

# Rosalie Lowrey

## Painter Laureate

By Lewis F. Carr

Rosalie Lowrey, of Granite drive beyond Six Mile on the Covington pike, is a true artist of the first rank. Of course she painted the Fred Rike portrait, recently presented to the city, and the Leopold Rauh portrait, which also adorns the city's walls; and countless others. But she is something more—a personality possessed of that fighting quality so necessary in the make-up of the true artist.

For the last 30 years, she has been building something—steadily, courageously, skillfully; not only a reputation and a technique and a clientele, but also an atmosphere, a group and an organization. She knows not only painting, but also people. She is the dean of Dayton artists in many ways.

The fighting part came in by necessity. Left almost without funds in early life, she realized that she would have to make her own way; and she felt she could do it by painting, which was a natural gift with her. Her rewards began to come to her. But they came the hard way. The insight as to what it takes besides ability to be a successful artist came when she was saying goodbye to that great teacher of painters, Cecilia Beaux. She looked at Miss Lowrey a minute or two without saying a word, and then said, "You will succeed. You have the will, the fighting quality, to do so." Not a word about ability, notice. Just the word about the other quality.

### Studied Piano Many Years

Born in Dayton, she has lived here all her life, and believes in Dayton, Dayton artists, Dayton people and herself. Her first essay into the artistic realm was in music. She studied piano many years under Miss Clara Kemper in the old Kemper home at the corner of Monument avenue and St. Clair street, gave many recitals there. Later, when the building became the Dayton Art institute, she began to have her pictures hung in the same building. She has a thousand pleasant memories of the place.

She went to Miss Thomas' private school until the sixth grade, then to Central District, Steele high school and finally took a year in the Howe-Morot school at the corner of Robert boulevard and West First street. Her fingers were busy all the time, vibrant with her love of drawing and painting. At the latter school, she decided to become a painter and became much interested in the Art Students' league here, and in the Montgomery County Art association, under Mr. Houston Lowe, president.

Eventually, she went to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts at Philadelphia, and then on to New York, where she studied under Hugh Breckenridge and Cecilia Beaux. It was these two who made the greatest impression on her as teachers. Another was Director Oliver of the Chicago Art institute.

Here in Dayton, her associations with kindred souls began to round out. She idolized Mr. Lowe and came to meet the painter, Robert Whitmore, who was an inspiration to her. She remembers also Mr. Wessel and Mr. Barnhorn of the Art institute, and came to know Mrs. Harry Munger, Dan Blau, Mrs. Jesse Aull and Mrs. Julia McCoy. She teaches five classes in painting here in the city these days.

Her resources dwindled, and she had to work harder and harder—through desperation at times. But she began to get more and more commissions for portraits and began to do pastel drawings of



ROSALIE LOWREY . . . Vibrant with Love of Painting

Fawcett Photo.

children. Gradually, she and her sister, Julia, raked and scraped enough money together to buy their tiny home in the country. They have no car, and Miss Lowrey commutes by bus almost every day.

### She's a Carpenter, Too

"Yes," she laughs, "I find I have to know how to do a lot of things in the day's work. I have to know good canvas; then I have to be a pretty good carpenter and make the frame the size I want it, and then I have to know how to stretch the canvas.

"Then there's question of paints. I have to know them and be a pretty shrewd buyer, because paints can really run into quite an investment. I have to know people and talk them into the right pose and into the idea of the tediousness of sitting for portraits.

"Then brushes. A painter must own half a hundred anyway, and must know them as an expert golfer knows his clubs."

"How long does it take to do an oil portrait?" she was asked.

"Oh, about a week," she said. We watched as she went skillfully and rapidly ahead.

First she drew in the likeness, her crayons flying with the deftness and sureness of her touch. Then over it, or brushing it away. Gradually, the likeness began to paint out the charcoal, painting rightness began to take life on the canvas, as she put in the natural flesh colors and mixed up the right shade for the hair.

### No Fuss or Fury

Two or three hours for five or six days, she said, and it would be finished. She works mostly in the

home of Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Jones, on Oakwood avenue, though often she works in the home of her subject. There is no fuss nor fury about her, no evidences of temperament. She is simply a hard-working artist who knows her stuff and does it.

She holds her classes each week through the cooler months at the following various places: The Young Women's league, the Christian Congregational church at Shiloh, the Charles McLean book store and at the homes of Mrs. Leon Meuche and Mrs. Lynn Jones. She is never idle. If she hasn't a commission for a portrait, she stays home and paints still life and other things she loves to do.

She is the daughter of the late A. W. Lowrey and a granddaughter of the late Oliver P. Boyer. She is a member of the National Association of Women Artists, and prizes her membership highly. Some day, she hopes to do a knockout portrait of her cat, Jupiter, guardian spirit of the home.

"What are some of your favorite jobs?" she was asked.

"Oh, the portrait of my mother, there. And the one of my brother. And I enjoyed doing the Rike portrait and the Rauh portrait very much, as I enjoy all my work."

"What do you consider the most interesting portrait?"

Her eyes sparkled.

"Oh, the next one, always!"

"Well, what do you do for recreation?"

"Oh, make jam and jelly and pickles and dig in the garden and cut weeds and take long walks. You see, we live only five minutes' walk from Stillwater river, and we love to walk and walk, or just sit still and study the wild life. We love our home in the country."