



Deaf Indian Carver Hunted Bears.

Modern art critics, who delight to determine the "derivation" of an artist's inspiration or method, tracing it cunningly from this or that old master until the painting or sculpture has been daintily dissected and deftly analyzed, would have no such task in considering the work of John L. Clarke, Blackfoot Indian artist, now in Portland.

Clarke carves in wood and paints in oils, and the critic who discovered the "influence" of any other artist in the Indian's work would be "spoofing" himself.

Clarke is deaf and dumb. Hence his opportunity of talking art traditions with

other artists has been limited. He has no idea that such a man as Michael Angelo ever lived, or that there is such a sculptor as Rodin. Write the name, "Phidias," and to him it would be just a queer word.

He is troubled by no traditions and hindered by no rules. His inspiration is the same that set the first cave-man to scratching the outline of a mammoth on a bit of bone. No dream-stuff for him.

He carves grizzly bear and buffalo and elk, and mountain sheep. The Glacier National Park country, where he lives, furnishes him with subjects for his chisel and gouge.

John L. Clarke, although he calls himself a Blackfoot Indian, and is Indian in every lineament, had a Scotch father. He was born at High River Indian Agency, near Great Falls, Montana, 35 years ago. When he was an infant, his parents moved to Sweet Pass Agency, Montana, known as the Blackfoot reservation, and now Glacier National park. Before he learned to talk, he was deprived of his hearing by a fall. He learned to talk with the Indians by sign language.

The Indian agent finding him deaf and dumb, induced his aunt, a well educated woman, to send him to the North Dakota State School for the Deaf, at Devil's Lake, N. D. He was there for two years, but wanted to go back to the reservation to enjoy hunting and fishing and the free life of the open country. Clark is a big game hunter and crack shot. Later he went to the Montana School for the Deaf, and then his aunt, whom he went to visit in Minneapolis, sent him to St. Francis Catholic School, near Milwaukee, where he learned carving and sketching.

From a little boy he has been fashioning figures in wood and clay, and the work came easy for him. Leaving the school after two years, he returned to Glacier Park, paying his way by selling his carvings as he went. At the park he opened a small shop where he sold his own work, together with souvenirs and Indian curios. Artists who visited the park gave him lessons in painting, and although his work on canvas is crude, it has strength and is full of action.

At the end of the tourist season each year, business would be dull, so last fall he came to Portland and opened a shop. He had a good business up to and through the holidays, but as soon as the season opens in Glacier Park, he intends to return there and open a bigger shop than ever. His brother is now preparing to get out big logs to build a cabin for the shop.—*Portland, Oregon, Journal.*