U. T. Acquires Two Pieces
By Famed Negro Sculptor

When Nashville’s Uncle William Edmondson Feels Inspired, He Just Grabs a Piece o’ Tennessee Limestone and Sorta Lets Himself Go

By ROLAND DOUGHERTY

A sheep in modern sculpture and three stone “Mourning Doves,” recently presented to the University of Tennessee, is the beginning of a unique—perhaps a valuable—collection of the work of an old Nashville Negro who “just skulps when the Lord tells me to.”

The sculptor is Uncle William Edmondson, now nationally known in the field of modern art.

His sculpture is done with Tennessee limestone that “ain’t good for nothing much.” But these Tennessee rocks, chisled “like the Lord said,” have been on display in the Modern Museum of Art where sophisticated New Yorkers could view, marvel and make notes.

Two pieces now owned by the University are on display in the art department in the Home Economics Building.

Arty “Coronet” published some of the Negro’s work in a fall edition along with Edmondson’s picture and other magazines have carried accounts of his work.

Uncle Bill just worked for his living for “nigh 70 years.” But he was crippled not long ago and was put on an art project for WPA.

Through the governmental agency the University hopes to get more of his work, according to Mrs. Mary P. Charlton of the Home Economics Art Department.

And so, if the old Negro’s hand stays steady and the Lord directs, the state of Tennessee may contribute more to modern art through one of her humblest citizens.

Joyner Refuses Radio Post for U-T Work

Athletic Publicity Boss Gives Up WBIR Program

Jack Joyner, handler of U-T sports publicity, will not do nightly sports broadcasts for Knoxville’s new radio station, WBIR, he announced Wednesday, retuning previously published reports.

A check-up here with athletic officials disclosed that the two jobs would conflict, and Mr. Joyner preferred keeping the post with the University.

Joyner has just recently returned from Washington, where he was present at the Washington, D. C. Touchdown Club’s presentation of the Knute Rockne Trophy to Bob Sufferin, Tennessee guard, as the best lineman in the United States in the 1940 season.

Deadline Near On Senior Class Dues

Senior class dues must be paid within the next few weeks, according to Harold Brown, president of the senior class. The dues are $1.50 and may be paid to senior treasurer Ann Daughtery or to any other senior class officer.

Senior dues include tickets to the Junior and Senior proms and to the senior holiday.
Aged Negro Says God Bade Him Sculpt Stones; Now U-T Prizes Them as Art

Nazi's Deride Enemy Efforts

Impossible for Britain and U. S. To Attain Plane Parity,

By S. I. Kuglen

From the Times, Jan. 16.—An author-
ized Nazi spokesman asserted the
enemy plane today that it was
impossible for the United States and Great Britain to attain plane
parity with Germany in the production
of planes and ammunition.

The spokesman attributed this "impossibility" to the fact that the
rival plane had already reached
the high degree of standardization
he believes American and British
aircraft have not attained. He added,
however, that the United States and
Great Britain were suffering from
the same "impossibilities" which are
preventing Germany from attaining plane parity.

The plane, he said, was an in-
comparable military machine, and
would not be met by any plane
manufactured by the United States
or Great Britain. The plane, he said,
was capable of lifting a pilot and
his machine 30,000 feet in about
an hour, and could fly at 500 miles
an hour. It was described as a
flying "rocket."

The Nazi plane is not yet in full
production, the spokesman said, but
when it is, it will be the most
powerful plane ever built. The plane
is said to be capable of lifting a
man and his machine 50,000 feet
in about an hour, and could fly at
500 miles an hour. It has been
tested in many ways, and has been
found to be superior to any other
plane yet made. The plane is said
to be a "flying ship," and it is not
expected to be available for some
time.

The United States and Great Britain,
he added, are suffering from the
same "impossibilities" that are
preventing Germany from attaining
plane parity. They are not yet able
to produce a plane that is as powerful
as the Nazi plane, and they are not
likely to be able to produce one
even this year.

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NEGRO WHO TURNED SCULPTOR AT GOD’S COMMAND GETS MANHATTAN EXHIBITION

Five years ago Negro William Edmondson (left) was a hospital orderly in Nashville, Tenn. Suddenly he became “converted.” In his own words, a call came to him to preach and to cut tombstones and sculpture at God’s command. Untrained and poorly educated, he soon was cutting limestone figures like Martha and Mary and Mourning Dove (below). Of the latter he says: “That ain’t no pigeon, that’s a big old sea bird. All them things I saw in the sky—right up there just like you see them clouds. God give me this thing.”

Last year Mrs. Louise Dahl-Wolfe, Manhattan photographer who took the pictures shown herewith while in Nashville, came across Edmondson’s sculptures in the yard where he also cut tombstones. Impressed, she bought several, took pictures of Edmondson and his work, interested Manhattan’s Museum of Modern Art to such effect that that discriminating organization on Oct. 27 opened an Edmondson one-man—an honor never hitherto accorded to any contemporary Negro artist. Of self-taught Sculptor Edmondson, Museum Director Alfred H. Barr Jr. says: “Usually the naïve artist works in the easier medium of painting. Edmondson, however, has chosen to work in limestone, which he attacks with extraordinary courage and directness to carve out simple, emphatic forms.”
Negro Sculptor With God-Given Genius To Have Work Displayed in New York

1937 This headline and photo appeared in the Oct. 9, 1937, Nashville Banner. Excerpts from the article: "William Edmondson, shown in his workshop in the rear of his home at 1434 Fourteenth Avenue, South, is entirely unimpressed by the announcement that his 'inspired' carvings of men and women, animals and 'mourning' doves have been heralded as the finest examples of 'modern primitive' art, or that his carvings will be exhibited as a one-man show in the richly endowed New York Museum of Modern Art. ... Five years ago, Edmondson ... was given divine instruction by God, he says, to begin the carvings that brought him fame ... [He] carves figures from huge blocks of limestone, many of which have been saved from the wreckage of old Nashville homes, built scores of years ago." The original acetate negative of this photo, which was badly deteriorated, was recovered by Chicago Albumen Works under the supervision of Beth Odle, photo specialist of the Nashville Room, and funded by the Nashville Public Library Fund. (Source: Nashville Public Library, Nashville Room)
The Museum of Modern Art, 14 West 49 Street, New York, announces an exhibition of sculpture by William Edmondson, to open to the public Wednesday, October 27. Mr. Edmondson, a Negro of Nashville, Tennessee, has spent most of his life working at odd jobs. Four or five years ago he became "converted" and says that the call came to him to preach and to cut tombstones and sculpture at God's command. He has had no art training and very little education, and has probably never seen a piece of sculpture except his own. He works at his home in the Negro section of Nashville where his yard is littered with uncut tombstones. His work comes within that category loosely called "modern primitive."

The exhibition will continue until December 1. Among the pieces to be shown will be "Mary and Martha," "Lion," "Large Angel," "Small Angel," "Lady with Bustle," "Mourning Doves," "Ram Resting," "Lady Holding up Her Petticoat," "Lady in Cloak."
THE ART GALLERIES
Ceramics and a Modern Primitive—Joe Jones

WITH the season just edging into its second month, there is still little on view that is really exciting at any of the galleries, and it is probable that the chief interest for most will be found at our two largest museums of contemporary art, the Whitney Museum and the Museum of Modern Art. At the Whitney, the feature is modern American ceramics, and though larger exhibitions of this branch of the arts may have been assembled in the past, it is doubtful if there ever was a more comprehensive or carefully chosen one. Got together by the Syracuse Museum for showings abroad, and only just returned from a tour of England and the Scandinavian countries, it is made up of items lent from literally all over the country and contains examples of the work of most of the important native practitioners of the art. If the total effect is somehow a little discouraging, if the works shown seem to lean either on a false archaism or on a kind of pat naïveté, that must be taken as a commentary on the progress of the whole ceramic art.

There are, of course, some excellent individual items. Wayland Gregory shows a well-handled terra-cotta group of a mare and foal, called “Kansas Madonna;” Henry Varnum Poor has a wall plaque, “Nude with Alligator,” that is interesting in its treatment of the contrasting planes of the design; and Sorcha Boru has a boldly simplified bull and a bland little “Saint Fiacre” that are well conceived. The technical brilliance of all the exhibitors is remarkably high. But it is a proficiency that is limited in scope and that leads to a dead end.

Ceramists have reached the point where they can keep their colors as true and put as high a glaze on their products as could any of the ancients, where they can reproduce (with only the minutest touch of exaggeration here and there to add sophistication) the styles of the early Chinese, medieval Spanish, or modern peasant potters at will. Somewhere in the process, however, true inventiveness has been largely lost. Ceramics at best is a minor mode of artistic expression, but it could have more significance if it had a closer linkage with contemporary life. Perhaps the most interesting exhibits, not so much for their own sake as for the potentialities they suggest, are three large enamel panels, two of abstract machine subjects and one of a glimmering symbolic figure, designed by Edward Winter and executed by the Ferro Enamel Corporation of Cleveland, Ohio (which specializes, I believe, in finishes for motorcar accessories and other commercial products). Some such application of modern industrial methods and an abandonment of antique craft techniques would seem a healthy turn for the art to take.

The exhibition, which is well worth seeing for its comprehensiveness at least, closes November 7th.

THE Modern Museum, pending the construction of its new home on the old Fifty-third Street site, is housed in temporary quarters in the underground Concourse at Rockefeller Center, and suffers a little from walls too bare, too white, and generally too warehouse-looking, not to mention a constant coming-and-going of groups of sightseers being briskly whisked through this latest of the Center’s many attractions. The central exhibit there at present is a collection of a dozen or so sculptures by a “find” of the Museum, a Nashville Negro named William Edmondson, and if a contrast were needed to point the difference between false quaintness and the innocent imaginativeness of true naïveté, his work would supply it. Untutored artistically, Mr. Edmondson has nevertheless a remarkably strong feeling for balance and sculptural substance, while the “primitive” simplification which gives his work its immediate charm springs, as it always should, not from over-refinement but from the painful and conscientious attempt to get, within the limits of his own craft equipment, as much out of his tools and materials as he can.

As a result, his square, blocky little figures (mainly of religious or churchly subjects) have a surprising amount of weight and power. The figures are not decorative enough to be attractive to many, nor have they really enough emotional or intellectual content to be of lasting interest, and it is likely that after the show closes, on December 1st, they and Mr. Edmondson will soon be
forgotten. Meantime—particularly in such things as his “Clergyman,” standing in stiff frock coat with Bible upraised, his “Lawyer,” or his delightfully puffed and befurbelowed “Saints Mary and Martha”—one is afforded a glimpse, rare in these times, of the workings of a truly naïve but contemporary mind.

The rest of the exhibition is rather a hodgepodge, comprising a roomful of modern American paintings; another of movie “stills,” another of architectural project drawings, photographs, and plaster models; and still another of contemporary French painting. The American room has a good Sheeler (his painting of the Ford plant at River Rouge, called “American Landscape”); some representative Burchfields, Hoppers, etc.; and a really excellent Georg Grosz water color, a semi-abstract conception of blurred shadows, falling buildings, and leaping flames called “Punishment.” The movie stills, showing everyone from Annette Kellerman in “Neptune’s Daughter” on down to Joan Crawford and the present, are amusing to look at. The real cream of the show, however, is in the French room. Made up partly from loans and partly from the Museum’s own wealth, the thirty or forty paintings there are all, if not masterpieces, at least prime examples of their various creators’ art. Particularly noteworthy are the Cézanne “Bather;” a van Gogh, “The House on the Crau,” which is cooler, more closely handled than his later work; and a small Renoir, “Head of Gabrielle,” all strawberry tints and smiling flesh, that for its rosy sensuousness must be one of the finest examples of the man’s smaller studies to be found anywhere.

Durand-Ruel has, until November 13th, a roomful of Monets on display—none of them exceptional examples, but all of them cool and green, light-struck and pleasant-looking. At Carroll Carstairs, until November 6th, there is a showing of the gracefully, sharply, very Continental drawings of Constantin Guys. . . . Lucile Blanch, at the Milch Galleries, has an exhibition of recent paintings. They are a little bewildering in the variety of techniques she employs, and a few of them, particularly the portrait heads, descend close to the banal. The best are the Florida landscapes, which show an excellent feeling for the solidity of earth and the contrasting fluidity of trees.

One of the most interesting shows now current is that of Joe Jones, at the webster helps to emphasize its story-book charm
Unusual, fascinating, are the Arizona Biltmore’s setting and individuality. But familiar to all who travel is at least one cigar you’ll find at its cigar counter—Webster. It is natural for Webster to be found at the better hotels and clubs—for it is distinctly a better cigar (at a very modest price).
Look for Webster also at Seattle’s Olympic, Boston’s Copley Plaza, Chicago’s Drake, New York’s Commodore and hundreds of other places of high standing from Coast to Coast. Fancy Tales (12c), the slim Golden Wedding (10c), and other popular shapes.

Webster cigar company
127 Madison Avenue, New York
Sculptor’s Works Given N.Y. Exhibit

NEW YORK. Oct. 29—Creations in stone, the work of a Race sculptor, done in form of angels, doves of peace and other symbols depicting biblical characters and incidents, have been placed on exhibit here, by the Museum of Modern Art which opened its temporary galleries at 14 West Forty-ninth street, Thursday.

These carvings, rough, but forceful and inspiring, are tombstones, and represent a wide departure from the orthodox design and thought usually found in works of such nature.

Their creator, William Edmondson, native of Nashville, recently attracted attention of the museum sponsors through his reputation in his home state as a designer and sculptor of rare ability. Recognizing this, the institution’s foundation board arranged to devote a section of their New York galleries to an exhibition of Edmondson’s handiwork.