whatever the issue was. When the predicament was particularly difficult, she would pray, “Oh, Lord, if we could just have a miracle, if we could just have a miracle today. This is what we need, Lord.” Stevens marveled at how she would pray the same way she talked to friends.<sup>23</sup>

For Teichert, scriptures were critical to the murals’ success. She studied scriptures; she quoted scriptures. While engaged on the south wall, she applied “a lot” of them to Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. “But,” Stevens discovered, “her real excitement was the world . . . and how scripture pertained to the prophecies which would happen.” She was particularly fond of Isaiah.<sup>24</sup>

Rather than loiter while waiting for a temple session to finish in the world room, Teichert and Stevens would retire for prayer and study to the office of President Lewis R. Anderson. There, with the president’s permission, Teichert kept the art books with which she taught Stevens lessons on anatomy, particularly during their work on the north wall. That he improved steadily enough to end up entirely responsible for creating the fur trader on the west wall is not surprising. No time was wasted. “You’re going to work on [the lessons] every minute that we’re not painting down there,” she informed him. But her art lessons were not like those she had received in New York. “We had art lessons and prayer and prayer,” Stevens recalls, “and then [more] art lessons and more prayer. Day after day. Operating on our knees many days.”<sup>25</sup>

When not praying or quoting scripture, Teichert was likely talking anyway, expounding her ideas and giving instructions. Some of the



Courtesy Frank Stevens

**Fig. 3. Frank Stevens, 1941 wedding picture.** Stevens modeled for Teichert, provided the muscle needed for handling the scaffold, and under her close supervision sketched and painted. Pleased with his progress during the project, Teichert asked him to create the fur trapper on the west wall.



instructions were necessitated by Teichert's need to gain perspective on the work in progress and communicate to Stevens what was needed:

She would say draw this line in here, Frank, and I'd paint that real heavy. . . . I could hardly see what I was doing because some of the sketches had been made and I was working so close to it, but she'd back off down the hall and shout instructions and make observations about what she wanted it to do. . . . [C]onstantly giving instructions: "A little higher. Make that line stronger over there."<sup>26</sup>

"She talked much, very fast, thinking just part of her words," Stevens remembers. "Sometimes she wasn't coherent, the way she would explain things." But he was "thrilled" to be part of the project and inspired by her presence: "I've never met a person in my life that even compared with her in her enthusiasm for the gospel and the building of the kingdom and how art could play its part."<sup>27</sup>

### **Physical Challenges**

For a woman who stood only 5'2" and weighed "scarcely" 117 pounds, painting walls twenty-eight feet high was physically stressful. Even with Stevens taking the brunt of moving the heavy scaffolding, Teichert still had to move the boards that went on the scaffold and climb up and down with her supplies. But more serious were the risks of working at such heights. Often she needed to perch on a board that extended beyond the ends of the scaffold. Nothing would be underneath to break a fall. "She was nervy, I'll tell you," Stevens declares.<sup>28</sup>

He would know, for he had to overcome his own height-induced fears:

One Swede came up to me, and I was working moving the scaffolding around. He said, "Do you like to do this work?" I said, "Well its new work to me. I guess I like it better than anything I've ever done before." He said, "You're going to have to get up on top. You are going to be pretty high to reach that ceiling." I said, "Yes, it's kind of scary to reach out there on the end of a board and try to do any painting." He said, "Well, if you're scared, you shouldn't be up there in the first place." I said, "I found out in my life that I've been scared of a lot of things, and I've still had to do them. I think . . . one of my challenges [is] to overcome whatever fear I might have to accomplish this work."<sup>29</sup>

The risks were not to be discounted, as they learned when Minerva fell off the scaffold and hurt her arm shortly after painting the Tower of Babel scene. She missed work a few hours to see a doctor and then resumed painting, going out on the edge as usual.<sup>30</sup>

The same determination prevailed when she became ill:

Night before last I came home with a high fever and very sick. I went straight to bed, didn't eat or say a word to anyone. I took three aspirin and prayed and tossed 'til near midnight, then drank lots of water. In the morning the fever was gone and I was well. That was wonderful, for never in my life have I raced so with time.<sup>31</sup>



One motivation for pressing through hazards and discomfort was her loyalty to the General Authorities. “I shall not fail them,” she wrote in the letter describing her illness. She did not. The murals were completed four days later.

### Finishing Up

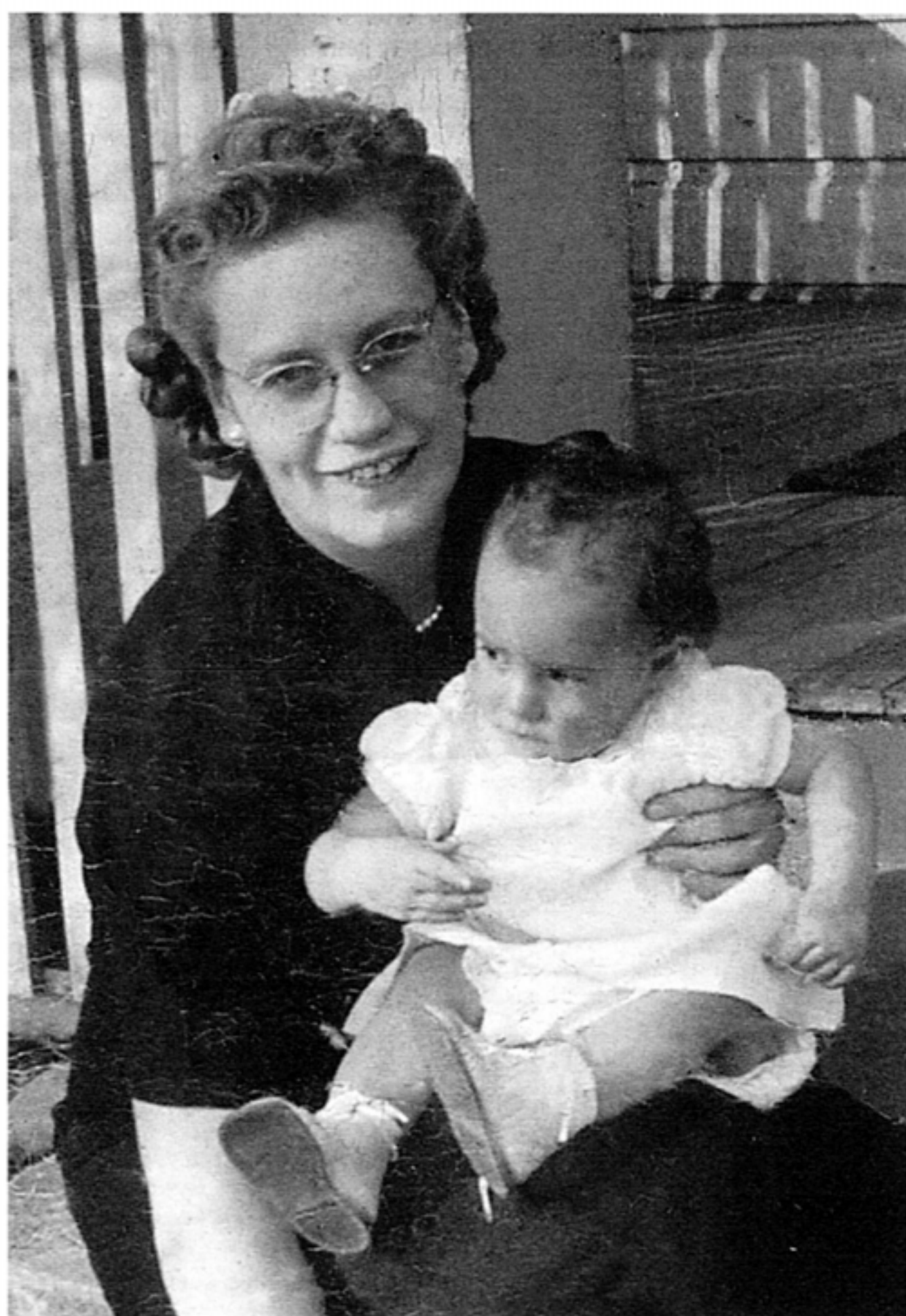
Wednesday, May 7, the team received the first of their reinforcements—Nancy Taylor Stevens, Frank’s wife. Nancy and Minerva were friends, Minerva having sold some paintings to Brigham Young University to pay part of Nancy’s tuition there. Knowing that Nancy had studied calligraphy, Minerva asked her to do some lettering under the foreground groups on the north wall.

That and Nancy’s other contributions would help greatly as they geared up for the last phase. Nevertheless, Minerva longed for three or four more helpers for the next few days. “I’m tired, very tired,” she wrote.<sup>32</sup>

Interruptions broke the artists’ frantic rhythm. As usual, the team stopped painting whenever a temple session was underway, but now more people than ever would “come back and demand a speech.” Minerva would comply but regretted losing any of the little time remaining.<sup>33</sup>

Herman arrived on Friday, bringing their youngest son with him, and ran errands for Minerva. They all hoped to complete the work on Saturday but had to stop short of their goal: “Saturday Frank Stevens, Nancy, Dad and I all worked from 6:00 A.M. to about 9:00 P.M., still it was not finished.” Although work remained, the Stevenses were slated to go home on Sunday. Minerva recorded their departure and in few words described the final effort: “We took . . . Frank and Nancy to Provo Sunday A.M., then worked again Monday, Dad helping cover spaces.” The completion date was May 12.

At home again, Minerva noted that she probably had been “homesick all the time” and was “terribly tired from the experience.” But she was also exultant:



**Fig. 4. Nancy Taylor Stevens** with her baby, Janet, 1943. Nancy assisted with the murals the last few days and sketched in the calligraphy.

Courtesy Frank Stevens





**Fig. 5. Herman A. Teichert**, Minerva's husband, in his later years. Herman supported Minerva throughout the murals project and, in the last few days and during the touch-up phase, moved scaffolding, painted "large spaces," and modeled.

Oh, but I have done a terrific job. It's wonderful that my health held up and I was able to go through with it. The authorities could hardly realize that it was ended.

They had heard that I was working very fast, and I sure did. No mural decorator in America ever beat that—nearly 4,000 sq. ft. in 23 days.<sup>34</sup>

Just how surprised the General Authorities were was detailed in a letter two weeks later:

It seems that my painting in Manti caused a little stir. Apostle Widstoe [*sic*] saw me at conference Sunday. He said, "Aren't you the same Sister Teichert I left painting in Manti." He was staring wide-eyed at me. I said, "I finished it." "Finished," he said, incredulously. "How long did you work?" "Exactly 23 days," I answered. . . . He [had] wondered how many years I would be.<sup>35</sup>

## Touch Ups

Teichert was to discover that more work remained. In June, probably at the request of the Church architect and the Presiding Bishop, she returned to Manti with Alice Merrill Horne, her art agent, to finish and modify the murals. Once her paints arrived—the bus had carried off her supplies—she reported she was "working hard and enjoying it—just put on brightening color and better drawing on all the 120 figures."<sup>36</sup>

Yet another trip occurred in July. Accompanied by Frank Stevens, who had volunteered his help, she returned to reconstruct the Tower of Babel. "We knocked the top off, putting clouds behind it, and about  $\frac{1}{3}$  way down put workers placing a stone, etc.," she related in a letter a few days later. "We 'con-centered' all the lines of rock on the three remaining ramps, and I feel fine about it. There are only 28 days work even now on it. But two of us working from 5:30 A.M. until about 8:00 or 8:30 at night as fast as we paint is terrific."<sup>37</sup> According to Stevens, the two also worked on the south wall.



There she changed the colors and brought “emphasis to certain parts. . . . She did quite a bit on this wall.”<sup>38</sup>

Still, more detail was desired. In December she spent a few days “touching up generally,” focusing primarily on the Mayflower and on hands. Herman helped by “lifting plank, ladders, paints, and everything for me.” Bothered by an arm broken in September, she labored on, even though “I do not feel so much like painting as I did last spring, but I guess that’s only natural since it will be a year before I can do much with my left hand.”<sup>39</sup>

Tiring of “that Manti job,” she and Herman made another trip to Manti in March 1948. Perhaps to her surprise, she found her two days of effort to be quite satisfying, even though “I worked, as usual, . . . beyond my strength.”<sup>40</sup> Her report was glowing:

I’ve enjoyed this trip and gone over this entire mural, pulling it together finishing a nose or a hand. My feeling is that it is the most tremendous thing in the world. It is a great pageant, 120 people marching by in grand review, not a head or hand sticking out but figures, every one requiring infinite attention.

. . . I worked hard and I surely love this gigantic temple.<sup>41</sup>

## THE DESIGN OF THE MURALS

Several constraints were placed on Teichert’s “great pageant.” It had to enhance the spiritual themes of the world room. It had to wrap under windows and around doors and fit in tight corners. It had to cover almost 4,000 square feet but be finished quickly. It had to stay true to scripture. Above all, it had to be shaped by prayer and the inspiration gained through temple attendance. Although Teichert had moments of concern about realizing her artistic vision,<sup>42</sup> she embraced the challenge with gratitude and dedication.

The following sections delineate the design and look briefly at Teichert’s style, drawing primarily upon the scriptures and upon statements from Teichert and Stevens. The opinions expressed here are not the official views of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And, as is the case with all great art, what is suggested here barely touches the possibilities, for each viewer will respond uniquely to the murals.

### The Artistic Narrative

The symbolic significance of the murals’ temple setting is important to appreciating them. At the time the Manti Temple was constructed (1877–88), the floor plan of all Latter-day Saint temples was designed around a series of rooms in which the temple course of instruction was given in stages.<sup>43</sup> Although some of the early temples have been remodeled, the Manti and Salt Lake Temples retain this arrangement. The world room Teichert painted is one such instruction room. In *The House of the Lord* by



Elder James E. Talmage is an explanation of the room's name: "From Eden man has been driven out to meet contention, to struggle with difficulties, to live by strife and sweat. This chamber may well be known as the room of the fallen world, or more briefly, the World Room."<sup>44</sup>

In Teichert's day, the murals on the walls of world rooms in other temples were populated only with animals. One such room, the world room of the Salt Lake Temple, was described by Elder Talmage:

Beasts are contending in deadly strife, or engaged in murderous attack, or already rending their prey. The more timorous creatures are fleeing from their ravenous foes or cowering in half-concealed retreats. . . . All the forest folk and the wild things of the mountain are living under the ever-present menace of death, and it is by death they live. . . . The scenes are typical of the world's condition under the curse of God.<sup>45</sup>

Teichert's concept for the Manti Temple world room, however, looked to the language of Doctrine and Covenants 76, which contrasts the behavior of worldly individuals with the actions of those striving to reach celestial goals. She determined that, since the figures of greatest import in the eternal plan are people, humanity is what should be shown: "The world has no significance other than people, and that's what it was created for . . . that's the story of the world room, it is a 'people room.'"<sup>46</sup> Teichert's focus on people enabled her to tell "the story of the world." "What could be more significant or greater," she asked Frank, "than to tell the story of mankind from the Tower of Babel to the Zion in the tops of the Rocky Mountains?"<sup>47</sup>

**East Wall.** Teichert's narrative begins in the East, the post-Deluge birthplace of the civilizations of the world. On the east wall (appropriately) of the world room is depicted the Tower of Babel under construction in the Plain of Shinar. The tower is pictured as "a great observatory"<sup>48</sup> in the form of a ziggurat. Interestingly, Hugh W. Nibley connects both with ancient temples. The temple, he cites one ancient author as saying, is "a sort of observatory where one gets one's bearings on the universe." The ziggurat form of temple was viewed as a stairway leading to heaven. "It resembled a mountain," Nibley adds, "for 'the mountain itself was originally a place of contact between this and the upper world.'"<sup>49</sup> Thus a ziggurat is a fitting choice for a temple mural of people attempting to build a tower by which to reach heaven (Gen. 11:4).

Likely unaware of these ancient echoes, Teichert may have selected the ziggurat because it was an ancient building form in the Middle East; she always attempted to depict architecture accurately. And it harmonized with the observatory theme she chose for representing the learning—astronomy and mathematics in particular—that came out of the East. According to Teichert, this knowledge is also represented by the lever employed by a laborer on the mural's left, the compass in the architect's hand, the square



held by a supervisor, and the wheeled carts. These are tools for a massive, concentrated effort—“almost the birth of cooperation”—made possible by the desire unifying the dominant people. Stevens notes, “We tried to depict the great element of work which was required even at that time. . . . [Building the tower was] quite a project; you’ve got to admit.”<sup>50</sup>

Teichert also portrays the harsh realities of slavery<sup>51</sup> and the builders’ lack of faith in God’s promises. The ominous cloud hovering over the misbegotten enterprise may denote God’s displeasure, which resulted in the dispersal of the people when their language was confounded. This dispersion is hinted at by the varied garb and headgear of the workers.

**South Wall.** In the next murals, the two biblical divisions of people—the Israelites and the Gentiles—move westward separately from the tower to eventually join in North America. The north wall encapsulates the history of the Gentiles in one panorama. On the south wall, whose expanse is broken up by four large windows, Teichert elected to portray four discrete critical events in the history of the house of Israel.

**Abraham.** The first represents the story of Abraham, a man of undeviating, and unpopular, loyalty to the living God. Having been saved from the sacrificial knife by an angel, who said he would take Abraham “into a strange land” (Abr. 1:16), Abraham is shown about to enter Canaan.<sup>52</sup> With him are his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot, both mounted on camels, their rolled-up packs behind them. Their cattle are driven before them, and their sheep trail behind.

Abraham is especially significant to those receiving the temple ordinances, for, he was told, “as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father” (Abr. 2:10). This depiction of Abraham may remind viewers of the covenants and promises granted to Abraham and his heirs.<sup>53</sup> It also suggests that through Abraham’s seed the nations represented in the murals and all others in the world will be offered the blessings of the gospel, “which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” (Abr. 2:11).

**Joseph.** The next scene is Joseph being sold to Ishmaelite traders traveling from Gilead to Egypt. To help viewers identify the story, Teichert painted Joseph wearing his many-colored robe, although she knew that in the Genesis account this much-envied gift from Jacob had already been taken away. Joseph is down on one knee but not cringing, restrained by three of his brothers, his head unprotected from the sun. Nine of his ten older brothers cluster around, Reuben, who had hoped to save him, not being there at the time. One of the Ishmaelites, distant kinsmen to Joseph, stands in the center of the group, holding out the twenty pieces of silver agreed upon as the price for Joseph. Another fez-wearing Ishmaelite watches over his shoulder, distancing himself from the proceedings. In the



background are other traders, their camels loaded with their wares of spices, balm, and myrrh. Two royal pyramids rise on the horizon, signifying Joseph's eventual destination as second in command over all Egypt.

On one level, Joseph represents obedience and chastity, having resisted the unrelenting advances of Potiphar's wife and thereby remaining true to God at all costs. On another level, as a deliverer of the house of Israel (Ether 13:9), Joseph is a type of the Redeemer (2 Ne. 3:15), who was also betrayed for a handful of silver. Finally, Joseph is a prophet who "truly saw our day" (2 Ne. 3:5) and testified of the doings of his descendants, the faithful of the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim. Among his seed were the great Nephite and Lamanite nations, to whose remnant, he foresaw, the gospel would be taken in the latter days. It is primarily Joseph's posterity who now preach the gospel to them and whose feet are "beautiful upon the mountains" (Mosiah 15:17), the mountain of the Lord often being another name for a temple. It is they who will build the New Jerusalem, or Zion (Ether 13:8). Joseph saw his descendant Joseph Smith, who would bring "to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel" (2 Ne. 3:24), including the temple ordinances.

**Moses.** The third scene shows Moses after he descended Mt. Sinai, the tablets of the Lord's decalogue in his hand, only to find his people singing and dancing before the golden calf (Ex. 32:18–19). Teichert does not present this scene precisely but chooses instead to reveal the core issue: the people have violated the first three of the very commandments Moses brought to them.

Through the power of the Lord, Moses had brought his people out of a land of idolatry and servitude and led them to Mount Sinai, a place of heavenly communication used in lieu of a temple, where they would become a covenant people (Deut. 5:2–3). Here, they were offered the privilege of hearing the Lord's voice, but they requested that God not speak with them, and they "stood afar off" (Ex. 19:9; 20:19, 21) while Moses conversed with the Lord. When Moses was with the Lord for forty days, the people turned away and broke their covenant to do "all the words which the Lord hath said" (Ex. 24:3). Symbolically, the first of the tablets lies at their feet, broken. Moses points condemningly toward the shards and thrusts forth his other arm, holding the second tablet aloft in warning, ready to dash it, too, to the earth. If the people have broken the first three commandments, surely they will disdain others.

In this scene, the people have rejected Jehovah—literally turned their backs on him—who is present on the mountain and who is typified by his prophet, Moses, for Jesus identified himself as being "like unto" Moses (3 Ne. 20:23). The Israelites have reverted to a false god of their own making and prostrated themselves before it. This picture of the exclusive nature





Fig. 6. Pilgrims and the Mayflower. Southwest corner.



of idolatry reflects Christ's warning "No man can serve two masters. . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). To those living in the latter days, Christ also prophetically commanded, "Thou shalt no more worship the works of thy hands" (3 Ne. 21:17).

**The Pilgrims.** The final scene on the south wall is of a Pilgrim family on the shore awaiting transport to the Mayflower. All the father carries is a Bible. Other emigrants are in a small boat about to embark; one is already climbing up a ladder on the side of the ship. According to Teichert, one of their links to Abraham, Joseph, and Moses is this: "Israel is embarking to the West for the New World."<sup>54</sup> Just as the three prophets and their people were delivered by journeying to a new land, so too were the Pilgrims, whose deliverance was prophesied: "I beheld the spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity upon the many waters" (1 Ne. 13:13).<sup>55</sup>

The Pilgrims were also a covenant people. When they signed the Mayflower Compact, they agreed, among other things, to "covenant & combine" themselves "for the glorie of God, and advancemente of the Christian faith."<sup>56</sup> This compact helped establish a covenantal foundation, not only for a nation, but also for families in the New World. This, Teichert believed, continues to be their contribution to Zion.<sup>57</sup>

**North Wall.** The fact that the north wall was mostly one long, continuous expanse allowed Teichert to paint a single procession of Gentiles (Gentiles in the Book of Mormon sense) "from the Orient to the chivalry of Europe, even to the sailing of Columbus." Against a backdrop of "great and spacious" buildings (1 Ne. 8:26) and a harbor scene are pictured the two queues of the procession: one on some form of conveyance and the other walking. In the foreground is a series of shadowed semi-silhouettes representing the poor and the oppressed. The viewer "reads" the wall from right to left (east to west) beginning, according to Teichert's instructions, with the group by the only window on the wall.<sup>58</sup> For convenience, the mural will be divided into five areas: the Esau, Orient, Crusader, Columbus, and shadowed sections.

**Esau Section.** The window, located on the extreme east end, needed figures that would fit under it. Teichert devised this solution: Esau the Edomite, drawn in shadow, is "down on his knees dragging an Israelite girl out to sell her to a big . . . Sabaean slave trader for a jug of wine."<sup>59</sup> While working on the murals, Teichert was repeatedly asked what biblical passage this image is based upon. Finally, she could no longer escape the challenge. The resulting story is worth repeating in Teichert's own words as it tells us much about her knowledge of the scriptures, her approach to scriptural art, and her confidence:

Old brother L—— the night watchman, said, "Sister Teichert, that story is not in the Bible." I nearly blew my top, "Why it is too." "Well, you've got to prove



it to me,” he answered. And I knew I had to either paint it out (a 2 or 3 hundred dollar job or prove it). Just before I left to come home dear little Pres. A. came sneaking up exactly as a cat creeps up on a mouse. . . . I knew something was up. He said, “Sister Teichert, before you go, there’s that Edomite story. A number of the sisters say they know that is in the Bible, ~~can~~ but none can tell me where. I believe it’s there alright, but it’s up to you, you’ve got to prove it.”

I’ve been on the spot[;] to tell you the truth I thought my eyes would come out before I finally went blind. . . . I’ve used up more eyesight than on the entire 4000 sq. ft. of painting. I read the entire prophets then apocalypse and new testament running a card down the columns and stopping at every Edom, or Heathen, or Idunea, or Esau. Then Kings and Chronicles. I borrowed every reference book besides my own many. Today, after a ten-day search and a lot of prayer, I found it in Joel chapter 3 [Joel 3:3, 7, 8]. By combining that with Obadiah 1 I got it pieced out and sent it to them.

Never get yourself in a mess like that. Better not put it down in paint if you can’t prove it right now.<sup>60</sup>

**Orient Section.** Traders of various nationalities ride their burdened camels to the west. Their desire for gain is both positive and negative: positive in motivating exploration and providing goods, negative in leading to idolatry in the form of worshipping wealth. At their side are representatives of several ethnic groups: an Arab sheik, a Chinese, the Greek goddess



Fig. 7. Esau the Edomite selling an Israelite. North wall, detail of east end.



Diana, a Turk, “James” (a Jew wearing a phylactery on his forehead), and a Greek Orthodox priest. All are worshipers of various eastern faiths and hold what Teichert considered to be symbols of their religions.<sup>61</sup>

A goddess rather than a human, Diana is almost colorless, less real than her processional companions. Her presence is an allusion to Acts 19:21–34,<sup>62</sup> which portrays the strength of idol worship, both that of wealth and that of graven images. Paul had been so persuasive in garnering converts in Ephesus that the silversmiths whose wealth was based on making silver images for Diana feared that their “craft [was] in danger.” A near riot ensued, during which was heard the repeated chant “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” Clearly Diana symbolizes idolatry in all its various guises, including the exploitation of religion for lucre.

**Crusader Section.** The Oriental traders give way to the European crusaders. In their midst is a representative of western Christianity or the “Mother Church”<sup>63</sup>—a priest carrying a cross. Again the Crusaders are a human mix of both good and bad. They were responsible, Teichert was taught as a youngster, for bringing to the West the learning of the East, including its numerals, medicine, and design,<sup>64</sup> the latter typified by the red paisley pattern in one of the women’s robes. But they and other armies also bring with them all the horrors of war. In this procession are many other notables: a king, queen, and prince; an “explorer with a globe”; and “a Judge in wig and gown of the courts” holding a scroll.<sup>65</sup> They may signify the pride of the world and those who seek power and gain.

**Columbus Section.** At the end of the procession is Columbus on one of his ships, waving farewell to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, joint sovereigns of Castile and Aragon, who have helped finance this voyage west. Columbus was motivated by scripture,<sup>66</sup> and his voyage will fulfill prophecy—“I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my [Nephi’s] brethren, who were in the promised land” (1 Ne. 13:12)—and help prepare the way for the restoration of the gospel and the establishment of Zion. Waiting for the royal couple are their coachman and two of their entourage,<sup>67</sup> symbols of their earthly power and glory.

**The Shadowed Section.** In 1943, Teichert shared this concern: “I dread what America faces. I’m very sure it will face hunger in cities and what could the huddled poor do.” Four years later on a Manti Temple wall, she painted those huddled masses—the halt, the blind, the “beggars from many causes”—all going unheeded. Of the wealthy who are pictured, “only a King is giving,” she wrote, “and he doesn’t even look at the hand of the mother as he tosses his coins.”<sup>68</sup>

First on the right are a blind woman (designated by the blindfold on her eyes) and a man, both barefooted. Three veiled women, Teichert noted,



hide from the beggars' pleas,<sup>69</sup> and the religious pass them by. Nephi linked the plight of such poor to the pious proud:

The Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and have stumbled, because of the greatness of their stumbling block, that they have built up many churches; nevertheless, they . . . preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning, that they may get gain and grind upon the face of the poor. (2 Ne. 26:20)

Next is a fatherless, homeless family, their few belongings on the ground beside them.<sup>70</sup> The mother has a baby in her arms and a very young child beside her. It is to her that the king is impersonally tossing a few coins, not concerned whether she catches them or not. Next to this family is one composed of a mother and her lame son. All the passersby are indifferent to their hardships. "Because they are rich they despise the poor," Jacob aptly stated, "and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore, their treasure is their god" (2 Ne. 9:30).

Lying in isolation is a "crippled soldier, who lost a leg in battle."<sup>71</sup> In spite of his service to his country, he is judged unrighteously by the judge and, ironically, ignored by the crusading soldiers. The mural reminds us of King Benjamin's warning:

Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand. . . . But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent. . . . For behold, are we not all beggars? (Mosiah 4:16–19)

The "perfumed set," as they were named by Horne<sup>72</sup>—now including a trader carrying a balance in one hand and greedily clutching his bag of gold in another—comes upon a woman clutching her head in utter despair and a mother cradling the limp body of her son in her arms, much as Mary is often depicted, mourning over the crucified body of her son. These women, struggling alone in their distress, may remind viewers of covenantal obligations to help those in need: to be "willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; Yea, and [be] willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:8–9).

Standing close by the despairing woman but completely disregarding her is a "gaudily dressed woman," who stands for vice in its sundry forms. Rather than offer succor, the young woman eyes the trader approaching with his gold,<sup>73</sup> obviously scheming, since he ignores her, how to make him part with it.

Next to Columbus's ship is a family of emigrants. They have been "driven to the ends of the earth by the pressure from the vast crowd to the east. These will be the next to find the new world. There they wait with their worldly possessions to cross the mighty ocean."<sup>74</sup>



**West Wall.** The central figure on the west wall, which the audience faces, is a towering “Indian Brave as the symbol of the American Continent.”<sup>75</sup> Recapitulating some of the continent’s history, this descendant of Joseph welcomes both the fur trader on his left and the Pilgrim on his right. The latter two are contrasting figures, representing the worldly and the spiritual strains that arrived on American shores as well as the various motives that brought them here. The trader grasps his gun—which is both a defense and a dealer of death—and pelts he plans to sell. The Pilgrim carries only his open Bible.<sup>76</sup> Avidly reading the holy book, he steps toward Zion far above him in the tops of the mountains but does not yet see it. The trader, too, is accepted as part of God’s plan for preparing a country in which the gospel can be restored and Zion established.

Above the trees behind the brave is the city of Zion, the pure in heart (D&C 97:21). Teichert explained, “We have not had in mind any city exactly. It could be Salt Lake, Logan, Provo, Bear Lake, Manti, but it is the place where the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands should begin to roll forth until it should cover the whole earth.”<sup>77</sup> Stevens adds, “It represents the Zion people, not merely the place, but the spirit of the people who build the place. . . . Zion has to be established not only spiritually but physically.” He suggested that while the Pilgrims were driven to America, they also “came here because they were gathered.” Similarly, the Saints were not “merely driven by some enemy or persecution”; they came “to gain Zion.”<sup>78</sup>

In contrast to the darkened trees, the city is full of light, which may signify the love of God. It also suggests the truth and light of Christ that reside in the premillennial Zion and may refer to his actual presence in the millennial Zion. The city is placed near the ceiling, nigh to heaven, and in the mountaintops in fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills” (Isa. 2:2). “That’s why,” Stevens clarifies, “she wanted the mountains so rugged.” The seagulls, he continued, “represent celestial intervention into our lives,” depicting “the Lord’s hand in a very physical as well as a spiritual way. That Zion may be established.”<sup>79</sup>

**Zion the Nexus.** Zion is the nexus of Teichert’s entire narrative. In Zion, the events pictured in the world room reach their climax; the history of Israel and the history of “the gentile nation” have been shaped by God’s hand to culminate in the events of the last days. Those seeking furs and gold have played a role just as surely as the immigrants seeking a haven for their families (1 Ne. 13:14).<sup>80</sup> And while the south side reflects the spiritual side of humanity and the north side their carnal nature, neither side is



purely one or the other. Israel is sometimes faithless; the crusaders were impelled partly by a spiritual quest.

With the exception of Columbus and the sovereigns sending him off, no person on the north wall interacts with any other person. Each is isolated, profoundly alone. No person other than Columbus smiles. All others are dreary. Even the rich and powerful have received no lasting joy from their possessions and status, for “wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). For them and for all people, Zion stands as a bright beacon of hope and a symbol of eternal life. There the king of kings will reign in righteousness. There love will abound. There the repentant may rest from their labors.

Zion is the place to which “all nations shall flow” (Isa. 2:2). To it may come the “tired,” the “poor,” the “huddled masses yearning to breathe free,” and “the homeless, tempest-tossed,”<sup>81</sup> and in the millennial Zion, the gathered will be exalted, for there will be no poor among them (see Moses 7:18; 4 Ne. 1:3).

“Oh yes, that is Zion, this is the combination of everything; this is what we’re talking about,” Stevens recalls Teichert as saying. “And while she would talk she would reach back with those big brushes and stand with her back real straight, and her eyes wide open and stretch her arms out just as far as possible.” Repeatedly, she would cite the Lord’s designs for all in the world who will hearken: “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).<sup>82</sup>

### Elements of Teichert’s Style

A striking feature of Teichert’s style—one that is puzzling to many first-time viewers—is her minimal use of detail. Latter-day Saint art, she believed, should be “rich in story and backed by a great faith.”<sup>83</sup> Once the story was told, in her opinion the painting was finished. “Not going to do any more with that,” she would say. “That tells the story.” Detail that was irrelevant to the story but that many would think was necessary to finish the figures was excluded. “Don’t get so excited about doing a tremendous technical job of talking about nothing,” she cautioned Stevens.<sup>84</sup>

For her, the attitude and position of the figures were far more important to the story than detail. The issue is not that she painted only what she was capable of. She had studied anatomical drawing and as a student was known for her astute drafting of figures. Furthermore, she relished the nuances: “The human form, so tremendous; horses are so beautiful.” She taught Stevens, “All of these figures that God has made and the construction of them and all—you must get them right.” Wryly, she added, “It doesn’t look like I do sometimes, but you believe me. I know what I’m talking about.” She was just more concerned about the overall story.<sup>85</sup>



Thus it is that some faces are indicated only sketchily. The characters' postures and gestures are more telling, much as is the case when a viewer sits at a distance from actors upon a stage. And indeed, Teichert, having been trained in mural art theory, was always cognizant of how her large works would look from a distance. Of noses, she had her own philosophy, though one still consistent with her stance on story versus detail. A nose, she claimed, does not have expression; therefore, it "isn't that important. Don't paint it." In this and other issues, she departed markedly from her New York mentor, Robert Henri,<sup>86</sup> but with the result that her style is strongly individualistic and instantly recognizable.

Another element Teichert considered essential to her narrative was color, as Stevens points out: "There was no question but what her values, her colors, spelled out the story that she wanted to tell."<sup>87</sup> He remembers her saying, "The values of color is the only thing that makes things go round, and unless you do that you haven't accomplished anything."<sup>88</sup> The skin tones of the people on the north wall are unhealthy, for example, "due to their oppressed and 'dreary' state" and indicate the people are "out of harmony with their creator."<sup>89</sup> Terry O'Brien claims that Teichert is quite successful in matching color to purpose. The artists of other world rooms "match up only occasionally." He believes Teichert's colors "depict the barrenness, strife, contention, disorder, chaos, opposition, loneliness, death, mourning and dreariness also present in the representation of people."<sup>90</sup>

For the world room, Teichert wanted the colors to be "soft." Almost everything was mixed with white lead—bought in five-pound cans—which Stevens recalls as having a warm tint. No colors, even the purples and golds on kings and queens, were used straight out of the tube; doing so was anathema, a sign of "calendar art." Teichert loved the earth colors—the earth reds, siennas, ochers, and terra burnt greens. Yellow ocher was the unifying color of the room, even grays and reds beginning with it, for the earth is "yellow ocher when the sun hits it." But "ultramarine is the thing to stick to," she maintained. It could be mixed with yellow to warm it up or green to cool it down. Stevens states that "she loved the subtle blues as they wrapped around different objects."<sup>91</sup>

The many subtle shifts of color in an object are another distinguishing feature of Teichert's style. "Learn to use all of the colors," she instructed Stevens, who up to that time had never owned a set of oil colors. "Colors don't really hurt each other. Look at nature; it has all of them." What was of concern to her was the proportion of one color to another: "A little bit of violet," which she considered to be a "dynamite color," "or some of these very extremely vivid colors can come out if they're in the right proportion." Then she went on to teach Stevens about the way "sunlight will change all of them. Look at water. . . . Water isn't any certain color—it can be all."<sup>92</sup>



In keeping with her training in painting murals, Teichert applied her paint thinly, in imitation of fresco, where the paint is applied to wet plaster. The Church architect, she complained later, required thicker paint than was her wont. Even so, the paint is often just a wash, resembling watercolors, a medium she had used before art school. According to Stevens, “her idea was never to paint it too thick but just bring out whatever colors you had to do.”<sup>93</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In the Manti Temple world room, Minerva Teichert and Frank Stevens labored and prayed to tell the story of the fallen world from the Tower of Babel to the establishment of Zion. The resulting design magnifies God’s glory and reveals his hand in the broad sweep of human history. While the details of the murals’ messages will vary for each individual, any Church member may harvest their spiritual lessons. The pageant’s inspired power is undeniable, as Frank Stevens testifies: “It’s just one mural in one spot, but to me it’s so big in my life that I can’t imagine it not being important to my family and to all who really try to enter into it.”<sup>94</sup>

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1. Minerva Teichert, *Letters of Minerva Teichert*, ed. Laurie Teichert Eastwood (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1998), 74, 76 (April 9 and October 8, 1945).

2. Teichert, *Letters of Minerva Teichert*, 45 (November 15, 19, 1942); some of the other letters recording temple visits are dated February 3, 1945; June 1, 1946; October 24, 1949, pages 71, 83, and 129, respectively, of *Letters*.

3. Teichert, *Letters*, 53 (Sunday).

4. John H. Nielson, letter to Scott [Haskins], May 19, 1982, in Scott Haskins, Conservator’s Report on the Garden and World Rooms, Manti Temple, 1982, Archives Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives); Frank Stevens, interview by Marian Johnson, November 3, 1986, 14, transcript in possession of Marian Johnson; Minerva Teichert, Notes, in Manti Temple Historical Record, August 1946, typescript, 95, LDS Church Archives.

5. Teichert, *Letters*, 87, 93 (August 14 and November 10, 1946); Frank Stevens, interview by Doris R. Dant, January 28, 1999, 1, Orem, Utah, transcript in possession of author. Richard and Susan Oman, “A Passion for Painting: Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert,” *Ensign* 6 (December 1976): 57, present one version of the selection process; family members and Frank Stevens, her assistant, offer still others. As far as I could determine, neither Teichert nor Anderson recorded the details of how she was selected.

6. Robert Teichert, interview by Marian Johnson, December 4, 1985, 2, Provo, Utah, transcript in possession of Marian Johnson.



7. Dawn Pheysey, "Foreword," *Letters of Minerva Teichert*, ed. Laurie Teichert Eastwood (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1998), x; see also Teichert, *Letters*, 101 (April 20, 1947).

8. Teichert, *Letters*, 93, 94 (November 13, 18, 23, 28, 1946); Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 3. The dimensions of the room are listed by the 1982 conservator. Haskins, Conservator's Report.

9. Teichert, *Letters*, 94 (November 18, 1946); "Lead Poisoning," The Lead Page, [orion.oac.uci.edu/~epinet/The\\_Lead\\_Page](http://orion.oac.uci.edu/~epinet/The_Lead_Page). Minerva was aware that her vision difficulties stemmed from lead poisoning: "For the last several years I've had serious eye trouble, one of the results of lead poisoning." *Letters*, 70 (January 14, 1945). "My eyes are in a bad shape. Dr. Ed [Jeppson] looked at them the other day. It's neuritis again and I musn't paint for some time." *Letters*, 126 (February 25, 1949).

10. Teichert, *Letters*, 94 (November 23, 28, 1946).

11. Teichert, *Letters*, 99, 100 (February 9, March 14, and April 11, 1947); Frank Stevens, cited in "Statements and Writings about Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert," research notes by Robert Davis, Museum of Church History and Art archives (hereafter cited as MCHA), 6.

12. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 14, 18.

13. Teichert, *Letters*, 101 (April 20, 1947).

14. Teichert, *Letters*, 100, 101 (April 11, 20, 1947).

15. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 11; Frank Stevens, phone conversation with Doris R. Dant, April 20, 1998.

16. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 11, 12; Frank Stevens, interview by Marian Johnson, November 12, 1986, 7, transcript in possession of Marian Johnson; Frank Stevens, Panel Discussion, Minerva Teichert Lecture Series, Museum of Art at Brigham Young University, May 7, 1998, 2, transcript in possession of Doris R. Dant; Stevens, "Statements," 7.

17. Teichert, *Letters*, 100, 101 (April 11, 17, 1947); Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 12.

18. Teichert, *Letters*, 101 (April 17, 20, 1947).

19. Teichert, *Letters*, 101 (April 20, 1947).

20. Teichert, *Letters*, 102 (April 23, 1947). Stevens remembers them working from seven in the morning to seven or nine at night. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 12; Stevens, "Statements," 6.

21. Stevens, "Statements," 8; Teichert, *Letters*, 100, 101 (April 11, 20, 1947).

22. Stevens, "Statements," 6.

23. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 12; Stevens, "Statements," 6, 7, 8.

24. Stevens, "Statements," 7, 8.

25. Teichert, *Letters*, 102 (May 1, 1947); Stevens, interview, November 12, 1986, 5; Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 4–5; Stevens, Panel Discussion, 3; Stevens, "Statements," 3.

26. Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 8.

27. Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 3; Stevens, "Statements," 3.

28. Robert O. Davis, "I Must Paint," in *Rich in Story, Great in Faith: The Art of Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert* (Salt Lake City: Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1988), 13; Teichert, *Letters*, 101 (April 20, 1947); Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 15; Stevens, "Statements," 3; Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 3.

29. Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 4.

30. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 15; Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 9; Stevens, "Statements," 5. Laurie Teichert Eastwood states that Minerva worked on the murals in July 1948, during which time she fell again and hit her head. The examining doctor sent her home to recuperate from the resulting concussion. Teichert, *Letters*, 124 n. 38.



31. Teichert, *Letters*, 102 (May 8, 1947). For more information about Teichert's Manti Temple murals in the context of her whole life, see Elaine Cannon and Shirley A. Teichert, *Minerva! The Story of an Artist with a Mission* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), where the photographs of Herman and Minerva were published. Note especially the time line on pp. 147–48. For a documented biography, see Eastwood, "Introduction," 1–19.

32. Joyce Stevens Waite, comments to author, January 28, 1999 (Joyce is a daughter of Frank and Nancy Stevens); Teichert, *Letters*, 102 (May 8, 1947).

33. Teichert, *Letters*, 102 (May 8, 1947); Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 5.

34. Teichert, *Letters*, 103 (May 13, 15, 1947).

35. Teichert, *Letters*, 104 (May 27, 1947).

36. Teichert, *Letters*, 104 (June 8, 1947). The Church architect and the Presiding Bishop are each mentioned separately as being involved in the touch-up requests.

37. Teichert, *Letters*, 105, 107 (July 7, 27, 1947); Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 8.

38. Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 8.

39. Teichert, *Letters*, 111, 116 (September 20, December 13, 16, 1947).

40. Teichert, *Letters*, 120 (March 7, 17, 1948).

41. Teichert, *Letters*, 120 (March 13, 1948).

42. Stevens, Panel Discussion, 3.

43. James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 84.

44. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, 158.

45. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, 158.

46. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 13; Laurie Teichert Eastwood, cited in "Statements," 5. Teichert may have based her view upon Abraham 3:24–25, among other passages: "We will make an earth whereon these may dwell; and we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them."

47. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 13.

48. Minerva Teichert, Notes, 99.

49. Hugh W. Nibley, "Meanings and Functions of Temples," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 4:1458, 1460.

50. Stevens, interview, November 12, 1986, 1; Teichert, Notes, 99; Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 8.

51. Teichert, Notes, 99.

52. Teichert, Notes, 100. In this record, the artist mistakenly states that Abraham's party "are entering the land of Shinar." Exactly what she intended is difficult to determine. Teichert knew scriptural history minutely, well enough to know that Terah went with the party when they left Ur but was later left behind in Haran. He is not included with the group in the mural. So I have somewhat arbitrarily replaced Teichert's phrase "land of Shinar" with "Canaan."

53. "Abraham, Covenant of," LDS Bible Dictionary, 602.

54. Teichert, Notes, 100. See also Stevens, "Statements," 7.

55. See also Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 6.

56. "The Mayflower Compact," in *The American Canon*, ed. Daniel L. Marsh (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1939), 126.

57. Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 6. For more information on the covenant legacy, see Lynn D. Wardle, "The Constitution as Covenant," *BYU Studies* 27, no. 3 (1987): 11–28.

58. Teichert, Notes, 99.

59. Teichert, *Letters*, 122 (April 1, 1948). See also Teichert, Notes, 99.

60. Teichert, *Letters*, 122–23 (April 1, 1948). Obadiah treats Esau and Edomite as synonyms. Joel 3:3, 7, 8 gives the story itself. It reads:



And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head: And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the Lord hath spoken it.

61. Teichert, Notes, 100; James is named by Frank Stevens in the November 3, 1986, interview, p. 15.

62. Teichert, Notes, 100.

63. Teichert, Notes, 100.

64. Minerva Teichert, transcription of undated tape recording, MCHA.

65. Teichert, Notes, 100.

66. John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 32–35.

67. Teichert, Notes, 100.

68. Teichert, *Letters*, 50 (February 28, 1943); Teichert, Notes, 100. Teichert clearly had the Emma Lazarus poem on the Statue of Liberty in mind as she created the huddled masses in her foreground. In the January 28, 1999, interview, p. 2, Stevens notes that Teichert believed the desire for freedom was one of the motivations for coming to the New World, and in conversation with me on January 25, 1999, he confirmed that she referred to the Lazarus poem. She may have visited the Statue of Liberty while a student in New York City. She linked refugees to the statue in her painting *Jewish Refugees Reach the Statue of Liberty*, which was displayed in the ZCMI Tiffin Room in 1940; she describes the scene in a January 14, 1945, letter: "Lee Maxwell . . . told of the six hundred Jewish Refugees that came into New York on his 'boat' even tho their quota was all 'used up.' He told me of them looking at the NY sky line at early dawn, the hope, the hunger and fear on their faces." Teichert, *Letters*, 70.

69. Teichert, Notes, 100.

70. In a swash banner now barely legible, Teichert labeled this group "poverty."

71. Teichert, Notes, 100.

72. Alice Merrill Horne, letter to Minerva [Teichert], 1947, cited in Teichert, *Letters*, 107.

73. Teichert, Notes, 100.

74. Teichert, Notes, 100; underneath the family is a swash banner with the barely discernible text "To Earth's End."

75. Teichert, Notes, 100.

76. Teichert, Notes, 100.

77. Teichert, Notes, 100.

78. Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 6–7.

79. Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 6–7.

80. Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 2, 6.

81. Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus," on the Statue of Liberty.

82. Stevens, "Statements," 3; Frank Stevens, communication with author, July 2, 1999.

83. "Typed Copy of Hand-Written Message of Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert" [1947], MCHA, 8.

84. Stevens, interview, November 12, 1986, 2; Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 17.

85. Stevens, interview, November 12, 1986, 1; Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 17; Stevens, "Statements," 8.

86. Marian Eastwood Wardle, "That He Who Runs May Read," *The Book of Mormon Paintings of Minerva Teichert*, eds. John W. Welch and Doris R. Dant (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies; Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 31–34; Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 9; Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 18; Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 9.



Henri taught, "The painting of a nose is the painting of an expression." Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit* (New York: Harper and Row, 1923), 251.

87. Stevens, interview, November 12, 1986, 1.

88. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 17.

89. Terry John O'Brien, "A Study of the Effect of Color in the Utah Temple Murals" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1968), 83.

90. O'Brien, "Effect of Color," 99.

91. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 17–19; Stevens, interview, November 12, 1986, 1, 3, 6.

92. Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 15, 17–18.

93. Marian Wardle, "That He Who Runs," 31, 33; Haskins, Conservator's Report; Teichert, *Letters*, 121 (March 17, 1948); Stevens, interview, November 3, 1986, 15, 18.

94. Stevens, interview, January 28, 1999, 7.



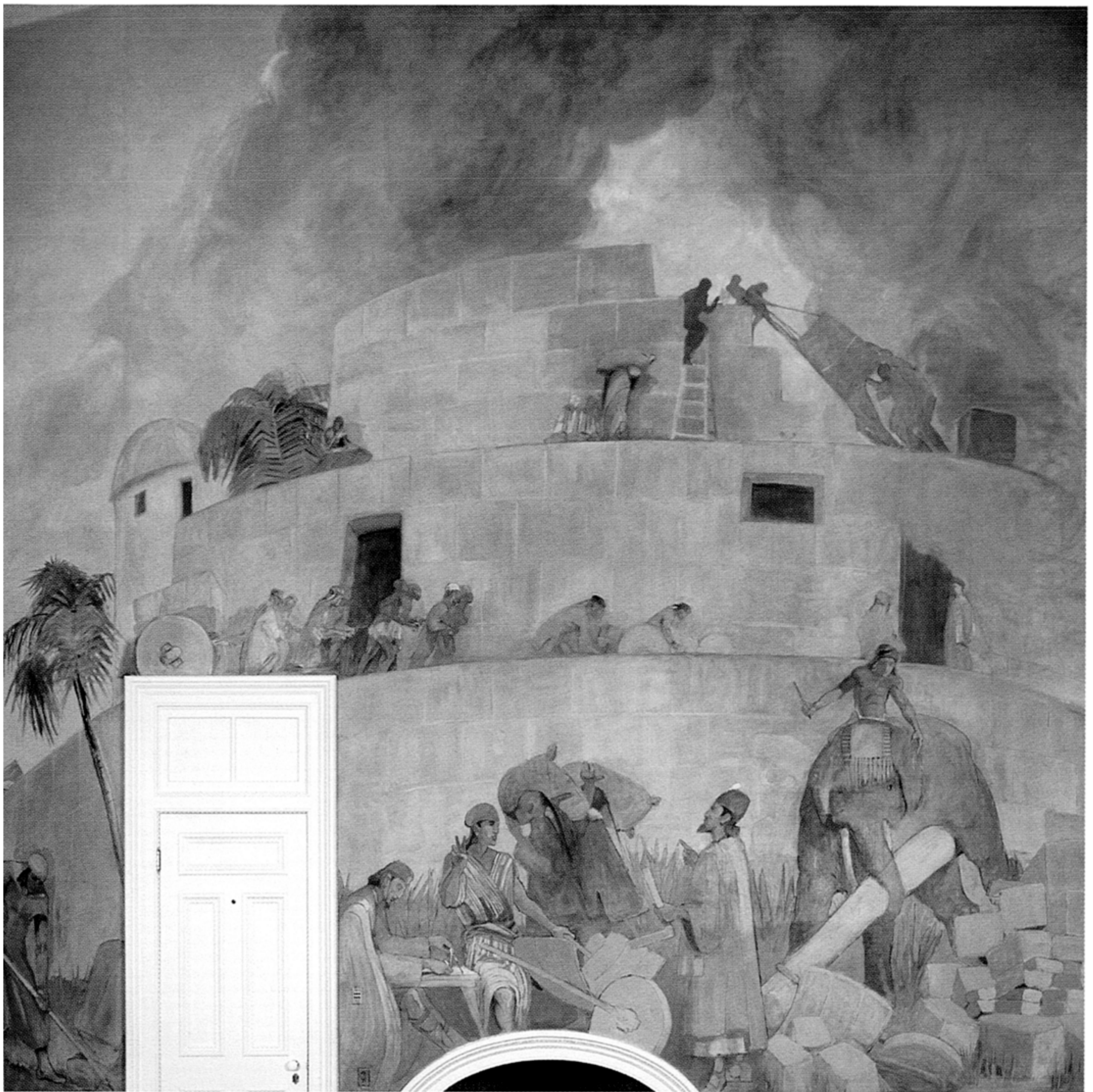


PLATE 1a. Construction of the Tower of Babel. East wall. 1b. Detail.

This and the following murals were photographed by Val Brinkerhoff, Associate Professor of Visual Arts at Brigham Young University.

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PLATE 2. *Above and right:* South wall, full view.





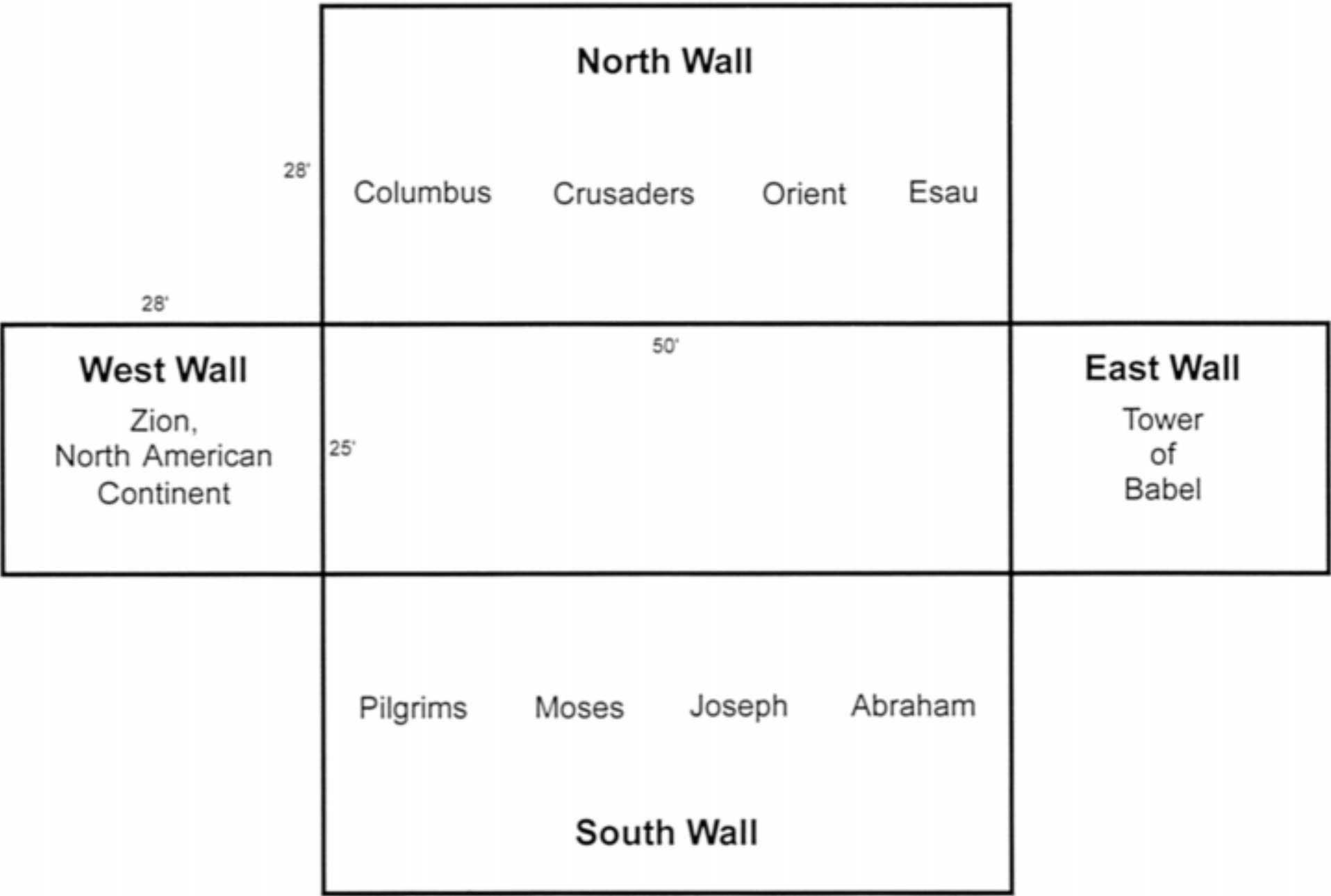
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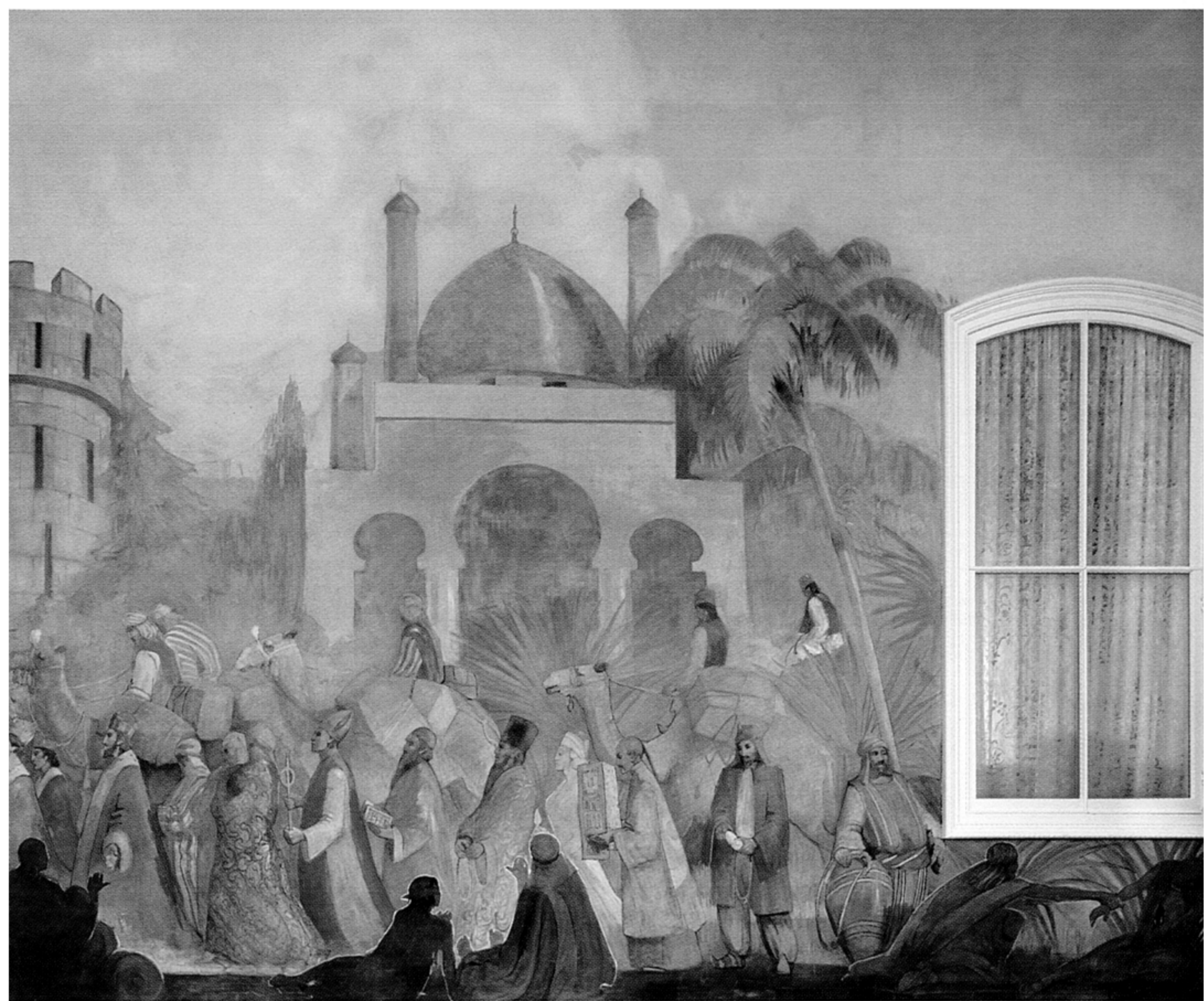


PLATE 3. *Above and right:* North wall, full view.

PLATE 4. Layout of Minerva Teichert's murals in the Manti Temple.







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PLATE 5. Maquette of north wall.





PLATE 6. Abraham, Sarah, and Terah. South wall, east end.



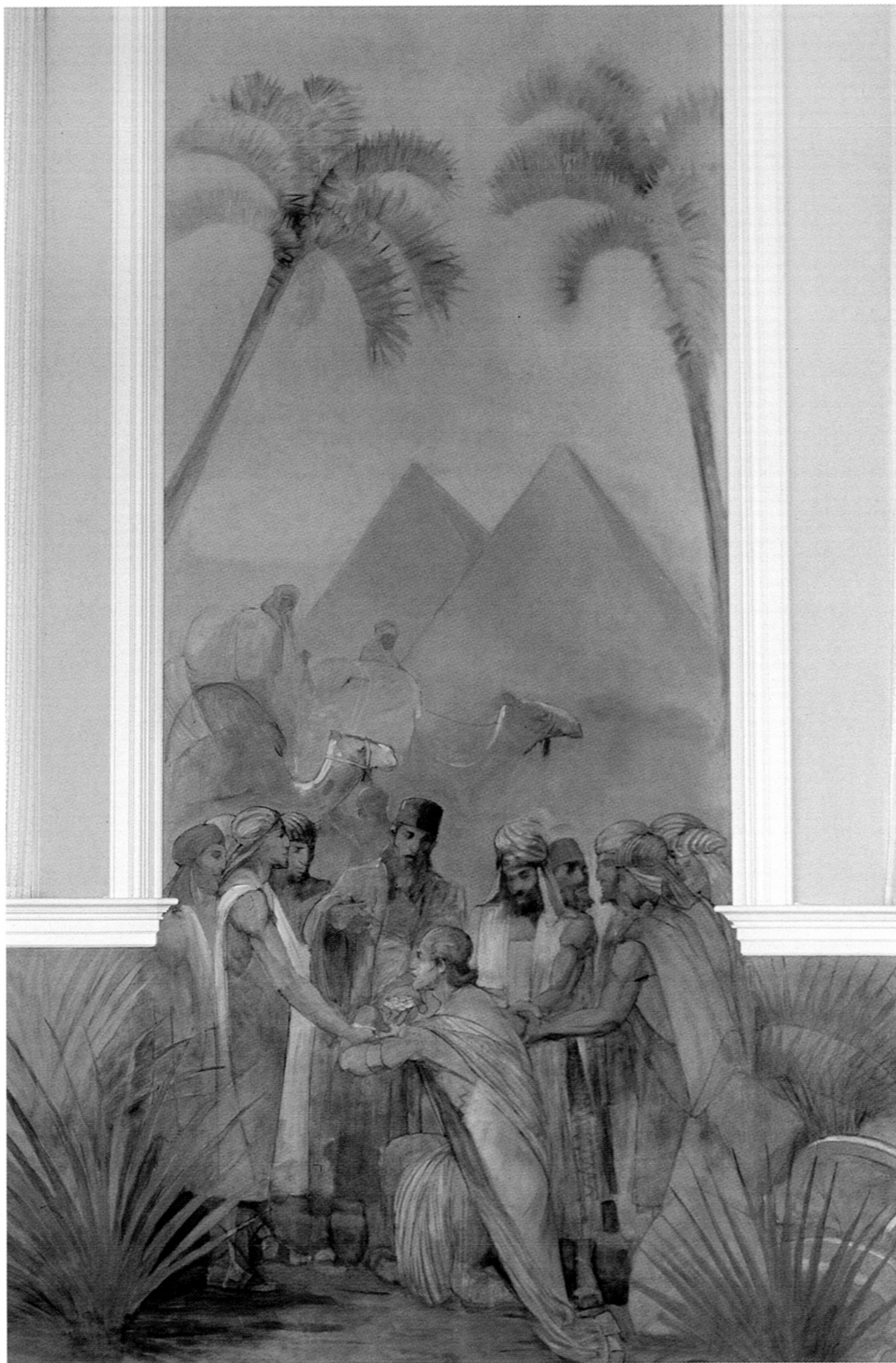


PLATE 7. Joseph being sold. South wall, center.





PLATE 8. Moses at Mt. Sinai. South wall, west end.



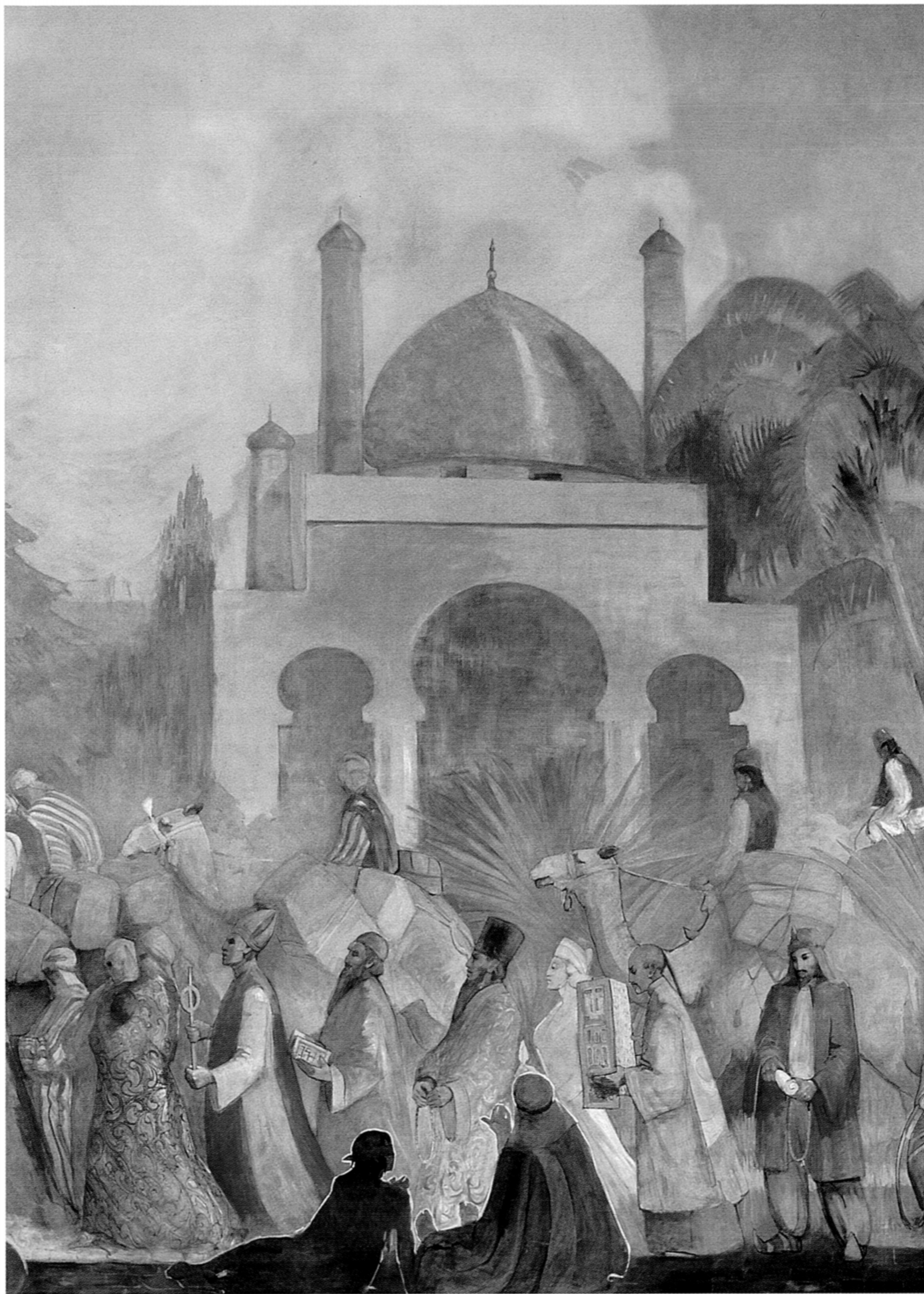


PLATE 9. The Orient. North wall, east end.



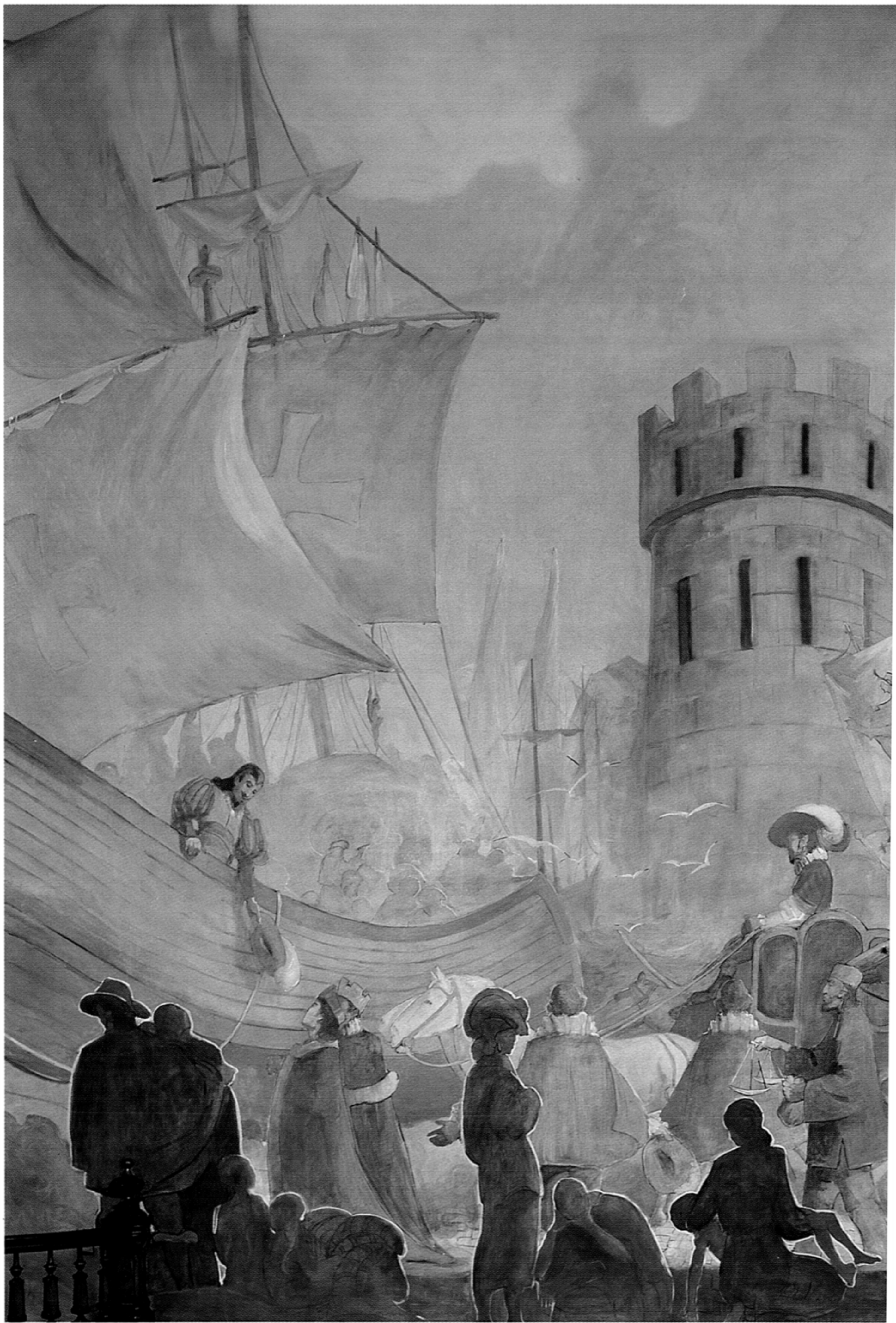


PLATE 10. Columbus. North wall, west end.





PLATE 11. Crusaders. North wall, center.





PLATE 12a. Zion  
and the North  
American Conti-  
nent. West wall.  
12b. Detail.

