



**NOYES**  
MUSEUM OF ART  
STOCKTON UNIVERSITY

## Education Guide

# From the Collection of the Noyes Museum of Art of Stockton University:

## *Purple Martin Palace*

The *Purple Martin Palace* was built in 1935 by Leslie Christofferson of Whiting, New Jersey. Born in 1909, he was a carpenter and blueberry farmer with a fondness for Purple Martins. This folk art masterpiece was originally displayed in his backyard on an eighteen foot pole.

The *Palace* has eight floors containing 112 “apartments” with individual verandas. Standing more than six feet high and four feet wide, it is built of cypress wood with a tin roof and weighs in at 500 pounds

The *Purple Martin Palace* is a form of folk art. Folk art originally began with artists who were trained in the passed-down traditions of their community. Contemporary folk artists are primarily self-taught or learned their craft from their elders. Most folk art is hand-made and is intended to be used, to add pleasure to daily life, and to preserve traditions. Folk art is important to all of us because it teaches us about our past.



Leslie Christofferson  
*Purple Martin Palace*, 1935  
Cypress wood, tin and paint  
On loan from the collection of the  
Noyes Museum of Art of Stockton University  
1992.002

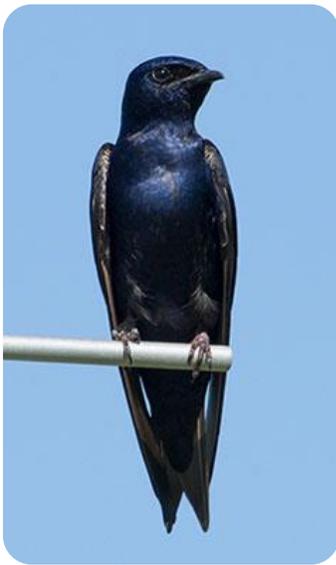
**For more information about The Noyes Museum of Art of Stockton University  
please visit our websites:**

**[www.noyesmuseum.org](http://www.noyesmuseum.org)  
[www.artsgarageac.com](http://www.artsgarageac.com)**

## What is a Purple Martin?



Purple Martin Female



Purple Martin Male

The Purple Martin is a bird that summers in New Jersey. The creator of the *Purple Martin Palace* referred to them as his “friends”. He would get to know “his” birds because the same ones came back year after year. In fact, it is true that once Purple Martins have nested at your site, they will return annually if the site is maintained.

Purple Martins are the largest member of the swallow family in North America. They measure 7.5 inches long and weigh in at 1.9 ounces. The adult males have iridescent, purple feathers covering their entire body, while adult females have purple coloring on their head and back with brown and grey feathers covering chest, belly, and undertail.

When the martins are not spending their summers nesting in New Jersey, they can be found in Brazil. When the martins are nesting, the pair-bond is monogamous. They work together to build their nest and to feed the young continuously for 26-32 days until they fledge. After that period, the young continue to rely on their parents for food and training for an additional one or two weeks.

Martins are aerial insectivores, which means they eat only flying insects that are caught in flight. Some of their diet includes dragonflies, moths, butterflies, flies, beetles, wasps, and occasionally mosquitoes.

For more information on the Purple Martin visit [www.purplemartin.org](http://www.purplemartin.org).



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