

# Landscape Artists in the White Mountains in the 1800's

BY: BOB MCLAUGHLIN

In the 19th Century, American landscape artists came into their own. These early artists focused on romantic portrayals of dramatic landscapes, and the White Mountains provided exactly the type of landscape they were seeking. Unlike the European romantic landscape artists of the period, American landscape artists avoided representations of mythical figures or classical ruins and focused on dramatic portrayals of nature featuring dramatic geographic features including mountains, cliff faces and waterfalls painted with lush colors and dramatic atmospheric effects. In fact, features in their paintings appear to glow. To a large extent, American landscape art represented a rejection of the industrial revolution and urban blight and sought to recapture a bucolic world that was passing away.

## Three examples of Thomas Cole's early White Mountain Paintings



*Top: **View in the White Mountains** (1827) part of the collection of the Wadsworth Athenaeum Museum of Art*

*Lower Left: **Peace at Sunset (Evening in the White Mountains)** (1827) part of the collection of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco*

*Lower Right: **Autumn Twilight, View of Conway Peak (Mount Chocorua), New Hampshire** (1834) part of the collection of the NY Historical Society*

## Thomas Cole

The first of the American landscape artists of note was Thomas Cole (1801-1848). Cole was born in Bolton le Moor, England, and emigrated with his family in 1818 to the United States. After working for a brief time as a designer for calico prints and an engraver, Cole was introduced to oil painting by an itinerant portrait painter named Stein who lent him an instructional book. Cole was sold on oil painting.

Cole moved to Philadelphia in 1822 where he worked at perfecting his drawing and took classes at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. In 1825, Cole moved with his family to Catskill, New York in where he took an extended sketching tour up the Hudson River valley and into the Catskill Mountains. In 1828, Cole visited New Hampshire on a trip recommended by a patron, Daniel Wadsworth. On this trip Cole sketched and climbed Chocorua. Cole returned the next year, and later in life described the experience as: “[I]n the mountains of New Hampshire there is a union of the picturesque, the sublime, and the magnificent; there the bare peaks of granite, broken and desolate, cradle the clouds; while the [valleys] and broad bases of mountains rest under the shadow of noble and varied forests.” While most of Cole’s landscapes portrayed the the Hudson River valley and the Catskills, and he is recognized as the founder of the Hudson River School of landscape painting, his visits to the White Mountains resulted in some notable paintings.

**In addition to painting the White Mountains, Thomas Cole also painted the lakes region south of the Whites.**



*Top: **View on Lake Winnipiseogee [sic]** (1828) part of the collection of the Wadsworth Athenaeum*

*Bottom: **Lake Winnepesaukee** (1827) part of the collection of the Albany Institute of History & Art*

Consistent with typical practice in the early Nineteenth Century, Thomas Cole sketched in black and white (pencil, pen and ink or charcoal) in the field and made notes and then used these sketches and notes and his recollections to paint in his studio. This approach allowed him to accurately depict structures of the mountains, cliffs, trees, streams and lakes and other physical elements in the landscape,

**Thomas Cole in his later paintings reflected the increased domestication of the wilderness.**



Top: *A View of the Mountain Pass called the Notch of the White Mountains (Crawford Notch)* (1839) shows the clearing of the forests to make way for a farm and stumps of the trees that were cut while capturing the wilderness beyond. This painting is part of the collection of the National Gallery of Art.

Left: *The Hunter's Return* (1845) part of the collection of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art.

Bottom: *Home in the Woods* (1847) part of the collection of the Reynolda House, Museum of Art.

but also encouraged the use of exaggerated color and atmospheric effects that appealed to the art collectors of the time. Cole also used the sketches as source material for multiple paintings.

Thomas Cole and the other painters of the Hudson River School were greatly influenced by developing attitudes about wilderness in the early nineteenth century. Together with the poets and novelists of the Romantic Period, the painters portrayed the beauty of wild places in contrast to representations in the prior periods that considered wilderness to be frightening and dangerous or even evil. Instead of a source of evil, Cole tried to portray the beauty of the wilderness as the gift of a beneficent God.

As time went by and the impact of man on the wilderness became more apparent, Thomas Cole reflected the change in his paintings. For example, in his 1827 painting, *Peace at Sunset*, a deer is represented on a ledge but there is no sign of humankind or their works, while in the 1839 *A View of the Mountain Pass called the Notch of the White Mountains* the foreground is occupied by a cleared field with stumps and further back two structures are apparent together with a mounted horseman. By 1845 the subject of the painting *The Hunter's Return* is a prosperous small farm and a group of men returning from a successful hunt with the landscape reduced to picturesque background. A little later, in 1847, the primary subject in Cole's *Home in the Woods* is a cabin and the mountains are relegated to a distant backdrop.

**Thomas Cole also produced many allegorical paintings departing from but greatly influenced by his landscape paintings.**



Top: *The Voyage of Life* was a four part series of allegorical paintings by Thomas Cole originally completed in 1840 in which the voyager is accompanied by his guardian angel throughout life. The panels are *Childhood*, *Youth*, *Manhood*, and *Old Age*. Two versions of the paintings exist; the 1840 version is part of the collection of the Munson-Williams Arts Institute and the 1842 version is in the National Gallery.

Above: *The Titan's Goblet* (1833) is part of the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This painting is particularly enigmatic and has been described a "defying explanation" by the Metropolitan Museum.



Thomas Cole was drawn to allegorical paintings as well as landscapes and he created series of allegorical landscape paintings such as *The Course of Empire* which represented the same landscape as it was developed, at the height of development and in ruins, or *The Voyage of Life* which represents a figure traveling through a landscape in a boat as a young man, in his maturity and as an old man. A study of Cole's work demonstrates the cross influences of his landscape and allegorical paintings.

Thomas Cole's home and studio in Catskill, NY, which he named Cedar Grove, is listed as a National Historical Location and is open to the public. ([www.thomascole.org](http://www.thomascole.org))

### **Albert Bierstadt**

Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902) was a member of the second generation of the Hudson River School who painted the White Mountains. Bierstadt was born in Prussia but his family emigrated to Massachusetts when he was one year old. His brothers, Edward and Charles were noted early photographers, but Albert was drawn to oil painting. Bierstadt painted many scenes of the White Mountains but is probably best recognized for his paintings of Yosemite valley and the Rockies.

Bierstadt was drawn to the grandeur of the White Mountains as was Cole. However, he avoided the allegorical allusions that Cole embraced and his choice of color was more restrained and realistic particularly in his later paintings. Bierstadt was drawn to the ridges of Franconia Notch and it is easy to recognize in many of his paintings the familiar view of the Notch that drivers on I-93 can enjoy while driving through Franconia Notch.

**Albert Bierstadt's early work was similar to the paintings of Thomas Cole.**



*Top: **Mount Lafayette, Franconia Notch** (1862) The color and light of the painting is very reminiscent of Cole's work.*

*Left: **The Emerald Pool, Pinkham Notch** (1870) uses lush colors and romantic color typical of Cole's paintings.*

*Right: **Echo Lake, Franconia Notch** (1861)*

The artists discussed in this article typically sketched their subjects in the field but returned to their studios to create their paintings. The paintings of Cole and Bierstadt reflect the sentiment of the 1800s which glorified the wild beauty of the American landscape and man's place in it. Landscapes portrayed a pastoral setting in which people and the environment coexist, but the landscape dominates. The American landscape painters relied on the drama of the landscape itself particularly the White Mountain landscape. The style valued a realistic and detailed portrayal of nature although it is frequently highly idealized and over dramatized.

**Bierstadt painted Eagle's Cliff from Lafayette Place multiple times.**



*Top: **Eagle Cliff from Lafayette Place, Franconia Notch***

*Bottom: **Eagle Cliff from Lafayette Place***

While the term "Hudson River School" was coined to disparage the artists of the movement, it came to be a badge of honor which hid the breadth of the artists fields of work. Specifically, while the roots of the school were in the Hudson Valley of New York many significant paintings by the artists were set in other locales including the White Mountains.

It is interesting to study their paintings of the White Mountains and compare them to the same viewpoints today. Next time you visit the locations represented in these paintings, I suspect knowing the paintings will give you an even greater appreciation of the beauty you experience.

If you are interested in studying these paintings, they are available on the Chapter website on the Mountain Passages page or you might visit the White Mountain Artists website (<https://www.whitemountainart.com/>)

We will continue the story of painters in the White Mountains in the Winter Issue.

# Landscape Artists in the White Mountains in the 1800s: Part II

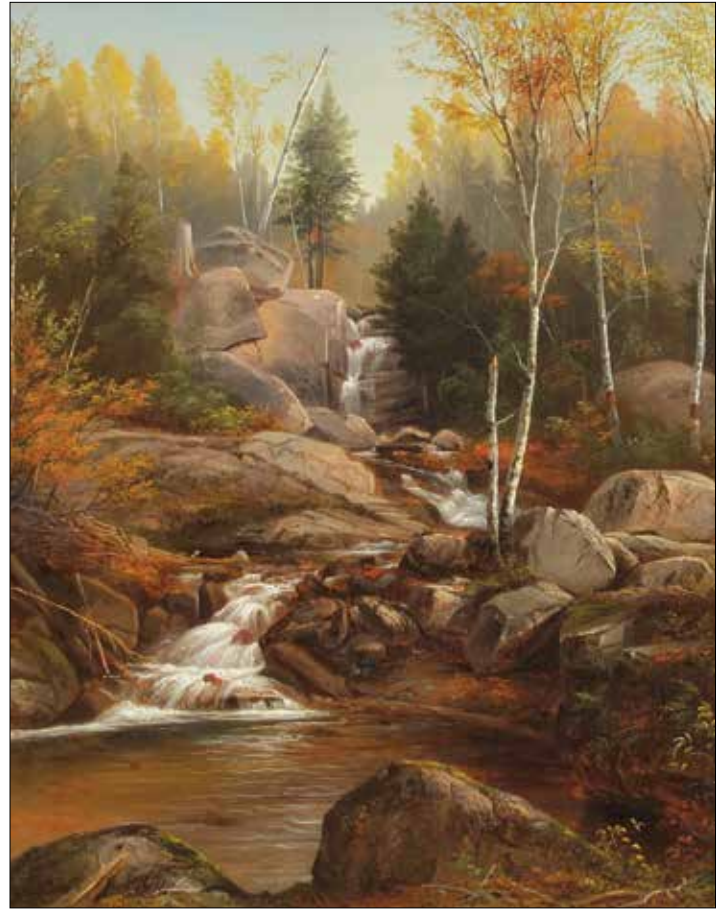
BY: BOB MCLAUGHLIN

In the Fall Issue of *Mountain Passages*, we began a review of the landscape artists of the Nineteenth Century who painted in the White Mountains. The first article discussed the lives and works of Thomas Cole and Albert Bierstadt. While both of these painters worked in the White Mountains, their primary focuses were the Hudson River Valley and the Catskills. In this issue, we continue our exploration with later landscape painters who were based in the White Mountains.

## Benjamin Champney

Benjamin Champney (1817-1907) was the first artist who dedicated most of his works to the White Mountains. Born in New Ipswich, NH, Champney became a lithographic illustrator and portrait painter as a young man and eventually saved enough to study and paint in Europe. Champney traveled to France in 1841. After returning to the United States briefly in 1846, Champney returned to Europe and painted a massive Panorama of the Rhine which established his reputation as a painter and provided a source of income. The panorama was exhibited in Worcester, MA, New Haven, CT and New York City. Unfortunately, the painting was destroyed in a fire in the Crystal Palace in New York in 1857.

Champney first visited Conway in the White Mountains in 1838, and returned in 1850. Champney ultimately chose to make North Conway his summer home for over 50 years. Thereafter, except for a painting trip to Germany and Switzerland in 1854, Champney focused on painting in the White Mountains. In 1853, Champney married and he and his wife purchased a house between Conway and North Conway.



*Artist Falls and Brook in Autumn* painted in 1857 captures a cascade emptying into a placid pool.



*Champney sketched in the field to develop his compositions and then returned to the studio to paint. His workflow is demonstrated in the sketch in pencil and finished painting of Chocura.*



*Champney frequently focused on smaller elements in the landscape rather than the sweeping panoramas. Big Boulder captures the beauty of an erratic and surrounding vegetation that is typical of trailsides throughout the White Mountain trails.*



Champney's studio became a popular social gathering point with his most recent works displayed. Ultimately, Champney's studio became the epicenter of a North Country Colony of painters and other artists, and Champney painted the White Mountains extensively. Consistent with his previous work as a lithographer, Champney reproduced many of his most popular paintings as chromolithographs (colored lithographs), which could be reproduced and sold to tourists who could not afford to buy the original paintings.

In addition to providing a center for art in the White Mountains, Champney was active in the Boston art scene and was one of the founders of Boston Art Club and served on a triumvirate of joint presidents of the Club when it was created in 1854.

Champney Falls on Mount Chocura is named after Benjamin Champney as is Champney Place on Beacon Hill in Boston. As with earlier artists in the White Mountains, Benjamin Champney would sketch in the field, and then return to the studio to complete the painting on large stretched canvas. As an example, a field sketch in pencil and finished painting of Chocura appears on page 4.

Champney departed from earlier landscape painters in the Whites by his focus on smaller elements in addition to the grand landscapes. For example, his Big Boulder captures the beauty of an erratic and surrounding vegetation that is typical of trailsides throughout the White Mountain trails. As another example, Artist Falls and Brook in Autumn painted in 1857 captures a cascade emptying into a placid

pool. That said, Champney was also drawn to capturing the grand views. For example, Crawford Notch from Mount Willard beautifully captures the spectacular view that most of us have enjoyed, and his paintings of Cathedral Ledge and Echo Lake captured the beauty the lake near Conway in the twilight.

### Edward Hill

Another prominent artist of the White Mountains was Edward Hill (1843-1923). Hill was born in Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, England in December 1843 and his family moved to the United States the next year finally settling in Gardner, MA, in 1860. Hill married Sarah Loria Brown in 1869. In 1870, Hill set up a studio in Bethlehem, and then in 1874 moved to Littleton, NH. Beginning in 1877, Hill was the "artist in residence" at the Profile House in Franconia Notch for about fifteen years. During his time as artist in residence, Hill maintained his studio at the hotel during the season, and established a gallery to sell his paintings to guests.



*Edward Hill maintained his studio for years at the Profile House at the northern end of Franconia Notch and focused on painting in the Notch.*

*Top: Hill, Eagle Cliff from Profile Lake demonstrates that Hill could also paint in vibrant colors.*

*Bottom: Hill captured the view that many of us have enjoyed driving north on I-93 but did it before the interstate changed the foreground landscape. Hill, Franconia Notch from North Woodstock. Hill's choice of pigments in this painting are more subdued and realistic than many other artists painting at the time.*



*Top: Champney also painted expansive spectacular landscapes. Top: Autumn Landscape with Waterfall (1878) is an expansive view of Franconia Notch.*

*Bottom: Champney beautifully captured the spectacular view from Mt Willard which most of us have enjoyed.*

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While the artist in residence at the Profile House, Hill concentrated on painting in the area of the hotel. After about fifteen years at the Profile House, Hill moved his studio to the Glen House (1884), then the Waumbek Hotel (1885), the Flume House (1894), Nashua (1895 to 1898) and New Boston (1899 to 1901). Subsequently, Hill left the White Mountains for the mountains of the western United States.

Hill was a prolific painter, but his work often suggests that he was attempting to cater to the clientele that frequented the White Mountain hotels. His paintings are smaller (typically no more than 26 inches by 18 inches) suitable for display in a typical dining room or parlor in the home of a prosperous family in contrast to the six foot canvases painted by artists like Thomas Cole. Hill also tended to be repetitive in composition, and more sentimental. Nevertheless, Hill's paintings were carefully constructed and worthy of attention.

In addition to painting, Hill established himself as a poet, songwriter and newspaper correspondent. While Hill was financially successful and acclaimed in his earlier years, his later years were filled with disappointment. After he moved to Hood River, Oregon, he had increasing difficulty finding buyers for his work. Hill died in Oregon in 1923 and was buried in an unmarked grave. Sixty years after his death, a collector of his paintings, Robert A. Goldberg, arranged for a marker reading "Edward Hill, 1843 1923, ARTIST" to be placed on his grave.

#### **Samuel Lancaster Gerry**

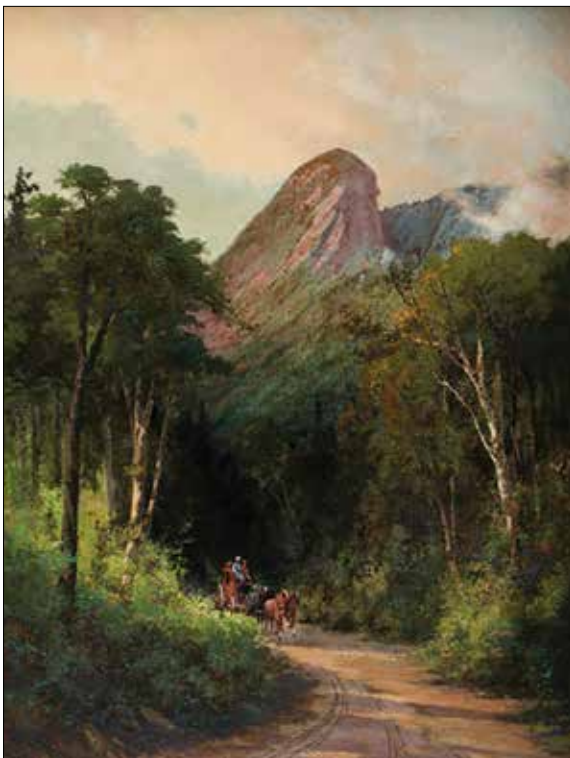
Samuel Lancaster Gerry (1813-1891) was born in Boston on May 10, 1813. Although Gerry had no formal art training, he had a wealth of experience and was partner in a Boston sign and ornamental painting business with artist James Burt from 1834 to 1839. Prior to 1834, Gerry had exhibited paintings in Boston. In 1835, Gerry visited the White Mountains. The following year, Gerry married Martha Caroline Jewett and produced his first dated painting of the White Mountains, a scene in Jackson, NH. Subsequently, while continuing to paint scenes around Boston, Gerry painted

extensively in the White Mountains and the Lake District. In fact, for over 60 years Gerry spent at least part of each summer in the White Mountains or Lake District. However, unlike Benjamin Champney, Gerry apparently stayed in rented accommodations and changed his base of operations throughout the years.

Unlike the earlier painters of the White Mountains who were romantics who idealized the grandeur of the landscapes in their paintings, Gerry sought to more realistically capture his subjects. Throughout these years, Gerry was a member of the thriving artistic community in the Whites that critiqued and supported each other's work. Gerry in his paintings tended to focus on the foreground of his compositions either placing his subjects in a secluded scene such as a forest, or if the scene was more open, the expansive panorama was frequently reduced to a backdrop. These tendencies are not apparent in all of Gerry's work but become more pronounced in Gerry's later work.

#### **Final Thoughts**

When studying paintings of these artists, it is interesting to remember that as they were painting idyllic White Mountain landscapes, lumbering was already devastating the very landscapes they idealized. To a large extent, the artists, particularly the second generation of artists, were recreating an idyllic vision of what they dreamed had been rather than what was. This creative decision likely reflected their artistic preference, but also clearly reflected the preference of their potential clientele. Through this choice, the artists also fostered public appreciation of the beauty and value of the untrammeled landscapes of the White Mountains. This appreciation greatly influenced the decisions to protect the environment that led to the protection of our forests and environment by government and private groups.



*Being based at the Profile House, Hill painted many views of the prominent face of Eagle Cliff.*

*Left: Eagle Cliff, Franconia Notch (1886).*

*Right: Eagle Cliff from Profile Lake 1885.*



While writing this article, I became painfully aware of the many worthy artists I have omitted. I would encourage you to explore the other artists of the White Mountains. You may wish to explore the White Mountain Art & Artists website (<https://www.whitemountain-art.com>) authored by John J. Henderson and Roger E. Belson from which we have obtained many of the images we use in these articles. In addition, many other websites dedicated to White Mountain artists

can be found by a search in your favorite web search engine. Explore! You will be amply rewarded.

In the next issue of Mountain Passages, we will continue our review of the painters of the White Mountains focusing on the next generation of artists who painted in the Whites including Winslow Homer, William Trost Richards, and Susie M. Barstow.



*Left: "Gerry, Artist's Brook, (1858)." The cows in the stream are the focus of this painting together with the rough surfaces of the trees. The background is reduced to less distinct shapes. Samuel Lancaster Gerry tended to focus his attention on the foreground of his paintings.*

*Right: "Eagle Cliff from Profile Lake, Franconia Notch." Gerry's view Eagle Cliff almost has an impressionistic feel.*

*Bottom: "Gerry, Fishing on Echo Lake, Franconia Notch" contains more detail in the lake's shore and the boats on the lake.*



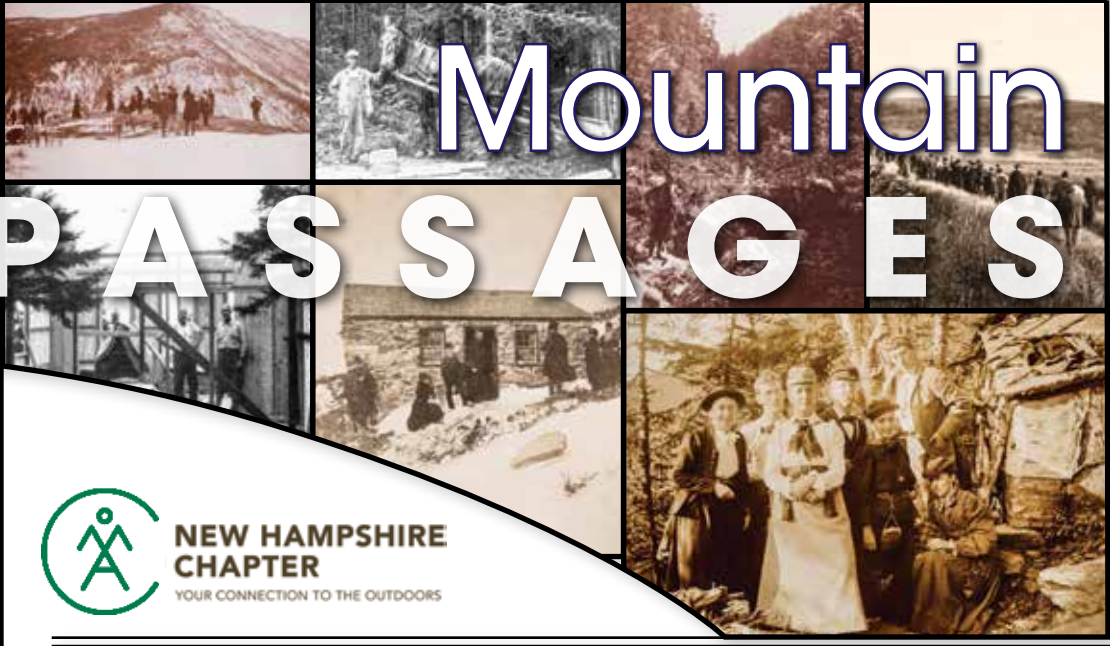
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# Mountain PASSAGES



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## Landscape Artists in the White Mountains in the 1800s (Part III)

BY: BOB MCLAUGHLIN

In the Fall Issue of *Mountain Passages*, we began a review of the landscape artists of the Nineteenth Century who painted in the White Mountains. The first article discussed the lives and works of Thomas Cole and Albert Bierstadt. This review continued with consideration of the lives and work of Benjamin Champney, Edward Hill, and Samuel Lancaster Gerry. In this issue of *Mountain Passages*, we continue our review of the painters of the White Mountains focusing on the next generation of artists who painted in the Whites including Winslow Homer, William Trost Richards, and Susan M. Barstow.

### Winslow Homer

Winslow Homer (1836-1910) is considered one of the greatest American painters of the Nineteenth Century. Born and raised in Boston, MA, Homer initially was trained in print making and moved to New York City in 1859. Homer became the front editor and design chief for Harper's Weekly. He became one of the most prominent illustrators of the Civil War focusing his work on portrayals of soldiers and camp life in addition to representations of combat.

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## OUR MISSION

The Appalachian Mountain Club is the nation's oldest outdoor recreation and conservation organization, and promotes the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters and trails of the Appalachian region. AMC has more than 100,000 members, 16,000 volunteers, 450 full-time and seasonal staff. The New Hampshire Chapter is the second largest of the 12 Chapters within the Club.

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Homer, Winslow; Artists Sketching in the White Mountains (1869)



## Artists in the Whites from page 1

Following the end of the war, Homer turned his attention to rural scenes but continued to focus on people in the landscape. He also portrayed the landscape as it was, rather than seeking to idealize it as earlier artists had. While well respected for his massive oil paintings, starting at the comparatively late age of 37, Homer transitioned to painting primarily in transparent water color. Homer visited and painted in many regions including the English coastal villages, Hudson River Valley, the Maine seacoast and the Bahamas. It has been noted that Homer started his art by portraying the horrors of the Civil War and as he aged sought to recapture an idealized version of bucolic life before the war. That said, many of his later paintings maintained a biting sense that things were not all ideal.



While Homer's painting of the White Mountains was limited, it is significant particularly when considered together with his work in the nearby Adirondack mountains. Homer first portrayed the White Mountains in an engraved print in Harper's Weekly published on July 10, 1869. The *Summit of Mount Washington* showed two women on horseback reaching the summit and more horses and tourists beyond them with the view from the summit and the landscape in the distance reduced to mere background. Later that year, Homer painted an oil painting of the same scene Homer, Winslow; *Mt Washington* (1869) changing the focus to the pack horses without riders but retaining the two female riders in the background. Another painting *The Bridle Path, White Mountains*, portrays the female riders on a lower stretch of the Crawford Path on their way to the summit. In another painting on page 1, Homer portrays a scene of artists painting en plein air on what appears to be the summit of Moosilauke. Notably, unlike the artists we have discussed up to this point, it is clear Homer's primary interest is the people in the landscape and not the landscape itself although his paintings also successfully capture the atmosphere of place.



Homer returned to portraying the mountains of the Northeast thirty years later in the 1890s but this time he was based in the Adirondacks. While set in the Adirondacks, his paintings from this period reflect the conditions in the White Mountains as well. They also demonstrate his mastery of water colors. For example, *The Woodcutter* painted in 1891 presents a lone powerful figure in silhouette against a threatening sky painted in Payne's Gray. The woodcutter surveys an unbroken forest which soon will be lumbered. Homer balances the heroic figure of the woodsman against landscape that soon will be despoiled. In another painting of the same year, *Huntsman and Dogs*, Homer presents us with the figure of a young hunter making his way across a slope that has recently been logged. Unlike earlier painters who painted idealized scenes of landscapes before they were impacted by man, Homer focuses on the landscape as it was and how it was used.



Top left: Homer, Winslow; *The Summit of Mt Washington* an engraving from the July 10, 1869 issue of *Harpers Weekly* from the collection of *The Art Institute of Chicago*.

Bottom left: Homer, Winslow; *The Bridle Path, White Mountains* from the collection of the *Clark Art Institute*.

Top right: Homer, Winslow; *Mount Washington* (1869)

Lower right: Homer, Winslow; *The Woodcutter* (1891)



In *Campfire, Adirondacks*, Homer portrays an old guide sitting before his campfire deep in the woods. This scene contrasts with an earlier engraving by Homer that appeared in the June 25, 1870 issue of Appleton's Journal, *A Quiet Day in the Woods* which shows a dandified couple, clearly tourists, lounging on the forest floor reading a newspaper. Finally, not all of Homer's paintings focused on people. For example, his 1892 painting, *North Woods Club, Adirondacks, The Interrupted Tete a Tete* is a beautiful mountain landscape suggesting the presence of man only by the alerted pair of deer.

Winslow Homer has been one of my favorite artists since I was privileged to repeatedly visit a special exhibition of his watercolors at the National Gallery in Washington DC. I encourage you to explore his many works including his watercolors. You will be amply rewarded.

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Top left: Homer, Winslow; *Campfire, Adirondacks* (1892) from the collection of The Art Institute of Chicago;

Bottom: Homer, Winslow; *North Woods Club, Adirondacks (The Interrupted Tete-a-Tete)* (1892) from the collection of The Art Institute of Chicago;

Top right: Homer; Winslow, *A Quiet Day in the Woods* published June 25, 1870 in *Appleton's Journal* from the collection of The Art Institute of Chicago.

Center right: Homer, Winslow; *Huntsman and Dogs* (1891) from the collections of [www.winslowhomer.com](http://www.winslowhomer.com).





### **William Trost Richards**

William Trost Richards (1833-1905) was born in Philadelphia, PA on November 14, 1833. Richards was a recognized member of the Hudson River School and was introduced to the public when his works appeared in an exhibition in New Bedford, MA in 1858. However, unlike other Hudson River School artists, Richards favored painting in the relatively new medium of transparent watercolor. In the 1870s, Richards' work concentrated on landscape painting in the White Mountains.

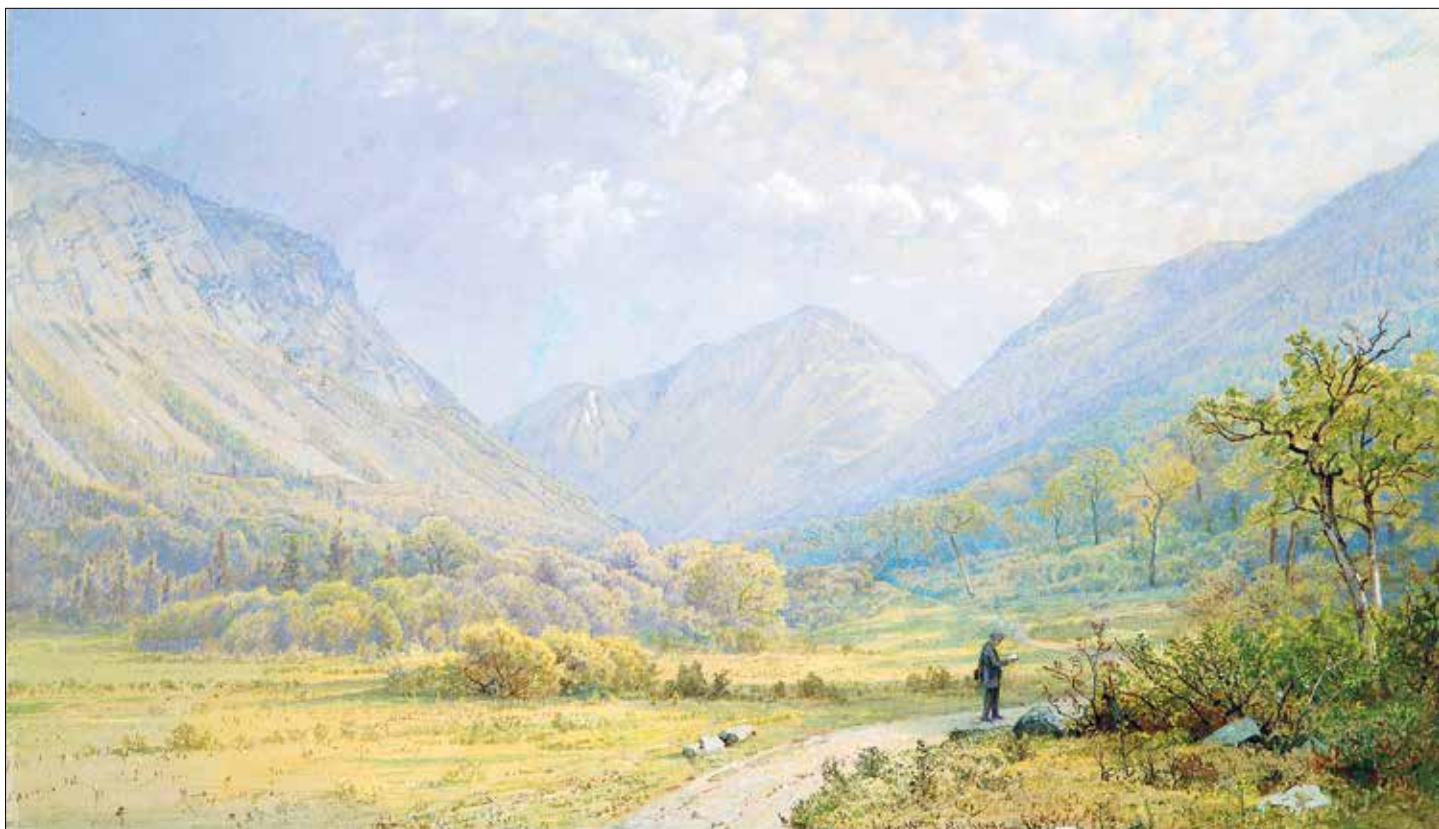
Richards eschewed the romanticism and stylized approach of other artists painting in the White Mountains preferring instead to capture in almost photographic accuracy the landscapes before him. I became familiar with William Trost Richards when an instructor for a Museum of Fine Arts' course I was taking referred me to his 1872 painting *Franconia Notch*. In *Franconia Notch* Richards' captured the view of the Notch from near Lafayette Place when it was an open field and the only way through was on a dirt road. As a student

watercolorist, I was struck by Richards mastery of detail in his drawing and power of the image he achieved with a very limited palette. Richards' painting led me to continue my research into the artists of the White Mountains and thus was the genesis of this series of articles. Richards' attention to detail is illustrated in his graphite sketches. There are two examples of these sketches on this page.

*Top: Richards, William Trost, Franconia Notch (1872) licensed from www.alamy.com;*

*Lower left image: Richards, William Trost, Mount Chocorua and Lake (1873) from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*

*Lower right: Richards, William Trost; From the Flume House, Franconia, New Hampshire (1872) from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.*



However, Richards' capture of light and color in his landscapes really sets him apart. Richard was able to capture in relatively small watercolor paintings the spectacular landscapes that other Hudson River School artists recorded in massive oil paintings. For example, Richards' 1874 painting, *Lake Squam from Red Hill* is only 9 by 14 inches yet it captures the glory of a sunset over Squam Lake.

In his later work, Richards turned his attention almost exclusively to seascapes. While much of his work in this period portrayed the drama of surf crashing against rocky shores, I find

his peaceful portrayal of late afternoon on a Nantucket beach to be more appealing. However, no matter the subject, study of the paintings of William Trost Richards is amply rewarding.

*Top: Richards, William Trost, Lake Squam From Red Hill (1874) from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art;*

*Bottom: Richards, Willaim Trost; Nantucket Shore (1865) from the collection of the Nantucket Historical Association.*

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**Susan M Barstow**

Susan M Barstow (1836-1923) was born in New York City on May 9, 1836. She studied at the Rutgers Female Institute in New York and continued her artistic training in Europe. Ms Barstow was the premier figure in the female contingent of the Hudson River School. I was introduced to Ms. Barstow's work when I visited the Thomas Cole House National Historic Site in Catskill, NY last summer and had the opportunity to tour the special exhibit *Women Reframe American Landscape: Susie Barstow & Her Circle's Contemporary Practices*. I was immediately taken by her approach to landscape painting.

Susan Barstow was an early member of the Appalachian Mountain Club and an avid hiker in the White Mountains. Her paintings reflect her experiences on the trail frequently portraying intimate trailside subjects as well as expansive vistas. For example, *Mountain Lake in Autumn (1873)* is a beautiful view of a stream with the water reflecting the color of the surrounding woodlands. Another painting, *Wooded Interior* while still a close up woodland view has a more open feel suggesting that the artist was at the edge of the woodland, but only hints at the wider landscape in the background. An 1864 untitled painting presents a more typical view of what appears to be Echo Lake in the northern end of Franconia Notch with a mountainside and cabin reflected in the lake. While this last painting is closer to the standard production of the other landscape painters of the time, the 1890 painting of *Night in the Woods* shows how differently Susan Barstow envisioned the wilds of New Hampshire.

Left: Barstow, Susan; *Wooded-Interior (1865)*

Upper right: Barstow, Susan; *Night in the Woods (1890)*;

Bottom right: Barstow, Susan; *Untitled (1873)*





A newspaper reviewer in 1891 commented "[Susan Barstow] is a keen observer of Nature in her various moods—has penetrated the depths of the woods when flooded with sunshine, in the evening when the moon's pale beams showed the way, and also with lantern in hand only to guide her into the impenetrable darkness beyond." Ms Barstow's vision was unique among the painters of the White Mountains. Unfortunately Susan Barstow's work has been neglected, but no survey of the painters of the White Mountains would be complete without her.

As a final consideration, these three painters were all working during the period in which photography was developing as an art form. It is interesting to consider how each painter sought to distinguish their work from the newer medium which could provide accurate if limited representations of its subjects.

*Lower: Barstow, Susan; Mountain Lake in Autumn (1873)*

*Right: Barstow, Susan; Early October near Lake Squam (1886)*





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## Artists of the White Mountains: Contemporary Artists

BY: BOB MCLAUGHLIN

Starting in the Fall 2023 Issue of *Mountain Passages* and continuing in the next two issues, we presented an overview of the great artists who painted the White Mountains in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is a virtual “hall of fame” including artists from Thomas Cole to Winslow Homer.

In this issue, we continue our review with three artists currently painting in the Whites. For this issue, we chose to highlight the work of Becky Fullerton, Molly Mundy, and Erik Koepfel. Each of these artists have their own artistic vision but all share a love of the White Mountains. I hope you enjoy meeting them at least as much as I did.

### Becky Fullerton

In the Spring Issue of *Mountain Passages*, we profiled Becky Fullerton, the AMC Archivist based at the Highland Center in Crawford Notch. In that article we noted that Becky was also an accomplished artist and promised a follow up article on that side of her many interests. Both sides spring from the same source. Becky has a passion for the forests and mountains of New England. When not painting the region's wild scenery in her studio or en plein air, or working at Highland Center, she is likely hiking, running or

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## OUR MISSION

The Appalachian Mountain Club is the nation's oldest outdoor recreation and conservation organization, and promotes the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters and trails of the Appalachian region. AMC has more than 100,000 members, 16,000 volunteers, 450 full-time and seasonal staff. The New Hampshire Chapter is the second largest of the 12 Chapters within the Club.

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Becky Fullerton; *Born of Earth Robed of Sky*



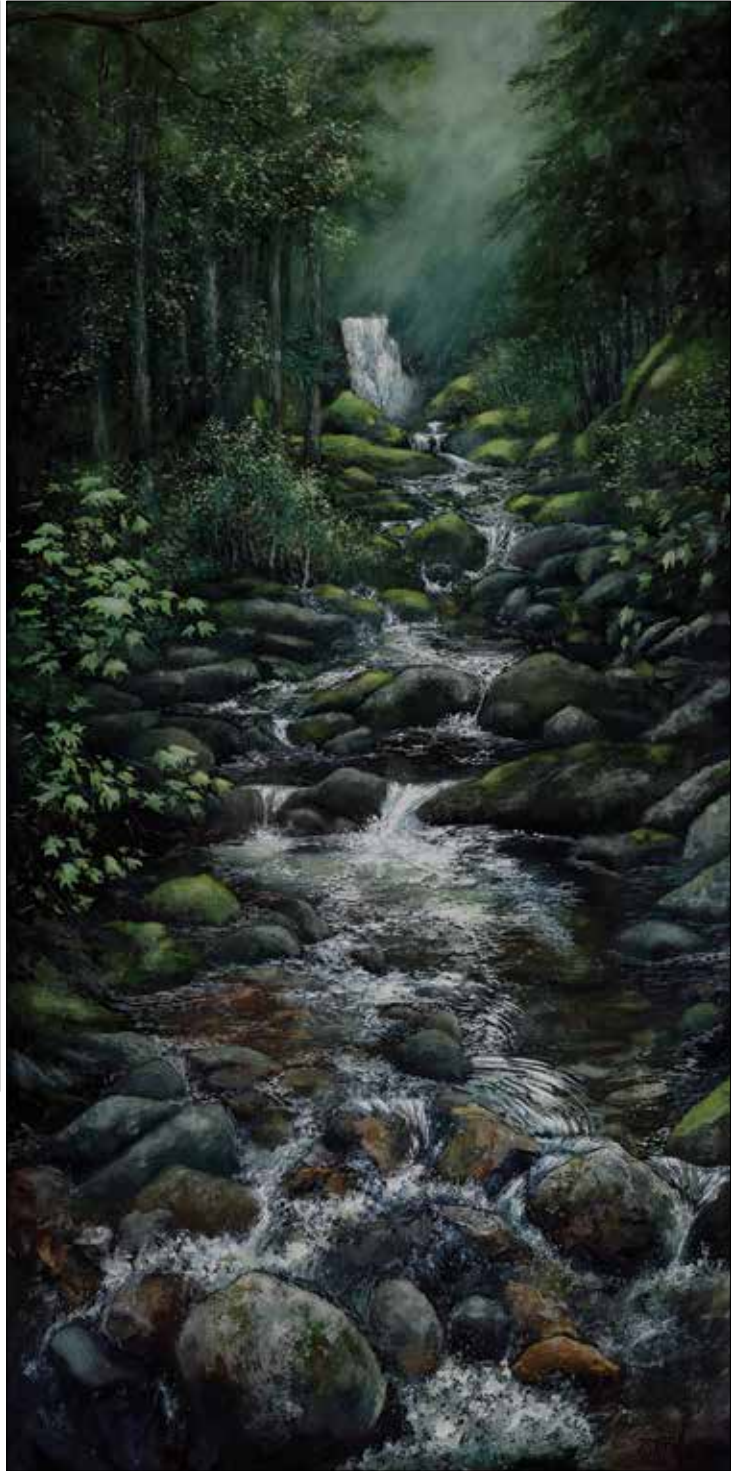


*Top: Becky Fullerton; A Burst of Sunlight*  
*Lower: Becky Fullerton; Ice Cold in Summer*  
*Right: Becky Fullerton; Cold Brook Falls*

a trail, or out on a lake or river in a kayak. The grandeur of alpine summits, the intricacy of intertwining limbs in the deep woods, and sparkle of rushing water down a mountain stream inspire and inform her painting process.

Becky specializes in landscape painting in the realist and impressionist traditions. She has been painting in oils and watercolors for over twenty-five years. Her focus is landscape painting in the mountains of New England, particularly here in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and Maine. Each year she hikes in the backcountry, taking in the dramatic scenery of the wilderness, sketching, painting, and taking photographs for later reference.

She is always trying to capture the special atmosphere unique to this area with its changeable weather, steep trails, and seemingly limitless views as a way to promote the unique and fragile beauty of places that deserve conservation.



Becky's home is in Bethlehem, New Hampshire, on the edge of the White Mountain National Forest. Originally from Vermont, Becky grew up in southern New Hampshire. After a long spell of living in Boston, Becky returned to the Granite State in 2018 to pursue her career as an Archivist and to live among the mountains she aspires to capture ever more authentically in paint. Becky holds a Bachelor's degree in Studio Art and Art History from Hartwick College, as well as a Master's degree in Museum Studies from the Harvard Extension School. Having known Becky for years, I was only introduced to her art work when it



was highlighted in an article in *Forest Notes*, the magazine of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests in their Summer 2023 Issue. Becky has been the subject of articles in numerous other publications and maintains her own website at <https://rmfullerton.com>

Becky graciously agreed to answer a few questions. Here are the questions and her answers in her own words

**1. What scenes in the White Mountains tend to inspire you to paint? Intimate woodland scenes, streams, lakes or vast vistas? What draws you to these subjects?**

*There are a few types of scenes in the White Mountains that really inspire me to paint. I love a big, open summit or ridgeline scene. But there has to be some distinguishing element to it, like the extreme slanting light at day's start or end. Or perhaps there are dramatic clouds piling up for a storm, sunken in the valleys to form an undercast sea, or whipping by in shreds ahead of a weather front. Showing what's happening in the sky is a great way to add motion to what can seem like a still landscape. I'm drawn to the look and feel of weather moving over the mountains, and I could honestly watch cloud shadows slide over a forested slope for hours. Additionally, I enjoy painting brooks and streams spilling over rocks in the forest. There is an incredible amount of detail and intricacy to be found there, and I love the challenge of trying to express moving, sparkling water in two-dimensional paint.*

**2. As you indicate above, you primarily paint in oils, but less commonly paint in watercolor (both transparent and gouache). How do you decide which medium is the best for a particular painting?**

*It often feels to me like brighter, sunnier scenes are more suited to a watercolor treatment. The white base of watercolor paper lends itself to exaggerating the stark, washed-out light of rocks under the midday sun or a pristine snow slope. Painting layers in oils, on the other hand, helps me achieve more solidity and mass in my subjects. I find it way easier to depict things like clouds and dense foliage in oils. So, if the painting is a huge, wooded hillside with rain showers sweeping through, I'd go with oils. Then again, I often paint the same scene in both mediums, using watercolor as a sort of practice round to flesh out an idea.*

**3. Do you consider yourself an Archivist who paints or a painter who supports herself by being an Archivist?**

*I guess I would just put a slash between Artist/Archivist and call them even. Growing up I had doubts about a full-time artist career being a viable option for me. I loved history and therefore chose art history as a dual major to studio art in college, intending to go into museums while continuing to paint on my own time. It has only been in the last decade or so that painting moved from being a hobby to being part of my livelihood. Now I'm working toward having both archives and art completely balanced. I wouldn't want to give up either one. They both need equal space in my life.*

**4. When you paint outdoors, en plein air, are you primarily sketching or are you trying for a completed painting? What medium do you use for painting outdoors?**

*I don't think I've ever completely finished a painting outdoors! The time just flies by and the light changes so quickly. The hope when I begin is that everything will go well, and I end up with a solid*

*framework to build on back in the studio. If it all starts to go sideways, I can just call it a sketch and start in on something else. If I'm way out on a trail somewhere, I will pack a small watercolor kit to use in a sketchbook or on small sheets of paper. If a painting location is under about a half mile or so, I will carry a box with oil painting materials out for a full session. However, I am thinking about hiking my full oil kit out to one of the huts this summer for a few days of short hikes to different beauty spots. Fingers crossed for a less rainy summer!*

**5. Are your paintings currently on display?**

**Where can our readers go to see more of your work?**

*Through the end of June, I have a large selection of watercolors and oils on display at the Pope Memorial Library in North Conway, NH. I also always have work in two area galleries. One is The Gallery at WREN: Women's Rural Entrepreneurial Network on Main Street in Bethlehem, NH, and the other is Jackson Art Gallery & Studio just off Route 16 in Jackson, NH. During one fun, in-person fair coming up, I'll be bringing just about every finished painting in the studio to Art in the Park at the North Conway Community Center on August 3rd and 4th. And of course, you can visit my website at [rmfullerton.com](https://rmfullerton.com) to see current work and read up on what I'm up to in the studio.*

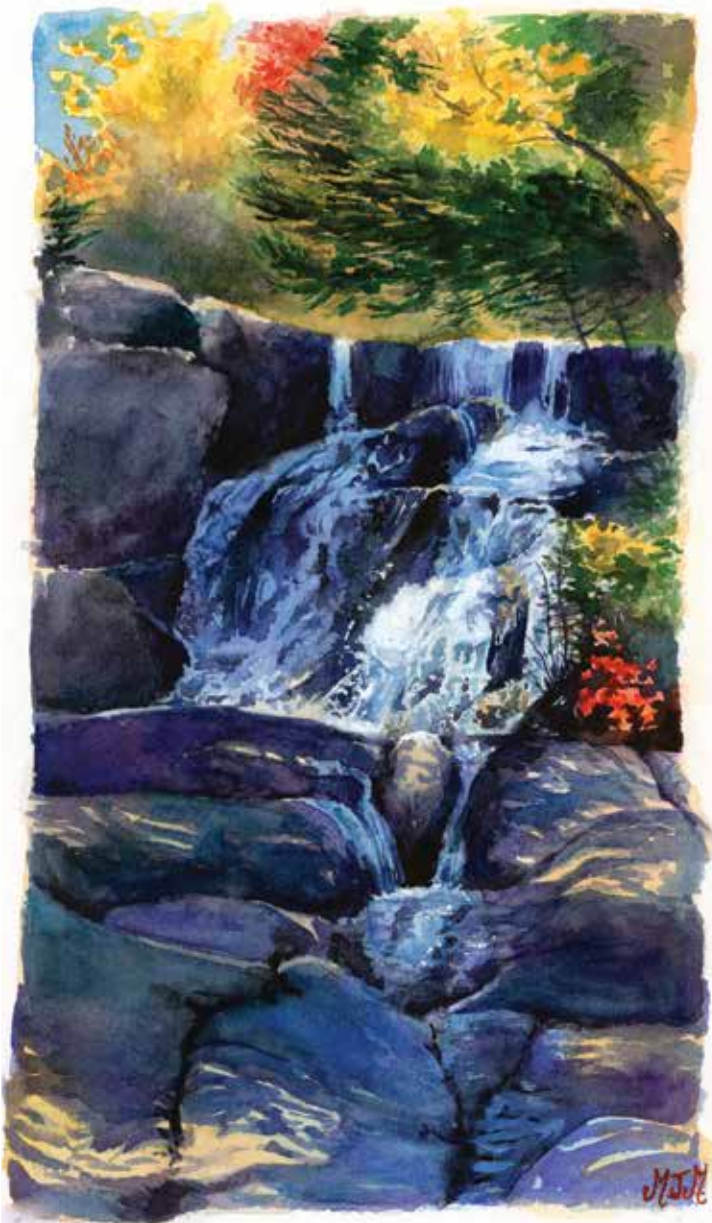


*Molly Munday: Last Snow*

**Molly Mundy**

Molly grew up in Lyme, New Hampshire, in a family that valued time spent outside. Molly recalls she was painting and drawing right from the start, and was lucky to have parents who nurtured her artistic interests and who made time to take Molly and her siblings to the mountains for camping and hiking trips. Molly graduated from Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2014 with degrees in Illustration and Art History. While in college Molly started working as a Teen Trail crew leader for the AMC, and after graduating she dove headfirst into a life of seasonal work in the outdoors — generally doing trail work during the summers and often working in the AMC

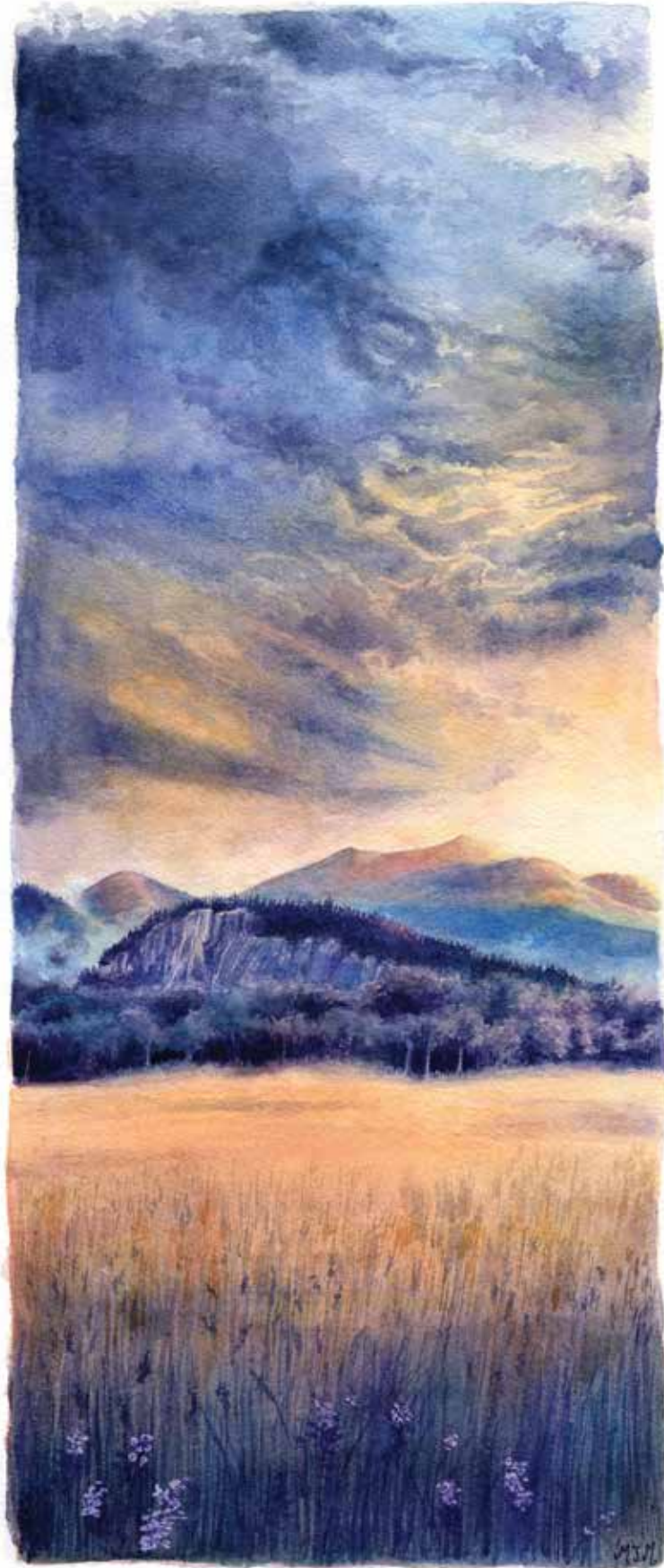




*Molly Mundy: Zealand Falls*

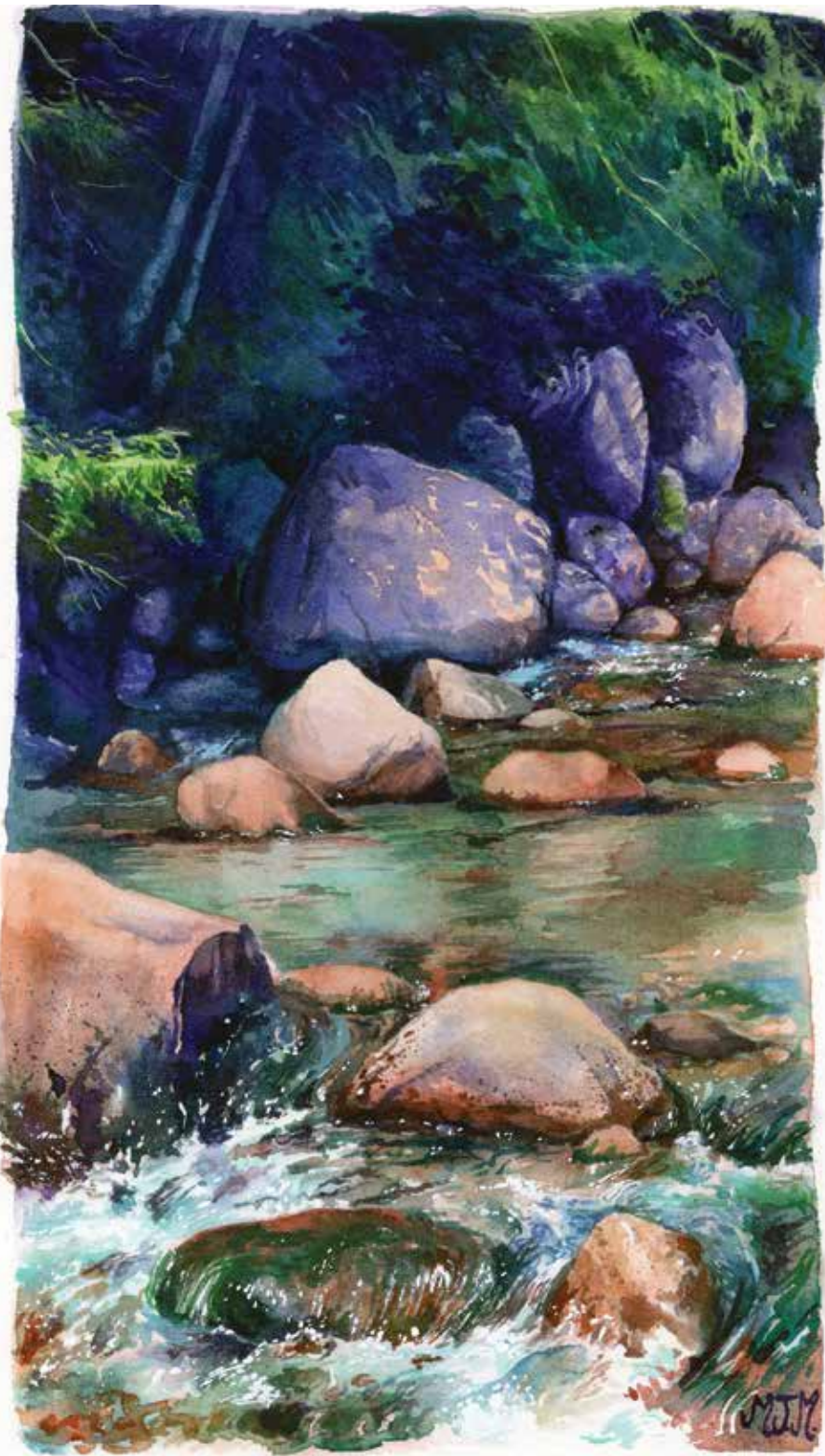
huts in the fall and winter. She spent time in the Adirondacks, the Berkshires, the Green Mountains, and of course, plenty of time here in the White Mountains. Molly's time working in the northeast was interspersed with travel (out West, or international) whenever she could fit it in and afford it.

Throughout this time Molly continued painting and drawing — bringing her sketchbook and watercolors on trail projects in the backcountry, and experimenting with frozen paint while winter hut caretaking. After working seasonally and traveling for several years, Molly's love for these mountains drew her to settle here. In addition to making art, Molly also works as a rock climbing guide, does construction work, and ski patrols part time at Wildcat Mountain. Although Molly now calls Jackson, New Hampshire home, she still seeks to prioritize travel and adventure, and continues to look for ways to incorporate these values into her life. As Molly puts it, "Watercolor painting is one of the many ways that I connect to a place, both at home and while adventuring."



*Molly Mundy: Cathedral after a Storm*





Molly Mundy: Ellis River Morning

When she is not painting, Molly is often rock climbing, running, hiking, skiing, or sitting by a river. Moving through or within a landscape in a variety of ways informs her work. Molly states, "It is important to me to experience a landscape fully - to truly be in it. I love watercolor painting for its effervescence and translucence and the way it continues to challenge me in new ways." When Molly paints outside she finds that her focus narrows, and her awareness of her surroundings is heightened. Molly sees her work as a way to capture an experience or a feeling, and hopefully make it available to others in some way. Molly says

that her paintings are intimate representations of the natural world because this is how she experiences it. As Molly says, "I want my artwork to pull people in - to feel close and personal in some way. I hope that my work can compel others to engage with the landscape on an emotional level, and to notice it in a new way." You can see more of Molly's work at [www.molly-mundy.com](http://www.molly-mundy.com), or on instagram @mundymolly.

Molly graciously agreed to answer a few questions. Here are the questions and her answers in her own words

- 1. As an amateur painter, I have always found transparent watercolor a very challenging medium particularly as you get into detailed representation, but I really love working in watercolor. Your paintings are detailed and spectacularly lovely. Can you share how you achieve this?**

*Thank you! I think that my excitement for detail, and the ways that I achieve it varies painting to painting. Sometimes there are specific details that I really want to focus on, or pull out of the view. Often letting the white of the paper show through, or preserving light areas to achieve contrast can allow for details to pop out. I try to visualize this at the start of a painting so that I can plan. Watercolor is really about finding a balance between planning carefully and letting go of control. And then just an understanding of how the paint works that I've developed over the years. Often details that appear to be done with a tiny brush in my paintings, such as distant trees or rocks, or leaves, are actually done in larger, scrubby, dry-brushed strokes with an angled brush or a calligraphy brush.*

- 2. The paintings you suggested to accompany this article are split evenly between vistas and more intimate woodland scenes. Does this reflect the scope of your entire corpus of work or do you tend to favor one subject over the other?**

*I tend to like a balance between vistas and closer, more intimate scenes. I often gravitate to the smaller, tighter views because I think that people tend to overlook those moments in favor of the sweeping vistas, and I like my paintings to serve as reminders of the beauty of those small moments that can happen when you pause in the woods, or even in your yard, or on your porch, and really notice what's around you. At the same time, there are places and landmarks that are really special to me, and that I know many other people also really connect with, and sometimes those can only be conveyed through a more distant, complete view of that place.*



### 3. Are your paintings currently on display?

#### Where can our readers go to see more of your work?

*Yes! I have work hanging at the Jackson Art Studio and Gallery in Jackson, New Hampshire. And at The Three Sisters Gallery in Gorham, New Hampshire. I'll also be showing work this summer at a number of outdoor shows and events. People can find out more about those by following my social media or subscribing to my email newsletter through my website.*

#### Erik Koepfel

Erik Koepfel was born in Oregon in 1980, and spent his childhood moving with his family through many of the most beautiful landscapes of North America from the Rocky Mountains, to Southern California, to the Appalachians. At the age of ten, Erik's family settled in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. From an early age Erik drew obsessively from nature, and began to develop a love for the



*Above: Erik Koepfel Mt. Washington from the Intervale 10 x 16in. Oil on panel.*

*Right: Erik Koepfel Autumn in Pinkham Notch 36x29in. Oil on canvas Framed*

expressive potentials of traditional representation. Erik received his formal training from the Rhode Island School of Design followed by the New York Academy of Art, and an annual apprenticeship in Wiscasset, Maine with his professor and friend, Seaver Leslie. After copying extensively from the Italian Masters, Erik developed a body of work that has been exhibited and collected internationally, and represented across the United States. Koepfel's mastery of traditional techniques has led him to become one of very

few contemporary artists whose work is regularly exhibited with historic masters of the 19th and early 20th Centuries. He has hung beside Thomas Cole, Winslow Homer, Edgar Degas, John Frederick Kensett, and George Inness, and has had the distinguished honor of entering collections including artists of this caliber. *American Artist*, *PleinAir Magazine*, and other respected publications have covered his progress. Erik maintains a website at <https://www.erikkoepfel.com>.

#### As Erik puts it,

*In the act of painting, I have sought to discover that highest knowledge of Beauty, poetic and philosophical, that has been the common thread between all of the Great Masters of Art. I have spent hours staring at the finest masterpieces in museums worldwide in an effort to decipher that meditative effect that distinguishes greatness from proficiency, and have made the creation of that sentiment my central goal as an artist. Following this path has led me to study deeply the sciences of philosophy, design, linear perspective, anatomy, color, optics, architecture, botany, light and atmosphere with respect to their purposes in art, and I have built a foundation of consistent formal principles that work in harmony to illuminate meaning in painting. As my subject, I have chosen the universal human condition in this world, and have sought wherever possible to discard the sociopolitical fashions of contemporary culture in favor of those enduring sentiments that we all encounter in life. It is my belief that to experience the Beauty of our existence here in this magnificent landscape is the best way to happiness. My intention as an artist is to share that Beauty.*

Erik graciously agreed to answer a few questions. Here are the questions and his answers in his own words

**1. Looking at the paintings you provided for this article, I am initially struck by similarity to the lush romantic paintings by masters such as Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, Benjamin Champney, and Edward Hill. On closer examination, at greater magnification, it seems there are more distinct brush strokes that suggest a more contemporary approach. Can you explain what appeals to you most about this approach to painting the White Mountains?**







Above: Erik Koeppe Mt. Washington from the Intervale 10 x 16 inches. Oil on panel  
 Right: Erik Koppel The Old Man on the Mountain 18x14in. Oil on panel



*I think if you compared my work with the historical artists in person that you would see that your impression is incorrect. Although each artist has some part of their own manner, my methods are entirely consistent with the methods of the 19th century artists. This has been asserted by numerous authorities among 19th century art dealers, historians, and museum curators. It should also be noted that the difference with what people call a “contemporary approach” is as much ideological as method. The closest bond that I feel with the old artists is in the manner of approaching the landscape as a poet and philosopher. These artists weren’t just copying mountains. By trying to understand the beauty of scenery, they were trying to further understand the beauty of life, thus trying to do Good for themselves, and for the society that they lived in. I believe that experience in nature enriches the human soul, and that experiencing inspired paintings can further enhance the viewer’s understanding of their place in nature. I don’t know if I’m succeeding in this or not. It’s up to the viewer to decide.*

**2. The paintings you provided for this article all portray sweeping vistas. Is painting vistas your primary interest or do you also enjoy painting more intimate woodland scenes?**

*I love to paint beautiful scenery, and will happily paint whatever inspires in nature. I often paint the bed of a stream or a spot in the woods as well as vistas. I’m interested in places that have something striking about them. Sometimes that comes from the place itself, and sometimes from the way the light reveals it.*

**3. Are your paintings currently on display? Where can our readers go to see more of your work?**

*The Jackson Historical Society and Museum of White Mountain Art is a great place to see my work in the White Mountains. I have a huge painting there, “Autumn in the White Mountains,”*

*78x135in., Oil on canvas, that is the centerpiece of their collection. I also have several other pieces on permanent display, and a few are generally available for sale. Other places in New Hampshire to see my work are The Art Place in Wolfeboro, Four Square Gallery in Stratham, Ceres Gallery in Portsmouth, and the beautiful gallery at the New Hampshire Antique Coop in Milford. In the cities, I work with The Guild of Boston Artists on Newbury St., and Rehs Galleries in N.Y.C. I’m also regularly exhibiting around the country. So your readers can easily keep in touch by subscribing to my newsletter on my website [www.ErikKoeppe.com](http://www.ErikKoeppe.com)*

I think this article will complete our review of the artists of the White Mountains. If you are interested in learning more or seeing better images of the artists’ paintings, visit our webpage at [www.amcnh.org/newsletter](http://www.amcnh.org/newsletter).