

N S H S

# foundation news

April/May/June 2010

## Exploring the Art of John Falter

John Falter, called “America’s most gifted illustrator” by Norman Rockwell, was born in Plattsmouth in 1910 and spent his youth in Falls City. After graduating from high school in 1928, Falter studied art in Kansas City and New York City before receiving his first commission from *Liberty Magazine* in 1933. Soon, Falter was a successful illustrator of fiction.

During the 1940s Falter’s career skyrocketed as he became a thriving advertising illustrator, creating over three hundred recruiting pamphlets and posters while serving in the Navy, and began his notable work for *The Saturday Evening Post*. By the 1960s, Falter had created more than 185 covers for the *Post* along with many pieces for other leading magazines of the day. Later in his career, Falter concentrated on book illustrations, private commissions, a large series of paintings dealing with American migration in the 1800s, as well as his “Jazz from Life” portfolio of prints based on sketches of the Colorado and Odessa Jazz Parties. Falter was elected to the Illustrator’s Hall of Fame in 1976.

After his death in 1982, his wife, Mary Elizabeth Falter Jones, donated the contents of his studio, thousands of items from paintbrushes and easels, to completed paintings, sketches, doodles, diaries, and correspondence to the Nebraska State Historical Society. While the NSHS has cared for this collection over the years there has always been a desire to explore how it can help us understand Falter’s career and artistic process. Happily, this exploration is currently taking place.

Using funds supplied by the NSHS Foundation, an intern has been hired to work full-time on this collection for six months. Karen Anderson, a



Karen Anderson is cataloging, digitizing, and researching John Falter’s work.

Nebraska native finishing her Masters Degree in Museum Studies, is working closely with Senior Museum Curator Deb Arenz to catalog, digitize, and connect the dots of this extensive collection.

This project is made possible by the Johnson Endowment Fund, established by Fay Sherwin Johnson in honor of her husband and Nebraska artist, Thomas Berger Johnson, and the Gladys Marie Lux Internship Endowment established in memory of Mary Hannah Hansen Lux and Clarence Burton Lux, both steadfast supporters of education and art. If you would like more information on how you can support the important projects at the Nebraska State Historical Society or honor the memory of your loved ones in the gift process, please contact the Foundation. ☒

**Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation**

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