



7-1-2011

"With God's Assistance I Will Someday Be an Artist": John B. Fairbanks's Account of the Paris Art Mission

Rachel Cope

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq>

Recommended Citation

Cope, Rachel (2011) ""With God's Assistance I Will Someday Be an Artist": John B. Fairbanks's Account of the Paris Art Mission," *BYU Studies Quarterly*: Vol. 50 : Iss. 3 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol50/iss3/8>

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *BYU Studies Quarterly* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

“With God’s Assistance I Will Someday Be an Artist”

John B. Fairbanks’s Account of the Paris Art Mission

Rachel Cope

In the late nineteenth century, Paris was the unchallenged capital of Western art; as a result, budding artists aspired to study there. Included in this group was John B. Fairbanks of Payson, Utah, who, through the sponsorship of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, fulfilled his goal by serving as an art missionary from 1890 to 1892. While studying with other LDS art missionaries at the Académie Julian in Paris, Fairbanks corresponded regularly with his wife, Lillie, and their then-seven children. Many of Fairbanks’s letters have been preserved in the Church History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah;¹ this article presents an important selection of them below.

Fairbanks never received a prize or honor for his artwork in Paris, but the account he left behind is valuable not only as a record of the art mission, but also because it is raw and real; his story is meaningful because it is so human. His letters describe his surroundings and detail his experiences as an artist in training, but, more poignantly, they depict his reactions to foreign places and events, express the tender love and concern (financial, spiritual, and emotional) he felt for his young family, note his longing to be reunited with his wife and children, discuss events then taking place in Utah (including the Manifesto issued by Wilford Woodruff in 1890), share the depths of his frustration as he failed to attain his goals in the

1. Photocopies of the letters are also available at the library in the Springville Museum of Art in Springville, Utah. The Springville Museum of Art photocopies were used as the main source of the letters cited in this article, thus the footnotes cite that source even though many of the letters can also be found on microfilm at the Church History Library.

efficient and timely manner he had originally anticipated, and exemplify his enduring determination and his consistent, steadfast faith.²

Prelude to the Art Mission

Fairbanks was born in Payson, Utah, on December 27, 1855, to John Boylston and Sarah Van Wagoner Fairbanks. Even as a child he had an affinity for art. This interest intensified as he got older, particularly when he became acquainted with artist John Hafen (1856–1910), who had opened an art studio in Payson. Fairbanks visited Hafen’s studio regularly to observe him as he painted. Having noted his friend’s artistic interests, Hafen furnished Fairbanks with art materials and encouraged him to paint as well.

Fairbanks married Lillie Annetta Huish on June 24, 1881. In October of that year, the young artist was called to serve in the Southern States Mission (1881–1883). Following an emotional farewell, he noted in his journal, “I left my wife and sisters on the platform crying.”³ During this period of separation, Lillie and John corresponded frequently.⁴

Upon returning home from his first mission, Fairbanks was greeted by John Hafen at the train station,⁵ and their friendship resumed. Although both men had to work occasional odd jobs to support their families, they continued to pursue art careers; they also worked as photographers and looked for opportunities to enhance and to share their talents. Both longed to receive formal training and looked to Paris as the world capital of art.

European Art Study

Following the Civil War, increasing affluence as well as a growing appreciation for European art provided the impetus for American artists to study abroad.⁶ As a result, the number of art students in Europe escalated throughout the 1870s and into succeeding decades. By 1890, at least 1,500 American artists were attending French academies.⁷ Many of these

2. Rachel Cope, “John B. Fairbanks: The Man behind the Canvas” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 2003).

3. John B. Fairbanks, Journal, October 10, 1881, J. B. Fairbanks Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

4. John B. Fairbanks Collection, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

5. Fairbanks, Journal, September 26, 1883, Perry Special Collections.

6. Ulrich W. Hiesinger, *Impressionism in America: The Ten American Painters* (New York: Neues Publishing, 1991), 73.

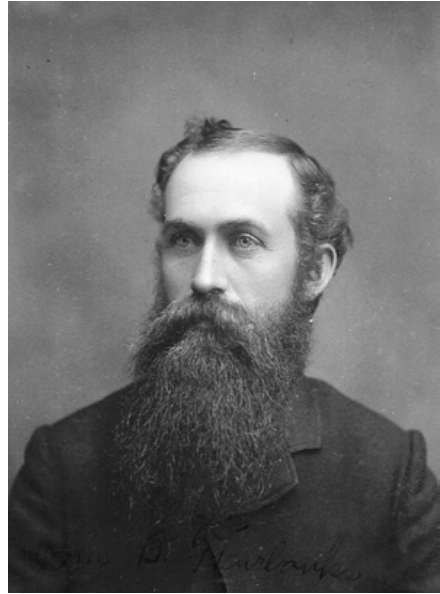
7. Linda Jones Gibbs, *Harvesting the Light: The Paris Art Mission and the Beginning of Utah Impressionism* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

individuals refined their techniques in Paris at private schools such as the Académie Julian or the government-sponsored Ecole des Beaux Arts.

Beginning in the 1830s, artists following the Barbizon School took their easels outdoors to paint nature and figures in a realistic but romanticized style. Then controversy began to rage within the artistic community in France with the advent of impressionism by artists such as Edgar Degas (1834–1917), Claude Monet (1840–1926), Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), and Camille Pissarro (1830–1903). Critics coined the term *impressionism* from an 1872 work by Claude Monet entitled *Impression: Sunrise*. Impressionists

used light, color, and shadow to portray simple subjects from everyday life. They captured the world in “more dynamic and colorful poses” using “small brush strokes or daubs,” believing that the manner in which they portrayed light was more important than the painting’s subject.⁸ Ultimately, impressionists wanted to reject conventional detail and eliminate subjective interpretation in exchange for the creation of a specific moment.⁹ By the final decade of the nineteenth century, American critics and the public at large had favorably recognized the work of impressionist painters.

Aware of the importance of European training, Latter-day Saint artists George Ottinger (1833–1917) and Dan Weggeland (1827–1918) encouraged



John B. Fairbanks, date unknown. Courtesy Florence Fairbanks Cope.

Saints, 1987), 2; David McCullough, *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 411.

8. Patricia Jobe Pierce, *The Ten: Frank W. Benson, Joseph R. DeCamp, Thomas W. Dewing, Childe Hassam, Willard L. Metcalf, Robert Reid, Edward Simmons, Edmund C. Tarbell, John H. Twachtman, J. Alden Weir and William Merritt Chase (Who Replaced Twachtman, 1902)* (Concord, N.H.: Rumford Press, 1976), 7; H. Wayne Morgan, *New Muses: Art in American Culture, 1865–1920* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 114.

9. Hiesinger, *Impressionism in America*, 10.

young Utah artists to study in Paris. In 1888, James Taylor Harwood¹⁰ (1860–1940), Harriet Richards (1870–1922), Cyrus E. Dallin¹¹ (1861–1944), and John Willard Clawson (1858–1936) enrolled in art academies in France. Fairbanks, as well as several others, hoped to follow. John struggled “to save enough money to study in Europe. Although he was able to save but a little, his desire grew. Finally he wrote to Pres. Joseph F. Smith asking what he thought of his plans. The reply was that the plans were worthy and Pres. Smith complimented him for entertaining such a worthy ambition.”¹²

The Paris Art Mission

While discussing together the possibility of studying in Paris, John Hafen and fellow artist Lorus Pratt (1855–1923) developed an idea: they wondered if the Church would be willing to subsidize their training if they agreed to paint murals in the Salt Lake Temple upon their return to Utah. Following careful contemplation, they approached George Q. Cannon, then First Counselor in the First Presidency, and introduced their idea. Cannon became intrigued by the artists’ suggestion and asked them to conduct further research and to propose a plan for the cost and length of study. Hafen and Pratt readily agreed.

After meeting with President Cannon, Hafen contacted his former art teacher, James Taylor Harwood, who described the conditions and expenses of receiving an art education in Paris. Shortly thereafter, Hafen wrote a letter to President Cannon in which he summarized his discussion with Harwood and detailed his own financial situation; he also included an approximate budget. He then shared the following: “For many years past I have been prompted to write to you on the subject of Art, even commencing to write letters, but my timidity would overcome me. I since realize the necessity of cultivating any talent God has bestowed upon His children from the very fact that he is the giver of all gifts and it remains for us

10. James Taylor Harwood was born in Lehi, Utah, into an artistic family. His work shows the beginning of Utah impressionism. See Doris R. Dant and Linda Jones Gibbs, “Harwood and Haag Paint Paris,” *BYU Studies* 33, no. 4 (1993): 754–56.

11. Cyrus Dallin, born in Springville, Utah, moved to Boston to study sculpting and then worked in Arlington, Massachusetts. He is known for some of America’s most iconic sculptures, including *Appeal to the Great Spirit* and *Paul Revere*. Dallin’s work brings beauty and a sense of history to public spaces in Boston and many other cities throughout the nation. He also sculpted the statue of the angel Moroni atop the Salt Lake City Temple and which serves as the pattern for similar statues atop most other LDS temples.

12. Florence Cope, “History of John B. Fairbanks, Condensation by Florence Cope of a History by Florence Gifford Fairbanks,” 5, Springville Museum of Art.

to put them to good and legitimate use." Suggesting further the need for well-trained artists within the Church, Hafen continued:

Sometimes I feel like reproving myself for not taking some active step of some kind to further my interest in art education. What are we going to do, brother Cannon, when one beautiful Temple in Salt Lake City is ready to receive inside decorations? Who is there amongst all our people capable to do . . . justice to art work that should be executed therein? I must confess that it is impossible for me to see any other of more consistent course to pursue in this matter than to give two or three young men who possess talent in this direction a chance to develop in the same way Bro Pratt suggested in our conversation with you.¹³

Then, unbeknown to Fairbanks at the time, Hafen recommended that Fairbanks be included in the Paris study mission:

I wish to introduce to your notice and consideration Bro. J. B. Fairbanks of Payson: who is also earnestly devoted to art. He is not as well known as a disciple of the brush yet, having only followed the calling since he returned from his mission a few years ago but he is talented earnest and industrious; and above all a devoted servant to the cause of God. Why I bring him to your notice, is, if I should be one of the honored ones selected to enjoy the privileges of an education and Bro Fairbanks would be barred out, I should look upon it as a calamity. The bonds of brotherly love are such, and our aims and desires are so closely connected that I would rather share one year with him and divide it between us, so that each could have a six month chance than to leave him home behind. . . . However, I don't wish to dictate in this matter. I know that God will inspire you brethren to do that which will be for the best of all.¹⁴

Shortly after completing this letter to President Cannon, Hafen approached Fairbanks and exclaimed excitedly, "I wanted to break it gently. . . . But it is too good, I must tell you now. My prospects for going to France have never been better." Fairbanks congratulated his friend whole-heartedly, but, while doing so, his "heart sank," for he had hoped to accompany him. Noting the disappointment underlying his friend's enthusiasm, Hafen proclaimed, "But you are going with me." Fairbanks later reported, "This news was almost too much for me."¹⁵

As Church Apostle Heber J. Grant along with First Presidency Counselors George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith discussed the possibility of

13. John Hafen to George Q. Cannon, March 25, 1890, John Hafen Collection, Perry Special Collections.

14. Hafen to Cannon, March 25, 1890.

15. Typescript copy of letter from John Fairbanks to Joseph F. Smith, no date, in Florence Fairbanks, "The Life of John B. Fairbanks," 65, Perry Special Collections, and in the Springville Museum of Art.

an art mission, they requested that the three men develop an approximate budget.¹⁶ In preparation for this task, the artists found a place of solitude on Ensign Peak, where they “knelt in humble supplication to the Lord that if our plan were right, it might be approved. We promised that we would do all in our power to further art in Utah if we had such an opportunity.”¹⁷ In a letter to George Q. Cannon, Hafén later admitted, “I tried to approach this question to my brethren in a way that was calculated not to inspire my hope in them, as per your instructions, but, my dear brother, these young men/your humble servant included/have united their faith and prayers on the subject and have received a testimony of what is coming.”¹⁸ Thus, they were not surprised when they learned the Church would support their trip to Paris.

Apostles Anthon H. Lund and Heber J. Grant, along with Seymour B. Young of the First Council of the Seventy, set apart Fairbanks, Hafén, and Pratt as official missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on June 3, 1890.¹⁹ The Church leaders counseled them to avoid places “where the spirit of God is not. . . . H. J. Grant, said Try to lodge in the best houses. No one can have the Holy Ghost as wel(l) without keeping the word of wisdom as those who keepe (*sic*) it. . . . Leave other peoples religion alone. . . . See every thing on earth that you can.”²⁰ The artists then had three weeks to prepare for an experience that would not only enhance the quality of their painting, but would also introduce them to impressionism and

16. Fairbanks, Pratt, and Hafén concluded that the combined cost would be \$1,800 for one year. Additionally, Hafén needed \$360 to support his family. The total cost was \$2,160.

17. Fairbanks to Smith, no date.

18. John Hafén to George Q. Cannon, April 25, 1890, Hafén Collection.

19. At this time, an official French mission did not exist. In 1844, Almon Babbitt had been charged with inaugurating Mormon missionary work in France, but he never served in France. By 1847, a plea for elders to volunteer as missionaries in France was cited in the *Millennial Star* in England. Shortly thereafter, leaders at a general conference in the British Mission called William Howell to serve as a missionary in France. Due to political turmoil and the outlawing of all Protestant sects, the mission closed in 1864. Thus, in addition to his responsibilities as a missionary, Lorus Pratt was assigned to preside over the French mission in 1890. The French mission was reopened, with headquarters in Paris, on October 15, 1912. Gary Ray Chard, “The History of the French Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (master’s thesis, Utah State University, 1965); *Journal History of the Church*, July 12, 1890 (chronology of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), Church History Library.

20. John B. Fairbanks, *Diary of John B. Fairbanks*, June 1890, typescript, p. 2, John B. Fairbanks Collection, Church History Library. Heber J. Grant was an Apostle at this time. Editorial corrections appear in the typescript.

enable them to encourage a further appreciation for the aesthetic among Church members and Utah citizens.²¹

On Monday, June 23, 1890, Fairbanks arose at dawn to make final preparations for his journey. By 6:00 a.m. he had kissed tenderly his three youngest children while they slept, and bid his beloved companion of thirteen years farewell. In his journal he recorded that Lillie "was very much affected by the parting" but in practicality acknowledged that "part we must."²² The four oldest children then accompanied their father to the depot. Fairbanks recalled, "I bid them good bye got on the train leaving the darlings standing on the platform with sorrowful faces and tears standing in their eyes."²³ By noon, Fairbanks, Hafen, and Pratt had boarded an eastbound train. The tears in Hafen's eyes reflected the sober mood of the small group. Yet despite the sadness and trepidation they felt, the art missionaries recognized that their sacrifices would ultimately benefit the Church, their families, and the Utah community.²⁴

The art missionaries visited art galleries in New York, spent eleven days crossing the Atlantic, visited more galleries in Liverpool, and finally arrived in Paris on July 24, 1890.²⁵ The following day they met with Cyrus Dallin. Mesmerized by his surroundings, Fairbanks reported to his wife, "Paris is art on every side."²⁶

Académie Julian

During their second day in Paris, Fairbanks and his colleagues traveled to the Académie Julian to become acquainted with the professors and students. As they arrived at the school, they were surprised by its unkempt appearance. Hafen recalled:

Leaving those grand boulevards we entered Rue St. Denis, a narrow street. With quick steps we pass grocery shops, shoe, drug, dry goods, vegetable and every other kind of shops that modern Shylock²⁷ has ever thought

21. Fairbanks, Journal, June 3, 1890.

22. John B. Fairbanks, Diaries, 1877–1914, June 24, 1890, Church History Library.

23. Fairbanks, Diaries, 1877–1914, June 24, 1890.

24. John B. Fairbanks to Lillie Fairbanks, July 27, 1890, Springville Museum of Art.

25. John B. Fairbanks, Diaries, 1877–1914, June 24 to July 24, 1890, Church History Library.

26. John Fairbanks to Lillie Fairbanks, July 27, 1890, Springville Museum of Art.

27. Shylock is a character in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*, written around 1597. Many historians and critics are intrigued by Shylock because of his Jewish faith and the role he plays in *The Merchant of Venice*, where he is depicted as

of; expecting every moment to behold the magnificent academy building my fancy had pictured. When, all at once, here we are! Yes, we were here in a narrow court or yard of a feather cleaning and pillow factory; a few packing boxes and bales of feathers lying about. In front of us, on a two-story, rickety old building was the sign, sure enough, Academie Julia, [sic] Peinture.²⁸

Although unimpressive in its appearance, the school cultivated skills of a superior quality in its students. Founded by Italian bookshop assistant Rodolphe Julian (1839–1907) in 1868, the institution thrived and expanded continually. With some English-speaking professors, the academy welcomed many Americans, such as Robert Henri, who attended beginning in 1888 and who would later train Minerva Teichert. By 1890, Julian had organized nine different *ateliers*, workshops, five for men and four for women.²⁹ Beginning students drew from plaster casts, but later moved to the life-room, where they sketched from nude models.³⁰ Students received evaluation from professors on Wednesdays and Saturdays; giving specific criticism was considered a better teaching method than lectures.³¹ Fairbanks was under master artists Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant, Jean-Paul Laurence, and Jules Lefebvre.³² The emphasis on figure drawing was typical of academic art schools of this time period; it was believed that drawing had to be mastered before artists attempted to paint. Therefore, students spent long hours in the classroom, often working on the same drawing for three to four weeks.³³ This endeavor served the Utah artists well, since they needed to develop basic drawing skills.³⁴ Yet despite the traditional emphasis on academic figure studies, many Julian students, such as Henri Matisse, who also attended in 1891, later embraced radical techniques.³⁵

a greedy and merciless moneylender. He is one of the more problematic of Shakespeare's characters for modern readers because of the way in which he is depicted as the villain of the piece.

28. John Hafen, "An Art Student in Paris," *The Contributor* 75 (1893–94): 486.

29. Gabriel P. Weisberg and Jane R. Becker, eds., *Overcoming All Obstacles: The Women of the Académie Julian* (New York: Dahesh Museum and Rutgers University Press, 1999), 16.

30. John Milner, *Studios of Paris: The Capital of Art in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 13.

31. Catherine Fehrer, "New Light on the Académie Julian and Its Founder, Rodolphe Julian," *Gazette de Beaux Arts* (1984): 208.

32. *Road to Zion: France, Part 2*, with hostess Aline Conti, available at <http://byutv.org/watch/c845775f-7b60-434f-a1fe-b1a715ofbb6d>.

33. Gibbs, *Harvesting the Light*, 21.

34. Fehrer, "New Light on the Académie Julian," 213.

35. Wiesberg and Becker, *Overcoming All Obstacles*, 5.

Becoming an Art Student

When Fairbanks began his training at the Académie Julian, he became increasingly aware of his weaknesses as an artist. Nonetheless, he hoped that if he utilized his time, he could develop proficient skills within one year.³⁶ In order to achieve this goal, he developed an intense schedule. Fairbanks arose at 5:30 a.m., and, after getting ready for the day, devoted thirty minutes to the study of anatomy or French. Upon arriving at school, he would sketch for several hours. During the lunch break he continued his study of anatomy, followed by another four hours of sketching. He would then go home to complete some chores before attending night classes for three hours. Following these classes, he would return home and go to bed. Just one month after arriving in Paris, Fairbanks explained, "I can see the hand of the Lord in opening the way for me all the way through and I trust that now I am here he will not leave me to myself but that he will help me in my studies."³⁷

The art missionaries diligently kept themselves away from the temptations of Paris and sought to have the spirit of God with them, as would all LDS missionaries, but they understood that their mission was different from a proselytizing mission. On February 2, 1891, John wrote to Lillie:

You ask if we preach the gospel to the students, No, that is not our mission we do not bother them about religion because most of them are not of a religious turn of mind besides we want them to become acquainted with us as men first. We have however lent the Book of Mormon to one young man, I think a great deal of him and he seems to think just as much of us. There are a few very fine men in the school but they are not very numerous. If they were anxious to know of our doctrines we would tell them, but they don't seem to care and we don't want to cast our pearls before swine. Our mission is to get acquainted with art as much as we possibly can, and I am pleased to say now we are looked upon as being among the great draftsman of the school.³⁸

The Concours

The highest art honor available at the time was to be included in the Paris Salon, the annual government-sponsored art exhibit, but the selection

36. John Fairbanks to Lillie Fairbanks, August 18, 1890, Springville Museum of Art.

37. John B. Fairbanks to Lillie Fairbanks, August 24, 1890, Springville Museum of Art.

38. John B. Fairbanks to Lillie Fairbanks, February 2, 1891, Springville Museum of Art.

committee was very demanding.³⁹ In an effort to prepare his students for the difficulties of the competition, Rodolphe Julian had them compete against each other in an in-house weekly *concours*, a contest, for the best work as chosen by the masters. At the end of the month, they judged each of these pictures; the best one received a cash prize.

In April 1891, Fairbanks faced the most difficult period of his mission, as students at the Académie were submitting their works to be considered for display in the concours or in the Salon, held in early summer.⁴⁰ Although he became determined for one of his pictures to be chosen, the judges rejected them. Despite his attempts to maintain a positive attitude, Fairbanks's letters sometimes reflect his discouragement. Yet he consistently followed such comments with declarations of determination and expressions of faith.

Extended Mission

The art missionaries originally planned to study at the Académie Julian for one year; they later received permission from George Q. Cannon to remain longer, although Hafen left after the first year due to financial difficulty at home. Having experienced feelings of failure in the spring, Fairbanks believed it was essential for him to pursue his studies for an additional year. Lillie's strength of character is reflected by her acceptance of this announcement without complaint: "John I want you to stay until you are satisfied[;] if it requires 2 years, all right."⁴¹

During the summer of 1891, Fairbanks spent his time in the small village of Chilleurs under the tutelage of Adolph Schultz.⁴² While there, he drew from dawn to dusk. By sketching and painting in the countryside,

39. Ross King, *The Judgment of Paris: The Revolutionary Decade That Gave the World Impressionism* (New York: Walker, 2006), 17.

40. John B. Fairbanks to Lillie Fairbanks, April 18, 1891, Springville Museum of Art. "The professors were chosen not only for their ability to teach, but also for the influence they might be able to exert on their students' behalf. Julian himself was notorious for his efforts to assure that his students' work would be shown in the Salon." Catherine Fehrer, "Women at the Académie Julian in Paris," *The Burlington Magazine* 136 (November 1994): 754.

41. Lillie Fairbanks to John B. Fairbanks, May 20, 1891, Springville Museum of Art.

42. John B. Fairbanks to Lillie Fairbanks, June 14, 1891, Springville Museum of Art: "My Dear Wife, Sunday is here again and I very much welcome this 'Beautiful day of rest,' and I feel that my two weeks here has been profitably spent, when at Auvers for two weeks I made about 4 sketches I think I have made in two weeks here about 8 finished sketches and about as many that are not finished. I have about made up my mind to stay here three or four months. My friend gives me many

he developed additional skills and his letters became more relaxed. By the end of the summer, he had created over two hundred sketches or paintings. He explained, "The idea that we have of art at home is ridiculous it is a study of a life time and nothing less. I find that I have come here to begin the study of art, and not to finish it. I do not expect to finish my study of art on this earth."⁴³ Additional study and perspective enabled him to redefine what it meant to be an artist.

Fairbanks spent his second summer in France working under the personal direction of landscape artist Albert Gabriel Rigolot (1862–1932).⁴⁴ During this time, he maintained his rigorous work schedule. Observing Fairbanks painting in the rain, Rigolot declared, "Fairbanks all the time work, all the time work."⁴⁵

After completing a second year of training, the missionaries received a letter from George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith, encouraging them to begin thinking about artwork for the Salt Lake Temple, although they gave the artists the option of remaining in Paris longer if they felt their training was incomplete. Nonetheless, the letter ended with the following request: "We would like to get the benefit of the best artistic skill now in the Church in the decoration of this grand building."⁴⁶ Church leaders later sent "plans and dimentions [*sic*] for the temple decorations" so the artists could begin sketching.⁴⁷ Their thoughts turned in the direction of the temple murals, and by the end of 1892, two years following their arrival in Paris, each had arrived home. Fairbanks's last letter from Paris was written on July 27, 1892, and he traveled home in August.

Home in Utah

In January 1893, John Fairbanks, John Hafen, Lorus Pratt, Edwin Evans and Dan Weggeland began painting in the Salt Lake Temple.⁴⁸ Fairbanks later

suggestions that I proffit by." John B. Fairbanks to Lillie Fairbanks, August 23, 1891, Springville Museum of Art.

43. John B. Fairbanks to Lillie Fairbanks, September 3, 1891, Springville Museum of Art.

44. Rigolot enjoyed portraying riverscapes and landscapes and was admired for his naturalism.

45. Florence Fairbanks, "Life of John B. Fairbanks," 73.

46. Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith to J. W. Clawson, Lorus Pratt, John Fairbanks, Henry Evans, Herman Haag, April 18, 1892, Lorus Pratt Collection, Springville Museum of Art.

47. John Fairbanks to Lillie Fairbanks, May 23, 1892, Springville Museum of Art.

48. Since Hafen returned from the art mission a year earlier than the others, he likely started painting in the temple prior to Fairbanks's return. Fairbanks later

assisted with the murals in the Mesa Arizona Temple. In 1898, his wife Lillie fell down the stairs and died, leaving John with eleven children to care for. In 1900, he left his oldest son Leo and his daughter Nettie to care for the younger children while he traveled to South America. The Cluff Archeological Expedition had hired him to sketch and photograph the travels of the group, another experience he was told to consider a mission for the Church. During his two years in South America, he found time to make numerous sketches from which he later produced beautiful paintings. In 1917, Fairbanks



John B. Fairbanks and his son Avard, in Paris in 1914. Courtesy Florence Fairbanks Cope.

traveled to southern Utah to paint Bryce and Zion Canyons. While there, he met Florence Gifford. The two were married and had five children together.

Although Fairbanks's career as an artist never proved to be lucrative and many of his paintings have been forgotten, he had an impact on the development of art education in Utah. He helped organize the Society of Utah Artists and served as a charter member of the Utah Art Institute. Fairbanks and others also established the art department at Brigham Young Academy. He worked as the art supervisor in Ogden's public school system and taught art at the LDS College in Salt Lake. Throughout his life, Fairbanks continued to work as an artist and encouraged his children, especially his sons J. Leo and Avard, to pursue their artistic talents. He eventually took his youngest son from his first marriage, Avard, to study in New York City, and in 1914 they traveled to Paris, where John studied privately while his young son attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

Painted replacement murals in the St. George Temple and assisted in the restoration of damaged sections in the Salt Lake Temple.

Fairbanks continued to paint and assisted J. Leo and Avard in the creation of the Mormon display for the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He passed away in 1940, at the age of eighty-five.

The Letters

The following letters were selected from the collection for their content. The first, dated October 12, 1890, contains Fairbanks's reaction to news of President Woodruff's Manifesto and describes the Académie Julian and the program of study. On October 26, 1890, Fairbanks expressed his dedication to his studies and summarized the many opportunities for the French to study art. On November 9, 1890, he further expounded on the end of polygamy and depicted some street entertainment in Paris. On November 16, 1890, he described his hope that his children will have firm goals in their lives, and his discomfort that someone donated money to his family. Then, skipping ahead several months, on May 24, 1891, he explained to Lillie why he decided to extend his studies in Paris, and told her that he had advanced from drawing to painting. One year later, May 11, 1892, a few weeks before returning to Utah, John described his work with Rigolot and told Lillie he was thinking about plans for the Salt Lake Temple murals but hoped to remain in France until he felt ready to leave.

~~Strikeouts~~ indicate words crossed out by Fairbanks. <Angle brackets> indicate words written above a line. Editorial corrections are enclosed in [square brackets]. Original spelling and punctuation have been retained. Photocopies of all of the following letters may be found at the Springville Museum of Art.

Rachel Cope (rachel_cope@byu.edu) is Assistant Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. She received her PhD in American History from Syracuse University, where she was awarded the Outstanding Dissertation Prize and the 2009 Doctoral Prize for exemplifying excellence in scholarship and research. Rachel was the recipient of dissertation fellowships from the history department and the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University; in addition, she was a research fellow at Haverford College and the Massachusetts Historical Society, as well as the BYU Studies Research Editorial Fellow from 2009 to 2010. Her research interests include conversion, revivalism, missiology, and women's religious history. She is the great-granddaughter of John B. Fairbanks and thanks her family for help with this article, especially her grandmother Florence Fairbanks Cope.

John B. Fairbanks's Letters to Lillie Fairbanks

8 Rue Boissonade

Paris, France

Oct 12 1890

My Dear Wife & Children

Sunday is here again but no letter from home this week I am anxiously looking for one letter however, I am pleased to say I am well. My ankle is nearly well again.⁴⁹ I scarcely know what to write about but I can probably find enough if the boys will only keep still and let me think. We are all writing and talking. We are all quiett now so I will begin. We read an account in a paper last week of Prest Woodruff's proclamation relative to polygamy.⁵⁰ We were some what surprised but our faith is not at all shaken. I believe that as God designs to leave the nation without cause that is the only way it could be done. Polygamy was an excuse and the only one that they had for persecuting Gods people now that it is removed if they still continue there is no excuse at all I must say though that there is a kind of regrett that I had not entered into that principle before ~~still I do not~~ the privilege was denighed. Still I do not feel condemned. I think it will be for a little season and then more will be revealed on the subject, as was promised when the revelation was given. I think we have done all that we could under the circumstances. We have been listening for a while to Bro Evans tell about visiting the places in London where Jack the Ripper committed his depredations.⁵¹ He committed 10 murders in a very short time But recently there has been nothing heard of him.⁵² In one of the places a policeman visited the exact spot every 15 min on his rounds but this is uninteresting to you. So I will switch off onto something else. I will write some thing about our school it may be interesting to you and the children. It is situated on Rue Sant Denis

49. Fairbanks was born with a crippled left foot; while serving a mission in the southern states, he experienced great pain because of this ailment. On November 20, 1881, he recorded the following in his journal: "This morning ankle is much better than it was yesterday morning. We went into the woods to have prayer and to anoint my ankle for the purpose of having all deformities removed." Although he continued to walk with a limp throughout his life, much of the pain was alleviated. John Fairbanks, Journal, November 20, 1881, Church History Library.

50. The Manifesto, which formally ended plural marriage, was issued by Wilford Woodruff in September 1890.

51. Utah artist Edwin Evans (1860–1946) joined the art missionaries three months following their arrival.

52. A pseudonym given to an unidentified serial killer in the impoverished Whitechapel area of London, England. The majority of the murders attributed to Jack the Ripper took place in 1888; the last one occurred on February 13, 1891.

pronounced Sandanee we go through a gait way into a court that is a sort of square where a great many doors and windows open into from all sides and we see in front of us the sign Julian Academy in large letters on the wall we go up two flight of stairs and there enter the Academy. By the way I forgot to tell you that any one would not be struck with the beauty of the out side appearance of the building. A person never would stop and ask what place is that unless he was looking for a workshop of some sort. It consists of four large rooms, when we go there in the morning we see in one corner of the rooms a lot of easles and stools stacked up in the corners. A little later all of these easles and stool are on the floor, each man takes his position Monday morning which he keeps for a week. On the walls there are prize drawings and paintings the[y] are very fine. These are framed in very common frames or hung without frames. There are all manner of chariactures of those who have attended the school some of which are very funny some vulgar and some rediculous. At 8:15 the moddle [model] poses in the morning. There is nobody there to keep order the schollars are left entirely to themselves. There are a few Frenchmen who are always making a noise of some kind, singing, whistling, imitating cats, dogs, pigs or some thing else. There is hardly ten minutes of the day but what they are making some noise then when the time comes for the moddle to rest most of the schollars go smoke right in the room and there we have to stay in that smoke the rest of the day. During the rest some indulge in exercising with dumbbells some at looking at the prize drawings, some studying the skeleton some conversing while others are looking around the room at the different work being done, so as to gain some points if possible. I try to spend my rests profitably as I can. One after noon it was remarkably quiett and we all wondered what was the reason when to our surprise there was about one Frenchman in the room. Most of the men in our room are Americans. There are more Americans and Englishmen in ~~our room~~ the school than French men. The professor comes only twice a week, Wednesdays and Saturdays and then he only criticises the work we have done. Were it not for the instruction we get from the advanced scholars and what we can pick up by looking around we would not gain much by going to school. But as it is we can get what we want from those who have studied for years. We do not have classes but we each take our position and do the best we can and continue so doing. It is the influence of art and the good painters who attend the school that makes it what it is. I am well pleased with the progress I am making allthough it is slow. I now feel that I have got the worth of my money.

The Americans are usually harder workers than the French in fact always I may say I suppose one reason is the[y] come here and desire to make the best of their time while they are here but the French man is at home and can

spend a day or so at school and a day or two away. Oh yes I had forgotten to tell you that the walls of the school rooms are nicely decorated with the cleanings of the pallet. That is when a mans pallett board gets too full of old paint, they scrape them off and doff it on the wall—or plaster it on rather.⁵³ So you may judge partly how it looks, if you remember how the door in the old shop <upstairs> at your fathers looked you can probably get a better idea. In fact taking the Julian School as a whole it is not a desirable place to go to only for the purpose of learning and yet it is the best or one of the best schools of art in the world so considered I believe. It is getting time for me to get ready for school so I will close asking Gods blessing upon you all that you may have a good time during my absence is the desire of your loving and ever true husband.

J. B. Fairbanks.



8 Rue Boissonade

Paris, France

October 26, 1890

My Dear Wife

I am again without a letter to answer. I hope there is nothing the matter that has prevented you writing. We are having good health. The weather is getting a little cold here now, and the nights are getting longer. I understand that the weather does not get very cold here in winter but is wet. I dread winter mor on your account than on my own. I hope you will be very carefull of yourself and the children this winter. Leo is getting large enough so that he can do the outside work or most of it and of cours he will be glad to do it and save you that bother. Good boys are always[s] anxious to do all they can for their mothers and Leo is one of the good boys of course Nettie too of course is anxious to help you with house work and the children. I do not remember of anything of importance happening last week but may before I get through. My drawing last week our Professor said was very good especiall the head. Quite a number of the students complimented me on it that is they told me it was by far the best that they had seen me do. Of course this made me feel well. But I see I have to do a very, very great deal to learn yet. I feel to acknowledge the hand of the Lord in my success thus far and I pray for his assistance in future. I find it an advantage to rest a little occasionally. In order to do this I paint or try to a little which is a benefit

53. One piece of a post filled with paint scrapings is preserved and can be seen in the video *Road to Zion: France, Part 2*.

in that direction I want to get all the information I can in every direction while here therefore I waist but little if any time I try hard not to waist any but sometimes I presume I miss it. I feel dreadfully awkward in painting but by the time next fawl arrives I hope to be a little more familiar with colors and be able to sling them with more ease and decision.

Friday one of our professors Benjamin Constant came to the school early and criticized our drawings his reason for coming early was that he was getting ready to go to America he was to leave on Saturday. So it will not be long untill America will be visited by one of the great American French artists.⁵⁴ In the afternoon we visited the Beaux Arts (boz Arts). This is a government school of art in which any one can attend who can pass an examination in drawing architecture, history, etc free and every year or every four years I do not now know which any one of the students can compete for a prize and the one who gets the prize has the privilege of going to Italy for 4 years with all expences paid by the government. There is one for architects one for painters and one for sculpters. ~~So you~~ In Paris there are a number of free <night> schools for French men or boys where drawing is taught so there is no wonder that the French are far ahead in art. If a young man has talent there is plenty of opportunity for him no matter how poor he may be. Besides these oportunities they can go and copy some of the very best paintings in the world in the art galleries. I want to do some of that after a while when I get farther along in my drawing.⁵⁵

I often see you all in my minds eye and I wish I could see you all in reality. I often think of the pleasant times we have all had and contemplate upon the good times we will all have when I return I want to get all the information I can so I will have something to tell you all and I often think what a fine thing it would be to get a magic lantern with views to illustrate my travels but this is expensive but there are views that I can get and will before I return if possible. But what I am seeking for now is knowledge.

Monday 27 Mr. Checksler & Bro. Clawson both complimented me on the drawing I started this morning they said I was making rapid progress in the right direction.⁵⁶ I may be on the road but a long ways from the end. But with Gods assistance I will some day be an artist. Tell the children not to forget pa in their prayers. Kiss them all for me god Bless you all remember

54. Jean Joseph Benjamin-Constant (1845–1902), was “almost the first French painter of any repute to visit America in a professional capacity.” “Benjamin-Constant Dead,” *New York Times*, May 27, 1902.

55. Fairbanks did later paint copies of famous works in Paris.

56. John Clawson joined the art missionaries in fall 1890.

me to your friends. Bros Hafen and Gard send their kind regard to you all from your ever loving Husband and father JBF all write.



8 Rue Boissonade

Paris France

Nov. 9/[18]90

My Dear Wife

Your letter of the [9/?] containing Geo Q's & Pres Woodruff's discourses came to hand a few days since and was read with interest although the letter was short it was so much better than to get none. It does me lots of good to heare that all are well at home and it does me so much more good to hear how things are going and what the children and you are doing and what the little folks have to say. My ankle is O.K. again except a little week. I do not think I will study too hard. We have quite a variety then occasionally we go to some part of Paris where we have not been before which relieves our minds from our studies. All that I am afraid of is that I will not study hard enough to get all I want in the time that I will be permitted to stay here. There is so much to learn and so little time to learn it in that it some times looks discouraging, still I can see I am improving some in my drawing. In fact when I consider where I was when I started for school then *consider* compaer my position or the knowledge that I now have with that I then had. I feel that the Lord has blessed me.

You asked me what I thought about the manifesto. Well Lillie these are and have been my ideas from the first I heard of it God has designed the destruction of the wicked but he can not destroy them if they are not worthy of destruction, or in other words they must become thoroughly ripe for destruction before the judgments will be poured out upon them. They have passed laws against one of Gods laws or the practice <of certain principles> the Lord could have destroyed them before they did this if he had wanted to or he could have hindered them in their passing the bill but God does not work in that way he allows people to exercise their franchise or rather their agency as he did Adam in the garden of Eaden but they must suffer the consequences there off. For years our nation has said Polygamy is the only thing that we have against the Mormons and persecution has been carried on under that cloak they supposed that the Mormons would not give it up that is the devil has put these things into their heart ~~so to do~~. Now the Lord is going to prove to the whole world that polygamy is not the thing at all but because they are Gods his people thus they will be their own judges and bring condemnation upon their own heads. Our Elders for years have told the people that it is was not polygamy that the nation was kicking against

but the church of God and now it will be proven. I am sorry it has become necessary in fact I feel somewhat condemned—and this may be another reason for the suspension that is because the Lords people have not done what they might have done in that direction when they did have a chance. Still we have tried and tried hard yet I do not feel entirely justified but God is mercifull and when we have suffered sufficient for our neglect we will no doubt have ~~have~~ a chance and if we do not then we have done our share. Don't let the matter bother you Lillie all will be well, Both Bro Cannon and President Woodruff expressed my feelings in that regard.⁵⁷ I think their discourses were very good and to the point. If the Lord does not require it of us Lillie then we are justified and will get the same reward as if we had entered that principle. Well so much for that. Now for some thing else.

The other day we were walking around at noon and we saw a pipe worth 8000 franks or \$130. That is quite a sum of money to be worse than thrown away it was carved and ornamented in the finest style, we walked away father and heard some music, we stopped in side of a court (that is a place some thing like this)⁵⁸ the enterance is generally a gate way) to see what it was and there we saw a man with a fiddle and one with a cornett and

57. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, various congressional acts were passed against the practice of polygamy. This resulted in the disincorporation of the Church, fines, and imprisonments. In May 1890, the Supreme Court ruled in *The Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. United States* to uphold the Edmunds-Tucker Act, which had been passed in 1887 to enforce the 1862 Morrill Act, which disincorporated the Church and escheated its property. Chief Justice Melville Fuller said that Congress had the power to criminalize polygamy, but "it is not authorized under the cover of that power to seize and confiscate the property of persons, individuals, or corporations, without office found, because they may have been guilty of criminal practices." The ruling in *Late Corporation* directed federal escheat of substantially all the property of the legally disincorporated LDS Church, which was estimated at \$3 million. Following the decision, the U.S. Attorney for Utah Territory escheated \$381,812 in assets. A looming question formed in the minds of Church leaders: would the temple be escheated? On September 25, 1890, Wilford Woodruff recorded the following in his journal: "I have arived at a point in the History of my life as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints whare I am under the necessity of acting for the Temporal Salvation of the Church. The United State Governmet has taken a Stand & passed Laws to destroy the Latter day Saints upon the Subjet of poligamy or Patriarchal order of Marriage. And after Praying to the Lord & feeling inspired by his spirit I have issued the following Proclamation which is sustained by My councillors and the 12 Apostles." The Manifesto would follow. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-84), vol. 9, September 25, 1890.

58. Here Fairbanks drew an aerial view of a courtyard.

a little girl about the size of Ervon playing a base viole she played it nicely too. These people play in these courts and then the people throw coppers & then I also saw a man with three dogs and a monkey a drum and fife he would play a sort of a tune on the fife with one hand, and drum with the other and one of the dogs would stand up and act the soldier, then he would throw some small simbles & the monkey that was sitting on <one of> the dogs backs and the monkey would play the symballs he would then give him some kind of an instrument that the monkey would turn around he would play that. Ask the children how they would like to see such things I guess baby and Ortho would like to see them any way. I found to day a place where I can get stereo[s]copic views for 80 cents per day and another for 60 so I think I will get some we visited a street where there were hundreds of photos nearly every store had them. There are [photographs of] nude women in all most all positions in the windows as well as views of Paris.



8 Rue Boissonade
Paris, France
Nov 16 1890

My Dear Wife,

Sunday has come again and with it my time for writing. We are all in the enjoyment of health and trust you are all the same. The time is passing very rapidly a way 5 months will soon have passed away since I left my dear home and my loving wife and children to sojourn for a time among strangers. The time flies so rapidly that I sometimes fear that I will not be able to accomplish what I want in one year, but I will strive for it.⁵⁹ Last week I consider that I made two of as good or the best drawings I have made yet. I hope and trust that I may continue ~~so to do~~ <to improve> and with the help of the Lord I feel that I will. I know he has helped me in the past and that gives me considerable consolation and a satisfaction that if I do right and strive to keep his commandments he will help me in future. Although I can see and feel that I am improving and the fellows tell me I am making great progress yet I still see an awfull mountain before me. How I do appreciate this great privilege It is really wonderfull and miraculous when I think of it. How plainly Lillie do we see the answer of my continuous prayers for this opportunity. You remember how I used to pray for it every morning and evening do you not? Well I am here, now why should I doubt. My blessing said I should be able to excel as an artist.

59. Fairbanks would remain in Paris an additional year.

Is not God able to bless me so that I may excell as well as he opened the way for me to come here? I know he can and my constant prayer is that I may be able to do so <he will.> I would like to have you remind the children of these facts so that when they want to do some good thing or accomplish some great thing work that they must ask God constantly for his aid and assistance, the same as their pa and ma has done. But they must not stop there but make every effort that they can besides I like the way Leo has expressed himself very much and I only hope he will keep his object in view and constantly strive with that object in view.⁶⁰ I care not what a boy wants to be if it is a legitimate profession. I like to see him work with that object constantly before ~~them~~ him, then there is some hope of his becoming something. The person who has no aim in life is like a man who builds a house without a plan he lays a foundation without knowing what he wants and at the suggestion of a friend changes it and again changes it and after he begins to build he does not know where he wants his doors nor windows but he puts them in where they seem the handiest when his house is finished the windows and doors ar out of place entirely his house is very unhandy and it is also an awkward shape. There is nothing about it to be desirable. So with life, a boy starts and at the suggestion of a friend he changes his occupation time is constantly passing, he sees an opening where he thinks he can better his situation and is constantly changing till life is half spent and nothing accomplished. Still his building has constantly been going on he has put in a few day at this a year or two at that and a month or so at some other thing all in the wrong places. When life is finished there is nothing that any one would admire no one would feel like following his course in life in order to become a usefull man in society. His life has been a failure so to speak the same as the mans house I hope every one of my sons will have an aim in life and work to it, my daughters too.

We had a circus in school last week two young men came in dressed in circus attire. They were the limberest men I ever saw. One of them sit on his own head he looked something like this⁶¹ the other put his legs over his shoulders and turned around he looked something like this⁶² and many other performances they went through that were wonderful I payed about 2¢ to see it. Well I presume I must close for this time asking God's blessings

60. John B. Fairbanks to J. Leo Fairbanks, February 2, 1891, Springville Museum of Art: "I hope you will do your best and get some more of your work in besides getting the prize. Now if you want to do this I will tell you how pray to the Lord and ask him to help you and then go to work and and keep drawing whenever you can."

61. Here John drew an acrobat with his feet above his head.

62. Here John drew another acrobat.

upon you all kiss the children for me and tell me how the children like to hear from me. Give my kind regards to all who enquire about me and tell me who they are tell me how things are going how you get along what the children say and all you can think of loving ever your true husband, John.

Monday 17 I received your welcome letter containing a letter from Ervon Roy and Ortho. Those little letters pleased me very very much. I see Ervon tryed his best to write and it was very good too. Roys letter looked like he had been plowing and the furrows were first rate I could see some forms of letters in his too Ortho's looks like he was not going to be outdone by either of his brothers if he could help it. Their little scribbling pleased me very much and I hope they will write again.

I am pleased to hear how willing Leo is to go out and work to make something, for every little will help and he will never regret what he does for his Mama. Your letter too me was read with much pleasure although I was sorry to hear of you having the blews just about that time I fealt rather sorrowfull and I prayed to God with all my heart to bless you all and comfort you for I I fealt as though you needed it, don't forget that in God you will always find a comfoter I felt very very strange when I read of you receiving a donation it made me feel queer all over. I don't like the idea at all but I presume I will have to let it go now.⁶³ Well I am glad that you are comfortably situated now, and feel comfortable. The \$7.00 per mo. may do more good than \$9.00 from someone who have children.

63. In a letter dated December 7, 1890, Lillie responded, "The answer to your favor of Nov 15. You speak of being sorry of me receiving a donation. O tell you I don't feel sorry about it, for if a father would see his child in want of it, and he had plenty and would not take her a little, I think he would be a heartless being, I could not get it. It was not your fault nor mine. I had the money and the man engaged to haul it but it could not be got. I was nearly out of wood, Pat said I could get a stick of wood or too at his house, and he would get the wood as soon as he could. My folks new my condition, your folks new my condition. Henry and Frank knew I wanted them to haul. But they were busy they never came to find out or see if I wanted, or they did not care, and when Pa was so kind I could not help but thank them. I told Roy I would pay them back, he said this is a gift from Father. I was not in want of the potatoes but he would not take them back, they thought I would like some. Baby was sick at the time and the weather was cold. I could live on the donations from Pa, on such conditions. If I could have arranged I would have had it different. Everybody was scared for fear we would not be able to get any all winter. But we can get all the coal we want now. Pat brought a load of the day seaders. I got the boys chopping every night. When they came from school, more than half the load is outside, and stacked down. That large box with papers and packing, we emptied it, then put the potatoes in it, it holds quite a few. The apples are in another corner, covered all stacked in another corner." Lillie Fairbanks to John B. Fairbanks, Springville Art Museum.

I am glad that you can rent for you have company and all the room you want. Oh how do hope you will be carefull of yourself and the children. And that I may be successfull in my studies that I may become an artist in very deed.

I will answer your letter next Sunday it is now past half past eleven and I must go to bed. Kiss the children all for me. The boys all join in kind regards. May Gods blessings attend you all is my prayer.

Lovingly and truly, John

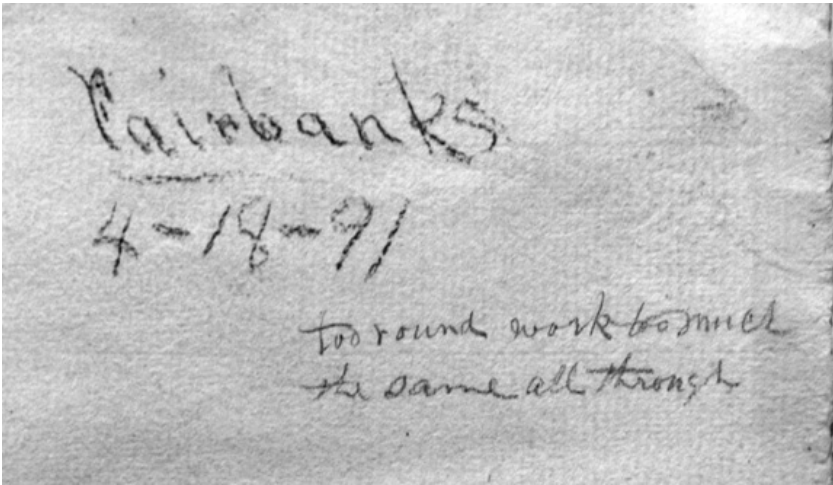


9 Rue Campagne Premiere
Paris, France
May 24, 1891

My Dear Wife

The time has again come for me to write to you but I have no letter to answer I hope that sickness is not the cause, but I may get one tomorrow, I will not mail this letter till tomorrow night. Well last knight we were at the club. There was an exhibition of pictures there was also a celebration of the aniversity of the organization of the club. There was quite a programme. I will send it to you. Mrs. Frank Leslie the manager of the Popular Monthly recited a piece (America) the American Counsel made a speach, Professor Bougureau one of the French masters in art made a speach. The rest of the Programme you will observe was of such a nature as would <if well> rendered <make> the entertainment very interesting. I am pleased to say that they were <very> well rendered Yes very very well rendered. There were I should judge over 200 American present, after the programme was ended there was a dance but there was such a crowd and so little room that I think the dancers did not enjoy themselves much. But if the rest of the people are like me it is a pleasure to hear Americans talk even. We have very few acquaintances among the ladies here, but there are quite a large number of good friends among the men so we feel quite at home in gatherings of that kind. We have some very warm friends but as yet we have not tried to converse much about religion although we have conversed a little with some. One of our friends has just left he called to see us befor he went and wished us all the success we might desire. He said we had been the moddles for the school this winter. He said many others had been induced to study harder through seeing our industry. He wanted us to call and see him some time in Boston.

My Dear Loving Wife your letter of the 10 and 11 came to hand today 25, I was very much pleased to hear that you are all well and on the improve. You loving letter shows that there is no love like that of a dear wife they share joy and sorrow in fact, are a part of ones self. My letter was written I



John B. Fairbanks, *Academic Figure Study of a Boy*, April 1891, charcoal, 24¼" x 17", details, Springville Museum of Art collection 2004.116. Fairbanks created this sketch while he studied at the Académie Julian in Paris. Beginning students drew from plaster casts but later moved to the life-room, where they sketched from models. A professor's criticism is written in the corner of the paper and is enlarged in the lower image. Thanks to Jeffrey D. Andersen for sharing this image.

presume as I felt at the time, but I have no reason to be discouraged I have been blessed I have improved. Bros. Pratt and Hafen have each been working at art many years. Bro. Evans is a gifted young man and especially in drawing I think. Still as you say I think I am not far behind the rest. But I have been promised success by the servants of God, and I shall do my best to make it. I will cling to the promis, and the Lord being my helper, will realize the promis blessing.

I am glad you got the pictures I did not draw the horse but the one he chose was much the best I see his taste for art is very very good. I hope he will make a good drawing. I was pleased to learn that he is hunting events for the Juvenile, I am always pleased to hear of the childrens good works it shows to me that there is an ambition to do some thing that is deserving of praise and to be some thing besides a common ordinary person that any one can be without effort. Encourage them all you can in works of that kind and you will soon see that you have around you a lot of sons and a daughter who will ever thank you for the training <and encouragement.> you have given them. I am pleased to hear how you are getting along do not worry or feel that you are going to suffer for want of things you need for the way is or will be opened in fact I may say is now by which we can <all> live while I am here. O I must tell you when I was working so hard to get a drawing on the wall two weeks before the time came I felt that I would not be able to get one there. I asked the Lord if it was his will that such might be the case, if I had succeeded I presume I would have gone home this summer but as it is I feel that it is the will of the Lord that I should stay untill I am better qualified for the work that will be expected of us when we return home, and although I felt rather bad at the time <when> this feeling came over me and <it> was very consoling

It is quite a tryal to stay another year or half year and be deprived of the dearest truest friends and companies. Still it would be too bad to return with my work only begun. My Dear Wife I hope you are reconciled to my staying although I know it will be a great tryal for you as well as me.

I am very much pleased with the Enterprise it seems to give all of the home news which is very interesting to me it saves you the trouble of writing the news, and you can write as you would talk those are the kind of letters I like. I was also pleased to hear that your garden is getting along so well. There has been radishes here I think three months cherries green peas and new potatoes one month there are straw berries now. Apples are not yet gone so they have fruit all the year.

I have begun to paint I have painted now two weeks this will be three. I tell you it is discouraging. I cant begin to satisfy myself. The professor told me when I began that I did not know how to paint, but he said I would learn.

Well I presume I will if I keep at it steady enough and am diligent which I will strive to be.

It seems that George Hancock must have made money since I left home, I saw in the enterprise some time ago that he had subscribed 5000 dollars to the start a bank and now he is spending money to fix a pleasure resort, I am glad if such is the case. Well I must bring my letter to a close. May God bless you and give you health and strength and cheer and comfort you. Give my love to all enquiring friends, ever your loving and true husband, kiss the children all for me.

J. B. Fairbanks



45 Rue Mazarine

Paris

May 11 [1892]

My Dear Wife & children

I am now in the country with the man I wanted to study under, I am very much delighted. I find him to be an excellent teacher, he takes so much interest in a person.

The price seems rather high \$30 per day, but I fell sure that I will make more than that in work that I will do and if I do I get my instructions free in reality. The country here is beautiful. We have whatever we want, hills, valleys, woods, streams, small lakees, plain cottages, and meadows, giving all the variety that a person wants.

One of the great modern French Artists sketched here most of the time during his life time ten years ago. I am told that this used be quite a retreat for artists, there being from 15 to 20 here every summer. On our way we passed some very beautiful country and an old chatteau or castle in ruins Mr. Rigolot said it was historic it is partly in ruins I want to visit it some Sunday I will take Sunday for it for then I have nothing particularly on hand. Mr. Rigolot is recently married, and has his young bride here. They act very sensible compared with another couple here, but although married so recently they had a sort of quarrel last night, after they had got over it he said that was characteristic of the French and I think it is. The other couple will be quarreling one minute, and the very next they will be hugging and kissing and in such a sickening way the lady has a dog (as most French ladies have <upon> which she bestows the rest of her kisses and caresses. I don't know but I should have said she bestows the rest upon her husband for I am quite sure the dog gets the most. French women are naturally very affectionate (and correspondingly the other way) and as children they say are two expensive. They substitute dogs, babies would only be babies a

few years and then they would have to have another, but a dog stay a dog always and is a pet all the time. I can say I don't admire these tast[es] in this regard at all, I would rather have one baby than all the dogs that could be found. With me there is no comparison no similarity, there is nothing that can take the place of the baby, and I am more than glad that I have a wife whos feelings are the same. We received a letter last week from John Hafen asking us to send in some sketches, for the temple deckorations one subject the Garden of Eaden the other the lone and dreary world, The one who sends in the best sketch will be given the contract to do the work with the privilege of inviting his brethren to help I've also received one a short time since from the first Presidency stating that they would like to have those of us who feel qualified to come home and work this fall and winter in the temple, ~~so you see they~~ but they do not want to interfear with our work out here, So I presume we will be allowed to stay till the time set in our minds is up. It seems quite evident at least that we will not be called home in a hurry. May God bless you all and preserve you in health and peace, is the prayer of your loving husband and father.

J. B. Fairbanks