

Arnold Friberg
Historical Painter/Artist

Arnold Friberg was an American artist born on December 21, 1913, in Winnetka, Illinois, son of a Swedish father and a Norwegian mother. At the age of 3, Arnold moved to Arizona with his sister Gertrude and his parents. By age 7, young Friberg was already drawing original cartoons. At the age of seven, Friberg's parents joined The Church of Latter-day Saints and Arnold was baptized a member at age eight. The Fribergs were able to scrape together enough money to enroll Arnold in a correspondence course at the age of 10. While in Phoenix, Arizona, young Friberg often shared his drawings with the newspaper staff of the Arizona Republican. During his high school years, Arnold earned money by making signs for local businesses. After graduating from high school, he began his studies at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. He worked for various local printers doing commercial art while attending school for several years afterward. This included calendar work the Northwest Paper Company, for whom he created paintings of Mounties. He created more than 200 paintings depicting Mounties and he is the only American who was made an honorary member of the Royal Canadian mounted Police.

In 1940, Friberg moved to New York City and studied with Norman Rockwell under the artist Harvey Dunn at the Grand Central School of Art. With the outbreak of World War II, he left the Grand Central School of Art and joined the United States Army serving in the 86th Infantry division. He used his art skills in combat to draw maps.

Shortly after the end of the war, he set up shop in San Francisco, then he married Hedve Baxter. He made it big creating a series of paintings depicting Western scenes for a calendar company in 1948. He then moved to Utah in 1950 in order to begin teaching commercial art at the University of Utah. It was while teaching at the U of U that DeMille knew he had found his artist. This led the Fribergs to move to Hollywood in 1953.

Friberg's most famous and popular patriotic work is his 1975 painting, "The Prayer at Valley Forge," a depiction of George Washington praying at Valley Forge, the site of the camp of the American Continental Army over the winter of 1777-1778 during the American Revolutionary War. Friberg is also well known for his fifteen previsualization paintings for the Cecil B. DeMille film "The Ten Commandments," used to promote the film worldwide. Friberg received a nomination for an Academy Award for these paintings.

Arnold Friberg passed away July 1, 2010 at the age of 96 in Salt Lake City from complications of hip replacement surgery. You can find his gravesite in Plat X, Block 6, Lot 206, Grave 2 East

