

Sherman Garden Cooperative Apartments

A monthly publication for residents of Sherman Garden Apartments, 1856-66 Sherman Avenue, Evanston, IL

SEPTEMBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

GARDEN ROOTS



We at Sherman Garden Apartments are certainly surrounded by abundant flora, but what about our fauna (apart from the many squirrels and rabbits)? Have you ever asked yourself how we came to have animal sculptures in our exterior walls? Who designed them? Are they unique to Sherman Garden?

The answer is that they were designed by painter and sculptor Elizabeth Tuttle Holsman, the wife of Henry K. Holsman whose architectural firm built Sherman Garden Apartments along with numerous other complexes throughout Chicago. Cast in concrete, her animal designs were used in several of the residential buildings, while other artworks by her can still be seen elsewhere in this area as well as in out-of-state museums.

Born in 1873 in Brownsville, Nebraska, Holsman (then Elizabeth Tuttle) taught art at the University of Nebraska and in Missouri. In 1898 she came to Chicago and studied at the Art Institute. It was here in Chicago that she met her future husband Henry, who had come here from Iowa. As a painter, Holsman was part of the American Impressionist scene, painting landscapes depicting her roots on the prairie. Her watercolor *Still Waters* won a silver medal at the 2nd annual Northwestern Artists Exhibition in St. Paul in 1916 and has since prompted an American art historian to call her "an American Claude Monet." Her *Indian Encampment near Rushville, Nebraska* is listed in the Smithsonian's Inventory of American Paintings. Elizabeth Holsman appears in *Who Was Who in American Art*, the *Dictionary of American Sculptors*, *Women Artists in America*, and *An Encyclopedia of Women Artists of the American West*.

The obituary published in the *Evanston Review* on October 11, 1956, listed her former address as 1866 Sherman Avenue, while noting that she had been a resident in a local rest home for over two years.

So, who created the animal sculptures on our walls? An artist, a resident, one of our own.

(Some of this information and the photo of Mrs. Holsman was provided by Peter Holsman, grandson, who lives in Northbrook and is also an architect.)

