

Naramata Mural

Angie Waterman



When the Naramata Co-op growers decided to add a cold storage plant to their fruit packing complex, they chose the most convenient site. Unfortunately when they prepared the site in 1981, the pioneer Methodist Church had to be razed and a fine grove of mature maples had to be felled. These radical changes in the heart of the village of Naramata resulted in an uneasy stir and caused local artist, Frances Hatfield to conceive the idea of a mural on the south side of the cold storage plant. This could transform the starkness of the new facility to beauty, record history and mobilize community effort in this village work. The executive and management of the Naramata Co-op were informed and permission was granted for Frances to do the mural.

The Naramata Citizens' Association (NCA) agreed to support it. In December 1982, Frances asked the Canada Council Exploration Division for part of the funding of this project. In May 1983, the entire amount specified was granted, but this did not obviate the necessity for fund raising by the NCA. Letters requesting donations raised sufficient money to pay for all the paints and varnish for the mural.

Frances said it was all very well to be struck by the inspiration that you could design a mural but the technique and know-how posed a problem. After asking several American muralists for work as an apprentice or helper, it was Judy Baca of Los Angeles who invited her to work on a church mural with her. Judy is best known for creating a mural with the help of young people on the subject of ethnic minorities in California. Painted in the Tujunga Wash in North Los Angeles, this work is almost half a mile long. The rest of the winter was spent in studying murals in Mexico and Frances returned to Naramata in the spring with a number of designs which she discussed with the Co-op and the NCA. After some public input, the present design was prepared.

[*Learn more about Judy Baca](#)

Cartoons of the design had to be drawn and divided into squares; 2040 of them. Orchardist/house-painter, Horst Franz, prepared the wall with a ground coat. Scaffolding was erected and plumb lines dropped vertically on the wall surface to reproduce the grid of the cartoons. Then the design could be accurately transferred to the wall. Wet days were a loss and too hot sun was a problem but the mural was painted in two months by three

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people: Frances Hatfield, Betty Wornock and Robert Magenis with some local volunteer helpers who needed steady heads for working on scaffolding up to thirty feet from the ground.

The 34 by 60 foot mural is painted with acrylic paint on the south wall of the cold storage plant. It depicts a pioneer fruit grower planting an apple tree; women bench-packing in the old way; dry cultivation by harrowing the good Okanagan soil; the seasonal changes from stark leafless trees in the snow through blossom to harvest. The pioneer Methodist Church commemorates the past while children dance around the Maypole celebrating youth and Spring. It is designed to be seen from a distance since it is more practical for the public to view it from outside of the Co-op property. However, a legend that makes up the parts of the mural is lettered on it for those interested. A section of the mural was given a protective coat of acrylic varnish which was being given time to demonstrate its qualities before being applied to the entire mural.

On August 23, 1983, the Naramata Village Mural was dedicated. Mr. Duncan McDougal, chairman of the RDOS, introduced the board member of the Canada Council, Mrs. Ruth Schiller. She dedicated the mural and spoke of the part that art plays in the life of the community. Frances herself closed the dedication ceremony. Approximately 200 people attended the dedication. As well as Naramatians, other interested people from Pen-ticton, Summerland, Osoyoos and Kelowna attended the ceremony. They chatted and photographed the brilliant mural and enjoyed the chilled apple juice and cookies so hospitably provided by the Naramata Packing House and the ladies of the village. Frances Hatfield is Okanagan born and a graduate of the Vancouver School of Arts. She studied at the Ontario School of Art and has taught at the Kootenay School of Art and in other parts of BC and Ontario. She lived high above Naramata in her studio/home "Stonecrop" but has since moved to Armstrong, BC.

[*Learn more about Frances Hatfield](#)

