Large Print

This is a large-print version of the exhibition text in *Driftwood: The Life of Harlan Hubbard*

1
DRIFTWOOD: THE LIFE OF HARLAN HUBBARD

On this panel:

Untitled (moored shantyboat),
Harlan Hubbard, 1930s,
watercolor and pencil on paper,
Caddell Collection

Harlan Hubbard rowing on the Ohio,
June 18, 1954,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Logo for the Filson Historical Society

Logo for Payne Hollow on the Ohio

2

INTRODUCTION

Looking out over the retreating floodwaters of the Ohio River near Fort Thomas, Kentucky, an aspiring painter named Harlan Hubbard (1900-1988) paused to pull a small notebook from his pocket. With a dull pencil he scribbled the date, March 21, 1933, and recorded.

"I have been affected by this rise of water.[…] I need a flood in my soul, to carry off all the old drift and the flimsy habits that have extended down to the water's edge. […] If it does not come, the river will become stagnant, filled with growth and mud."

At 33 years old, Hubbard worried that no creative flood was coming. He had been living with his mother, unmarried and unassured, working as a contractor to make ends meet. He had little time for his creative pursuits or for his greatest passion, rambling along his native landscapes and waterways.

It is an unfamiliar glimpse of a figure who, nearly a century later, holds honored place in Kentucky arts and letters as a maverick and inspiration. His breakout book, *Shantyboat*, has become an off-cited influence on contemporary river explorers. Hubbard's later writings, chronicling his unique second act with his wife, Anna, stand as a primer for sustainable living amid climate crisis. And his artwork – stylistically varied and brimming

with experimentation – remains a valuable reminder of a rapidly disappearing Kentucky landscape and culture.

How did such a radical transformation occur? What were the forces that shaped and molded Harlan Hubbard from awkward and overlooked to fulfilled and revered?

On this panel:

Driftwood on the Banks of the Ohio,
Harlan Hubbard, undated,
oil on canvas,
Collection of Bob and Charlotte Canida,
Photograph by Clifton Andrews

Hubbard's breakout book, *Shantyboat*, bore the original title *Driftwood*. The theme of driftwood recurs in his writing, both published and private, as a metaphor for transformation, change, and adventure.
Courtesy of the UofL Archives & Special Collections,
Harlan and Anna Hubbard Papers (1991_069-UA)

3

BELLEVUE

In the hilly river town of Bellevue, Kentucky, on January 4, 1900, Rose Ann and Frank Gilbert Hubbard welcomed their third son: William Harlan Hubbard. The boy, who would ultimately prefer to be called Harlan, was sensitive, adventurous, curious, and precocious. He did not fit in easily with his peers, but he enjoyed a close relationship with his two much older brothers: Frank Lafayette (1887-1985) and Lucien Swingle (1889-1971).

Lucien, the middle child, encouraged Harlan's physical exploration of the world through outdoor pastimes such as baseball and piloting a river canoe. Frank, the eldest, taught Harlan to see the surrounding landscape and people with an artist's eye, instructing him in techniques of drawing and perspective. With Frank, Harlan saw the way that direct experience of a place could influence one's understanding of landscape and culture.

On this panel:

Portrait of Frank Gilbert Hubbard,
ca. 1890s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Portrait of Rose Ann Swingle,
ca. 1880s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Frank Lafayette Hubbard,
ca. 1900s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Lucien Swingle Hubbard,
ca. 1900s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Young Harlan,
ca. 1904,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

4

NEW YORK

Life for the Hubbards changed radically in the 1910s. Lucien landed a job as the Night City Editor of the *New York Press* in New York City. Frank, now working as a freelance illustrator, soon followed Lucien to pursue opportunities in Madison Avenue advertising.

Lucien and Frank – who were, at the time, the sole financial support for their mother and youngest brother – eventually convinced Rose and Harlan to move to New York, too. Between 1915 and 1921, mother and son divided their time between The Big Apple and Bellevue. The change afforded Harlan opportunities that would have a dramatic effect on his future.

Harlan enjoyed the opportunities in New York City. When he wasn't studying Latin and literature at Evander Childs High School in the Bronx, Harlan attended concerts and visited parks, museums, and galleries. Frank also continued instructing Harlan in art, encouraging him to sketch often and try new media, like watercolor and oil.

On this panel:

View of the East River,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1920-1921,
oil on canvas,
Vince Kohler Collection

This is believed to be Harlan's earliest existing painting, completed in watercolor under the instruction of his brother.
Geranium,
attributed to Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1915,
watercolor on paper,
Payne Hollow on the Ohio Collection

Harlan completed his first work in oil on his 19th birthday, January 4, 1919. Frank guided Harlan through the intricacies of underpainting and pigment mixing, setting up a humble still life on the kitchen table of a carrot, onion, and tin can.
Still Life with Carrot, Onion, and Tin Can,
Harlan Hubbard, 1919 (signed 1921),
oil on canvas,
Carol Swearingen Collection

Harlan sketching,
Frank Lafayette Hubbard, 1907,
pencil on paper,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

5

UPSTATE

In 1917 and 1918, as a high-achieving student at Evander Childs High School in the Bronx, Harlan had the opportunity to join New York State's Farm Cadet Service. He spent two remarkable summers providing essential manual labor to the Upstate New York agriculture sector, whose work force had suffered following the draft of young men into World War I.

Harlan's host family in 1918, Charles and Minnie Hoehn, became lifelong friends of the Hubbards. With Charles Hoehn, especially, Harlan felt a philosophical sympatico. Hoehn taught Harlan the invaluable skills of handling a scythe and planting and harvesting crops. At the Hoehn farm, Harlan would also read Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* for the first time – a foundational text for his later life and career.

On this panel:

Hoehn farm,
Mia Cunningham, ca. 2000s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Farm Cadet Service culminating essay,
written by Harlan Hubbard, 1918,
New York State Archives, Farm Cadet Service Collection

An example of an enrollment card used by students to become Farm Cadets,
New York State Archives, Food Supply Commission Scrapbook, 1917-1918.

Portrait of Henry David Thoreau,
Benjamin Dexter Maxham, 1856,
ninth-plate daguerreotype,
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

6

THE ACADEMY

Harlan returned from Upstate New York with an imagination full of dramatic landscapes immortalized by painters like Thomas Cole (1801-1848) and the Hudson River School. Frank encouraged Harlan to channel his creative energies and enroll in the National Academy of Design, which Cole and other colleagues founded in 1825. At the Academy, Harlan spent his first year sketching plaster casts of Greco-Roman masterworks – a right of passage in the classical art education. He was an accomplished draftsman and won a medal in 1919 for a sketch of a Greek bust.

Later that year, Harlan graduated from drawing statuary to painting from life. Although figure studies and portraits would become quite rare in Harlan's oeuvre, he demonstrated great skill in his life classes, studying closely the techniques of two of his favorite western artists: Diego Velasquez (1599-1660) and James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903). Few works survive from this New York period, but those that do reveal Harlan's growing capacity for composition, perspective, and value.

On this panel:

View from Mount Holyoke, Northampton, Massachusetts, after a Thunderstorm – The Oxbow,

Thomas Cole, 1836,
oil on canvas,
Metropolitan Museum of Art

Sketch of Nude Reclining,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1920-1921 (signed 1921)
oil on canvas,
Ted Steinbock Collection

Medal,
1919,
Hanover College Collection

Studies from James Abbott McNeill Whistler,
Harlan Hubbard, 1917-1921,
New York Sketchbook,
Filson Museum Collection (2024.36)
Gift of Florence Fowler Caddell

Concept drawing for the original National Academy of Design, South Elevation,
Peter Bonnett Wight, 1861,
ink, watercolor, and gouache on paper,
Art Institute of Chicago

7

QUIET DESPERATION

Harlan and his mother moved back to Kentucky permanently in 1921. Although disappointed to lose the artistic and cultural advantages of New York, Harlan understood that the time had come to relieve Frank and Louie of their mother's financial welfare and shoulder it himself.

The pair settled in Fort Thomas, a neighboring city of his native Bellevue, where Harlan began working as a contractor and laborer. Through this work he learned useful trades, including masonry and bricklaying, carpentry, and basic plumbing. In 1922, Harlan suggested to Rose that he design and build them a new home, which he raised the following year with the help of just a few additional craftspeople and laborers.

In this period, Harlan and Rose also took the first of many trips to California. Harlan's brother Louie, who in the 1920s was a successful writer and producer in Hollywood, produced the first Academy Award-winning motion picture, *Wings*. The film was set to shoot in San Antonio, Texas, in October 1926, and while Louie was on location, Rose and Harlan went to California to keep his wife and children company.

Harlan disliked the superficiality of Hollywood, preferring to escape into the wilderness of the American West while

his mother made social calls. Harlan did, however, have a chance to spend some time with another transplant from Fort Thomas named Katharine Kavanaugh Cahill (1884-1962), an artist with whom he explored art museums and other artists' studios.

On this panel:

The Hubbard home of 129 Highland Avenue, Fort Thomas, Kentucky,
ca. 1920s,
Courtesy of the Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Louie and Rose in Beverly Hills,
ca. 1927-1928,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Harlan at a construction site,
ca. 1920s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Untitled (Palm trees),
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1920s,
watercolor, crayon, and pencil on paper,
Caddell Collection

Rivertown,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1921,
oil on canvas,
Pamela and Paul Thompson Collection

8

THE STUDIO OF NATURE

What little time Harlan could find between work and family obligations he spent reacquainting himself with the Kentucky landscape. The comfort and inspiration he found in its *genius loci* – spirit of place – meant a temporary release from the stressors of society.

Rambling the Campbell and Kenton County hills or paddling the Ohio River in his hand-built canoe or johnboat, Harlan journaled and painted, honing his authentic artist voice. In the tradition of great 19th-century painters like Asher Brown Durand (1796-1886) of the Hudson River School, Harlan's favorite studio became "the studio of nature."

One of the lumber suppliers for Harlan's 1923 family home in Fort Thomas, Cornelius "Neely" Willison, became a friend and mentor to Harlan. Willison's mill, tucked in the rolling Campbell County hills, became a frequent destination for Harlan in his rambles. The Willison family introduced Harlan to other people living in the surrounding river enclaves.

The Willison mill ultimately became Harlan's first official studio. In 1927, in thanks for helping the late Neely Willison over the years, Harlan received permission from the surviving Willisons to convert the abandoned mill into

his “painting shed.” He created there from late 1927 to early 1934, experimenting in a Modernist painting style.

On this panel:

Riverbend and Train (Looking Down the River at Brent),
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1928,
oil on Masonite,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Self-portrait,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1930s,
charcoal and pencil on paper,
Caddell Collection

Illustration of Willison Planing Mill,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1980s,
pen and ink on paper,
Vince Kohler Collection

Springtime,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1928,
oil on Masonite,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Untitled (Sketch from canoe after Claude Monet),
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1920s,
oil on tin,
Filson Museum Collection (2024.27.2) Gift of David Ward

9

THE AMERICAN SCENE

The first glimmers of professional success for Harlan came at an inauspicious time for most Americans: The Great Depression. Harlan received little to no meaningful external encouragement as a painter until the introduction of the federal work-relief Public Works of Art Project (PWAP).

The PWAP sought to support the arts sector of the struggling American economy by commissioning artists to create public artworks within their communities. As part of this program, Harlan created four large paintings to be divided between the public libraries in Covington and Newport. He also painted the proscenium above the stage at Covington's Carnegie Library auditorium.

Like many PWAP projects, Harlan's pieces were required to reflect the prevailing patriotic style of the Depression Era. Regionalism, often called "American Scene" painting, emphasized the human figure and a distinct overall narrative in public art. Harlan, generally unattracted by either feature for his work, may have accepted the commission with confidence but later worked with trepidation.

Still, Harlan's attempt to conform to the Regionalist aesthetic for his PWAP commissions created a distinctive phase in his stylistic development as an artist. From a

new studio on the river road near Ross, Kentucky, Harlan made a concerted attempt to break into the elusive and exclusive art market. His first solo art exhibitions took place at the Getz-Brown Gallery in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1935 and 1936.

On this panel:

Shank's Store,
Harlan Hubbard, 1934,
oil on Masonite,
Mike and Louise Slaven Collection

Confluence of the Licking and Ohio Rivers,
Harlan Hubbard, 1934,
oil on board,
Kenton County Public Library

Market and Square,
Harlan Hubbard, 1934,
oil on board,
Kenton County Public Library

First Campbell County Courthouse,
Harlan Hubbard, 1934,

oil on board,
Campbell County Public Library

Image of *The Spirit of Covington*,
The Carnegie, Covington, Kentucky,
Jessica K. Whitehead, 2018

Fourth Street School,
Harlan Hubbard, 1934,
oil on board,
Campbell County Public Library

10

EMERGENCE

Harlan left his studio at Ross in 1938 in order to spend more time at home in Fort Thomas caring for his aging mother, Rose. The change meant significantly less of the independence to which Harlan had grown accustomed, so he constructed a freestanding painting studio in the backyard of 129 Highland Avenue. This brick, stone, and lumber structure took inspiration from the unique vernacular architecture employed in the structures of German immigrants of the area. Harlan made use of recycled mixed materials and built his structure directly into the steep hillside at the back of the lot.

In the studio, Harlan put to use his knowledge of landscape painters who had also responded to the *genius loci* – spirit of place – of the Ohio River Valley near Cincinnati. Among these were Lewis Henry Meakin (1850-1917) and John Henry Twachtman (1853-1902), whose brushwork and sense of light as a value influenced the maturation of Hubbard's style.

During this period, Harlan continued to spend time on the Ohio River and the surrounding hill country making watercolor studies. Their loose, almost abstract quality and vibrant colors encourage comparison with other contemporaries who shared Hubbard's love of nature, like John Marin (1870-1953), Charles Burchfield (1893-1967), Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986), and Walter Inglis

Anderson (1903-1965). The aesthetic carried over into some of his oil sketches.

On this panel:

Dark hills,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1930s,
watercolor and pencil on paper,
Caddell Collection

Studio at 129 Highland Avenue, Fort Thomas, Kentucky,
Jessica K. Whitehead, 2023

Sketch of Rose Ann Hubbard reading,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1930s-40s,
pencil and charcoal on paper,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Brent in Winter,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1930s,
oil on board,
Hanover College Collection

Steep Path,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1938,

oil on Masonite,
Mike and Louise Slaven Collection

11

THE LIBRARIAN

Despite the short-lived flurry of recognition during his PWAP period, Harlan entered the fourth decade of his life generally unfulfilled, constantly searching for ways to express and validate his authentic self. “What great event in my life am I waiting for?” he wrote in his journal, only to find the answer in meeting and marrying a remarkable woman named Anna Wonder Eikenhout.

Neither Harlan nor Anna was necessarily yearning for married life. Each was well-disposed to solitude, and each had active intellectual and creative interests to occupy their days. Anna, a librarian at the arts reference desk of the Cincinnati Public Library, was also a talented musician. Harlan, too, had been studying the violin for years, and the two found common ground in the love of books, art, and music.

They were married on April 20, 1943, in a private civil ceremony in Maysville, Kentucky. Not long afterward, once Harlan’s mother, Rose, had died, Anna encouraged her new husband to finally pursue a dream he had harbored since childhood: to give up the expectations of traditional society, build a shantyboat, and live on his beloved river. In a world consumed by the realities of World War, Harlan and Anna were privileged to be able to escape the violence and find a world apart and out of time.

Between 1944 and 1953, Anna's unconditional partnership transformed their shared life, catalyzing a remarkable second act for the couple. The shantyboat years not only brought them the joys of companionship and exploration; the period enabled an explosion of creativity from Harlan, paving the way for incredible new innovations in his painting and inviting the birth of his career as a published author. The flood had come for his soul, and her name was Anna.

On this panel:

Untitled (Anna at Lake Michigan),
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1940s-50s,
watercolor on paper,
Caddell Collection

Harlan and Anna on the riverbank,
ca. 1940s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Since childhood, Harlan and his brothers had been familiar with shantyboat culture on the Ohio. This is a sketch made by Frank Hubbard in the early 1900s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Anna cooking at the outdoor kitchen,
Payne Hollow, Kentucky, 1950s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

12

VAGRANTS

Shantyboats were a familiar sight in Northern Kentucky. The bespoke, eclectic vessels were a natural inclusion in any river scene near Cincinnati and Louisville from the late-19th or early-20th centuries. Shantyboats pop up in all sorts of compositions, from accomplished oil paintings by Thomas Pollock Anshutz (1851-1912) and engravings by Alexander J. Van Leshout (1868-1930) to sketches by a Hubbard contemporary, Glen Tracey (1883-1956).

Harlan and Anna decided to build their shantyboat at the existing community near Brent, not far from where Harlan had kept his first studio in the Willison mill. He was already acquainted with many of the inhabitants there, and he leveraged their familiarity for helpful guidance in constructing a water-ready vessel.

While the boat came together, Harlan and Anna established a base camp on the shore, to which Anna brought her characteristic organization and charm. They enjoyed her creative cooking, filled with the spoils of their foraging, fishing, and gardening. She served their meals on her set of blue and white china and a somehow-spotless linen tablecloth.

On this panel:

Brent Remembered,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1980s,
acrylic on Masonite,
Behringer-Crawford Museum

Building the hull of the shantyboat,
Harlan Hubbard, 1944,
woodcut on paper,
Caddell Collection

The Home of Old Man River Series,
Glen Tracey, October 5, 1939,
pencil on paper,
Filson Historical Society, Manuscript Collection

13

THE PURE DELIGHT OF DRIFTING

The Hubbards lived at Brent, happily, from September 1944 to December 1945, but they desired to experience what Harlan would call “the pure delight of drifting.” They had no precise timeline or end goal in mind, beyond taking their home down the entire length of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans.

In general, they knew that the best time to drift on the river was during the high-water winters. Over the next six years, the Hubbards spent their winters and early springs navigating the tempestuous river currents, occasionally beaching the boat when the water turned to a dangerous, crushing ice jam. In summer and fall, they found obliging landowners – sometimes with a cottage to rent – who would allow them to moor their shantyboat and plant a garden. The crops raised and fish caught during a shantyboat summer would be lovingly canned by the Hubbards: rations for the winters ahead.

In their spare time, the couple revived their common hobbies: reading aloud from literature and poetry, answering correspondence, and playing music together. And of course, Harlan found time to create art, sketching, painting, and carving his way to the Gulf.

The grand shantyboat epic ended after a sojourn through the Intercoastal Waterway and its network of bayous.

When the Hubbards reached the port of New Orleans on April 7, 1951 – just a few weeks shy of their ninth wedding anniversary – they decided to explore the Intercoastal Waterway, purchasing a boat with a small motor to tow the shantyboat through the bayous. Finally, in the summer of 1951, they made the difficult decision to put the shantyboat up for sale and move on to the next adventure. They sold it to a family near Bayou Delcambre, purchased a used car, and fashioned a camping trailer that would carry them on an extended journey west toward California.

On this panel:

Image of the shantyboat model constructed by Harlan Hubbard,
December 1944,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Skipper and shantyboat,
1940s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Bayou Delcambre,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1950s,
oil on canvas,
Vince Kohler Collection

Bluffs on the Mississippi River,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1940s,
oil on canvas,
Hanover College Collection

Shantyboat moored with corn crop,
ca. 1940s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

14

Publishing Shantyboat

Harlan felt confident that his and Anna's shantyboat story had a life beyond their memories. He kept detailed notes during their journey (even Anna made some rare entries about her experiences during the trip), and Harlan found himself writing substantial portions of what they knew could be a publishable manuscript.

There were plenty of previously published river narratives in fiction and history, but there were few peers to Harlan and Anna's unique husband-and-wife drifting adventure on the inland waterways. The closest were Reuben Gold Thwaites' 1897 book, Afloat on the Ohio (later re-printed as On the Storied Ohio) and Kent and Margaret Lighty's Shanty-boat, published in 1930. Even Harlan's brother, Louie, tried his hand at writing an awkward historical novel in 1942 based on the first steamboat to travel the Ohio and Mississippi, the New Orleans.

With Frank's help in New York, Harlan found a publisher for his book – first titled "Driftwood" and later renamed Shantyboat – at Dodd, Mead & Co. in 1952, for release in 1953. Harlan illustrated the entire publication, including the dynamic and colorful slip jacket for the hardcover.

On this panel:

Cover of *On the Storied Ohio* (*Afloat on the Ohio*),
2nd edition,
Reuben Gold Thwaites, 1903
Jessica K. Whitehead Collection

Illustration of the interior of the shantyboat, from
Shantyboat, 1953,
Caddell Collection

Cover of *Rivers to the Sea*,
Lucien Hubbard, 1942,
Jessica K. Whitehead Collection

Cover illustration for *Shantyboat*,
Harlan Hubbard, 1953,
Caddell Collection

15

Settlers

As bittersweet as leaving the shantyboat behind must have been, Harlan and Anna were committed to preserving the "shantyboat spirit" in their new life on solid ground. The couple settled in a historic steamboat landing downriver from Madison, Indiana, and Milton, Kentucky, where they had passed their first shantyboat summer. Many of the locals referred to the place as "Payne's Landing," but Harlan and Anna preferred to call it "Payne Hollow."

They rented from the owner of the land, Ansel McCord, for a few months before negotiating a purchase of seven acres along the bottomland of the Hollow to build a permanent residence in September 1952. There, Harlan and Anna laid out the foundation of a new cabin above the highwater mark for the 1937 flood and created a unique structure that nestled into the steep incline of the hill. Harlan and Anna's Payne Hollow cabin – no larger than the square footage of their shantyboat at first – expanded into a two-room home in 1954.

Harlan and Anna's first Christmas at Payne Hollow came not long after the completion of the initial cabin. They spent the cold winter days finalizing the Shantyboat manuscript to send to Edward Dodd, Harlan's publisher, but they also enjoyed the stark, natural beauty of the place they had chosen as their home. During this time,

Harlan completed this lovely watercolor for Anna, in which he highlights the distinctive upriver land feature of Plowhandle Point. Like Georgia O'Keeffe's Pedernal, or John Marin's Bear Mountain, Harlan would return to Plowhandle Point countless times as a subject.

On this panel:

View Downriver from Plowhandle Point (View from the Point),
Harlan Hubbard, 1965,
Hanover College Collection

For Anneke, Christmas 1952, Payne Landing,
Harlan Hubbard, 1952,
watercolor on paper,
Caddell Collection

Payne Hollow,
Harlan Hubbard, 1986,
oil on board,
Caddell Collection

Original Payne Hollow cabin,
June 1954,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Harlan and Anna on the riverbank at Payne Hollow, ca. 1950s,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

16

A Little Seven-Acre World

After the joyful exertions of setting down roots at Payne Hollow, Harlan and Anna flourished. Harlan experienced an intense creative renaissance through the interdisciplinary challenges of maintaining a life on the fringe. He divided his time among practical demands – like milking or butchering goats, setting trotlines for fish, chopping wood, and planting and harvesting succession gardens – and those of the brush or pen. In each task, Harlan practiced gratitude, consistently awed by his and Anna's hard-earned river paradise.

Anna Hubbard did not paint, nor did she consider herself a particularly accomplished writer, but her less-tangible artistry pervades the Hubbards' life at Payne Hollow. Anna organized and documented their domestic ecosystem with equal amounts of rigor and grace. Her quiet brilliance resulted in a remarkably balanced life for the Hubbards, equal in its function as in its beauty.

Anna made day-to-day life at Payne Hollow as bespoke and efficient as her husband's structures. She managed their nutrition, adapting the learned practices of organic gardening, foraging, and preserving foodstuffs into a healthy and delicious diet specifically tailored to their unique lifestyle. Anna also provided the lilting soundtrack to Harlan's gardening, woodcutting, and fishing with constant practice on her family's heirloom Steinway baby

grand piano. It was the second of two pianos hauled into the Hollow in the 1950s, by way of a neighbor's tractor.

On this panel:

Harlan with giant sunflowers,
August 1954,
Behringer-Crawford Museum Collection

Transporting the upright piano to Payne Hollow,
1954,
David Sloane Collection

Return from the Woods (Goats on Hillside),
Harlan Hubbard, 1960,
oil on board,
Hanover College Collection

Anna's favorite cookbook was *Let's Cook It Right!*
By Adelle Davis, 1962,
Payne Hollow on the Ohio Collection

Path to Payne Hollow from the river,
John Fettig, ca. 1970s

17

Life on the Fringe

By the 1960s and 1970s, the Hubbards had been the subject of numerous articles, each of which raised the profile of Payne Hollow to pilgrimage status for the burgeoning back-to the-land subset of American culture. Visitors came both announced and unannounced, drawn by their own passion and initiative or taken – as many were – as students from local schools and colleges. "We are not at all anti-social," Harlan told a reporter in 1969. "On some Sundays we are quite overrun."

All their visitors sought a practical demonstration of a set of values that felt, in the post-industrial world, remarkably radical and unfamiliar. As the writer Gene Logsdon wrote in the July 1977 issue of Organic Gardening, "Before my eyes unfolded as quiet but as profound a revolution as will ever be my privilege to bear witness to." Payne Hollow was an achievable utopia, even more accessible than – and just as poetic as – Henry David Thoreau's Walden.

All the while, Harlan and Anna had been working on another publication, this one about their unique life at Payne Hollow. It was shorter than Shantyboat, with a different pacing and tone, which initially caused some issues in finding a publisher until it was accepted by Eakins Press. As with Shantyboat, Harlan provided beautiful pen and ink illustrations for the cover, end

pages, and chapter headings. Payne Hollow released in 1974, only increasing the public's interest in the Hubbards and their lifestyle.

On this panel:

Payne Hollow in winter sunlight,
John Fettig, ca. 1970s

Illustrated cover concept for *Payne Hollow*,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1970s,
UofL Archives & Special Collections, Harlan & Anna Hubbard Papers (1991_069-UA)

Harlan and Anna conversing at Payne Hollow, 1984,
Courtesy of the Lucian Bartnick Collection

Illustrated manuscript page from *Payne Hollow*,
Harlan Hubbard, ca. 1970s,
UofL Archives & Special Collections, Harlan & Anna Hubbard Papers (1991_069-UA)

18

In the Studio

After expanding the main home at Payne Hollow, Harlan built a new workshop and painting studio uphill from the house. He approached its construction with his characteristic sensitivity to locally sourced or recycled materials adapted for new use. Beyond providing Harlan a practical place to store and use the hundreds of tools required to maintain his bespoke Payne Hollow structures, the cistern and old root cellar, and their extensive seasonal gardens, the new building gave Harlan a dedicated place to paint again.

In the studio portion of the upper level, Harlan installed an enormous canted window, which allowed the ideal bright, indirect daylight to stream onto his neatly arranged stacks of Masonite and paper, dry pigments, linseed oil, brushes, pencils, and charcoal. The space inspired a new creative flush of painting for the artist.

Throughout this period, Harlan appears to intentionally synthesize the aesthetic of his sketches with the more impressionistic or realistic tendencies in competed oils and acrylics. We can observe both styles coexisting in his work from the 1960s and 70s, the black outlines functioning like a signature tracery – the evidence of Harlan’s most mature artistic voice. Nowhere is that maturity more evident than in this series of large-scale commissions for the then-new branch of Citizens State

Bank in Owensboro, Kentucky. In 1969, Harlan was offered the opportunity to tell Owensboro's Ohio River history in paint.

On this panel:

Payne Hollow Studio in Winter,
Harlan Hubbard, 1982,
oil on Masonite,
Bob and Charlotte Canida Collection.

Interior of the Payne Hollow painting studio, John Fettig, ca. 1970s.

River Traffic,
Harlan Hubbard, 1969,
oil on canvas,
Owensboro Museum of Fine Art, a gift of JPMorgan Chase

Farm Scene (Study for the Bedford Bank Mural)
Harlan Hubbard, 1970
oil on Masonite
Courtesy of the David and Debra Hausrath Collection

Yellow Banks
Harlan Hubbard, 1969,
oil on canvas,
Owensboro Museum of Fine Art, a gift of JPMorgan Chase

19

I Rejoice after my Own Fashion

As their health began to decline in the 1980s, Harlan and Anna Hubbard began to think about legacy. By the time Anna died on May 4, 1986, the couple had successfully gotten Shantyboat and Payne Hollow reprinted, worked with friends and scholars to release a volume of Harlan's early journals, and made plans for large bequests of paintings and archival material to enter the collections of Hanover College, the Behringer-Crawford Museum, and the University of Louisville Archives and Special Collections.

Upon his death, in January of 1988, Harlan willed his artistic estate to his friend and fellow simple-living advocate, Bill Caddell. He left Payne Hollow to a young artist named Paul Hassfurder, who had been helping Harlan and Anna with some of their heavier domestic labor for several years.

What remains today – spread across numerous public and private collections – is a broad and impressive physical record of a singular American experience.

On this panel:

Sketch of Plowhandle Point,
Harlan Hubbard, undated,

oil on board,
Hanover College Collection

Harlan and Anna’s gravesite at Payne Hollow,
Jessica K. Whitehead, 2022

Cover of *The Hanoverian,*
Fall 1985/Winter 1986,
Payne Hollow on the Ohio Collection

Harlan and Anna with their physician, Dr. Marcella Modisett, ca. 1980s,
Payne Hollow on the Ohio Collection

Window on the River,
Harlan Hubbard, 1986,
oil on Masonite,
Caddell Collection

20

Acknowledgements

In the spirit of Harlan and Anna Hubbard, Payne Hollow on the Ohio creates and maintains a dynamic space for the exploration and interpretation of the confluence of art, culture, and environment in an effort to help people live more deeply, authentically, and sustainably. They are the current caretakers of historic Payne Hollow.

Jessica K. Whitehead is an author, curator, and artist specializing in Ohio Valley History. To order the book, explore resources on the Hubbards, and inquire about renting this exhibit, visit her website.

Thanks to Brooks Vessels for the design of this exhibit on behalf of the Filson Historical Society, which is committed to collecting, preserving, and sharing the significant history and culture of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley.

Many Thanks:

- Behringer-Crawford Museum
- Hanover College
- University of Louisville Archives and Special Collections
- Owensboro Museum of Fine Arts
- Kenton County Public Library
- Campbell County Public Library
- The Carnegie
- New York State Archives

- National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution
- Art Institute of Chicago
- University Press of Kentucky
- Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Caddell Family
- Bob and Charlotte Canida
- Vince Kohler
- David Ward
- Mike and Louise Sloven
- Carol Swearingen
- Ted Steinbock
- Pamela Houston
- Pamela and Paul Thompson
- John Fettig
- David Sloane
- Jessica K. Whitehead
- Joe Wolek

On this panel:

Photograph by Joe Wolek,
Payne Hollow on the Ohio