

St. Louis Globe-Democrat Sunday Magazine, September 18, 1932

NINE

# August Leimbach Belongs to a Little Known Profession

**An Architectural Sculptor, of Which There Are But Comparatively Few, His Artistic Creations Have Been Used to Decorate Both Interior and Exterior of Buildings from Springfield, Ill., to the Pacific Coast and the Statue He Designed Known as the "Madonna of the Trail" May Be Found in Twelve Different States.**



August Leimbach at work in his home.

—Globe-Democrat Staff Photograph.

By a Globe-Democrat Staff Writer.

AUGUST LEIMBACH is an artist who can say truthfully and with modesty that his creations are spread from coast to coast. For stretched literally all the way across the continent, one in each of the twelve states in a line from the Atlantic to the Pacific, are statues by his hand. He was the designer, as you may or may not know, in 1927 of the statue known as the Madonna of the Trail, a dozen of which were erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution along the historic route of the National Old Trail extending from Maryland to the East to California on the West. In still another sense, the artistic handwork of August Leimbach may be said to stretch half way across the continent. For by following a southerly route from Springfield, Ill., through St. Louis and various Texas cities to San Francisco you will come now and then upon the architectural decorations created by him. His work is to be found in many parts of the country, in fact, on the exterior and interior of public structures of all kinds—office buildings, hotels, theaters, state capitols, schools and churches.

His is a professional calling which includes but few members comparatively. He is an architectural sculptor and an architectural sculptor, in case you don't know, is

## Madonna Statue His Most Famous Creation

It is, then, this phase of sculpture to which Leimbach is devoting his life. While following architectural sculpture in the main, he has occasionally turned aside for such creative work as the Madonna of the Trail and to take part in competition with other sculptors for the right to design other statues. The Madonna statue, however, is his most famous creation and more shall be written of it subsequently. For the present, let us turn back to the man and learn how he came by his wide reputation.

In technical training, Leimbach is a product of post-war Germany, a product of post-war Germany, receiving the full benefits of the thorough system of craftsmanship education then in effect. Born in the little village of Kallendorf, Germany, populated then as now with some less than 2000 persons and located near Eisenach, he began his technical training in the elementary schools there where he had his



Mr. Leimbach at work on his most noted creation outside the realm of architectural sculpture. He is shown putting the finishing touches on the full-size model of the Madonna of the Trail statue which he designed for the Daughters of the American Revolution.

—White Photograph.

first lessons in drawing. Then in Stuttgart and in Hamburg in later years, he continued his training, attending various trade schools, too, as he worked at his calling.

Completing his apprenticeship at the age of 18 years, he pursued his profession in Germany until he reached the age of 25 years, by which time he had attained considerable success, having been privileged to work under some of the best masters, as he calls them, in Germany. By this time, also, he had saved considerable money which he at first planned to use in an extensive visit to the Orient for

a study of all that part of the globe had to offer in the way of art. He might have made that trip, too, had not certain events happened. But let him relate it.

"You see," he explains, "I had a brother living in St. Louis and just as I was getting plans pretty well in hand for my visit to the Orient, my brother came home for a visit. Like so many others returning from America, he had nothing but good to say for the country, in fact, he painted a rather glowing picture of the opportunities it offered. He suggested I might find the United States fully as interesting a place

for travel as the Orient. He suggested, also, I might want to locate there. Anyway, he urged strongly that I pay his adopted country a visit.

## Selects St. Louis In Preference to Orient

"So I decided to take his advice, calling off my plans for visiting the Orient. I came direct to St. Louis and stopped first with my brother. That was in 1916. I remained here only a few months at

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## + + BELONGS TO A LITTLE-KNOWN PROFESSION + +

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the time, though. By coincidence a brother of a man for whom I had worked in Hamburg was then engaged in some construction work in Waco, Tex. While I was in St. Louis trying to make up my mind whether to stay in America or go back to Germany, I received a letter from this man asking me to come to Waco to do some architectural work. I went and so it was in the Texas city I did my first modeling in the United States.

"Then I was called to Galveston to do some work there and when I had finished I mentioned my right-of-way of America which I had begun two years before, for by this time it was 1912. I went on West to California and there I met some former colleagues, men with whom I had worked in Germany, who also were looking America over. Stan Franzen was beginning preparations for the World's Fair held in 1915. Some of my German friends suggested all of us remain and work on the World's Fair buildings. It seemed like a good suggestion and we did.

Thus did the course of events help August Leimbach to make up his mind to remain in America. Thus early, too, did he find much interesting and lucrative work. He got his share of sculpturing to do on World's Fair buildings, creating designs for several structures including the Wisconsin State Building, the Ford Frick Building, Postoffice and others. At intervals during this time he also found demand for his services in other cities, in Sacramento and in Salt Lake City among others. In the latter city he created the architectural designs for the Stranahan Theater.

He went did Leimbach like California and the West that he remained a year after the fair was held, returning to St. Louis in 1915. Since then, this city has been his headquarters, although a great portion of his work has been performed in Southern cities.

There are, however, several examples of Leimbach's handiwork to be found in St. Louis buildings. To mention some of the structures he has helped to decorate, there are the Shubert, St. Louis and Missouri theaters, the City Club building, several high schools, the city hall and the hotel house at the Fair in Forest Park. One creation of which he is especially proud

is the lobby of the Alhambra. Leimbach also had a hand in the decorative scheme of the Missouri State Capitol, for which he created chandeliers and the two chandeliers became on either side of the main entrance.

By way of additional evidence of the widespread demand for Leimbach's services may be listed designs on the Bell Telephone Building in Dallas, the Texas Pacific Station in Fort Worth and the First National Bank Building in Fort Worth, Tex., which Leimbach also has more art work than any other bank structure in America. There are many other examples which might be cited but those will be sufficient for the purpose.

Even before he had attained such a great measure of success, Leimbach began to desire to visit his home town in Germany. Also, to do something for the village in appreciation of the start given him toward his artistic career. So after allowing time for the latter endeavor by the war to subside in some extent, he returned to Karlsruhe in 1921 to remain several months.

While there he designed a playhouse and placed thereon the names of all members of a barbershop society of which he once had been a member, who were killed in the war. The playhouse he presented to the town as a memorial gift. It was his way of expressing his gratitude for what the village and the barbershop had done for him. Also, during his stay there he was employed to design another playhouse which were placed the names of all the village's children in the list of war dead.

Several months, as was said, were spent among the scenes of his youth, after which he came back to St. Louis to resume his profession. Probably because of the character of his creations, he had not been asked to submit a design for the statues which the daughters of the American Revolution planned to erect in the memory of pioneer mothers. Some difficulty was encountered by the organization in finding an appropriate design. The head of a stone manufacturing concern which was to get the contract for manufacturing the statues from the sculptor's design thought Leimbach was the sculptor to do the job. He suggested to Leimbach that he create and model a design.

"He told me," explained Leimbach, "that I would have to complete my design in three days, explaining that Mrs. John Trigg, Mrs. of St. Louis, who was chairwoman of the committee to select the statues, was leaving for Washington at the end of that time to attend a convention of the U. S. A. Of course, that wasn't much time to do a statue—but I went to work at the job.

"On the third day Mrs. Trigg came to my home to inspect the completed model. She told me she liked it very much. The next day she went to Washington. A few days later I received a telegram from her saying she had accepted it.

### Writing Called Hard Work by Author

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world. A program that applies to me, does not apply to the fellow next door who is dragging, too, to be an author. There are no rules about story writing, as set by an architect in designing a house.

"Sometimes these rules are violated by successful authors, probably some of the most successful, but after all they know the rules even if they do not follow them. Just as an artist must know anatomy in order to draw a portrait. He may exaggerate and distort physical parts and seemingly violate set rules, but the fact remains that despite his distortion he does know anatomy."

It is not fair to say that money tinders with literature. The word implies a lack of seriousness, lack of understanding of fundamentals. Money is serious and is most certainly has progressed far beyond the degree of apprenticeship. He is probably one of the few successful men in the writing game who are willing to use their art for practical ends when art itself has no market. He selflessly adds the Telephone News but spends his leisure in perfecting a different type of writing which may some day occupy his entire life.

"It all comes under the head of work," he smiled. "Whether you are writing about telephone operators or fiction villains, you have to put in your night or ten hours a day to make a living. For the present I have taken the easiest way."

asking me to send the model there, which I did. A few more days and I received another telegram advising me my design had been accepted. I doubt if any other sculptor ever created a design and had it accepted in such a short time."

The Madonna of the Trail, as you may know, is the ragged figure of a woman with a babe in her arms and another child clinging at her skirts. Twelve replicas of the original were erected at historic places in twelve states. The states are Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The one nearest St. Louis is at Vandalia, Ill.

As good as Leimbach may be of that achievement, one does not find it difficult to believe that architectural sculpture is his first love.

He engages in it in all of its phases, some of his work consisting of the construction of miniature building models, known as "scale models" to the profession. He requested the privilege of explaining in this article just what an architectural sculptor is.

"I don't think many persons know there is such a profession," he says. "They see the sculptural adornments on buildings and believe they are created entirely by plasterers. Now, plasterers are skilled in doing the actual work with a cast, that is, a negative. But it probably never occurred to these same persons that there had to be a positive from which the negative was made. And that someone had to create the positive, that is, the original model. That is the work of the architectural sculptor."

## THE FUN BOX

A Long Distance.

A lady heard her new colored maid answering the telephone one morning. "Yes'm," the girl replied to the phone question, and again "Yes'm." Her third answer was "Is she in?"—then "Yes'm," her screen asked.

"Well, ma'am," said Lucy, "she asked if this was your house and I told her yes, then she asked if you was home and I said yes. Then she said, 'Long Distance from Washington and I said 'Yes'm.'"

Woe Blanket.

Wife. The heavy explosions of a battle always causes rain. It rained after Waterloo. It rained after Marathon. It rained after Marston. But Marathon was fought with spears and arrows, my dear.

Wife. There you go again! Always throwing cold water on everything I have to say.—Montreal Star.

Back to Front.

First Executive. I suppose you enjoyed your vacation. Second. Little. Yes—but there's nothing like the feel of a good duck under your feet again.—Boston Transcript.

Guessing the Kings.

Will the twentieth century prove to be as depressing to the king as the nineteenth was? The nineteenth saw the abdication of twenty-four monarchs, beginning with Charles Emmanuel of Savoy and ending with Milan of Serbia. The first sovereign to lose his throne in the twentieth century was the Emperor of Korea in 1907, followed by Abdul Hamid in 1909 and the Chinese Emperor in 1912. Some claim the world war, and monarchs were bowed over like ninetines.—Boston Transcript.

Half and Half.

"At times," said the girl, "you seem to be mainly enough, and then at other times you're hopelessly feminine."

"Well, that's heredity, you know."

Heredit?

"Yes. You see, half my ancestors were men and half women."

Kloda Hans.

George Was Empty.

The absent-minded professor drove up to his garage door, looked inside and blinked. Then he leaped back into the car and drove like fury to the police station.

"Sergeant," he gasped, "my garage is empty. My car's been stolen."—Los Angeles Times.

## WHY DID SHE CHANGE HER MIND?..by Timmins



**"B.O."—YOU'RE LUCKY, ALL RIGHT!**  
LIFEBOUY MAKES ME FEEL CLEAN AS A WHISTLE. BATH LATHER—AND HERE IT GOES YOU ARE ON A HOT DATE!

**A MONTH LATER... NO MORE TURN-DOVING!**  
HOW ABOUT SOME REMEDIES TO MAKE THINGS?

**Beware of "B.O." these hot summer days**  
OF COURSE we perspire more in summer. We have to or we couldn't endure the heat. But make sure that "B.O." (body odor) doesn't offend. See that pores are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected—bath regularly with Lifebuoy. Its coarse, abundant lather purifies—scapes "B.O." Quells health by removing germs from hands, in phantasies, hygiene, scent vanishes as you rinse.

**Aids complexion**  
Millions owe their fine complexion to Lifebuoy's gentle care. Its bland, penetrating lather deep-cleans pores—frees the skin to glowing health. Adopt Lifebuoy today.

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