

RAILROAD WEEK IN REVIEW

September 18, 2020

I'm always proud to bring customers to the BNSF campus and give them a tour of the facilities, the state of the art technology, and the art. It demonstrates to the marketplace that we value the diversity of our heritage, and we understand the importance of preserving the artistic representations of our history.” — Karen Burchfield, VP Coal Marketing, BNSF

“I think it's one of the great treasures of Fort Worth that many people don't know about. It showcases the railroad as a force of economic power and it displays the majesty of these landscapes. It's unparalleled as a collection that relates to the westward expansion of the United States.” — Andrew Walker, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth

“BNSF is an iconic company and this is a historic day. Carl has been critical to BNSF's success for a very long time. I thank him for his leadership and his accomplishments. We look forward to Katie's leadership and more success. She possesses all of the qualities that make us excited about the future.” — Warren Buffett, CEO, Berkshire Hathaway

Katie Farmer becomes BNSF President and Chief Executive Officer on January 1, 2021. Until then, Farmer will continue her COO role. Carl Ice, current President and CEO, will retire at the end of 2020 and remain on BNSF's Board of Directors as well. Matt Igoe becomes COO, moving up from VP-Transportation.

Farmer has been with BNSF for 28 years, serving as COO since September 2018. She joined BNSF as a management trainee in 1992 and has held leadership positions in every major function of the company including operations, marketing, and finance. Prior to her operations role, Farmer led BNSF's largest business unit as Group Vice President, Consumer Products (automotive and intermodal).

Igoe has been with BNSF for 22 years. Following his career as an Army officer, he joined the railroad in 1998 as a management trainee and has held multiple positions of increasing responsibility in operations and marketing. In October 2012 he assumed the role of General Superintendent, Transportation before being promoted to the position of VP, Central Region in February 2013. He served as VP, Service Design and Performance beginning May 2016 before being named to his current role.

Farmer is the first woman to lead a Class I railroad and knows the BNSF system like the back of her hand. As former group head for Consumer Products (a third of BNSF revenues, a larger percentage than any other Class I), she brings a level of continuity lacking when lawyers and CFOs become railroad Presidents and CEOs. Kudos to Katie and Matt.

The BNSF art collection is something to behold. I think we spend so much time and effort in the here and now of revenue unit volumes and operating ratios that we lose sight of where it all began. Thus I think it fitting to step back from the noise for the calming effect of some of the best American art I have ever seen.

You walk into the BNSF Fort Worth campus and you're greeted with an impressive display of railroad artifacts relating to the BNSF heritage, and the paintings frame the exhibit. What follows is largely quoted from the [art collection page of the BNSF website](#).

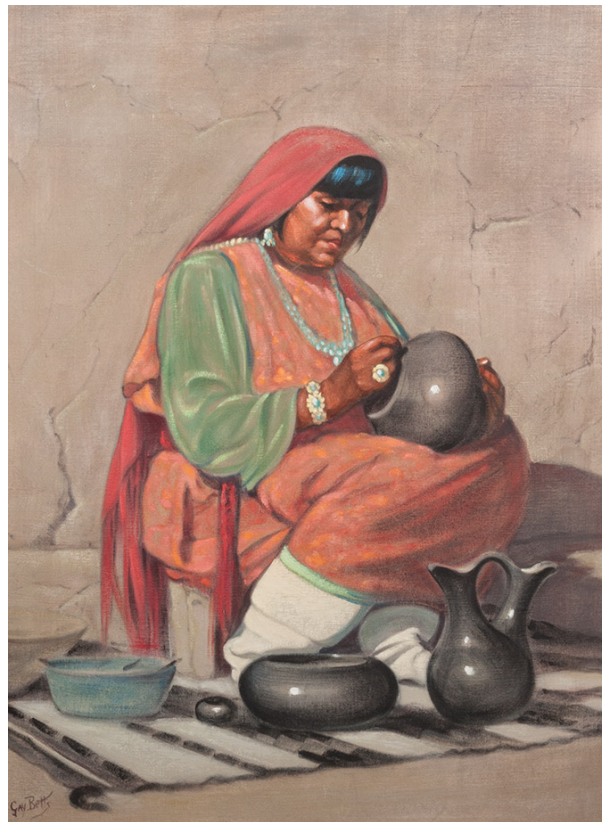
In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the railroads powering America's growth needed a way to catch the imagination of the public and entice paying customers to travel out west. And that's how the BNSF Railway art collection was born – by accident. The works displayed were commissioned by the various railroads to promote tourism and weren't originally intended to be a corporate art collection. Below is "Grand Canyon" by William Leigh (1866-1955) of Falling Waters, West Virginia. He made his first trip west in 1906, exchanging a painting for free transportation on the Santa Fe.



Great Northern, Northern Pacific, and Santa Fe, all major predecessor lines of BNSF, engaged dozens of talented commercial painters to travel the West and capture its natural splendor on canvas so people back home could see what awaited them. The railroads would reproduce the images as colorful lithographic prints to display to the public in depots and ticket offices, in many instances being the first time many people east of the Mississippi River would have seen these wonders of the new America.

Santa Fe's commissioned works focused on the Southwest, including Native American scenes, desert landscapes and the Grand Canyon. Northern Pacific hired Thomas Moran to paint scenes from the Yellowstone Territory (his Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone may be most important work in the collection). Great Northern hired the prolific Austrian-born artist John Fery to paint scenes from the Glacier National Park region, and BNSF's collection now contains the largest concentration of his works in the world.

Today, BNSF office employees in Fort Worth and other locations work in buildings graced by paintings that vividly depict how railroads encouraged westward development. A walk through the headquarters campus takes employees and visitors on a journey into canyons, deserts, pueblos, forests and mountain ranges.



Up now at the [bnsf.com art page](https://www.bnsf.com/art) is a [selection of paintings](#) by women to coincide with Women's History Month — “Making their Mark: Women, Art, and the West.” This Grace Betts (1883-1977) oil on canvas, “Maria Martinez,” dates from 1951. Betts was born in New York City and was the daughter and pupil of Edwin D. Betts Sr. In addition, she studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, and was a painter, muralist, illustrator and teacher. She specialized in painting Native Americans and Western landscapes. This painting is one of five that Santa Fe bought from her.

These are just a few of the works created by some of the many women artists in the collection. When these were painted 150 years ago, art was not considered an acceptable career for the fairer sex. But these women had a gift that they thankfully chose not to ignore, and their contributions to art and to our railroad's history are incalculable.

Linda Osmundson, author of *How the West Was Drawn: Women's Art*, writes, "As men traveled West to search for gold, their wives followed. Many recorded the journey through painting or the written word. Others grew up in the West and painted what they saw, lived or loved. Many were the wives, daughters and sisters of religious and business professionals. Some were self-taught while others were well-trained and/or teachers."

To sum up, then, BNSF's contribution to the documentation of American history is "almost unmatched in the corporate world," says the Amon Carter Museum's Walker. "In its preservation of historic materials, BNSF's commitment to the American story is a story every young person should know." I'm hopeful this respite from the noise was indeed calming.

End note: Last week I wrote that the FRA is "fussy" about the cars that are permitted to move LNG. Allow me to clarify that. LNG requires the DOT-113C120W cryogenic tank car, of which there are only 62 in service in North America according to rail equipment analyst Richard Kloster. Thus a hundred-car train at any time in the near future seems a bit far-fetched.

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