

Charles Craig

Charles Craig (1846-1931) was inspired by Western and Indian life. His paintings were characterized by detailed accuracy of Indian life, gained from several years spent living with various tribes.

Craig was born in 1846 on a farm in Morgan County, Ohio. He began painting as a boy, creating his palette from natural materials and canvases made from oil and flour treated cotton cloths. His nickname was Pink Faced Charlie as he was always sunny and optimistic and so were his paintings.

At the age of 19 in 1865, Craig traveled West as far as Fort Benton, Montana, where he lived with Indian tribes for four years. It was during this time that Craig realized he needed to further his technical skills in order to record his experiences accurately. He returned to Ohio and set up a studio where he painted portraits to earn enough money to finance his art education.

Craig studied for a year at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He then went on to work with Peter Moran, brother of Thomas Moran, both of who were accomplished painters. In 1881, Craig moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado where he resided for the next 50 years. He was one of the first resident artists in that resort community. He was also the first major Western artist to paint in Taos, NM in 1881 and 1883.

In Colorado Springs, he set up a studio and supplemented his income by giving art lessons. Craig's paintings during this period were literal and reflected his frequent trips to the Ute reservation in Southwestern Colorado. Craig exhibited regularly in the town's Antlers Hotel, and a fire there in 1895 destroyed many of his works. Others are exhibited in private collections throughout the United States and Europe.

Craig died in Colorado Springs in 1931.

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