Louis Betts was a painter, born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on October 5th, 1873. His father was a landscape painter and his mother was also an artist. At an early age his father E. D. Betts, Sr., encouraged him in his love of pictorial art and was his first instructor. When he was fourteen years old he painted his first portrait, for which he received instruction on the violin, his favorite instrument. Painting and music became his "vocation and avocation" for the rest of his life.

He later became a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art under William Merritt Chase who encouraged him to become an Impressionist. He won a traveling scholarship, which gave him his first trip to Europe. Louis Betts became known as a successful portrait painter of the time in Chicago, New York, London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Madrid.

It was said of one of his portraits: "of Scott Libby, Jr., a handsome lad, is regarded as a perfect representation of American childhood and also as one of his finest achievements. Another critic wrote: "His grasp of character and essentials is revealed in a broad and dashing manner He is a painter's painter in the truest meaning whose work will never appeal to connoisseurs." At the time many of his portraits went on to attain national prominence including: "Michael Cudahy," "Ella Flagg Young," and D. Thomas Wakefield Goodspeed of the Chicago University. He was also known for genre, portraits, landscapes, still lifes, flowers Gardens, nudes, and Indians.

Betts was elected an associate member of the National Academy of Design in 1912, he became a full Academician in 1915. He was also a member of the Academy of National Arts, 1912. He is represented in various museums and institutions in the United States. He spent time at the Impressionists' art colony at Old Lyme, Connecticut. He passed away in 1961.