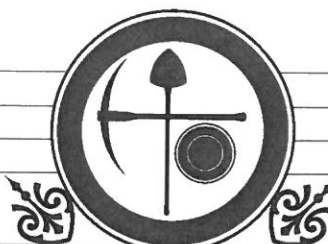


This month's theme:
Mary Hallock Foote



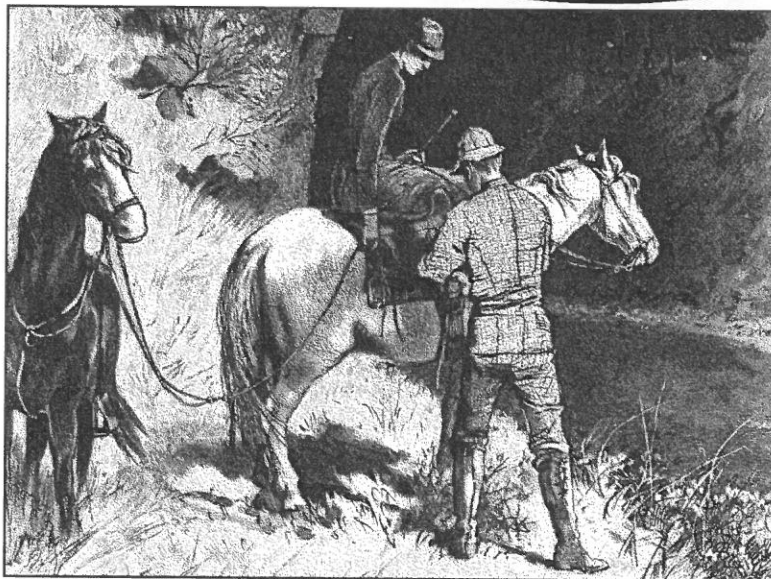
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The Newsletter of the Idaho State Historical Society's Junior Historian Program

PROSPECTOR

February, 2004



Mary Hallock Foote

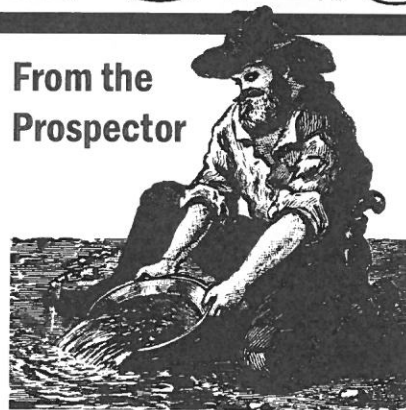
On a spring day in 1884, a well-dressed woman and her children stepped off a train in Kuna, Idaho. They were on the last leg of a long trip and were very anxious to reach their destination. Earlier, the woman's husband had come to this part of the country to find work. Excited by what he had found, he had sent for his family to meet him. Now, standing on the station platform waiting for a wagon to take them to Boise, the group wondered what surprises their new life in Idaho

would hold for them.

This scene was not unusual. Victorian women did not enjoy all the possible opportunities that woman do today. These women were expected to put their roles as wife and mother above their personal desires. If the husband wanted to move to the rural west, then the family was expected to follow without complaint. Standing on the edge of a sea of sagebrush, nervously wondering about their future, this family's situation might have been typical, but the woman was not. On that day,

Continued on next page

From the Prospector



Howdy Prospectors,

My mule was lazy this month so we decided to stay in Boise to see what Idaho history we could uncover close to the office. Luckily, the capitol city is full of stories. In fact, there is so much history in this town, it was hard to make a choice. We finally settled on one of Boise most famous citizens, Mary Hallock Foote.

Mary might not have liked Idaho all that much, but her visit sure made an impression. Her skillful artwork showed the rest of the country just how beautiful Idaho could be.

Well, that's all I'm going to tell you for now, you can read the rest yourself. Remember to send in your submissions before next issue. We're counting on you!

Mary Hallock Foote Continued

Mary Hallock Foote, one of the most famous woman artists of the time, had arrived in Idaho.

Mary grew up on a quiet farm on the East Coast. When she was only 17, she moved to New York City to become an artist. A woman with a career was unusual in Victorian society and some people even thought it to be unacceptable. Luckily, the combination of Mary's hard work and talent was recognized and before long she was making illustrations for books and popular magazines.

Mary was happy with her new life. It was exciting to be in the heart of such a large city. She met many important and interesting people and enjoyed discussing the latest art and literature with her friends. For a woman with Mary's dreams and ambitions, it was the perfect place to be. Unfortunately, the future is sometimes full of surprises. Her comfortable lifestyle was about to change.

In 1876, Mary married a man named Arthur Foote. Arthur was very different from most of the people she knew. Instead of an artist or writer, Arthur was an engineer. He was also a quiet man, uncomfortable with the parties and social gatherings Mary was used to. Most shocking of

all, Arthur was interested in moving west to try his luck on the frontier. This last point worried Mary greatly, but she was in love, and reluctantly she followed him



westward.

The family moved from place to place while Arthur worked mostly as an engineer for large gold mines. Mary's life had changed greatly. She had traded the world of sophistication and culture in the East for the harsh and dirty life of the frontier west. In boomtowns like Leadville, Colorado, Mary lived in a small log cabin and tried to make the best of her time among the unfam-

iliar miners and pioneer families.

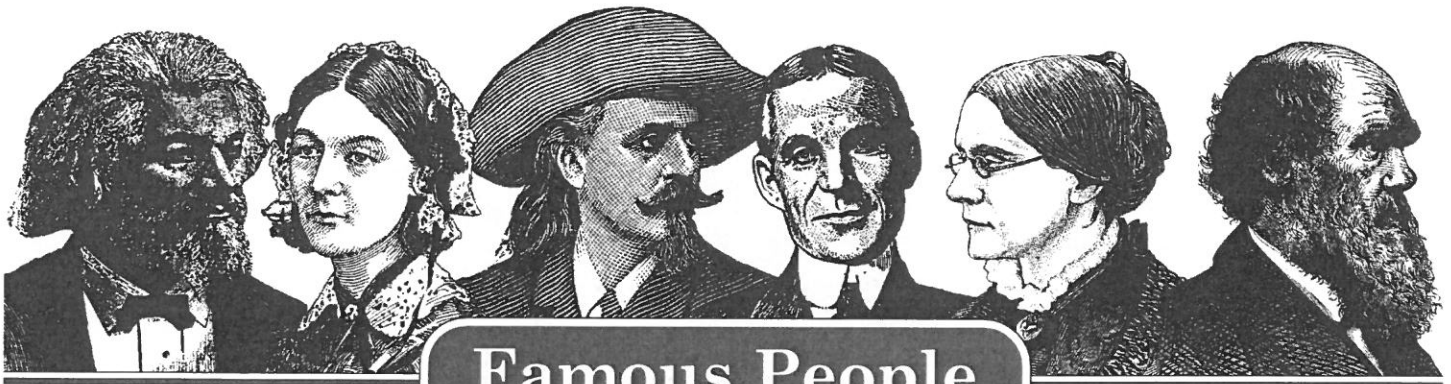
Mary continued to illustrate for the East Coast magazines, but her pictures changed. She was now drawing scenes of the West, which only increased her popularity. People in the East were fascinated with the West. Mary's drawings of her everyday surroundings seemed exotic and unusual to people living in the cities of the East. She also began to write fiction. Her romantic stories about miners and laborers sold well and her reputation grew.

Although Mary's career was successful, Arthur's was not. The Footes were having no luck at striking it rich and they began to slip into poverty. The family now had several small children and Arthur need to find a new job to support them. Searching the west for a good opportunity, he found Boise.

In the 1880's, Boise was a thriving city. Fueled by the nearby gold rush twenty years ago, Boise was continuing to grow and prosper. Arthur realized that one thing the area needed was a good source of irrigation water. In the southern Idaho desert it was difficult to plant crops. Arthur devised a plan to dig ditches and dams along the Boise river to bring water to new farms.

Life in Idaho was difficult for

Continued on page 5



Famous People

Arthur Foote

Arthur Foote was born in 1849 in Connecticut. Like his future wife, Mary, Arthur grew up on a farm owned by his distinguished family. The similarities seem to end there. Mary enjoyed New York social gatherings. Arthur felt out of place among the artists and writers. Mary was talkative. Arthur was quiet. Mary dreamed of spending her career in the comfort of eastern cities. Arthur wanted to go west. Despite their differences the two fell in love and married.

Arthur Foote's career as an engineer took the family all over the West. He worked at a quicksilver mine in New Almaden, California, tried to build a cement factory in Santa Cruz, and surveyed silver mines in Leadville, Colorado. His biggest scheme though, took place in Idaho. One

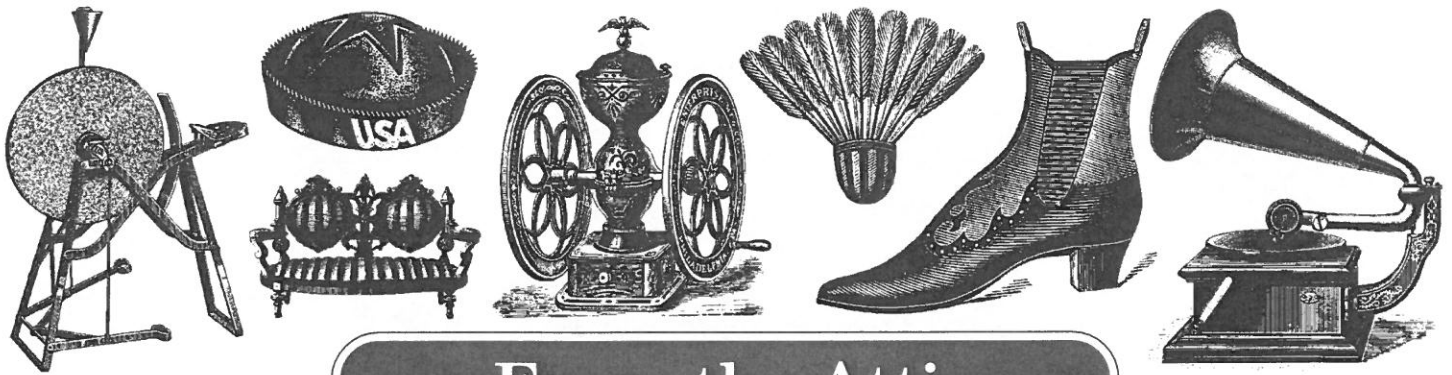
of the problems about life in the Rocky Mountains was the lack of water. Towns and farms had to be built very close to rivers for them to survive and grow. Boise was no exception. Arthur wanted to

change that, by building dams and canals on the Boise River that would bring water to new farms in the desert.

It was an ambitious plan. Arthur was very good engineer, but unfortunately a very poor businessman. He had trouble raising money and frequently got cheated by men he thought he could trust. Arthur stuck to his irrigation dream for 12 years, but finally had to give up to look for other work.

At the time, Arthur and Mary considered their time in Idaho a failure, but looking back we can see that Arthur's work was quite an accomplishment. Twenty-five years after the Foote's left Idaho, a canal and dam system was completed near Boise. This system was exactly like the one Arthur had planned. Without all of his hard work and vision, the irrigation system might have never been built. ♦





From the Attic

The Foote House

In Idaho, the Footes were always worried about money. The funding for Arthur's irrigation project went up and down,

leaving Mary to pay most of the bills with money she earned from her illustrations.

About a year after they arrived in Boise, the family could no longer afford to live in town.

Mary and the children packed up their belongings

and moved into a small log cabin located in the nearby Boise Canyon.

Arthur quickly realized that the family needed more room, so he set to work building a house. With little money for supplies, Arthur and two other engineers from his company, used materials they found in the canyon to build

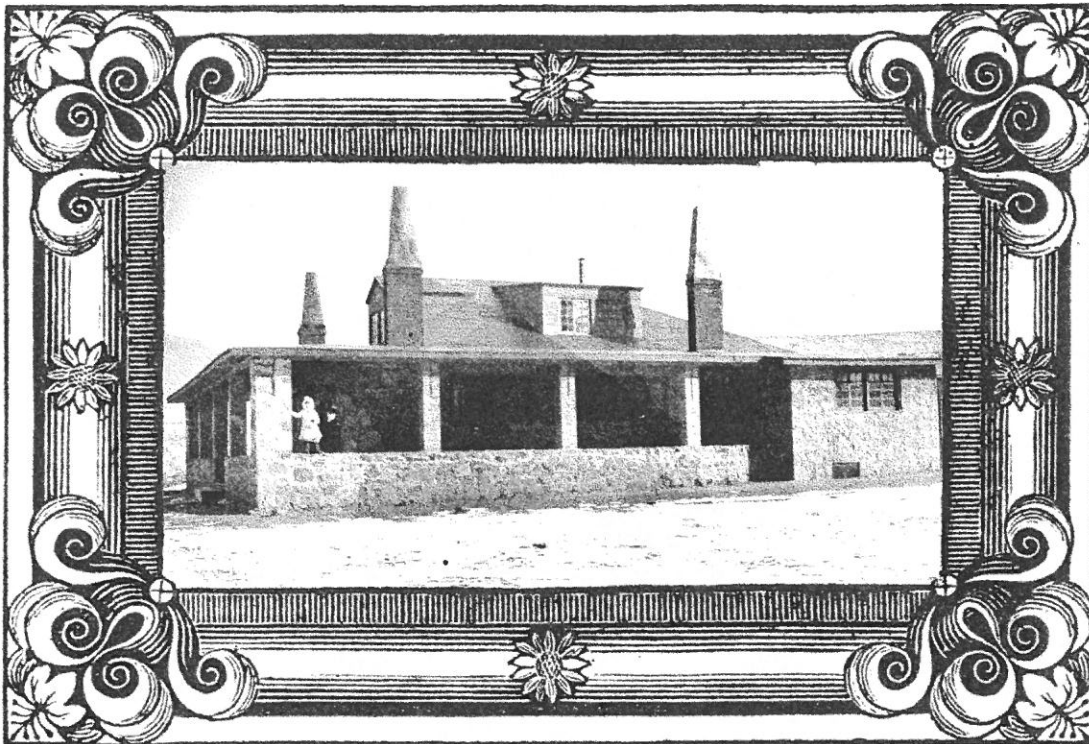
the structure. Considering their situation, the house was a marvel. The two-foot thick walls were built almost entirely of lava rocks,

bigger than the cabin, it was still very crowded. Arthur, Mary, three children, a governess, cook, and nurse all crammed into the

small space. To make things worse, during the day the house was also used as the office for the irrigation project.

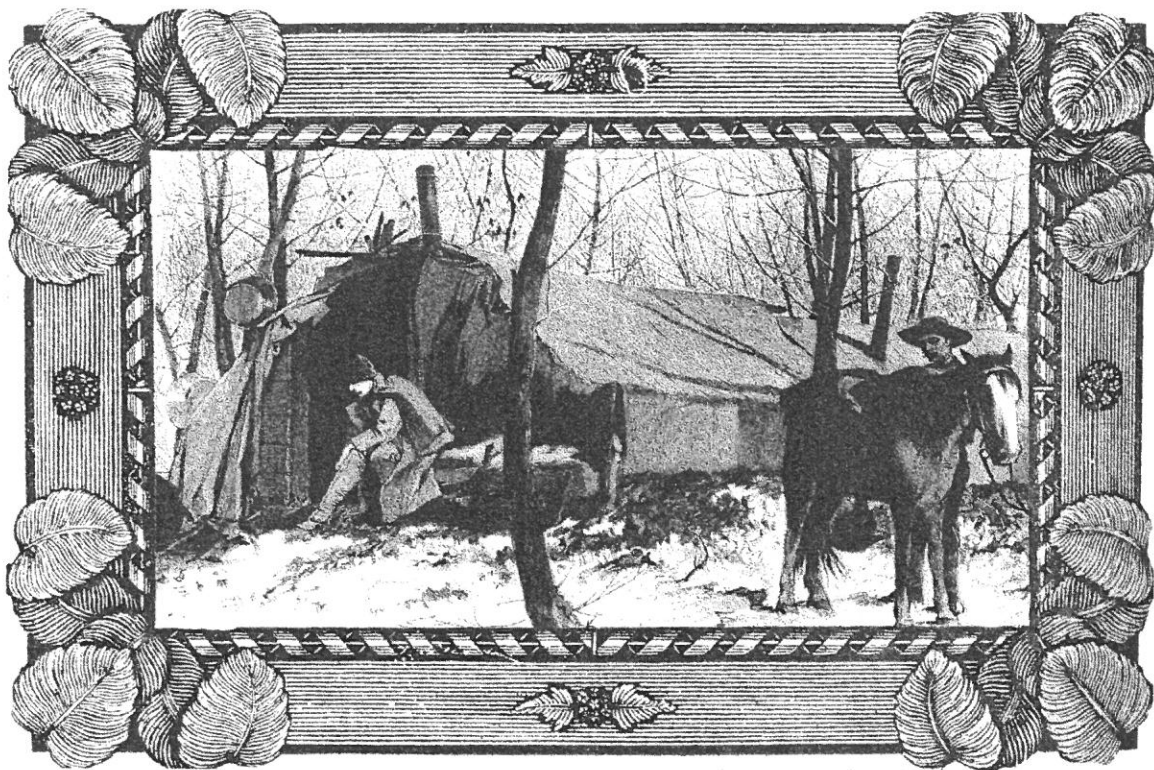
Eventually the family built a larger house on the plateau

above the canyon. The old house continued to be used as an office for awhile, but after the irrigation project failed, the walls began to fall apart. Today all that is left is a crumbling stone foundation located in a small park next to the Lucky Peak Dam. ♦



keeping the house warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Inside there were three fireplaces, a parlor, an office, a dining room, sitting room, and a kitchen. The outside had a large wrap around porch where the family could sit and watch the beautiful sunsets in the canyon.

Although the house was



The Winter Camp by Mary Hallock Foote

Mary Hallock Foote Continued

the family. Although Boise was bigger than many of the mining camps they had lived in, the city wasn't big enough for Mary. She felt lonely and missed her family and friends back east. Arthur's business did not go well and the family couldn't afford to live in the city on Mary's artist income. They moved several miles out of town into the Boise Canyon. There they lived in a small house Arthur had built out of the lava rock that lay beneath the steep cliffs. The view from the porch of the river flowing through the cottonwood trees was beautiful, but the isolation combined with the family's money problems continued to make Mary unhappy.

Boiseans often mention Mary Hallock Foote as one of their

most important settlers. Yet, Mary thought Idaho was "thousands of acres of desert, empty of history." She often spoke badly about Boise and other places in the West. She loved the beauty of the landscape, but hated the loneliness that went with it. Still Idaho was a productive time in Mary's career. Some of her most famous and respected drawings were made in Idaho. The desert landscape and harsh conditions inspired her to create moving scenes of western life. In the 12 years she spent in Idaho, her reputation as an artist continued to grow.

Eventually the irrigation project fell through and Arthur once again had to search for new

work. He found an opening at a mine in California and the family once again packed up their possessions and moved on. Luckily, Arthur's job at the mine was more secure than some of his past positions. Mary was free to focus on her art and children. Although she still missed the eastern lifestyle of her youth, she was content in California and lived there happily until 1932.

Finally, after living more than fifty years in the West, the Footes moved back east to retire. A few years later, after living a long and eventful life, Mary died at the age of ninety. The artwork and writing she left behind provides us with an important record of an eastern woman's life in the West. ♦



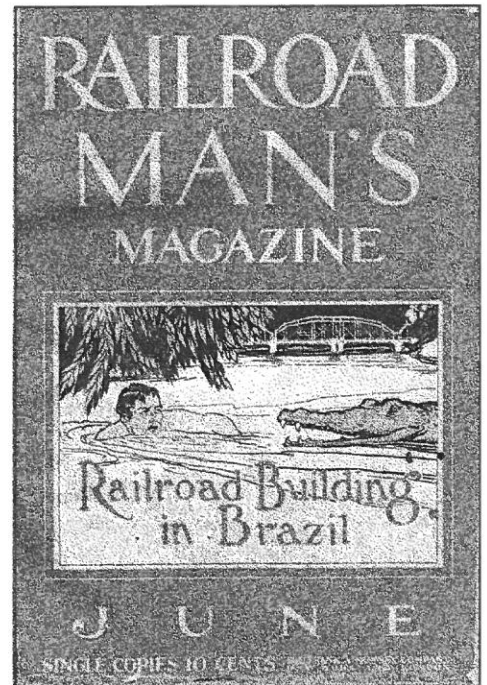
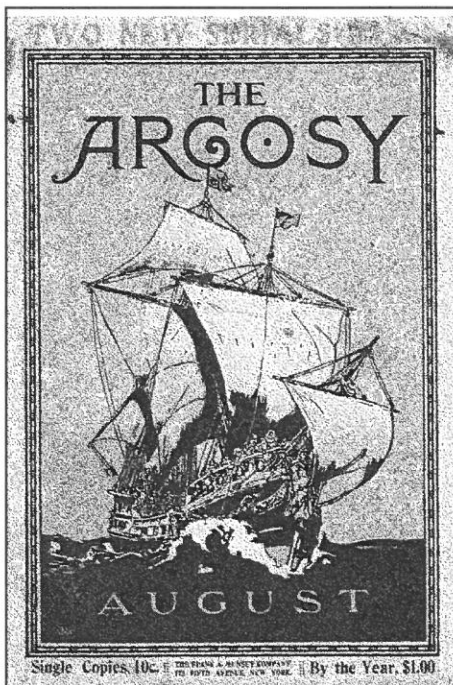
Mary Hallock Foote made most of her illustrations for magazines of the period. Publications like *Scribner's*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Century* filled each issue with romantic and exciting pictures and illustration. Before radio and television, these popular magazines were a common form of

family entertainment.

Although the stories and articles in magazines might have changed a lot since Mary Hallock Foote's time, their covers have not. Just like today, magazine covers in the 1800's featured large, eye-catching illustrations. If the picture on the cover gets a customer's attention, the person is

more likely to buy an issue.

Can you design an exciting cover for a hundred year-old magazine? Below are a few examples of how covers might have looked back then. Then, on the next page, we've given you a blank cover to fill in with whatever pictures you think we'll get a customer's attention. Have fun!



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1904

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THE FEBRUARY CENTURY MAGAZINE

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THE CENTURY CO-UNION SQUARE-NEWYORK

Copyright, 1904, by The Century Co. (Trade-Mark Registered Oct. 10th, 1881.) Entered at N. Y. Post Office as Second Class Mail Matter.



Next Month's Activities

Well, we've told you all we know about Mary Hallock Foote, but we need your help so that we can learn more. Pick from one of the activities below or make up your own project and send it in to our Prospector Headquarters. We'll take some of your best work and print it in next month's magazine. Remember to include your name, where you're from, and the name of your Prospector chapter. We can't wait to see what you send in!

make great art? Draw us a picture with a scene from your life and explain to us why it inspired you.

Woman Artists: There are many American woman artists who are important to our country's culture

Prospectors about her life and work.

Tales from the Mines: In addition to her illustrations, Mary Hallock Foote is also famous for her novels and short stories.

Many of these stories took place in wild and rugged mining camps like the ones she lived in most of her life. Do you think a gold mine or boomtown would make a good setting for an adventure tale? Write us a short story using an Old West mine for the setting.



Picturing Everyday Life: Mary Hallock Foote used her everyday surroundings for inspiration in her artwork. In her illustrations we can recognize her house, her children, and the rugged canyon near Boise where she once lived. Do you ever feel inspired by the people and places around you? Do you think your family sitting around the dinner table or your friends playing a park would

and history. Besides Mary Hallock Foote, woman like Sarah Peale, Mary Cassatt, Georgia O'Keefe, and Grandma Moses all became famous for their beautiful and unique artwork. We'd like to learn more about some of these artists. Do some library or internet research on a famous woman artist and write a short paragraph to teach the rest of the

Send in your work by March 12th to:

Prospector Club
Lucky Noah
Idaho State Historical Museum
610 North Julia Davis Drive
Boise, ID 83702

Or email it to us at
kzwolfer@ishs.state.id.us.

Resources for Teachers

Field Trip Ideas

Foote Park
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Lucky Peak Dam and Lake
9723 East Highway 21
Boise, ID 83716-9393
208-343-0671

Located 12.5 miles east of Boise on state highway 21. Turn right on the road over the dam and proceed .9 miles to the park. This small park preserves the home site of the Foote family. Although there is nothing left of the structure but the foundation, students can get an idea of what life was like in the canyon and how the massive irrigation project has changed the landscape. The park has a small picnic area and bathroom, but no room for buses to turn around. Larger vehicles would have to park a quarter mile from the site in the boat recreation parking lot.

Books

Bickford-Swarthout, D.
Mary Hallock Foote: Pioneer Woman Illustrator
Berry Hill Press, 1996
An overview and analysis of Mary Foote's artwork.

Miller, D.
Mary Hallock Foote: Author-Illustrator of the American West
University of Oklahoma Press, 2002
A thorough biography of Mary's life with extensive references made to her art and writing.

Rodman, P. (editor)
A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West: The Reminiscence of Mary Hallock Foote
H.E. Huntington Library, 1992

Late in Mary Hallock Foote's life she wrote an autobiography of her time in the West. This recently edited and re-released work gives the reader a picture of the major events in Mary's life in her own words.

Rodman, P.
When Culture Came to Boise: Mary Hallock Foote in Idaho

Idaho Historical Series, Number 19, 1977
This publication produced by the Idaho Historical Society provides a brief review of the Footes' life in Idaho.

Spence, C.
Mining Engineers and the American West: The Lace-Boot Brigade 1849-1933
Yale University Press, 1977
A look at Arthur Foote and other gentleman engineers on the frontier.

Stegner, W.
Angle of Repose
Penguin Books, 1972
A fictionalized telling of Mary Hallock Foote's life, *Angle of Repose* is a great book, but don't look to it for historical accuracy.

Web Resources

A short biography put together by the Idaho Historical Society
www.idahohistory.net/refrence%20Series/0727.doc

A brief biography and bibliography of Mary Hallock Foote's work
www.lili.org/farrit/Bibs_Foote.htm

Lesson Plan

Two Views of the Old West

Goal of Lesson

Mary Hallock Foote and Frederic Remington were both eastern-born artists who drew scenes of the West in the late 1800's. Although these artists were both popular during the period, they each chose distinctly different subjects for their illustrations. In this lesson, students will compare and contrast work by these two artists and will consider why it is important to have multiple points of view when studying history.

Inventory

Worksheet, Mary Hallock Foote's illustrations, Frederic Remington's illustrations

Activity

Break the class into groups of four or five. Hand out the worksheet and copies of both artists' works to the class. Before the groups begin the exercise, ask the class the definition of point-of-view. Put the best, agreed upon definition on the board and leave it there during the lesson. Explain to the students that they are going to look at work from two western artists with two different points-of-view. Give the groups time to work through the questions on the worksheets and then discuss the answers as a class.

Discussion

1) Many of Frederic Remington's illustrations were done for *Harper's Weekly*, a popular magazine of the time that featured many thrilling stories of western life. Just looking at this small sample of his work,

a historian might get the idea that the West was an exciting and dangerous place populated almost entirely by men.

2) Although Mary Hallock Foote also made magazine illustrations, her work takes on distinctly different themes. A historian looking at her work might conclude that the Old West was very romantic and idyllic, populated by families and children.

3) The differences in the artists' work outweigh the similarities. Some of the contrasts the students might notice are: violence vs. peace, men vs. women, or action vs. romance.

4) Neither set of pictures is a fully accurate record of the time period. Frederic Remington's pictures tend towards the mythical, with exciting pictures of cowboys and gunfights. Although these thrilling scenes did occur occasionally, Remington gives the impression that the western experience was one action packed episode after another. Mary Hallock Foote, on the other hand, was a romantic. Her illustrations often take eastern ideals of culture and gentility and project them on a western landscape that was rarely that dignified. Still, her drawings, often modeled on scenes from her own life, can give us some idea of pioneer and family life in the West.

5) To get a full and truthful view of history it is important to consider as many points of view as possible. As the students should be able to see, two artists' views of the same time and region differ dramatically. When studying history you have to consider the point of view of the source. Would a gold miner and a Native American have the same perspective on a historical event? There is value in most every point-of-view, but to get the full story, a historian must look at multiple perspectives.

Two Western Artists

Mary Hallock Foote and Frederic Remington were both artists who drew scenes of the West in the late 1800's for popular magazines. Look at a sample of each of the artist's work and then try to answer the questions below.

1) Imagine that you are a historian trying to find out about life in the Old West, but the only record you have of the time are these two illustrations by Frederic Remington. What do the pictures tell you about people's everyday life back in the late 1800's?

2) Now imagine that you are a historian, but this time the only record you have of the Old West are the two pictures by Mary Hallock Foote? What do these illustrations tell you about people's everyday life back in the late 1800's?

3) Put the pictures by the two artists side-by-side and then compare them. What things do the pictures have in common? What is different about them? For example is one set of pictures more exciting than the other? Is one more peaceful?

4) Which artist do you think draws a more truthful record of western life in the late 1800's? Are they both true? Is neither true? Why?

5) Mary Hallock Foote and Frederic Remington have two different points of view in their art. Do you think it is important to have many points of view when you are studying history? Why?



Mary Hallock Foote

A. The Irrigation Ditch

B. Afternoon at a Ranch



Frederic Remington

A. The Stampede

B. Gunfight

