

# ARTIST'S DESCRIPTION OF COVER ART



"Coming Home"  
Original Oil on Canvas  
24 x 36  
By artist Laura Carnagie  
Completed November 7, 2021

The cover of this year's Community Guide & Business Directory features art created by Pauls Valley artist and Chamber Board Member Laura Carnagie. The original painting is on display at the Chamber office and will be auctioned off.

Normally, I start my description with the main scene, however in this case it is prudent that I share the inspiration for what is painted in the rearview mirror, and then I'll introduce the rest of the painting.

The Indian Removal Act was passed in 1830 and thousands of men, women and children were displaced, removed and exiled from their ancestral lands. Many tribes that had lived for generations were forced to leave their homeland and travel to what was called "Indian Territory." The Chickasaws from Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama were just one of these groups. From 1837 into the 1890s, little by little, families arrived to what became Oklahoma lands.

It is said that Smith Paul, a North Carolinian, left Mississippi with the Chickasaws around 1836 and came to Indian Territory. Paul married ElaTeecha, a Chickasaw, in about 1845, forever bringing the two cultures together.



Following the Civil War, Paul was appointed agent for the remnant bands of Indian refugees in the Rush Creek valley. In 1871 the first official mail office location was recognized in what had become known as Pauls Valley.

With the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway completing its line from Kansas to the Gulf Coast, provisions were made in 1887 to create a modest train depot on the north edge of the town.

I've titled this painting Coming Home, paying tribute to those who walked here and those who came by trains or other means. This is a community with a rich history. As you walk around the Santa Fe Depot, you will notice names and words that pay respect to those who have continued to make this an area worth coming home to.

I chose to blur the image in the rearview mirror as a way of inspiring viewers to talk about their own family histories that should never be blurred or lost.

These stories should be recorded for generations to come as a testament of strength and hope so the visions of our own heritage stay crisp in our minds and in the generations that will follow.

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