

MASTERPIECES  
of  
COLORADO  
A RICH LEGACY OF LANDSCAPE PAINTING



TIMELINE WITH ARTISTS BIOGRAPHIES

1804 Lewis and Clark explore the Louisiana Territory and Pacific Northwest

1804 Matthew Murray invents the steam locomotive

1805 Lt. Zebulon Montgomery Pike explores Colorado

1820 Major Stephen H. Long explores boundary of Louisiana Purchase, views Longs Peak

1826 Nicephore creates a permanent photographic image

1832 George Caitlin journeys to St. Louis and the Missouri Territory to record Native American Tribes

1832 Bent's Fort trading post built in southwestern Colorado

1837 Sir William Drummond Stewart retains Alfred Jacob Miller to record the American Fur Company rendezvous on the Green River, Wyoming. Miller arrives in the West just in time to record the last days of one of the most romantic periods in American history.

1840 John G. Rand invents the collapsible metal tube for artist's paints

1853-54 U.S. government sends six major surveys across the country. Among the artists traveling with these expeditions, John Mix Stanley joins General Isaac Steven's survey party headed for Washington Territory.

1858 Pikes Peak Gold Rush

1858 Albert Bierstadt joins government expedition commanded by General Frederick W. Lander to survey overland wagon route from Laramie, Wyoming to the Pacific Coast

1859 Ohioan, **John D. Howland** (1843-1914), caught up in the excitement of the gold rush, travels to Denver and is one of the first to discover gold in Clear Creek. Finding little to do in Denver, the next year Howland headed for Central City with another miner who could play the violin. The two could not find work that winter and almost died when Howland's attempts to sell paintings to bartenders fails. In desperation, he and his partner form a musical duo – Howland dances while his

friend plays the fiddle. They manage to make a few dollars singing in the miners' cabins. In 1886, Howland, who at this point has lived in Denver longer than any other artist, organizes the Denver Artist's Club and becomes its first president. However, due to violent disagreements, the club breaks up after a year.

1860 Inauguration of the Pony Express

1861 US Congress sets boundaries of Colorado territory

1861-1865 Civil War

1862 Homestead Act provides inexpensive land to settlers

1863 Albert Bierstadt meets William N. Byers, founder of the Rocky Mountain News, who serves as his guide through the mountains

1863 Major Wesley Powell climbs Longs Peak

1864 Congress establishes the Wilderness Act

1865 Fire breaks out in the Smithsonian Institution destroying all but five of John Mix Stanley's paintings from the westward surveys

1865 **Charles Stewart Stobie** (1845-1931) arrives in Colorado wanting to following in the footsteps of his idol, George Catlin. Stobie, who was born in Baltimore, Maryland, studied art in St. Andrews, Scotland and later worked in an architect's office before heading west as a member of a wagon train. On the way, hostile Indians attack the train three times, and Stobie is credited with killing seven. Word spreads and upon his arrival the Rocky Mountain News reports the story. According to Stobie, "From that time forward, I never wanted for employment, friends, or money in Colorado."

Mountain Charlie, as he is called, is one of the most colorful characters of the day and is perhaps better known as an Indian fighter, scout and buffalo hunter, but recognized locally as one of the best painters of the West. He counts among his friends such western luminaries as Buffalo Bill Cody, Kit Carson, Wild Bill Hickok, Jim Baker, and artist Fredrick Remington. Stobie often takes Remington on sketching trips to Ute Indian encampments. He lives mostly in Denver and Grand Lake or among the Utes, of whom he said, "Preferring the Indians companions, I gradually got into their ways, and on hunting trips became more and more enamored of this kind of life."

1867 Lucien B. Smith invents barbed wire thus ending the open range

1868 **Alexis Comparet (later Compera)** (1856-1906) arrives in Colorado City, the earliest settlement in the Colorado Springs area where he ekes out a living painting murals in bars. He spends the 1870s in Paris studying with Harvey Otis

Young and Benjamin Constant. He returns to America in 1882 and settles in Denver where he teaches at the Academy of Fine Arts Association of Colorado. He exhibits in the International Mining Exhibition in 1882, and his work is reviewed in national periodicals as well as the New York Times. He lives in Denver in obscurity until his old friend, Sarah Bernhardt, plays there making his landscapes fashionable overnight. He moves to California in 1906 and dies there a few months later. It is reported that he changed his name because of irritation over constant mispronunciation.

1869 Completion of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory Point, Utah, joining the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific railroads

1870 A.E. Mathews tries to form an artist colony in Canon City

1870's **Richard H Tallant** (1853-1934), born in Zanesville, Ohio, comes west as a young man to work in the Colorado mining camps. A self-taught artist, Tallant later becomes an active member of the Denver Art Club from 1886-1887. He travels widely throughout the West, painting the Grand Canyon, the Tetons, Mount Hood and many major peaks in Colorado. Tallant's genre paintings of Pueblo Indian life in New Mexico and of the Cripple Creek fire are of particular historical importance. After marrying, Tallant and his wife homestead at Devil's Gulch near Estes Park. Tallant is loved and respected by the townspeople, and serves as justice of the peace for many years, earning himself the title, "Judge Tallant". He is a favorite of one of Estes Park's most famous citizens, F.O. Stanley, owner of the Stanley Hotel, who commissions many paintings from the artist.

1871 **Thomas Moran** (1837-1926) joins the Ferdinand V. Hayden survey and travels to the West with the government expedition to upper Yellowstone River. His paintings help influence Congress to establish Yellowstone as the world's first national park. From this time on, the English born Moran devotes himself to painting western landscapes.

1871 **Helen Henderson Chain** (1849-1892) moves to Denver with her husband who has become a partner in the Chain and Hardy Bookstore. The store later serves as an exhibition venue for local artists. Born and raised in Indianapolis, Chain received her formal art training in Indianapolis and at the Jacksonville Seminary in Illinois. Chain meets fellow artist, Hamilton Hamilton in 1873, when he is on a sketching trip on the upper Arkansas River where the Chains have a summer camp. He encourages her in her painting. She later travels to Europe and is said to have spent a winter in New York studying with George Inness. In 1877, Chain opens her studio and gives classes, and counts among her students Charles Partridge Adams. In 1883, she becomes the first woman to sketch the Grand Canyon on location, as well as the first woman to paint the Mount of the Holy Cross, and she climbs many of the Colorado mountains, including Pikes Peak. She, with other artists such as Henrietta Bromwell, found the Le Brun Art Club, an organization that later helps establish the Artists' Club of Denver.

1871 **George Smillie** (1840-1921) comes to Colorado and the Yosemite Valley on a sketching trip along with Worthington Whittredge, and, though he was born and lived his entire life in New York, for many years after this trip he paints western scenes in watercolor and oil. Smillie grows up in an artistic family – his father is a printmaker who engraves Hudson River School landscapes, and his brother a noted painter. He becomes a pupil of James McDougal Hart, and from 1862-1900, exhibited at the National Academy of Design. He is elected to the Academy in 1882.

1874 **Thomas Moran** joins the Powell Survey, and makes his first trip into Colorado, creating sketches of the Mount of the Holy Cross. He had been unable to join the Hayden Survey team when it documented the mountain in 1873, but was aware of it through Jackson's photographs and Holmes' field sketches. His arrival in Denver creates quite a stir and seems to help stir special interest in the arts. In later years, Moran returns to Colorado many times. In 1881, he joins William Henry Jackson for an extended trip over the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad and its branches, sketching and photographing the landscape of the Arkansas Valley and Mosquito Pass, Tennessee Pass and other regions on their way back to Denver. In 1892, he joins Jackson in Denver for a return trip with his old friend to Yellowstone Park and the Devils Tower, Wyoming.

1876 Colorado becomes the 38<sup>th</sup> state

1876 **Charles Partridge Adams** (1858-1942) arrives in Colorado with his widowed mother and his sister, who was suffering from tuberculosis. His mother made the decision to move her two remaining children to Colorado with the hope that the dry climate would improve her family's health. Eventually he finds work at the Chain and Hardy Bookstore where he takes classes from Helen Henderson Chain. She gives Adams advice on his drawing and painting techniques, and introduces him to other local artists. In 1881, Adams travels with Alexander Phimister Proctor, with whom he shares a studio, to Grand Lake where the two spend three months camping and sketching in the mountains. In 1893, Adams established his first studio in Denver, and eventually works out an arrangement with the railroads to travel on a free pass to various areas of the state. He and a photographer friend are provided with their own car and cook in exchange for two paintings.

Adams marries in 1890 and the couple spends their honeymoon in Estes Park. He and his wife had always hoped of settling in Estes Park, and in July 1905, Adams opens his studio, "The Sketch Box", there. The family divides their time between Estes Park and Denver for a number of years.

1879 **Harvey Otis Young** (1840-1901) moves to Denver to look after his mining interests. Born in Post Mills, Vermont, Young attends the St. Johnsbury Academy, then later, art school in Boston. After serving in the Civil War, Young sails to California sketching and prospecting for gold. In the 1870s, he studies in Paris and exhibits in the Paris Salon of 1878, as well as in Munich. The next year, he returns

to the United States and establishes a home in Denver where he becomes involved with the most prominent people of the day. He is one of fourteen artists to establish the Artists Club of Denver, which evolved into the Denver Art Association, the precursor to the Denver Art Museum. After unsuccessful mining ventures nearly bankrupt him, he moves to Colorado Springs where he devotes himself to painting. General William J. Palmer, founder of Colorado Springs, reportedly gives Young a private railroad car to use as a studio and move around as he wishes. Young develops a distinct style and technique of using translucent watercolor or thin gouache under-painting and thick gouache or oil in the foreground.

1879 **Joseph Hitchins** (1838-1893) comes to Colorado. Born in England, Hitchins is the son of an avid art collector who gave his son an early education in art. As a boy, Hitchins visits nearly all the major galleries in Europe and later studies at the Dusseldorf School in Germany. Upon his father's death, Hitchins moves to Canada then to Pueblo, Colorado. He is the first artist to live in Pueblo and remains perhaps the town's best known. A tireless and rapid worker, Hitchins spends hours at a time in his studio, often forgetting to eat. His drive eventually causes a severe breakdown in his health, which leads to his early death at the age of fifty-five.

1879 Photographer William Henry Jackson moves to Denver and opens a studio

1879 Prominent author and illustrator Mary Halleck Foote makes her home in Leadville

1879 Charles Russell travels to Montana to work on a ranch

1880 Fredric Remington begins pictorial account of the West

1880 University of Denver starts its first art courses

1881 Ute tribes are moved onto reservations

1881 **Allan Tupper True** (1881-1955) is born of pioneer parents in Colorado Springs and later attends the University of Denver and the Corcoran School, Washington, D.C., where prominent illustrator Howard Pyle notices his talent and is admitted into Pyle's elite group of protégés. (17) He later studies under noted muralist Frank Brangwyn in London, and then settles in Denver where he receives numerous commissions painting historical murals in the city's public buildings. Among his best known murals is the rotunda of the State Capitol in Denver, which illustrates the history of the West in terms of its dependence upon water. His other murals can be found throughout Colorado and the West. A Fellow with the Royal Society, he also is an illustrator for *Scribner's*, *Harper's* and *Life Magazine*. As a Federal art consultant, he lays out color plans for the Hoover

Dam, the Grand Coulee, the Shasta and other projects.

1881 **Charles Craig** (1846-1931), best known for his western scenes and Indian portraits, adopts Colorado Springs as his home. An extremely prolific painter, Craig begins his career by sketching and painting Midwestern Indians near his parents' farm in Ohio and in surrounding states. He receives formal art training in Zanesville, Ohio, and at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, then returns to Ohio in 1874, where he opens a portrait studio, an art school, and exhibits his work.

He moves permanently to the West in 1881 and continues his landscape and portrait painting, making frequent trips to Indian reservations. He exhibits widely from the 1880's until about 1920, including major exhibitions in Denver, Minneapolis, Brooklyn, New York City, St. Louis, Pueblo, and Omaha. During his life, Craig is known as one of the more colorful characters of early Colorado Springs and is frequently written about in the local newspapers.

1881 **William H Bancroft** (1860-1932) establishes Bancroft Sign Company to make a living while he pursues his dream of landscape painting. Born on a farm in Derby, England, Bancroft wins a school prize in draughtsmanship, which entitles him to study at the Royal Academy in London. In 1875, when he was only fifteen, Bancroft runs away from his home, landing in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and immigrates a year later to Iowa. He then travels to Santa Fe, where he joins General George Crooks' scouts to pursue the Apaches. In 1877, Bancroft attends the St. Louis Art School for a short time then returns west to Leadville, Colorado where he paints murals and decorates public houses of the mining camps. When Thomas Moran visits Leadville on a sketching tour, Bancroft accompanies him.

During the 1890s, the boom days of Cripple Creek gold, Bancroft writes that he finds himself down on his luck, penniless and in debt. A wealthy New York merchant who annually visits Colorado Springs comes into Bancroft's studio and buys \$1,500 worth of regional landscape paintings, which he continues to do for another five years. Millionaire gold mine owner Winfield Scott Stratton later buys Bancroft's still-life painting *The Miner's Last Dollar*, eventually refusing an offer of ten times its original cost. Bancroft goes on to paint and exhibit nationally, and in 1924 the Santa Fe Railway commissions him to paint the Grand Canyon.

1882 Steel from Colorado ore is milled in Pueblo

1882 Denver hosts the National Mining and Industrial Exhibition organized and sponsored by H. A. W. Tabor, which includes the first art exhibition in Denver. Among the participants are Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, Hamilton Hamilton, Helen Chain, Charles Craig, and Charles Partridge Adams.

1890s **Leslie James Skelton** (1848-1929) a native of Montreal, Canada, moves to Colorado Springs and becomes a prominent member of the fledgling art

community. He launches the first exhibition of local artists in Perkins Hall, Colorado College upon its opening in 1900. Skelton becomes an important member of the Colorado Springs Art Society and one of the trustees of the Broadmoor Academy. A stained glass window he designed and executed remains today above the altar of Grace Episcopal Church in Colorado Springs.

1890 The United States Census Bureau declares the closing of the frontier

1892 **Helen Henderson Chain** and her husband drowned in the China Sea after a typhoon sinks the *S. S. Bokhara*, on which they had embarked as part of a two year trip around the world.

1898 **Elisabeth Spalding** (1868-1954), along with fellow artists, Henrietta Bromwell, Emma Richardson Cherry, and Anne Evans, and others, founds the Artists' Club of Denver, the forerunner of the Denver Art Museum. Spalding, who studied art in New York City at the Cooper Institute with Julian Alden Weir, then later at the Art Students' League, chiefly under Weir and Twachtman, exhibits her work at the Chicago Art Institute, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Salon Societe Nationale des Beaux Arts as well as the Denver Art Museum. She serves as chairman for the Church Art Commission of the Diocese of Colorado. In 1943, the City Club of Denver awards Spalding its Medal of Distinctive Achievement in painting.

1898 Artists Ernest Blumenschein and Bert Phillips arrive in Taos, New Mexico after their wagon wheel breaks, forcing them to stop there to have it repaired

1894 Colorado becomes the second state to extend suffrage to women

1900 Zeppelin flies his first dirigible

1900 Eastman introduces Kodak Brownie box roll-film camera

1904 N.C. Wyeth and Frank T. Johnson travel to Colorado on a magazine commission to experience and sketch life in the West

1906 **George Elbert Burr** (1859-1939) arrives in Denver with his wife, looking for a more healthful climate. Born in Monroe Falls, Ohio, Burr enjoys daily art instruction from his mother starting at the age of six. By the close of his career at the age of eighty, he has to his credit book illustrations, pencil, wash, and silver-point drawings, some fifty oil paintings, over a thousand watercolors, two thousand pen and ink drawings, and an amazing twenty-five thousand etchings pulled from his own presses.

1908 Henry Ford introduces the Model T

1909 Colorado first in nation with 2.7 million acres under irrigation

1915 **Charles Ragland Bunnell** (1897-1968) moves to Colorado Springs. Born in Kansas City, Bunnell, serves in World War I, then studies at the Broadmoor Academy from 1922 to 1923, then again with Ernest Lawson in 1927-28. He teaches at the Kansas City Art Institute for several summers starting in 1929, and paints and teaches under Federal projects from 1935 to 1941. He opens his studio in Colorado Springs in 1949. Throughout his lifetime, he receives numerous awards and recognition, and is one of fifty artists selected by the Chicago Art Institute for a traveling exhibition. He exhibits widely in the West, including the *West of the Mississippi* exhibitions at the Colorado Springs Fine Art Center and in the *Western Annual* at the Denver Art Museum.

1915 Taos Society organizes with founding members, Ernest Blumenschein, Bert Phillips, Joseph Henry Sharp, Eanger Irving Couse, and Oscar E. Berninghaus.

1915 Rocky Mountain National Park established by Congress

1916 Congress establishes National Park Service

1917-18 United States enters World War I

1919 Broadmoor Art Academy founded in Colorado Springs and opens in the residence donated by Spencer and Julie Penrose

1920 **John Fabian Carlson** (1875- 1945) becomes the first director of Broadmoor Art Academy. Born in Kolsebm, Sweden, Carlson immigrates with his family to Brooklyn, New York when he is ten. He is encouraged in his artistic training by his father, who hires a private tutor for him. Carlson later studies at the Buffalo Albright Art School then enrolls at the Art Students League. By 1906, Carlson becomes an assistant instructor at the Art Students League in Woodstock, where he later serves as director from 1911-1918. He founds the John F. Carlson School of Landscape Painting, which he directs from 1922-1938. Carlson makes his first trip west in 1920 to look at property available for the establishment of an art school in Colorado Springs. Carlson becomes a co-founder of the Broadmoor Art Academy and teaches there from 1920-1922.

1920 **Robert Reid** (1862-1929) teaches at Broadmoor Academy. Reid was born in Stockbridge, Massachusetts and studied at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Art Students League of New York and at the Academie Julien in Paris. He exhibits annually at the Paris Salon and is member of the National Academy. He paints murals at the World Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893 and at the Library of Congress as well as the State House in Boston, MA. In 1920, he is hired to teach figure drawing and painting at the Broadmoor Art Academy and remains there until 1927.

1922 Delos Chappell, an art patron, donates his house on Logan Street to the Denver Art Association. In 1923, the Chappell House becomes the first home of the new Denver Art Museum.

1923 **Frank Vavra** (1898-1967) moves to Denver. Vavra was born in St. Paul, Nebraska, grew-up in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and enlists in World War I in 1917. He is gassed in the Argonne Forest in France in the summer of 1918. While recuperating in Vichy, he uses painting as therapy, following a strong interest in drawing since childhood. Frank studies with Pilan, who had been a student of Claude Monet, thereby becoming further captivated with painting and deciding to make it his career.

He moves to Denver for serious art study in 1923 and enrolls in the Denver Art Academy from 1924 to 1926. He opens a studio where he paints landscapes, portraits and scenes from his youth in Wyoming. In 1928 he and his wife, Kathleen, move to Insmont, a small town near Bailey, Colorado. Frank teaches art at the University of Denver from 1944 to 1949. Nerve damage from World War I necessitates his convalescence in a Denver nursing home, where he dies in 1967.

1923-25 **Nellie Augusta Knopf** (1875-1962) takes a leave of absence as Director of the School of Fine Arts at McMurray College to paint Colorado. Born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, Knopf graduates from the Art Institute of Chicago, where she had studied with John Vanderpoel and Frederick Freer. Although she is deaf, she successfully directs the School of Fine Arts at the Illinois State Woman's College, later McMurray College, in Jacksonville, Illinois.

1923-24 **Sven Birger Sandzen** (1871-1954) teaches landscape painting at the Broadmoor Academy of Art. The son of a Lutheran minister, Sandzen was born in Blidsberg, Sweden, and studied with Anders Zorn and others in Sweden before moving to Paris to study. He graduates in 1890 from the College of Skara and becomes a student at the art school of Stockholm's Artists' League. In 1894, Sandzen immigrates to Kansas to teach aesthetics and painting at Bethany College in Lindsborg, and, except for brief sojourns elsewhere, he lives in Kansas for sixty years.

Sandzen first paints in the Colorado Springs area around 1916. He also teaches at Chappell House, forerunner to the Denver Art Museum, in 1925. Starting in 1918, he becomes a regular visitor to Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico, and in 1922 exhibits with the Taos Society of Artists in New York.

1924 **Raphael Lillywhite** (1891- 1958) moves to Walden, Colorado. Born in Woodruff, Arizona in 1891, Lillywhite is raised with his fourteen siblings in a Mormon family that operates a trading post along the Little Colorado River. His mother has high aspirations for him and so names her son after the famous artist, Raphael.

Educated in Mormon schools, Lillywhite graduates from the University of Utah,

then studies art with Gonzales and Ed Tigera in Sonora, Mexico. After marrying and settling near Walden, he paints scenes of ranch life. From 1940 to 1942, he works for the Denver Museum of Natural History (now the Denver Museum of Nature and Science) painting backgrounds for bird and mammal exhibits.

1927 **Ernest Lawson** (1873-1939) becomes director of landscape painting at the Broadmoor Academy. Lawson teaches at the Broadmoor Art Academy in Colorado Springs during the summers from 1927-1930, and paints mountain landscapes and mining towns. Lawson is one of the members of the group of artists popularly identified as representing the American avant-garde in the early years of the twentieth century. This group, known as "The Eight," contributes to the development of the American art movement known as the Ashcan School.

Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, (although some biographies list his place of birth as San Francisco), Lawson moves with his family to Kansas City, Missouri in 1888, where he studies briefly at the Kansas City Art League School, then to Mexico City with his family in 1889 where he continues his studies at the San Carlos Academy. By 1890, Lawson has moved to New York and resumes his studies at the Art Students League under John Henry Twachtman.

1928 **Vance Kirkland** (1904-1981) becomes founding director of the University of Denver, School of Art. Born in Convoy, Ohio, Kirkland graduates from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1927, receiving his B.E.A. in Art, before accepting a position in Denver. He is one of the original members of the Denver Artists Guild in 1928, and opens the University School of Art in 1929. He, along with others, rebel against the conservative restraints of the *Denver Artists Guild* in 1948 and form *15 Colorado Artists*. Their first show is given alongside the *Guild* at the Denver Art Museum that same year. Kirkland is a highly respected educator for forty-one years, holding key positions including Curator at the Denver Art Museum for 24 years (1942-1965) and remains an innovative painter over fifty-six years until his death in 1981.

Of his landscape painting, Kirkland stated, "Every time, from the earliest paintings I did, even of Red Rocks, I had to change nature in order to be more concerned with the importance of the painting, rather than the importance of the landscape. Maybe that is the basis of all the work I have done"

1930s The Great Depression

1933 Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal policies transform the West

1933 Work begins on the new Fine Art Center in Colorado Springs located on the old Penrose property. The Center opens in 1936.

1935 – Forty Federal Arts Projects are completed in Colorado

1936 Kodak develops Kodachrome multi-layer color film

1941-1945 U.S. enters World War II

1964 Congress establishes Wilderness Act

1970s Re-emergence of realism as accepted painting mode