

February 2015

The Oakland Temple Bronze Group by Stephan T Seable

During the last part of the 20th Century brother named Sherman Thompson was a mover and shaker and prominent LDS businessman in Oakland California . He was also a promoter and patron of the arts. . We met one year while I was working on sets for the Oakland Temple pageant and he asked if I could restore some nativity figures the church had acquired from a nearby Catholic Church. He needed someone to repair and restore some life-size figures and several sheep so they could be used during the Christmas season at the Temple. I responded that I could. (I was a teacher and had the Summer months free.) The group included Joseph and Mary and the baby plus sheep, shepherds, and wise men. It took most of the summer because some of the figures were missing parts, faces and hands,etc. The work was completed before school started. The result was successful and many people enjoyed the restored figures before the Christmas season at our home. We hosted a wedding reception in August for a Brother-in law, Cliff and Lynette Perona in Concord, and displayed some of figures in the reception line. It was fun and unusual. The group then became a permanent part of the Christmas display for the Oakland Temple grounds.

Later the Temple decoration committee asked if I would create some children looking up at a Scripture from third Nephi on the temple wall for next year. I was pleased to do it and by the next season I had sculpted a little boy and girl in clay and made plaster molds. The figures were cast in wax and painted to look like bronze and were used a few years successfully. They melted a little during some unusually warm weather after Thanksgiving one year. The committee realized they needed something more permanent and commissioned me to cast them in bronze.

The new sculptures were a little different than the first group. A dog was added and different children were models including my son and daughter Adam and Johanna Seable. Our family pet, Ginger was the model for the dog. She was immortalized in bronze in my foundry at Concord high school. The little girl and boy sculptures were cast in East Bay foundries. The group was installed in the garden looking up at a scripture on the wall behind the original visitors center in 1980. The group was moved in 2014 to the Temple visitor's center when the flower garden was replaced by a reflecting pool as it had been in the original design.

Stephan and Kathleen Seable loved Northern California. They lived in Concord for thirty five years. They raised eight children while he taught art, biology, and outdoor survival, at Pacifica High and Concord High Schools,as well as extension classes for local colleges and art schools. He enjoys teaching young people and taught early morning seminary for seventeen years in Concord and Walnut Creek Stakes. He also created some sculptured relief plaques for the Salt Lake Temple, and has created hundreds of commissioned paintings, murals, and sculptures all over the Bay area, north western U.S., and on several continents. Some of these while serving missions.

Since retirement from school teaching the Seables moved to Grants Pass Oregon have enjoyed serving missions together in China, Chile, Oregon, and Salt Lake Church Headquarters.The family loves missionary work and their children and 43 grandchildren continue the tradition.

Stephan and Kathleen are currently living in Grants Pass Oregon where he still creates art between Church and Missionary work, and events and activities of their forty three grandchildren.

**Stephan Seable
2310 Stringer Gap Road
Grants Pass, Oregon
97527**

**E-mail, seable@yahoo.com
www.stephanseableart.com**