

THE RUTH FREYBERGER STORY

Dr. Heather Hanlon, Professor Emerita, Boise State University
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This handout is a supplement to the Keynote Presentation March 28, 2015.
All references and comments are anecdotal or cited by source.

See the Freyberger website: <http://art.boisestate.edu/freybergercollection/>.
For more information write or call: hhanlon@boisestate.edu: 208-286-2933.

Slides

1. The Ruth Freyberger Story.
2. Ruth's picture.
3. Who was Ruth Freyberger? Why is she important in the history of American art education? What makes her story so interesting today?
4. List of 12 famous women art educators before Ruth. These were called "hiddenstream" by Staniewicz and Zimmerman (1984) and discussed at length in Peter Smith's book in chapter 6. Eisner mentioned this was an "end of an era" (1972) when women in art education disappeared. Suggestion: See Supplement on page 5.
5. Ruth's father came from Lancaster County; none of the men graduated from high school. Most were skilled tradesmen.
6. Ruth's mother was born in Dauphin County. The family had a musical background, rich in folk art, horticulture, and were avid readers.
7. The family moved from the countryside into the city of Reading when her parents, (Ruth's grandparents), needed to find work. At this time her mother was only 13.

It was here in Reading, in a row house her father built, that she was born just 16 months after her sister Grace.

The three pictures are from a 2014 Google map and a AAA tour book showing downtown Reading in 1957. 633 Mulberry Street is definitely in a lower class neighborhood today and, here is how Marilyn Fox described it to me in a letter 2012:

"She lived in a tiny row home in a working class neighborhood that had seen better days. To go to the doctor or other appointments, she fearlessly left her house (remember: she was a tiny woman, I don't think she was even 5 feet tall!), and walked down to the corner, through a neighborhood scattered with kids' bikes, guys working on cars, and trash. A few times I offered to drive her, but she preferred her independence. Our dean at the time, a wonderful gentleman, Dr. Fred Gage, visited her many, many times. He brought her groceries, and also helped her "get around" to her

appointments as needed. Fred and Ruth had a remarkable, gentle relationship.”

Cited from a Marilyn J. Fox letter, 2012. Director, Freyberger Gallery, Penn State Berks.

Here is where Ruth lived until the last year of her life.

The picture on the bottom right is what I found on Google that is all that is left of 633 Mulberry Street today.

8. Mugging

And just a footnote here about her neighborhood:

In a letter, to me February 23, 1995, Ruth described to me how she was mugged, walking on the block in which she lived in broad daylight. She was going to catch a bus to go the store and the Post Office, Saturday, 2:30 p.m., December 31, 1994.

The street seemed deserted. After going about six houses, she heard footsteps behind her and moved to the right, and got hit on the head with something hard and shoved to the pavement but held fast to her purse.

It was a black man -- a guy who lived on the block where she lived. She screamed, he bent down to take her purse and she could see he was a black youth. He ran up a nearby ally and was joined by a white accomplice.

A lump quickly rose on her head. A man in a nearby house came to help her. He thought she had just fallen down but soon realized otherwise.

The purse and robbers were never found. She was taken to the hospital. Her hat helped protect her head, and other than quite a few medical bills she had to pay, a very sore head for several days, and losing everything in her purse, she felt grateful for coming out of it as well as she did.

9. On a more pleasant note: Ruth’s mother and her Pennsylvania Dutch folk art heritage was very important to her. She taught folk art classes to many Illinois students in her 31 years at ISU. image: www.etsy.com

10. Ruth graduated from high school with honors at age 16 but couldn't go to college the first year because of financial reasons so she took night classes and correspondence course in art.

As an honor student in high school, Ruth could borrow \$200 at 6% interest to start her college education. This was 1930! It was so high because she didn’t have any collateral; no relatives, friends, or patrons of the arts with money to help her.

Also, as an art student, she had to pay extra tuition beyond the regular one. Working during the summer at Woolworth's 5- and 10-cent store paid 30 cents an hour, and her Cum laude, B.S. diploma in Art and Library Science cost \$5.00.

11. Ruth's first year teaching responsibilities were in New Holland in 1945. There she taught art in grades 1-12, 9th grade English, Physical Education for girls grades 7-12 each day. She also coached girls' basketball, directed three assembly programs a year, and was responsible for an annual art exhibition. Eight class preparations a day.
12. In 1939 Ruth finished her M. A. degree at Penn State in Art Education. She then taught in the Huntingdon Borough schools fifty miles away from Pennsylvania State College where she started her first art program, taught in two grade schools and one high school.

Wanting more education and different types of experiences, she applied for and received a Carnegie Fellowship in Art History and Fine Arts at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, in 1945.

13. Viktor Lowenfeld picture; description.
14. Why did children draw differently?
15. Illinois State University - Centennial Art Department building.
16. -18. Ruth and her examples of Pennsylvania Dutch folk art.
19. Two Pennsylvania German bookplates.
20. Cover of three filmstrip booklets: "Understanding Children's Art Expression", International Film Bureau filmstrips.
21. Cover of "Difference in the Creative Drawing of Children of Varying Ethnic and Socio-Economic Backgrounds in Pennsylvania Based on Samplings of Grades One Through Six." - an article reprinted from *Research in Art Education NAEA 7th Yearbook*.
22. June McFee Award from NAEA Women's Caucus, 1979. Note: She was an original member of NAEA in 1947.
23. - 26. Some of Ruth's artwork.
27. Ruth's retirement award hung outside her classroom door where we often taught side-by-side in ISU's Centennial Art Department.
28. Ten years later Ruth was still receiving honors for her artwork, keeping busy moving a schoolhouse in memory of her sister Grace onto the Penn State Berks Campus, and even working with us at Boise State University.
29. Here is the schoolhouse before it was moved.
30. -31. "Schoolhouse is Moved to KU", by Bob Charlanza in the *Reading Eagle/Reading Times*, October 14, 1990. p.#? These articles were sent to me by Ruth showing me the little schoolhouse she had moved and now maintained as a museum in Grace's memory onto the KU campus.

- Interesting note: of the 50 almost all Amish children in the 1-8th grade children in the one room school Grace taught her first year, they all had the same last name but three.
32. In 1991, Ruth entrusted me with her Collection of Children's Art, at that time over 400 pieces, as I was to start a new art education program at Boise State University. The collection would be a wonderful foundation for our future research and graduate programs, and we used it very well.
 33. For our first exhibit, we asked some of our state art teachers visiting BSU during the Idaho Art Education conference to help select 150 out of the 400. Then, using some mini grant funds, I had them matted and shrink wrapped by students. Here is our first brochure.
 34. The Gallery Director had his students hang the exhibit using Lowenfeld's "Stages of Development" as guidelines.

- The timing couldn't have been better as the Binney & Smith Crayola Regional Show was being sponsored at BSU at the same time as well.
35. I wrote a few more mini grants and so that a total of 165 pieces of the collection were matted and shrink wrapped and eventually exhibited a number of times up until my retirement in 2006. Another group of children's art was collected: 50 pieces from Russia and 50 from Japan and matted/stored in archival safe boxes with the goal to begin an international children's art collection at BSU.

- The Gallery Director and I had kept Ruth informed of our work and how many visitors we had had. Our state art teacher's conference was held at BSU and saw the exhibit. Local schools brought buses of kids to see the show while the Binney and Smith was up too, and our art education majors played curators, tour guides, and taught Saturday classes for four different weekends for clinical hour credit.
36. All this seemed to just naturally lead to a Traveling Exhibit of the Ruth Freyberger Children's Art Collection when the Director and I were told Ruth had decided to give the BSU Art Education Program \$40,000 to continue what we had been doing. (She hadn't told us ahead of time.)

So, with her permission, we took \$5,000 of the original money and designed the tour reducing the artwork to 50 pieces, the time to two years, and the Director and myself working for free. Here is what we did.

- Inside cover of catalog.
37. Introduction.
 38. Traveling brochure/flyer.

39. Inside flyer; one of my favorites: "Pony Waiting for a Rider"; tempera on manila by a first grader.
40. List of places collection toured.
41. Dr. Freyberger and Dr. Hanlon were co-presenters at the PennState International Symposium October 1995. As usual and as Ruth noted while there and afterward, most of the participants were more interested in Lowenfeld's MALE students and their histories. No one asked about hers or any of the female doctorates.
42. PennState Symposium lecture by Ruth; her typed copy.
43. "In 1950, Pennsylvania had the fourth highest alien population of all the United States." The red chart shows:
 9.8% was foreign born white;
 4.7% negro, both foreign born and native born.
 Of the foreign born white; the Italian had second highest representation with 20.3%; and the Polish second highest with 12.1%.
 Note: "Negro" is the correct word to use for that time and place.
44. Then I started to show selected slides from Ruth's collection while she described each one in terms of the Stages of Development and what she found during her dissertation. They are on the website at:
<http://art.boisestate.edu/freybergercollection/>
45. Ruth's instructions to me.
46. BSU Albertson's Library and Special Collections Archives. This is where the Freyberger Children's Art Collection and all her personal records she gave me are today.
47. Another example of the Children's Art Collection.
48. Outside my art education classroom, we posted a memorial bulletin board to her. Student who met her when she visited us for a week a few years before, remembered her quite well and wrote notes that we posted there.

Two years ago I finished a website, (mentioned above) that is maintained through the Boise State University Art Department. It houses all Freyberger Traveling Exhibit Collection digitally, the Lowenfeld information that describes the collection, most of Ruth's published work, and other information about her. The address is:

<http://art.boisestate.edu/freybergercollection/>

Selected References:

- Smith, Peter, Coordinator A. Ed/Art Therapy U. of New Mexico, 1996, 25 years . K-12. Besides Ruth's archival files and my memories, I used this author's book and personal letters the most for this presentation. *The History of American Art Education: Learning About Art in America.*
- Stankiewicz, M. A. & Zimmerman, E. (1984). "Woman's achievements in art education", and also in G. Collins and R. Sandell (1984), *Women, art, and*

education Reston, VA: NAEA, pp. 113-140 for slide 4 definition/discussion of "mainstream" and "hiddenstream" slide 4.

Young, Bernard letter and email follow-up to his 2012 Lowenfeld lecture and his 2-24-15 list of first doctorates from Penn State. Thank you, Dr. Young.

A great many more sources were used but these were the most frequent. Please contact me if you would like a more complete list. h hanlon

Supplements:

First Penn State University doctoral graduates, in order by last name/date, are: Freyberger 1951; 1952 Russell and Brittain 1952; Beittel and Corcoran 1953; and Biggers in 1954. Source: Dr. Bernard Young, 2-24-15 email.

Questions for future research seeking information about women doctorates in America art education before 1950. This pertains to Slide #4.

1. Review "early conference proceedings and professional journals ... useful identifying presenters or authors as "Dr."
2. "What could constitute a doctorate "in" or "for" art education ca. 1900-1940?"
3. "Would someone with a PhD in psychology, whose dissertation investigated children's drawings or paintings, and who taught educational psychology courses for future K-12 teachers at a college or university that prepared visual arts specialists count?"
4. "When were the first doctorates in curriculum given? Where?"
5. "What about educational administration doctorates?"
6. "Might some early women in those fields have had interests relevant to art education?"
7. "You might also want to look for a general history of doctoral education for pedagogy—when were the first EdDs given? Where?" and
8. "When did women begin receiving PhDs or EdDs?"

Source: Dr. Mary Ann Stankiewicz in email to Dr. Heather Hanlon, 11-16-2014

