

Charles Adams

Young Adams moved to Denver from Massachusetts in 1876 at the age of 18. A year later he began working at the Chain and Hardy bookstore, where he received encouragement for his artistic interests from Helen Henderson Chain, who had been a pupil of the noted artist, George Inness. A three-month camping trip in the Rockies with another young artist in 1881 resulted in numerous sketches and paintings. In 1885 he traveled to the east coast, and visited the studios of George Inness and Worthington Whittredge, and the following year he visited the California studios of William Keith and Thomas Hill. Though not isolated from other artists, Adams was largely self-taught, experimenting with different styles and techniques, continuing to use those that best served his vision and his subject matter.

His paintings were first exhibited publicly in Denver in 1886, and he exhibited work in both local and national shows through 1908. In 1893 Adams established his first Denver studio, and began to paint watercolors in addition to oils. Since watercolors were less expensive, they sold readily, and from that time on Adams painted many watercolors in addition to oils. It is unusual for an artist to be competent in both mediums; Adams was a happy exception.

In 1900 he began renting a studio in Estes Park during the summer months, and in 1905 he built a studio there called "the Sketchbox" on Fish Creek Road, a building which stood until 2003, when it was demolished for a development. Many paintings were purchased there by visitors to nearby Rocky Mountain National Park, and taken home to all parts of the country. He was so successful that by the end of the summer he was able to pay off the cost of building "The Sketchbox" and the land upon which it stood.

Besides traveling extensively in the Colorado Rockies, he traveled to New Mexico, Arizona, Wyoming--where he painted the Tetons and Yellowstone, Montana--where he painted Glacier National Park, and British Columbia. An earlier trip to Louisiana in 1890 and a trip to Europe in 1914 resulted in a few paintings.

In 1917 Adams became quite ill and spent the winter in Los Angeles. He purchased a home there in 1920, and purchased a second home in Laguna Beach in 1926. Since paintings of the Colorado mountains were not in demand in California, he primarily painted coastal scenes and a few of the California mountains, continuing to paint some Colorado scenes from memory for sale in Colorado. In California Adams never achieved the success he had enjoyed in Colorado, though he continued to paint until his death in 1942.

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