

A Shared Vision The Rise of the Cape Ann Art Colonies, 1890–1920



Artists at work on Lighthouse Beach, Sept. 21, 1896. Left to right: Poland (model), Potthast, Bicknell, Jones, Buhler. Photo by George B. Wood.

Artists Turned to Europe

By 1900, art colonies attracting both European and American artists had established themselves in several places in America. This period was known as the Progressive Era. It was a time when social activism and political reform spread across the United States to combat the rise in government corruption and abuses of power. America was no longer rejoicing in an expanding and exuberant American identity.

Many artists turned to Europe for artistic ideas. Most American artists went overseas temporarily to work, but some stayed on as expatriates, including James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), Mary Cassatt (1844–1926) and John Singer Sargent (1856–1925). Those who went for limited periods brought the new French style, Impressionism, back with them. It was a style well suited to the topographical loveliness of Gloucester and Cape Ann. During this period, two other significant trends developed. American artists who had lived in European

art colonies brought the idea back home and recreated the atmosphere of conviviality and communal experience here. Gloucester’s scenic neighborhoods inspired a number of loosely affiliated groups of artists who shared common aesthetic visions to live and work together. The era of the teaching artist also began at this time, drawing professional students and tourists to the area and adding to the attraction of the colonies.

The art colonies and their artists benefited from changing views of art and an expanding market. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, painting, sculpture and classical music were highly valued as tools for education and the assimilation of urban immigrants. The major art museums of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Detroit were all established during this era. They were part of a “civilizing through culture” movement, as well as sites for philanthropy for wealthy industrialists.

JOHN SINGER SARGENT (1856–1925)

John Singer Sargent had close ties to Cape Ann. His father, Dr. Fitzwilliam Sargent, was born in Gloucester. Judith Sargent Murray, the original inhabitant of the building that is now the Sargent House Museum in downtown Gloucester, was his great-great aunt. The artist gave paintings of his parents (Mary Newbold Singer Sargent and Dr. Fitzwilliam Sargent) to the Sargent House Museum shortly after its founding in 1917. In addition to these family ties, Sargent spent time on Cape Ann visiting fellow artists Charles Hopkinson, Cecilia Beaux and other Gloucester notables in the early twentieth century. See chapter 4.



John Singer Sargent in his studio in Paris with *Portrait of Madame X*, c. 1885. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian.

“A Great Resort for Artists”

In 1893, Baedeker’s guidebook for tourists called Gloucester “a great resort for Artists.” Suitable and affordable space to live and work, essential for artists, was available in Cape Ann’s fishing shacks and from residents looking for extra income. Many of its hotels were built among the working docks. The combination of beauty and industry on Cape Ann drew many kinds of artists. Schooners and austere New England architecture provided subject matter, as did fishing, trade and granite quarrying. A diverse abundance of rich imagery graced Cape Ann shores and towns.

Improved public transportation meant that one could now travel between New York City and Cape Ann more easily. Moreover, the wealth created by the booming industries continued to produce upper classes with enough money and leisure to allow for interest in and support of the arts. Even maritime workers benefitted. They were so popular with artists that it did not take them very long to start charging for their modeling services—especially once they learned that artists were getting paid for their portraits or maritime scenes.



Martha Hale Harvey. Lobsterman Ad Parsons sitting on sailing dory containing lobster trap and rolled-up sail, ashore on Good Harbor Beach, Salt Island in background, c. 1890. 4 x 5 glass negative. Gordon Thomas Collection or Martha Hale Harvey Collection.

One of the teaching artists who came to Gloucester was **Eric Pape** (1870–1938). Pape broke away from his San Francisco family and their traditional careers in business, law and medicine to make art. He went to Europe and Egypt to study for five years and exhibited widely. Returning to the United States, he moved to Boston in 1894, and set up the Eric Pape School of Art in 1898. Pape also taught in Annisquam. In 1907, he designed the memorial bronze plaque attached to an immense granite rock face at Stage Fort Park, “Commemorating the Founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1623.”



Unveiling of the plaque at Stage Fort Park, designed by Eric Pape in 1907, commemorating the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Main photo: 4 x 6 nitrate negative. J. F. Wilkinson. Gift of Lewis Wilkinson. [#2288.14]

Artist as Historian

By the first part of the twentieth century, Annisquam had given way to East Gloucester as the heart of the Gloucester art colony. Most artists were living in hotels and boarding houses with easy access to good painting sites. In 1890, William Morris Hunt's student and biographer Helen Knowlton had already written that East Gloucester "...was never so full of artists, and is getting to be called the Brittany of America." Marine painters Walter Dean and Augustus W. Buhler were two of the first to settle on Rocky Neck in East Gloucester.

Augustus Waldeck Buhler (1853–1920) was born in New York City to German political refugees. His family moved to Worcester in 1865, where Buhler began taking art lessons. Buhler summered in Annisquam from 1885 to 1888 and then again after a two-year painting trip to Paris and Holland. In 1898, he opened a summer studio and school on Rocky Neck, and in 1903, he moved into a new year-round space.

Together with his friend Walter Dean, who followed him to Rocky Neck, Buhler befriended local fishermen from his first visit. He often went out to sea with them and painted the men at work with admiration and respect. Buhler and Dean were cognizant of the sea's treacherous possibilities. Buhler believed that his job as an artist was to be a historian, a visual record keeper of a passing time and place.

Shoving Off is a history painting, though very different from the grand paintings usually associated with that genre in that it crosses the line between the documentary and the personal. Buhler was not painting great figures and grand events; he was bringing grandeur to the everyday work of his friends. At the same time, he left us with a visual history of the fishing industry. This work is meant to give us information, but it transcends that function to become a statement of the artist's feelings for his subject.



Augustus W. Buhler, *Shoving Off*, c.1907. Oil on canvas. Gift of Dr. Bernard Cohen. [#2199]



Augustus W. Buhler, *After the Storm*, 1896. Watercolor on paper. Gift of the Estate of Miss Dorothy Buhler, 1985. [#2466.48] Take a closer look on page 5.13.

Buhler’s colleague **Walter Dean** (1854–1912) was born in Lowell, Massachusetts and trained in Boston and Europe, but considered Gloucester his true home. Dean had set out to be an architect, studying at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but left to be an artist, transferring to the Massachusetts Normal School. By 1900 he had moved to East Gloucester and was on his way to becoming known for his masterful depictions of maritime subjects.

View of Gloucester Harbor is such a depiction. His Parisian training shows in the muted soft palette and broken brushwork, and his European studies are reflected in the horizontal format that contains as much sky as water. This is the sea at rest, a sight for contemplation.



Man at the Wheel, Fisherman’s Memorial Statue. Jack Lucas Collection.

One of A. W. Buhler’s images, *Man at the Wheel*, may have inspired Gloucester’s iconic statue, also known by that name, sculpted by **Leonard Craske** (1877–1950) in 1923 for Gloucester’s 300th anniversary observance. Born in London, Craske came to America in 1910 at age eighteen. A photographer as well as a sculptor, Craske had a European view of art as idealistic work deserving of community support.



Walter Lofthouse Dean, *View of Gloucester Harbor*, c. 1890s. Oil on canvas. Gift of the Estate of Alice E. Babson, 1973. [#2085.46]



Eben Parsons,
*View Overlooking
Entrance to Smith
Cove, 1911*. Photo-
graph. [#2357]

In 1908, five years after Augustus Buhler opened his studio on Rocky Neck, **Oscar Anderson** (1873–1953) set up a studio on East Main Street in Gloucester. Anderson was born in Gotland, a small island off the coast of Sweden, and immigrated to the United States at age seventeen. He settled in Hartford, Connecticut, and studied with Paris-trained painter Charles Noel Flagg (1848–1916). With relatively little formal training, Anderson developed his own style—a charming and somewhat simplified American Impressionism, at times fresh and with unexpected color. He painted seascapes and landscapes year round, and went out in the coldest weather to paint winter scenes.

Anderson was a sociable man, and when he moved to Gloucester, he quickly became involved in the art community. His family joined him and built a home and studio for him on Banner Hill, a place to which many artists went to paint Gloucester’s panoramic views. Anderson opened his own studio and gallery on Rocky Neck and established an annual Gallery on the Wharf Exhibition in 1917. He showed the work of his artist friends A. W. Buhler and Lester Stevens and other year-round artists in Gloucester and Rockport, and became a social and artistic leader on Cape Ann. He also invented and patented the Anderson easel in 1909, a simple, adjustable and very stable easel for outdoor painting.



Oscar Anderson, untitled, no date.

More American than French

Childe Hassam (1859–1935), a Dorchester native, was one of the first Impressionists to paint in Gloucester, and he did so for over twenty-nine years, first in the early 1880s with his colleague and friend Ross Sterling Turner (1847–1915). Hassam went to Europe to study in the summer of 1883, and returned to Boston where he opened a studio. His first major oil paintings, Boston scenes, were executed then. In 1886, he attended the Académie Julian in Paris, stayed three years and then settled in New York City in 1889. He had adopted an Impressionist style and bright color in Europe, and back in the States, wanted to hone his technique with other artists and writers. He did so on Appledore Island, the summer home of poet, ex-student and collector Celia Thaxter, whose beautiful gardens Hassam painted.

By the time Hassam returned to Gloucester in 1890, his Impressionist style was more American than French. The American version was comparatively restrained and controlled, domesticated to American conservatism, and concerned with underlying structure and realism. It could be stunning, but unlike French Impressionism, was never revolutionary or avant-garde. His style did, however, bring fresh ideas to this country and its artists. Hassam was one of the two oldest artists to participate in New York City’s 1913 Armory Show, a groundbreaking exhibition that introduced European Modernism to America. (See chapter 7 for more details). Hassam showed six Impressionist pieces, but Impressionism was, by this point, a mainstream, even historical, style.



Childe Hassam, *View of Gloucester*, 1922. Etching. Gift of Harold and Betty Bell, 2003. [#2003.51.4] Take a closer look on page 5.15.

Ironically, Hassam disdained the new European movements, among them Cubism and Futurism, and commented about the arts, “...this is the age of quacks, and quackery, and New York City is their objective point.” Hassam made prints as well as paintings in Gloucester. Both his etchings and his lithographs are clean and precise, showing mastery and confidence with these unforgiving mediums. Childe Hassam and other artists around the turn of the 20th century cemented Cape Ann’s reputation as a significant place for aesthetic inquiry. Hassam’s portrayals of Gloucester became so popular that artist Ernest Haskell wrote:

Before I had seen Hassam’s pictures, [Gloucester] seemed like a fishy little city, now as I pass through it I feel Hassam. The schooners beating in and out, the wharves, the sea, the sky, these belong to Hassam.

For most painters who now settled in East Gloucester, realism and restraint began to recede before abstraction and expressionism. These artists, who included Frank Duveneck and John Henry Twachtman, saw Cape Ann in new ways.



Childe Hassam, *East Gloucester*, 1918. Lithograph. Gift of Harold and Betty Bell, 2003. [#2003.51.3]

The Painter Who Fell in Love with East Gloucester

Like Childe Hassam, **Frank Duveneck** (1848–1919) was a leading American painter who fell in love with East Gloucester. He was born in Kentucky and studied painting in Munich when he was twenty-one. Teaching at the University of Cincinnati School of Design, he evolved into a beloved and inspiring teacher with a following of artists known as the “Duveneck Boys.” Duveneck exhibited successfully in Boston in 1875, drawing William Morris Hunt’s important praise. It was perhaps Hunt who told him about Cape Ann, where Duveneck likely visited in the 1870s and 80s. He summered there from 1890 to 1917, bringing with him artists he taught in Ohio and Munich. These “Duveneck Boys” included Joseph DeCamp (1858–1923), Edward Potthast (1857–1927), Charles Corwin (1857–1938), Albert Fauley (1859–1919), and John Henry Twachtman (1853–1902).

Duveneck, DeCamp and Twachtman all taught summer classes in Gloucester, attracting increasing numbers of students to the area, and benefiting both themselves and the local economy. In 1900, the three teaching artists had an exhibition at the Rockaway Hotel on Rocky Neck, where artists from all over the country stayed, taught and created art.

Duveneck painted for fifty of his seventy-one years. He



Frank Duveneck, *Study of Braces Rock*, c.1893. Oil on panel. Gift of Walter L. Molina, 1985. [#2504]

was known as a master of technique throughout his career, but the work that is considered most important was painted between 1892 and 1917 in Gloucester. It was there that he made his breakthrough into Post-Impressionism. He was a close observer of the tides and the ways the ocean and rocks changed, and he used flat planes of color lying next to each other to build shape and form and subtle textures and glazes to create shadows.

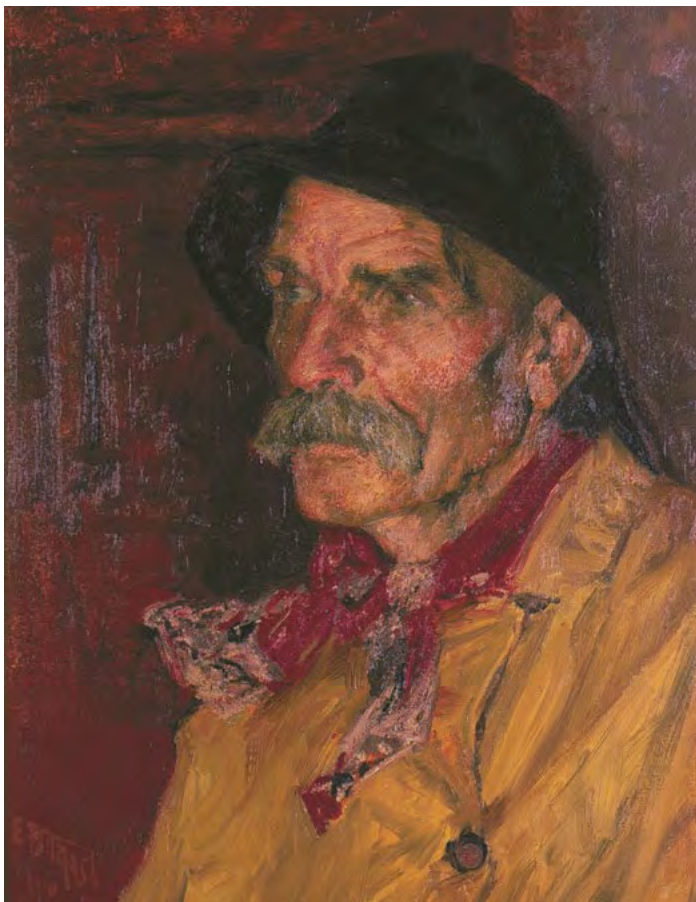
It is said that while Duveneck was in Gloucester he used two studios, one for the morning light and one for the afternoon. The landscape below, done from the outer reaches of Gloucester Harbor looking back at the City’s distinctive skyline, is typical of the work Duveneck did on Cape Ann, with its loose, flat brush strokes and serene setting.



Frank Duveneck, *Horizon at Gloucester*, c. 1905. Oil on canvas. Gift of Robert L. French and Elizabeth French, 2009. [#2009.51.8]

Edward Henry Potthast (1857–1927) first studied in Cincinnati, at the McMicken School of Design, and then, in the 1880s and 1890s, in Munich, Antwerp, Paris, and Grèz, an art colony associated with the Barbizon School. At Grèz, Potthast found light, a new palette and Impressionism. On his return to the United States in 1895, he moved to New York City, where he changed his focus from the lithography with which he had made his living to painting. He made his first trip to Cape Ann the following year and returned every summer for the next twenty-five years until his death in 1927. He specialized in beach scenes, which he would paint in watercolor during the summer and in oil in his New York studio during the winter.

Potthast is best known for bright, sun-filled paintings of summer, a focus for which Cape Ann was perfect, but *Portrait of a Fisherman* is not of that category. It shows the subdued color and bold lights and darks of Potthast's Munich School training, as well as the influence of his early teacher and mentor, Thomas Noble (1835–1907), a portraitist with a dark palette and technique of rich brush work and palpable paint.



Edward Henry Potthast, *Portrait of a Fisherman*, 1900. Oil on canvas mounted on board. Gift of Marietta E. Lynch, given in memory of Margaret Farrell Lynch, 1999. [#1999.70.1]



Potthast (left) at work on Lighthouse Beach, Annisquam (detail). Photo by George B. Wood.

American Impressionist **John Twachtman** (1853–1902), a friend and colleague of both Childe Hassam and Frank Duveneck, came to Gloucester in 1900, probably most influenced to do so by Duveneck. Twachtman took Duveneck's class in 1870s Cincinnati; they painted together in Munich, Venice and Florence, and stayed in touch. Back in the United States, Duveneck returned to Cincinnati to teach, and Twachtman settled on the East Coast. When Twachtman went to Gloucester for three summers, from 1900 to 1902, he and Duveneck reunited in a beneficial artistic encounter. Twachtman worked rapidly, with a light palette and controlled draftsmanship. He might have developed into an abstract painter if he had not died so young. His brushstrokes seemed to increasingly melt as his work developed. His paintings are considered some of the most poetic works of American Impressionism.

In August 1900, Twachtman hosted a major exhibition at the Rockaway that included the work of his colleagues and students. It was a show of high quality, one that it would be surprising to find today outside of a major city. Many examples of American Impressionist techniques were represented—the gestural strokes of painters like Duveneck, the quiet style of Twachtman, dazzling Childe Hassams and the rich dark textures of Edward Potthast. A well-respected teacher at The Art Students League in New York, Twachtman conducted summer sessions for his students at the Rockaway Hotel in 1900 and 1901, and at the Harbor View Hotel, with Joseph DeCamp (1858–1923), in 1902.

Twachtman had an enormous impact on painters in Gloucester, including Duveneck. The latter lightened and loosened his style, which had reverted to the dark tones and tightness of his Munich School influences. Twachtman's Impressionist landscapes were subtler and softer than Childe Hassam's. He was influenced by Tonalism, especially Whistler's, and Asian art, and employed pale, calm and subdued colors and soft edges. He painted a quiet world.

Twachtman was in Gloucester, teaching at the Harbor View Hotel on Wonson's Cove when, at forty-nine years old, he was unexpectedly taken to Addison Gilbert Hospital and died on August 8, 1902. He was buried in the city's Oak Grove Cemetery.



The Rockaway Hotel in East Gloucester, venue for a major exhibition of Gloucester artists. From Cape Ann Museum postcard collection. Postmarked Gloucester, July 20, 1921.



William Paxton, *Jackie*, no date. Oil on canvas. William McGregor Paxton. Gift of Jacqueline Hudson, 1994. [#1994.35]

Twachtman was one of the most innovative artists of his period and a member of the prestigious group of New York and Boston Impressionist painters who formed "The Ten American Painters," or "The Ten," in 1898. Like the French Impressionists, they rebelled against a conservative art establishment, seceding from the Society of American Artists, a group that had been formed in 1877 in a challenge to the more conservative National Academy of Design. The Society, now itself conservative, had rejected a painting by Twachtman as being too radical. Several members of "The Ten," including Joseph DeCamp, Willard Metcalf (1858–1925), Childe Hassam, Edmund Tarbell (1862–1938), and of course, John Twachtman, visited and painted Gloucester in the 1890s, and are considered to have done some of their finest work there. By the time the group disbanded after a 1919 show at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., Impressionism was part of the American cultural establishment.

Several members of "The Ten" were also members of another group of painters who taught or studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, The Boston School. Of those, Edmund Tarbell, Joseph DeCamp and William Paxton (1869–1941) all spent time on Cape Ann.

William Paxton painted his neighbor in Rockport, Jackie Hudson. Like all Boston School painters, he was influenced by Vermeer and the genteel subjects of the Dutch painter.



Rockport c. 1920s.

Discovering Rockport

Until the mid-1820s, Rockport was a quaint section of Gloucester on the northeast side of Cape Ann, called Sandy Bay. It was primarily residential, with a small fishing village. The twenties, however, saw the formation of a separate economy based on the quarrying of granite, a commodity increasingly in demand as the country grew.

By the 1830s, the area was shipping granite to cities and towns along the East Coast. Sandy Bay broke away from Gloucester in 1840 and incorporated as the discrete town of Rockport. Like Gloucester, Rockport consisted of several neighborhoods—Halibut Point, Andrews Point, Pigeon Cove, Pigeon Hill, Bearskin Neck, Land’s End and the South End, all with their own charm. In 1861, when the railroad was extended to Rockport, tourists began to arrive. In 1873, Nova Scotian-born painter Gilbert T. Margeson (1852–1949) opened the first Rockport artist’s studio.

In the 1890s, self-taught maritime artist **Parker S. Perkins** (1862–1942) began visiting. Though not well known after his death, he was a beloved and generous artist who, by helping and encouraging younger artists, contributed to an environment conducive to forming an art colony.

Perkins was among the first wave of artists to discover Rockport. His work was shown in the third annual exhibition at the Gallery-on-the-Moors (1918) and in the first exhibition of the Rockport Art Association (1921).



Parker Perkins, *Seascape with Straitsmouth Island*, no date. Oil on artist board. Gift of William and Janet James, 2014. [#2014.048]

Eric Hudson (1864–1932) grew up sailing to Rockport from Boston. Hudson studied art only informally in Europe, and his high contrast, richly brushed style was his own. His love of the sea and of being on the water took him to Rockport in the 1890s. He often painted while out in a dory, and he and his family lived on a boat one summer.

Perhaps Hudson painted *At Sea* on one of his dory trips. It is a dark painting, with an ominous feel. One ship in full sail is trying to outrun the storm coming in behind it, and make it into harbor, where the other vessels are moored. Movement is created by the angles of the sails and the sense of approaching the light sky, escaping the dark. The high contrast of whites and deep blues adds to the drama, and the rust color anchors and highlights the vessels at rest.



Eric Hudson, *Harbor Tug*, c. 1910. Oil on canvas. The James Collection, a promised gift to the Cape Ann Museum.



Eric Hudson, *At Sea*, c. 1910–1930. Oil on canvas. Gift of Jacqueline and Julie Hudson, 1989.

Harrison Cady (1877–1970) first visited Rockport in 1896 and also went to Parker Perkins’ studio to sketch with the older artist. Cady became a regular summer resident and was soon part of the art community. Born in New York City, he went to work at age eighteen, when his father died, leaving him to support his mother. He got a job at the *Brooklyn Eagle* newspaper as an illustrator, and by 1907, he was a staff artist and cartoonist for *Life* magazine. Cady is best known and was most loved, however, for his sometimes fanciful, sometimes realistic children’s book illustrations of endearing animal characters. Collaborating for about fifty years with children’s book writer Thornton Burgess, Cady developed the Peter Rabbit comic strip from a Burgess character. He wrote and drew the strip from 1920 to 1948.

Cady’s illustration career lasted over seventy years and his work maintained an enchanting naiveté throughout his lifetime.



Harrison Cady, *Stage Fort Park*, no date. Oil on canvas. (TOP RIGHT) Page from Burgess's *The Bedtime Story Calendar, Enchanting Tales of Field and Forest for Little People* (1915), from a book in the Cape Ann Museum archives.



A Closer Look: Augustus Buhler



Augustus W. Buhler (1853–1920), *After the Storm*, 1896. Watercolor on paper.
 Gift of the Estate of Miss Dorothy Buhler, 1985. [#2466.48]

Look closely at the painting. Respond to the questions below.

What do you see?

What do you think is happening in this painting?

What do you wonder about?

Writing prompt: It is hard to wait for the unknown. I remember a time when I had to wait for...

Teacher Notes

By the first part of the twentieth century, East Gloucester was emerging as the heart of the Gloucester art colony. Most artists were living in hotels and boarding houses with easy access to good painting sites such as Banner Hill, overlooking Smith's Cove, and the Inner Harbor to the city skyline downtown.

Augustus Waldeck Buhler (1853-1920) was born in New York City to German political refugees. His family moved to Worcester in 1865, where Buhler began taking art lessons. He summered in Annisquam from 1885 to 1888 and then again after a two-year painting trip to Paris and Holland. In 1898, he opened a summer studio and school on Rocky Neck, and in 1903, moved into a new year-round space.

Buhler befriended local fishermen from his first visit, and often went out to sea with them and painted them at work with admiration and respect. He was cognizant of the sea's treacherous possibilities. He believed that his job as an artist was to be a historian, a visual record keeper of a passing time and place.

After the Storm is less about accuracy and more about tragedy and grief, large emotions conveyed through the scene of personal loss and fear. Buhler was not painting great figures and grand events; he was bringing grandeur to the everyday work of his friends. At the same time, he left us with a visual history of the fishing industry. This work is meant to give us information, but it transcends that function to become a statement of the artist's feelings for his subject.

For more information about this painting see the Cape Ann Museum website at:

<http://www.capeannmuseum.org/collections/>.

Extensions:

PreK–5 (Science) The weather impacts our lives in many ways. Closely examine this painting. How is weather affecting the lives of these women? How do weather impact a place like Gloucester? How do wind and water change the shape of land? How might the wind and water have changed this landscape? Make predictions about the weather in this painting. What season is it? What is the temperature? What is the wind direction and wind speed? How could we find out more about the climate?



6–8 (ELA) Artists like Augustus Buhler were also known as historians. They recorded certain moments in history with each painting. What do you think has happened in the painting? Write a story about this painting.

9–12 (Social Studies) Maritime pursuits were essential to building the American economy, but they came at a cost. What were the major industries in Gloucester at the turn of the twentieth century? What were the dangers of these professions? How does this painting illustrate these dangers?

Standards

Elementary School (Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework)

PreK-ESS2-6(MA). Provide examples of the impact of weather on living things.

2-ESS2-4(MA). Observe how blowing wind and flowing water can move Earth materials from one place to another and change the shape of a landform.

3-ESS2-1. Use graphs and tables of local weather data to describe and predict typical weather during a particular season in an area.

Middle School (Common Core Standards)

CCSS.W.6.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

High School (Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework)

USI. 27 Explain the importance of the transportation revolution of the 19th century (the building of canals, roads, bridges, turnpikes, steamboats, and railroads), including the stimulus it provided for the growth of a market economy.



A Closer Look: Childe Hassam



Childe Hassam, *View of Gloucester*, 1922. Etching. Gift of Harold and Betty Bell, 2003. [#2003.51.4]

Look closely at the print. Respond to the questions below.

What do you see?

What do you think is happening in this print?

What do you wonder about?

Writing prompt: A young boy is riding a tricycle in this scene. When I was younger, I liked to...

Teacher Notes

A Dorchester native, **Childe Hassam** (1859–1935) was one of the first Impressionists to paint in Gloucester and did so for nearly thirty years, starting in the early 1880s. Hassam went to Europe to study in the summer of 1883, and returned to Boston, where he opened a studio. In 1886, he attended the Académie Julian in Paris, stayed three years and then settled in New York City in 1889. He had adopted an Impressionist style and bright color in Europe, and back in the States, wanted to hone his technique with other artists and writers.

By the time Hassam returned to Gloucester in 1890, his Impressionist style was more American than French. The American version was comparatively restrained and controlled, domesticated to American conservatism, and concerned with underlying structure and realism. It could be stunning, but unlike French Impressionism, was never revolutionary or avant-garde. His style did, however, bring fresh ideas to this country and its artists. Hassam made prints as well as paintings in Gloucester. Both his etchings and his lithographs are clean and precise, showing mastery and confidence with these unforgiving mediums.

Childe Hassam and other artists around the turn of the twentieth century cemented Cape Ann's reputation as a significant place for aesthetic inquiry. Hassam's portrayals of Gloucester became so popular that one artist, Ernest Haskell, wrote:

Before I had seen Hassam's pictures, [Gloucester] seemed like a fishy little city, now as I pass through it I feel Hassam. The schooners beating in and out, the wharves, the sea, the sky, these belong to Hassam.



For more information, visit <http://www.capeannmuseum.org>.

Extensions:

PreK–5 (Art) There is a lot to look at in this print. Make a list of what you see in the foreground, middle ground, and background.

6–8 (Math) Childe Hassam painted scenes of Gloucester Harbor when schooners were used extensively for fishing and other maritime activities. How are people in Gloucester traveling on the water today? Use a variety of resources to collect your data.

9–12 (Chemistry) Etching is an artistic printing process that begins with a metal plate. Explore how a metal and an acid came together to produce this artistic view of Gloucester.

Standards

Elementary School (Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework: Visual Arts)

2.6 Demonstrate an understanding of foreground, middle ground, and background.

Middle School (Massachusetts Math Curriculum Framework: Statistics and Probability)

6.SP Develop understanding of statistical variability.

1. Recognize a statistical question as one that anticipates variability in the data related to the question and accounts for it in the answers. For example, “How old am I?” is not a statistical question, but “How old are the students in my school?” is a statistical question because one anticipates variability in students’ ages.

2. Understand that a set of data collected to answer a statistical question has a distribution that can be described by its center, spread, and overall shape.

High School (Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework: Chemistry)

HS-PS2-6. Communicate scientific and technical information about the molecular-level structures of polymers, ionic compounds, acids and bases, and metals to justify why these are useful in the functioning of designed materials.

Childe Hassam, *View of Gloucester (detail)*, 1922. Etching. Gift of Harold and Betty Bell, 2003. [#2003.51.4]

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<http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/5aa/5aa349.htm> ; © Copyright 2005 Traditional Fine Arts Organization, Inc., an Arizona nonprofit corporation. All rights reserved.

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