



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

RUBY HAMILTON MOHLER (1859 - AFTER 1910)

Ruby Hamilton Mohler was born Ruby S. Mohler in 1859 to Anna C.E. Hamilton and Jacob Mohler. He began his career as a teacher serving schools in Southampton Township, Pennsylvania between 1880 and 1882.¹ He was employed for three years as a principal of the Cumberland Valley Art Schools of Pennsylvania.²

By 1887, Mohler resided in Kansas City, Missouri where he headed the art department at Baird College. Known as Prof. R. H. Mohler, the artist changed his name and took Hamilton, his mother's family name, as his middle name. Mohler and his brother established an art studio in the First National Bank building. They offered instruction and sold artwork including photographs, portraits, and landscapes.³

A member of the New York Art Club,⁴ Mohler took a studio at 10 East 14th Street in New York City in 1898. Mohler established a school, offering instruction in life and costume drawing as well as an outdoor sketching class. According to an advertisement for Mohler Art Studios, he also offered lessons in various media including oils, watercolors, tapestry, china painting, wood carving, brass hammering, and bent iron work.⁵

In June of 1898, the artist traveled from New York to Fort Smith, Arkansas making sketching stops en route.⁶ A prior resident of Fort Smith, Mohler offered art instruction in the area before establishing his school in New York City.⁷ Mohler returned to Arkansas to publish *Fort Smith, Picturesque and Historic*. Designed and illustrated by Smith, the volume included full page drawings as well as photographs of the region.⁸

In 1904, Mohler exhibited 85 paintings at the Hotel Baltimore in Kansas City. A critic for the *Kansas City Star* stated, "Mr. Mohler's best work is shown in sunsets, some of which he painted in Kansas City. One is a view in the East bottoms, looking across the valley, and another shows a

¹ "School Teachers Appointed," *Valley Spirit* (Weekly) (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania) Wed, Aug 18, 1880, 3; "Affairs Around Home," *Valley Spirit* (Weekly) (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania) Wed, Jul 27, 1881, 3; "Teachers Appointed," *The Shippensburg Chronicle* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania) Fri, Aug 11, 1882, 3.

² *The Kansas Democrat* (Hiawatha, Kansas) Thu, Jul 21, 1887, 3.

³ Ibid

⁴ "Chit Chat," *South Pasadenan* (South Pasadena, California) Thu, May 24, 1906, 1.

⁵ "Art Instruction and Art Material," *The Art Amateur* Vol. 39 No. 2 July 1898, 2.

⁶ "Personal Paragraphs," *The Shippensburg Chronicle* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania) · Thu, Jun 2, 1898, 3.

⁷ *Fort Smith Times* (Fort Smith, Arkansas) Fri, Oct 7, 1898, 5.

⁸ "The New Art Book," *Fort Smith Times* (Fort Smith, Arkansas) Sat, Sep 10, 1898, 5.



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picturesque spot on the road to Independence.”⁹ The following year, Mohler left Kansas City for the West Coast.¹⁰ He was joined by his sisters, both of whom were ceramic painters.¹¹

Mohler settled in South Pasadena, California where he became a founding member and “guiding genius”¹² of the Arroyo Verde Artists’ Colony. The colony was comprised of more than a dozen artist’s working in various media including stained glass, china painting, interior design, and landscape painting. The members of the colony built cottages to use as home studios around a centrally located open-air auditorium. The colony was located near William L. Judson’s College of the Fine Arts in Garvanza.¹³

In 1908, Mohler held a meeting of the Rembrandt Art Club in his Arroyo Verde studio. Mohler took on the role of club lecturer and his sister Blanche Mohler was elected president.¹⁴ That summer, Mohler and his sister Blanche went on a sketching trip to Imperial Valley with a group of Arroyo Verde Artists.¹⁵ By January of 1908, the Rembrandt Art Club had grown to include 50 members.¹⁶ In March of 1909, the Rembrandt Art Club held its first annual exhibition at the Masonic Hall. The exhibition committee included Mohler as well as his sister’s Blanche and Eleanor.¹⁷

A teacher and multidisciplinary artist, Mohler experimented with photography using it to reproduce his paintings, which he later hand colored.¹⁸ In 1909, following an exhibition of the Rembrandt Art Club at the Masonic Hall, Mohler’s work was selected by the California fine arts commissioner to be included in the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition.¹⁹ Mohler received an honorable mention at the exposition.²⁰

⁹ “Exhibit of Oil Paintings,” *The Kansas City Star* (Kansas City, Missouri) · Wed, Dec 14, 1904, 7.

¹⁰ “Neighborhood News,” *Joplin Daily News-Herald* (Joplin, Missouri) Mon, May 22, 1905, 5.

¹¹ “The Rembrandt Art Club,” *South Pasadena Record* (South Pasadena, California), Thu, Dec 3, 1908, 3.

¹² “Art at Arroyo Verde,” *The Highland Park Herald* (Highland Park, California) Sat, Jan 4, 1908, 4.

¹³ “An Artist’s Colony,” *The Highland Park Herald* (Highland Park, California) Sat, Jun 16, 1906, 1.

¹⁴ “The Rembrandt Art Club,” *South Pasadena Record* (South Pasadena, California) Thu, Dec 3, 1908, 3.

¹⁵ “Studying Desert Beauties,” *Imperial Valley Press* (El Centro, California) Sat, May 23, 1908, 9.

¹⁶ “Art at Arroyo Verde,” *The Highland Park Herald* (Highland Park, California) Sat, Jan 4, 1908, 4.

¹⁷ “Rembrandt Art Club Exhibition,” *South Pasadena Record* (South Pasadena, California) Thu, Mar 4, 1909, 1.

¹⁸ “Exhibit of Oil Paintings,” *The Kansas City Star* (Kansas City, Missouri) Wed, Dec 14, 1904, 7.

¹⁹ “Society,” *The Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, California) Sun, Mar 28, 1909, 36.

²⁰ Joseph Adams Ficher and Frank Wiggins, *Report of Governor's Representatives for California at Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition Commission* (Sacramento? 1910] 33.