

Kent Works in Utah Museum

Will Ross

The Kent Collector Summer 1991

# THE ★ KENT COLLECTOR



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By  
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In addition to Kent's 1926 painting "Denis", at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, two additional works of his are located in Springville, Utah.

The Springville Museum of Art, Utah's oldest art museum, began in 1903 with the donation of a painting by American artist John Hafen to the Springville High School. The high school continued to purchase at least one painting a year to add to the museum's permanent collection, and by 1925 had become the largest high school art gallery in the United States. In 1947, it added a painting by Rockwell Kent.

"Polar Expedition", painted in 1944, was originally part of the Encyclopedia Britannica Collection of Contemporary American Paintings, from which the museum purchased it for \$1,000. The painting is reproduced in color as Plate 64 in the

Catalogue of the Encyclopedia Britannica Collection of Contemporary American Painting, published in 1945. The catalogue also contained a brief statement by Kent on the painting:

"Spring in northwest Greenland is the season for travel and exploration. The sea is still frozen and deeply covered with wind-packed snow. The sun has returned, and by the end of May is shining twenty-four hours a day. On fair days, and under good conditions, a trip of fifty to seventy-five miles, with dogs drawing a laden sled, is easily accomplished. North Greenland in spring, the country and its life, are an experience in happiness never to be forgotten."

In addition, Kent's wood engraving

with linoleum tint block "Northern Night", 1930, DBJ 53, is also part of the permanent collection. This print, one of 120, was given to the museum in 1948 as a gift.

In August 1968 Kent wrote the Director of the Springville High School Art Association regarding the association of the museum with the high school, a relationship that continued until 1975.

"Although few would dispute that the appreciation of painting, as well as of literature and others of the fine arts, should begin when we are young, it's unusual, if not unique in America that, as in Springville, a High School should come to play a leading part not only in the promotion of art in its community but as an art center of national prominence.

Springville High School has set an example, through the establishment of a Museum of Art, that American communities in general would do well to follow and that has won it national renown."

"Polar Expedition" is reproduced in color on a notecard available at the Museum. The address is Springville Museum of Art, 126 East 400 South, Springville, Utah 84663. Springville is located south of Provo, Utah on Interstate 15. ♦



*Polar Expedition*