

= Carl Eytel =

Carl Eytel ( September 12 , 1862 ? September 17 , 1925 ) was a German American artist who built his reputation for paintings and drawings of desert subjects in the American Southwest . Immigrating to the United States in 1885 , he eventually settled in Palm Springs , California in 1903 . With an extensive knowledge of the Sonoran Desert , Eytel traveled with author George Wharton James as he wrote the successful Wonders of the Colorado Desert , and contributed over 300 drawings to the 1908 work . While he enjoyed success as an artist , he lived as an ascetic and eventually died in poverty . Eytel 's most important work , Desert Near Palm Springs , hangs in the History Room of the California State Library .

= = Life = =

= = = Early life and immigration = = =

Carl Eytel was born as Karl Adolf Wilhelm Eytel in Maichingen , Böblingen to Tusnelda ( née Schmid ) and Friederick Hermann Eytel , a Lutheran minister in the Kingdom of Württemberg ( now the state of Baden @-@ Württemberg , near Stuttgart ) , Germany . As a boy , he became a ward of his grandfather when his father died . Eytel was well educated in the German gymnasium and became enamored of the American West while reading the works of Prussian natural science writer and explorer Alexander von Humboldt , which he found in the Stuttgart Royal Library . From 1880 to 1884 he studied forestry in Tübingen and then was drafted into the German Army . He first traveled to the United States in 1885 aboard the Suevia and worked as a ranch hand in Kansas . Later he worked at a slaughterhouse for 18 months to earn his living and to study cattle . In 1891 , he read an article about the Palm Springs area in the San Francisco Call and was " incited " to visit the California desert .

= = = Palm Springs = = =

Eytel returned to Germany to study art for 18 months ( 1897 ? 1898 ) at the Royal Art School Stuttgart and then re @-@ immigrated to the United States . Wanting to be a cowboy , he worked as a cowhand in the San Joaquin Valley and he eventually settled in Palm Springs in 1903 . Living in small cabins he built himself , Palm Springs remained his home . Eytel often walked on his travels , covering 400 miles in the Colorado Desert on foot . On one of his travels he was nearly lynched as a horse thief and in 1918 , during a trip to northern Arizona , he was threatened with lynching as a German spy .

= = Work = =

While living for the most part as a " desert rat " and starving artist , he both traveled alone throughout the American Southwest and accompanied author J. Smeaton Chase and painter Jimmy Swinnerton on their travels . Serving as George Wharton James ' guide to " every obvious and obscure location of importance " , he illustrated James ' two volume The Wonders of the Colorado Desert . The work was successful and received generally favorable reviews . The collaboration on the book lasted from 1903 to 1907 . Eytel 's illustrations were also used by James in his 1906 article " The Colorado Desert : As General Kearney Saw It " .

= = = Successes = = =

By 1908 Eytel was exhibiting works in Pasadena and enjoying the patronage of socialite Martha M. Newkirk . He was also planning to build a bungalow in Beaumont , California . And , in 1909 , his work was being exhibited in major art venues and the Kanst gallery in Los Angeles . Later , in 1911 ,

after traveling with Chase on horseback , he contributed 21 realistic line art drawings to Chase 's book , Cone @-@ bearing Trees of the California Mountains .

Besides his work in Wonders of the Colorado Desert and Cone @-@ bearing Trees , Eytel contributed ( both drawings and articles ) to the best periodicals , including the Los Angeles Times and , for nearly 14 years , the New Yorker Staats @-@ Zeitung . ( During his travels in the southwest he became friends with Los Angeles Times city editor Charles Lummis . ) A stone wall in the dining room of Dr. Welwood Murray 's early hotel was covered with an Eytel mural of Palm Canyon . His hundreds of drawings of native palms were his trademark and he became known as " The Artist of the Palms " . His work helped publicize early Palm Springs . In 1977 his works were selling for \$ 10 @,@ 000 and under .

= = = " Creative Brotherhood " = = =

Along with naturalist Edmund C. Jaeger , and authors Chase and Charles Francis Saunders , Eytel was a core member of what University of Arizona Professor Peter Wild called a " Creative Brotherhood " that lived in Palm Springs in the early 20th century . Other Brotherhood members included cartoonist and painter Swinnerton , author James , and photographers Fred Clatsworthy and Stephen H. Willard . The men lived near each other ( like Eytel , Jaeger built his own cabin ) , traveled together throughout the Southwest , helped with each other 's works , and exchanged photographs which appeared in their various books .

The Brotherhood lasted from 1915 when Jaeger , who was the teacher in the Palm Springs one @-@ room school house , met Eytel and Chase . It ended in 1923 when Chase died . ( In 1924 , after completing his studies at Occidental College in Los Angeles , Jaeger began a 30 @-@ year teaching career at Riverside Junior College in Riverside , California . ) Jaeger wrote the initial eulogy for Eytel upon his death and in 1948 , recalling his time with him , Jaeger said :

As an artist Eytel was largely self @-@ taught .... Not widely schooled , but widely read . Eytel possessed a knowledge not only of the Greek and Roman classics but of the best literature of England , America and his native Germany . I never knew Eytel to sleep indoors . Trying to inure himself to hardships in the belief it would toughen his constitution ....

Over the years it was Eytel who served as their " spiritual figurehead " . Even after Jaeger left to complete his studies and Chase married the wealthy Isabel White ( 1917 ) , the three , plus Saunders , often exchanged letters . Suffering from a " hacking and persistent cough " , Eytel remained in Palm Springs , impoverished , and Swinnerton would buy art supplies for him . Later Eytel became a recluse .

= = = Smoketree School = = =

Journalist Ann Japenga has characterized Eytel 's work as " Smoketree School " ? a school which is named after a favorite desert art subject , the smoketree . The school has origins with Alson S. Clark and Jack Frost , who were influenced by French impressionist Claude Monet . Other Smoketree artists include Carl Bray , Fred Chisnall , Maynard Dixon , Clyde Forsythe , Sam Hyde Harris , John Hilton , R. Brownell McGrew , Agnes Pelton , Hanson Puthuff and Swinnerton .

= = = Style and subjects = = =

Like many artists of the desert southwest , Eytel 's style was impressionistic . His subjects were varied and included the Mission San José de Tumacácori , in the Tumacácori National Historical Park near Nogales , Arizona ( pre @-@ restoration ) , and California Mission San Gabriel Arcángel and Mission San Juan Capistrano Spanish missions . His drawings for Cone @-@ bearing Trees of the California Mountains and Wonders of the Colorado Desert were especially detailed and included Desert Bighorn Sheep , desert reptiles , and cattle . ( His Mirage in the Desert ( 1905 ) , painted for Wonders , depicts cattle and cowboys . )

Eytel depicted the life of Navajo , Hopi , Cahuilla , Serrano and Kamia peoples , including

landscapes of the New Mexico Eight Northern Pueblos in San Ildefonso , Laguna , Tesuque and Taos Pueblo . The Walpi Pueblo on First Mesa , Hopi Reservation , Arizona , and Cocopah people near Calexico , California were drawn as well .

Prospectors working the Anaconda ( Dale District ) and Manana ( Colorado River ) mines in Arizona and the famous Picacho gold mine were drawn , as were the Rancho Guajome Adobe near Encinitas , California , the Sierra Bonita Ranch near Fort Grant , Arizona , turn of the century Tucson , Arizona , and the Yuma Territorial Prison , Yuma , Arizona .

His scenes from early Palm Springs included the stagecoach station and William Pester ? " The Hermit of Palm Springs " .

Eytel 's landscapes and mountain scenes in Wonders included :

Ehrenberg , Arizona

Algodones , including the Pilot Knob landmark , Imperial County , California

Palo Verde , Arizona

San Jacinto National Forest , California

Oak Creek Canyon , within Coconino National Forest , Arizona

Mt . San Gorgonio , California

Mt . San Jacinto , California

Royal Gorge , Colorado

San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff , Arizona

Sentinel Rock and Cathedral Spires in Yosemite Valley , California

Tahquitz Peak , near Idyllwild , California

Twin Buttes , Navajo County , Arizona

= = Honors = =

Eytel was a friend of the Cahuilla people and they allowed him to be buried in their cemetery in Palm Springs after he died of tuberculosis in a Banning , California sanatorium . His funeral and burial were arranged by Nellie Coffman , who had established the original Desert Inn in the Palm Springs village in 1909 .

Eytel received the following eulogy from Saunders writing in August 1926 :

But to Carl Eytel , pioneer of Palm Springs artists , working there long before the world of fashion had heard of the place , Palm Springs was his home , and the desert his life . He knew it in all seasons , in all moods , and he painted it with a sort of religious ardor springing from unfailing love , in season and out . Others have been better draughtsmen than he , but when you look at a canvas by Eytel at his best you are looking into what seems the desert ? s heart .

His painting Desert near Palm Springs ( 1914 ) is displayed in the California History Room of the California State Library . The Palm Springs Art Museum has a set of Eytel 's sketches and displays various of his paintings .

The desert shrub amphipappus fremontii was given the common name " eytelia " in his honor . The short " Via Eytel " in Palm Springs is named in his honor , as is the short " Eytel Road " in nearby Cathedral City .