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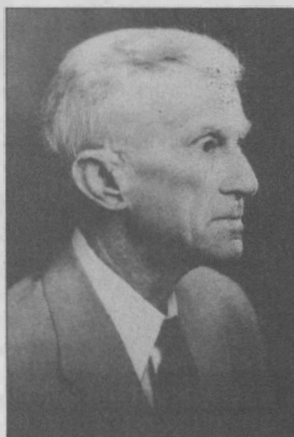
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Richardson's paintings depict landscapes



By Wendy Richter
For the Siftings



Charles Richardson

At this time of year in Arkansas, flowers, shrubs, and trees come to life showing new colorful leaves and blooms for the enjoyment of all.

The natural beauty of Clark County in the springtime brings to mind the work of an Arkadelphia artist who produced many paintings depicting the area's natural environment. Charles Richardson's well-known and very recognizable landscapes featuring river scenes and beech trees are prized possessions for many today. His work continues to be highly sought-after today.

Charles Richardson was born in Tennessee in 1869, and his family came to Clark County sometime in the 1880s. The family was not well-off, and as a young man Charles found work as a carpenter's helper to pay for art les-

sons at the local level before receiving a scholarship to the Cincinnati Art Academy. After graduating there, he returned to Arkadelphia and supplemented his income as an artist by working as a carpenter and house painter.

Richardson's work received recognition at county, state, and regional fairs, and even at the Southern Art League exhibition in New Orleans in 1930. He preferred to paint landscapes, but produced a few portraits and images of houses as well. One of his most visible portraits now hangs in the second-floor lobby of Ouachita Baptist University's Riley-Hickingbotham Library and is of long-time OBU employee Estelle McMillan Blake. An-



IMAGES COURTESY OF THE CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Estelle McMillan Blake, seated at right, is pictured in Richardson's studio.

other of his non-landscape images depicted the home of Clark County pioneer Jacob Barkman and is of special interest to local historians, since it is the only known visual representation of that structure in existence today.

Richardson sold his paintings for prices ranging from two dollars for very small works, to \$125 for a large portrait. He also added to his income by taking on students

from time to time and by teaching classes at Henderson and Ouachita.

Charles Richardson also had interests other than painting. He loved music and played the tuba in Dwight Blake's popular band for several years. Richardson had a fascination with archeology, and participated in collecting Indian artifacts in the area. Those artifacts were later preserved by the Henderson State Uni-

versity Museum. And, on a personal level, local historian Farrar Newberry recalled that Charles Richardson was quite a story-teller, and especially loved to joke about his own blunders.

The artist grew weak during the last years of his life, and could not keep up with the requests for his work. Some orders for paintings were never filled. Charles Richardson died in 1948 and was

buried in Arkadelphia's Rose Hill Cemetery next to other family members.

For additional information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum (www.clark-countyhistory.org or (870) 230-1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives or (870) 245-5332).