

PAINTING IN MOTION

THE ART OF CHARLES HERBERT WOODBURY (1864-1940)

VOSE GALLERIES OF BOSTON



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PAINTING IN MOTION: THE ART OF CHARLES H. WOODBURY (1864–1940)

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ON THE COVER: A detail of CHW-68 *Sun Bathing*, see pg. 3



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Nancy Allyn Jarzombek

3 October to 30 November 2002

VOSE GALLERIES OF BOSTON

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The paintings in this exhibition were originally purchased by Margaret Woodbury Strong (no relation to the artist, as far as we can determine), the founder of the Strong Museum in Rochester, New York. She chose well, selecting some of Woodbury's most vibrant, powerful compositions, and in her enthusiasm she amassed seventy-nine works. After careful deliberation, a portion of the collection has been deaccessioned from Strong's collection to make room for objects more truly in line with their collecting mandate. We would like to thank Nicolas Ricketts, Curator at the Strong Museum, for his assistance and thoughtful attention to the details of this project.

It is a rare pleasure indeed to work on an artist as capable, determined and articulate as Charles Woodbury, but pulling all of the raw materials together proved quite a task. I would like to acknowledge the help I received from Siobhan Wheeler, who traveled to the Archives of American Art in Washington, D.C., and sorted through literally hundreds of original letters written by Woodbury to his mother and to Elizabeth Ward Perkins in his later years. Siobhan also cheerfully attended to numerous details connected to the production of the catalogue. Sinclair Hitchings, Keeper of Prints, and Karen Shafts, Assistant to the Keeper of Prints, in the Print Department of the



CHW-08 *Turbot Creek – Maine*

Boston Public Library were extremely helpful, as was the able team of reference librarians headed by Janice H. Chadbourne in the Fine Arts Department of the Boston Public Library. I am also grateful to MIT for making two spectacular paintings by Woodbury available to us for the duration of the exhibition, and to Joan Parks Whitlow, Registrar and Collections Manager of the MIT Museum, and Jennie O'Neill, Collections Assistant, for their assistance.

The staff at Vose Galleries has worked hard to ensure the success of this project. I am especially grateful to Lynnette Bazzinotti, Carol Chapuis, Julie Simpkins, Courtney Kopplin, Melanie Gryboski, Carey Vose, and Brenna Cothran. Rocky Thies photographed the paintings with superb attention to every nuance. Bill, Terry and Marcia Vose gave me the green light and were encouraging and enthusiastic throughout.

Finally I would like to thank Chris and Peter Woodbury for sharing reminiscences of their mother and their grandfather with me, and for showing me something of Woodbury's Ogunquit.

NAJ



CHW-68 *Sun Bathing*

FOREWORD

In May of this year, as we were busy with the production of this catalogue, we were saddened to learn of the death of India Woodbury, daughter-in-law of Charles Woodbury. We first became acquainted with India about twenty-five years ago, when she and David Woodbury contacted us for an exhibition of Woodbury's paintings. That exhibition was quickly followed by a second, in 1980, of paintings by Charles and Marcia Oakes Woodbury. After David's death in 1981, India oversaw the very successful exhibition of Woodbury's paintings at the MIT Museum in 1986, and subsequently wrote about and lectured on both Charles and Marcia Oakes Woodbury.

India was born Ruth Beatrice Ruyl in 1905 in Hingham, Massachusetts, the daughter of two artists, Louis H. and Beatrice Baxter Ruyl. She graduated from Boston University in 1926 with a degree in teaching and came to Ogunquit soon after, to take a painting class with Charles Woodbury. She married Woodbury's son, David, in 1932. David was a playwright and Ruth, now calling herself India, was an actress in the summer stock theater at the Ogunquit Playhouse and on Old Silver Beach on Cape Cod. After living in New York City and Southern California, they settled in Ogunquit year-round in the early 1960s,

and India became of pillar of the Ogunquit community, supporting the arts and efforts to preserve the fragile seashore environment. In 2001 she received an Outstanding Citizen award from the Ogunquit Chamber of Commerce for dedicating so much of her time and effort to the town.

We were privileged to have known India. We stayed in touch through the years, always appreciating her lively intelligence, quick wit and firmly stated opinions. Her death marks the passing of an era.

Abbot W. Vose

Robert C. Vose III

Marcia L. Vose



India Woodbury in her garden, Ogunquit



CHW-04 *World Flier*



CHW-03 *At Play*



CHW-61 *Fog, Grand Manan*



CHW-66 *Over the Bay*



CHW-69 *Winter Coastline*

PAINTING IN MOTION

THE ART OF CHARLES HERBERT WOODBURY (1864–1940)

NANCY ALLYN JARZOMBEK

When I was a small boy the world held two mysteries for me—how any human being could write a book, and how a man, human or otherwise, could paint a picture . . . I tried to solve one problem by going to work at it and I found that paint was, after all, no such mystery but that the trouble was of another sort. It was easy enough to paint a picture, but what would make it a good one, and then even better?

(Charles H. Woodbury, "Notes for a lecture," Charles H. Woodbury Papers, Print Department, Boston Public Library)

Woodbury, from the start, had a touch that was painter-like. His way of laying pigments on a canvas or a panel so clearly betrayed his own enjoyment in the process that it communicated a like sensation of gusto. He possessed indeed a dangerous talent.

(William Howe Downes, "Charles Herbert Woodbury and his Work", *Brush and Pencil*, vol. 6, no. 1 (April 1900))

Charles H. Woodbury has long been acknowledged as one of Boston's strongest and most influential artists. He entered paintings in every major exhibition, held numerous solo shows in Boston, New York and Chicago, received many prizes and medals, was called upon to jury prestigious annual exhibitions, and garnered the admiration of critics nationwide. Moreover, he was an influential teacher both in Boston and at his well-known summer school in Ogunquit, Maine. In 1936 his work was the subject of a retrospective exhibition at the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, and in 1945 the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, held a memorial exhibition that included his most important paintings, watercolors and etchings. But thereafter Woodbury's reputation languished. In the 1950s and '60s realism was passé and regionalist painters were considered hopelessly out of date.

Today, as we view American art of the turn of the century with a better appreciation for its complexities, Woodbury emerges as a seminal modernist — albeit dressed in conventional Yankee clothing. His painting style and choice of subject matter remained traditional, while his ideas sprang ahead of his time as he experimented with color and form for expressive purposes. Perhaps of all his contemporaries, prominent art critic William Howe Downes understood him best: "He has applied to this difficult problem of painting a very exceptional talent and intelligence, and has worked it out by a method entirely his own, invented and developed with a perfect adaptation to its purpose. The achievement is of importance, constituting a valuable contribution to the art of our day."¹



CHW-06 *On the Reefs*



CHW-23 *Heavy Sea*



CHW-46 *Ogunquit Reef*

Reassessment of the artist began with two shows mounted by Vose Galleries in 1978 and 1980. The consistent high quality of his paintings, combined with the sheer beauty of his colors and paint surfaces caught the attention of a new generation of art lovers and historians and led to a major exhibition and catalogue by the MIT Museum in 1986. An increasing appreciation for his paintings, as well as a close look at his published and unpublished writings, continues to reveal facets of his personality and ideas, shedding light upon the wider context of art, art education and art appreciation of his time.

Woodbury was endowed with remarkable artistic talent. When he was only a child, people marveled at his drawings, but as he matured he began to realize that talent alone was not enough to paint a good picture. “It was easy enough to paint a picture,” he mused, “but what

would make it a good one and then even better?”² The answer to this question lay — at that time — in following the dictates of academic training and the study of paintings by great artists. But Woodbury, showing a streak of individualism, looked for the answers within himself. “My general idea,” he said, “is to paint the impression that the landscape makes upon me.”³ Even at the height of his career he was careful not to rest on his laurels, nor to internalize other people’s standards. “The position the painter holds in the community is an equivocal one,” he cautioned. “The ordinary standards of success do not apply. A masterpiece might well pass unnoticed and have little or no money value.”⁴ The result, he admitted to his friend Robert C. Vose, was that “I do many things that seem to have no interest for the Museum people.”⁵ But, he wrote, “A picture is for the one who can understand it.”⁶



CHW-67 *Half a Gale*

Woodbury's approach to art was shaped during his childhood in the seaside town of Lynn, Massachusetts. At the end of the 19th century, painters from Boston and New York swarmed to Lynn and other towns along the shore north of Boston in the summer, painting sketches of the seaside out-of-doors. It was in this ambiance that the Lynn Beach Painters emerged.⁷ All local to Lynn, this group of about seven painted beach and marsh scenes directly from nature, for which formal artistic training was not considered strictly necessary. By the time he was sixteen, Woodbury had joined in, applying the training in drawing that he had received in public school. A few years later he declared, "All of my best pictures have been painted out-of-doors. I might say that all of my knowledge has been gained in the open air, since I have never attended art schools but have studied most carefully all the conditions of landscape painting from the scenes themselves."⁸



CHW-07 *Rolling Waves*



CHW-02 *Changing Wind*

Woodbury's connection with the Lynn painters was interrupted in 1882 when he moved to Boston and entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study mechanical engineering. No doubt he was submitting to his parents' wishes, but it is equally likely that he was undecided about his career. Like his father, an inventor and cabinetmaker, Woodbury showed an aptitude for building things and for all parties involved, a future as an MIT graduate must have seemed more promising than the precarious and unpredictable life of an artist. Nevertheless, he kept painting while attending school and at the age of seventeen became the youngest artist ever elected to join the Boston Art Club. In 1884 he won the club's first prize with the painting *The Tide River* (also called *Low Tide*). At MIT he met Ross Sterling Turner, a watercolorist and instructor of rendering in the School of Architecture, whom he later credited with influencing his decision to become an artist. In



his extra time Woodbury took on students while continuing to train himself in life drawing classes at the Boston Art Club. After graduation from MIT in 1886 he opened a studio in Boston and sold illustrations to *Century*, *Harper's*, and the *New England Magazine* for extra income. He was industrious, prolific, and beginning to attract favorable critical attention.

In 1890 Woodbury married Susan Marcia Oakes, an artist from South Berwick, Maine, who had been taking lessons from artist-illustrator Tommaso Juglaris in Boston. Marcia was as intense and purposeful as her new husband. “My ambitions are legion,” she wrote, “— also my needs — as far as my work is concerned.”⁹ Together the Woodburys decided to spend a year painting in Europe, with Charles writing in anticipation, “all we see will be valuable to us.”¹⁰ They stayed a month in Holland before making a trip through Germany, Switzerland and Italy, where he observed, “The greens are muddy and not nearly so good as those of Holland or of home.”¹¹ From January to June of 1891 they lived in Paris and attended art classes, which comprised the only formal academic instruction that either of them received.¹² Finally they ended up back in Holland for a five-month stay, returning to Boston in October of 1891.

Europe expanded Woodbury’s artistic horizons and his extended stays there enhanced his reputation back home. He entered the Paris Salon of 1891 with an etching entitled *Un Ruisseau en Nouvelle*

Angleterre (A Brook in New England) and began entering pictures in all of the major annuals in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. At the end of 1893 a new level of seriousness entered his work. While on their third crossing to Holland he had made a series of sketches of the wake of the ship as it steamed through the ocean. When they landed he wrote, “I am on the lookout for the material for something big. I am going to paint the wake on a 50 x 75 canvas but not till we get to V[olendam] where I can have more room.” Too excited to wait for the bigger studio, he started right away in Laren, reporting, “I have been a good deal occupied with my wake, which is coming along fairly well. I am anxious to get it out of my present studio and into the Volendam one which is larger.” Finally in February he wrote, “I have been at work on my large picture since I came here and it is nearly done. Tomorrow I think will be the last day. I think that it is successful; whether or not other people will find it so is an open question but I must take my chances.”¹³

A few weeks later the painting hung on a wall of the Paris Salon, with the colorful title *Un Serpent Vert [Green Serpent]* referring to the greenish trail of the wake. It received a more prosaic title in the United States, *Mid-Ocean*, and won Woodbury a Gold Medal at the Atlanta Exposition of 1895 and a Bronze Medal from the Tennessee Centennial in Nashville in 1897. One critic wrote, “*Mid-Ocean* may be said to be Woodbury’s first serious effort to convey a personal impression of a great motive — nothing less than the majesty and beauty of the sea.”¹⁴

IMAGES LEFT TO RIGHT: CHW-16 *Blue Wave*, CHW-44 *Crashing Waves*, CHW-27 *White Caps*, CHW-41 *Island Town — West Indies*

Woodbury had found his idiom: heaving water, crashing waves, and blowing wind, subjects that were to occupy him for the rest of his life.

Up to this point the Woodburys had embraced a peripatetic lifestyle. When they weren't in Holland they were in their Boston studio or on the north shore, staying with his parents in Lynn, where Charles taught classes in the summers. They also spent several months of the year with the Oakes family in South Berwick or York, Maine. Eventually, however, they felt the need to settle, and decided upon a summer residence in Ogunquit, where they could have coastal views so important to Woodbury. In 1895 he wrote from Holland, "It is certainly only a question of money whether or not we build next spring. We are acquiring a lot of [Dutch] tiles which we will use in our place when we build it."¹⁵ The following year, after the birth of his son, David, Woodbury bought five acres of waterfront land in Ogunquit and put up the studio. Two years later, with money from the sales of two important paintings, he built a house large enough to accommodate his growing family and his parents. In August of that year, 1898, he established the Woodbury School of Painting and Drawing in Ogunquit.

Woodbury initially taught for the income, but he continued long after it was necessary because, as he told his friend Charles H. Sawyer, teaching compelled him to continually examine and clarify his ideas.¹⁶ The summer school became a laboratory both for himself and his students, as one observer noted: "Twice during the class session, he paints in the open while the group of students look on. He starts the picture on the bare canvas, and it grows before the eyes, to the finish."¹⁷ As a teacher, Woodbury was somewhat unconventional in his approach; during the six-week session he assigned weekly painting problems, lectured on principles of creating a painting, and on Saturdays provided what he called a 'concours,' adapting the word from his French training, during which he reviewed and talked about each student's work.¹⁸ Woodbury's emphasis was less on technical development than it was on encouraging his students to express themselves honestly through their choices of subject, line, and color: "The actual manipulation of the

brush is a skillful matter, and yet it requires more intelligence than manual dexterity. Art is psychology, not science, and there must be one unknown factor, the personal equation. You must know what you see, why you see, and what is worth

seeing."¹⁹ Only in this way, he believed, would the recording of a specific scene — a portrait of a place — become truly artistic.

"We [paint pictures] primarily because we want to put into visible form some thought or feeling we have in the presence of our subject,"²⁰ he declared. With this approach to picture-making, shaped by the gift of talent but guided by both by the artist's intellect and his awareness of his own psychological response to his subject, Woodbury established his own artistic identity, as distinct from his realist-impressionist colleagues. By 1880, French Impressionist painters strove to record — unemotionally — the impression that light and color made upon the eye; by 1890, American followers adopted much of their palette, brushwork and philosophy. By 1900, however, a number of American painters, Arthur W. Dow, Willard Metcalf, Hermann Dudley Murphy, John Twachtman, and J. Alden Weir among them, began to infuse their impressionist-style paintings with expressive or poetic qualities. Woodbury's emotional, intuitive approach had much in common with theirs. He tried to record the joy, wonderment and excitement he felt contemplating the forces of wind and water in the landscape all the while remaining faithful to his subject, retaining the shapes of the natural world, the sense of atmosphere, and the illusion of depth. He took things one step further, however, when he applied psychological language to the process of creation, declaring that "a picture is a true expression of the painter, generally of his hidden self if he is at all complex."²¹



Mid-Ocean, Collection of the Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield, Massachusetts



CHW-45 *Duck Decoys*



CHW-58 *Coming In*



CHW-05 *The Lost Boat*

A pause and then a change of direction in Woodbury's career took place during the four-year period between 1918 and 1923. Marcia had died in 1913 and in 1918 Woodbury stopped teaching, turning his summer class in Ogunquit over to two of his students, Russell T. Hyde and Elizabeth Sawtelle. He endured two rounds of serious surgery and recuperation that year, and afterwards spent several summers on Gerrish Island in Maine. During these years his friendship with Boston society matron Elizabeth Ward Perkins developed into a close collaborative relationship.

In 1923 Woodbury embarked on a new endeavor when he and Perkins established the Woodbury School of Observation: the Art of Seeing. Together they developed a theory of art education that they articulated in their 1925 book, *The Art of Seeing*,²² which Woodbury summed up in this way: "Our real object in the teaching is self education through self expression."²³ Perkins taught classes for children in Boston during the winters, with Woodbury offering Saturday criticisms. Woodbury resumed teaching in Ogunquit during the summers, writing in satisfaction, "I feel that we are well started in every way and there's the sense of the class goodwill and honest work ahead. What would be better or more worth while?"²⁴ By 1929 he and Perkins had added psychologist Milton Bird to their teaching team, to help stu-

dents understand themselves and therefore to produce better pictures. By 1935 Woodbury himself offered a course entitled "Mental and Emotional Training through the Study of Color Relations in Oil and Water Color."

It was a risky step for Woodbury, who stood at the end of a very successful career. Never one to go along with the crowd, he now turned his back on the elitism of the fine art world, and endorsed a wholly democratic approach to picture making. He and Perkins based their approach upon two cherished ideas: that art springs forth from an individual's psychology, and that anyone can learn to draw through proper mental training. It was uncomfortably egalitarian and a skeptical press gently chided them: "Mrs. Perkins and Mr. Woodbury declare that the trouble with us is that we don't know what we see."²⁵

Within the next two decades, of course, these ideas took hold, and went further than even Woodbury could have predicted. Not only was the notion of individual expression crucial to certain developments in modern art, it also played an important role in the way people began to understand and appreciate art. The premise is roughly as follows: a person creates a picture by expressing a personal idea; a viewer, then, is able to understand it by bringing his own personal experience to that picture. In 1934, American philosopher John Dewey (1859-

1952) published *Art and Experience* and launched the development of a vast industry of art appreciation. Books, art education programs, and museum education programs sprang up, all designed to teach people not only how to create but also how to see works of art through all ages.²⁶ Even today, the Education Program at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for one, has deep roots in the ideas originally set forth by Woodbury and Perkins, offering a Visual Thinking Strategies course for teenagers, and enthusiastically stating in its description of children's art classes, "[e]mphasis is placed on the process of realizing ideas through experimentation with materials."²⁷

During the last decades of his life, despite the skepticism, Woodbury continued to paint as he always had and students continued to come to him. In the late 1920s he discovered that the views from an airplane could provide him with wonderful landscape possibilities, but for the most part he remained earthbound, watching and painting the ocean, which was always the source of great satisfaction and interest to him. With characteristically self-deprecating wit he wrote in 1938, "This picture-painting gets to be an instinct after a sufficient number of years."²⁸

Although he preferred to work alone, Woodbury was gregarious and enjoyed good company. He often traveled with friends, family members, and favorite students, and he was known for his entertaining yet somewhat acerbic wit. Among his close friends he counted C. E. L. Green and Edward A. Page from Lynn, and Hermann Dudley Murphy, Harry Van der Weyden, and Alfred Hermann Schroff from Boston, and New York artists Jules Guerin, who called him "Shorty," and Charles Courtney Curran. He was on good terms with all of the important artists of Boston, but his idiosyncratic training and his choice to focus wholly on landscape and marine subjects separated him from the "Boston School" as comprised of Edmund C. Tarbell, Frank Benson, Joseph DeCamp, and their circle. In 1895 there was a small outcry in the press when Woodbury's *Mid-Ocean* was overlooked by Boston jurors in favor of a small marine sketch by Benson at the annual exhibition of the Boston Art Club. "Compared with Woodbury's *Mid-*



CHW-64 *The North West Wind*



CHW-65
Sketch for North West Wind

Ocean," one critic protested, "[Benson's painting] appears only as a sketch, it so lacks the earnest serious work which Woodbury has evidently put in."²⁹ If this bothered either artist, nothing was ever said. Indeed, of all of the Boston School painters, Woodbury was probably closest to Benson, who came to Ogunquit in 1900, the year before he began spending summers up in North Haven, Maine. The two men rediscovered etching around 1915 and exchanged enthusiastic letters.

“I was tremendously pleased to have your prints and to see the etched lines of another,” Benson wrote happily, “If you stay [in Ogunquit] till October I may get down for a day or so. I’d love to — we should have a bully time chinning it over.”³⁰

Next to his only child, David, there were three important figures in Woodbury’s life, all women, who deserve special mention. The first was his mother, Mary Parker Woodbury (1841–1937), with whom he lived in Ogunquit every year from July to November until her death at the age of ninety-six. A devoted son, Woodbury wrote to his mother by every post during his European trips, commenting on recent politics, giving her directions about where to send his paintings, and exhorting her to be busy so as not to miss him too much. Due to Marcia’s frequent illness, Mrs. Woodbury played a large role in the upbringing of her grandson, and after Marcia’s untimely death in 1913 she managed her son’s household in Ogunquit. Until only a few years before her death, he took her to the Caribbean every spring.

The second figure was his wife, Marcia (1867–1913), whose love of Holland dominated the early years of their marriage. Marcia returned often for extended stays to paint and sketch, even becoming fluent in the language. Holland provided a refuge from the demands of her difficult family, as well as from the requirements that went along with being the wife of a successful painter. As she confided to a close friend, “a good deal of the silent and invisible work . . . falls to my share — you understand. People could not realize how much I have to do with painting my husband’s pictures. Do you find yourself as much needed in mending your husband’s patients?”³¹ Marcia’s health was always a cause for concern. She was laid up every winter with severe chest colds, and suffered from fatigue and debilitating headaches.³² In 1907, while on a trip to Holland to build up her strength, she was hospitalized in Utrecht; Charles brought her home the following spring but she was never again strong enough to return. She may have been fragile in body, but her determination to paint was powerful. “I want



IMAGES TOP TO BOTTOM: CHW–53 *Steamer*, CHW–47 *Wreck of the Oklahoma, June 1914*, CHW–52 *Steamer in Fog*

to paint only feeling,” she wrote. “— what is not imagination and not the beautiful. People try to get at the beautiful without understanding what makes it They have to learn, which most artists never seem to, that the only possible way to the beautiful for humans is through suffering and joy. Without these it does not exist.”³³

The third woman in Woodbury’s life was Elizabeth Ward Perkins (1873–1954). A New Yorker by birth, Elizabeth Ward attended Bryn Mawr College and spent two years in Europe studying music. In 1896 she married Charles Bruen Perkins, an architect and the son of Charles Callahan Perkins who was a prominent figure in Boston’s cultural circles. While raising their four children, Perkins defined one of her missions in life to improve the quality of education for children. She was already active with the Children’s Art Center and the Children’s Museum in Boston when she began listening to — and writing down — Woodbury’s lectures on art. Woodbury drew from these transcripts when he wrote *Art and the Personal Equation* in 1919. It was an unlikely alliance; Perkins traveled in very different circles from Woodbury. She was wealthy and socially well connected through her marriage while Woodbury was neither, yet in each other they found a kindred spirit. Together they advanced their ideas about art and art education, Perkins concentrating on children while Woodbury focussed on adults, many of them art teachers. His letters to her span the years 1914 to 1938 and are sprinkled with references to art, psychology and teaching, along with opinions on world events, and concern for her well being. Only one letter survives that reveals the depth of his feeling for her. After the death of his mother, Woodbury wrote to Perkins, “I don’t have to tell you what it has been to have you with me in the past few weeks but you have been on hand through other crises which neither of us will forget and we understand all of them without the necessity of putting them into words. I am very much blessed in you, Elizabeth dear.”³⁴

For all that has been written about the life of the artist and the creative process, the last word belongs to Woodbury. “A painter’s life is full of drama and adventure for anything may happen to him. It is like

the ghost that is visible to those who can see ghosts. The sun is coming through now catching the wave tops and that is drama. The near wave is orange with the fresh water that has come down Josiah’s river and the salt water is dull green not put up in any tube. On account of what has happened one hundred miles out at sea, some wave bursts and goes straight in the air; it would have slanted in some other condition — I thought it would happen — I have just seen a new composition and laid it in — and now I stop. That’s the way the day goes.”³⁵

¹ William Howe Downes, “The Ideas of a Marine Painter,” *Art and Progress* vol. 4, no. 1 (November 1912): 762.

² CHW, “Notes on a lecture,” Woodbury Papers, Print Department, Boston Public Library (hereafter cited as CHW Papers, BPL).

³ “Talks with Artists: A Talk with Mr. Charles Herbert Woodbury, His Exhibition in Oils and Water Colors,” *Boston Journal*, morning edition (March 20, 1890): 2.

⁴ CHW, *Painting and the Personal Equation*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919): p. 9.

⁵ CHW to RCV, Sept. 3, 1915. Vose Galleries, Letters.

⁶ *Painting and the Personal Equation*, op. cit., p. 7.

⁷ See D. Roger Howlett, *The Lynn Beach Painters: Art Along the North Shore 1880–1920* (Lynn: Lynn Historical Society, 1998).

⁸ “Talks with Artists: A Talk with Mr. Charles Herbert Woodbury” op. cit., p. 2.

⁹ MOW to Amy Abramson, January 19, 1893. Marcia Oakes Woodbury Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution (hereafter called MOW Papers, AAA, SI).

¹⁰ CHW to his mother, New York, [August] 12, 1890, Charles Herbert Woodbury Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution (hereafter called CHW Papers, AAA, SI).

¹¹ CHW to his mother, Sienna, [September 1890], CHW Papers, AAA, SI.



CHW-55 *Boat Ashore — Winter*

¹² Charles attended critiques in the ateliers of two of the most popular teachers of the Académie Julian, William Adolphe Bouguereau and Jules Joseph Lefebvre. Marcia took instruction at the Montparnasse studio of American expatriate artist Charles Laszlo. Marcia's notebook from that time period, containing notes in French as well as sketches, is in the MOW Papers, AAA, SI.

¹³ CHW to his mother, Laren, Oct. 12, 1893; CHW to his mother, Laren, November 27, 1893; CHW to his mother, Laren, February 19, 1894; Charles Herbert Woodbury and Elizabeth Ward Perkins Papers, AAA, SI. Woodbury finally made it to Volendam at the end of February but used the large studio only for framing his painting before sending it to Paris.

¹⁴ William Howe Downes, "Charles H. Woodbury and his Work," *Brush and Pencil* 6, no. 1 (Apr. 1900): 10.

¹⁵ CHW to his mother, Volendam, October 24, 1895. CHW Papers, AAA, SI.

¹⁶ Charles H. Sawyer, "Charles Woodbury Painter and Teacher," *Art in America* (Aug. 1936): 525.

¹⁷ "Artists' Resort Now Discovered," *Lewiston Journal* (1906), quoted in Roberta Zonghi, "The Woodbury School: The Art of Seeing," *Earth Sea and Sky, Charles H. Woodbury* (Cambridge: MIT Museum, 1986): 33.

¹⁸ "Husband and Wife Eminent Painters of Differing Subjects," *The Sunday Herald* (Sept. 21, 1902), Mag. Sect., p. 3. Woodbury used the term 'concours' with a certain amount of irony and exaggeration. It comes from the French word for the highly competitive and difficult examinations required for art students to enter the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

¹⁹ *Art and the Personal Equation*, op. cit., p. 95.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²¹ CHW to EWP, Feb. 27, 1914, from "Extracts from Earliest Letters to EWP from CHW," CHW Papers, BPL.

²² EWP and CHW, *The Art of Seeing: Mental Training Through Drawing* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925): 5.

²³ CHW to EWP, "Notes from Illustrated Letters" to EWP from CHW, ca. 1926. CHW Papers, BPL.

²⁴ CHW to EWP, Riverway Studios, Tuesday [1923]. CHW and EWP Papers, AAA, SI.

²⁵ Eleanor Early, "The New Craze for Amateur Art – How a Wealthy Society Woman has Set Debutantes and Matrons to Decorating Boudoir Walls with Cows and other Animals They Sketch in the Classes for Applied Observation." Unidentified clipping, 1929. Fine Arts Department, Boston Public Library Artists' Files, Charles Woodbury.

²⁶ For a discussion on the development of the industry of art appreciation, with its far-reaching consequences, see Mark Jarzombek, *The Psychologizing of Modernity: Art, Architecture, and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

²⁷ See the website for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: www.mfa.org/education/childrenteenfamily.htm (as of July, 2002).

²⁸ CHW to EWP, undated. CHW and EWP Papers, AAA, SI.

²⁹ "Boston Art Club Exhibition," *Boston Daily Advertiser* (Jan. 19, 1895): 5.

³⁰ Frank Benson to CHW, North Haven, Maine, August 22 [1915], CHW Papers, BPL.

³¹ MOW to Mrs. Gretchell, South Berwick, November, 1896. MOW Papers, AAA, SI. Woodbury himself was reticent about Holland's appeal and in his early letters dwelled more upon its inconveniences: "I was bothered by children this morning who stood around me and made themselves as disagreeable as possible. Then I was stopped by a shower. After lunch my canvas blew over and the experience with the children was repeated and altogether I had a hard time." (CHW to his mother, Holland, August 19, 1890, CHW Papers, AAA, SI.) But in 1914, as he read reports of German troops approaching its borders, he was appalled. "Think of all those Dutch towns devastated. It is personal to me for the happiest years of my life have been spent amongst them." (CHW to EWP, Oct. 26, 1914, in "Extracts from Letters from CHW to EWP," CHW Papers, BPL.)

³² Marcia's symptoms suggest that she may have had untreated asthma and allergies. She described her head as being 'like a full barrel' and there is frequent mention of suffering from prolonged bouts of 'grippe' in her letters. She endured an operation in 1906, probably to remove adenoids, which was largely unsuccessful in relieving her symptoms. During the last years of her life she worked only sporadically and became increasingly depressed.

³³ MOW to unknown person, not dated. MOW Papers, AAA, SI.

³⁴ CHW to EWP, Ogunquit, 1938. CHW and EWP Papers, AAA, SI.

³⁵ CHW to EWP, Ogunquit, 1918. "Notes from Illustrated Letters," CHW Papers, BPL.



IMAGES TOP TO BOTTOM: CHW-26 *Water and Rocks*, CHW-31 *Sitting on the Rocks*, CHW-33 *High Tide* — Ogunquit, Maine



CHW-28 *Man on Rocks*



CHW-48 *Towing*



CHW-12 *Fishing*



CHW-15 *Bather on Rock, Narrow Cove*

CHRONOLOGY

THE LIFE AND WORDS OF CHARLES H. WOODBURY

1864

Born on July 14, in Lynn, Massachusetts, the son of Seth Herbert and Mary Parker Woodbury. Seth H. Woodbury was a cabinet maker and inventor. Although his son showed a talent for art, he steered Charles (CHW) toward the more practical profession of engineering. Seth and Mary Woodbury lived in Lynn all their lives, but after 1896 spent summer and autumn months in Ogunquit with Charles and his family.

Educated in Lynn public schools, showed talent for drawing at early age.

When I was a small boy the world held two mysteries for me — how any human being could write a book and how a man, human or otherwise, could paint a picture.

Charles H. Woodbury, "Notes on a Lecture," Charles H. Woodbury Papers, Boston Public Library.

1880

Began exhibiting oils and drawings with artist friends Edward Burrill and C. E. L. Green in local venues. Won second prize for amateurs at Lynn Art Exhibition.

1881

Submitted works to the 14th Exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association, Boston.

One critic singled out Woodbury's work as showing "a noticeable degree of promise." *Boston Journal*, October 1, 1881.

1882

Passed jury of the Boston Art Club for the first time with Sketch of *Fish Houses* and the watercolor, *Evening*.

February, CHW's younger brother, Frederick, died.

Spent summer in Swampscott and Marblehead; experimented with etching.

September, entered MIT to study mechanical engineering.

Over next four years CHW took courses in Geometry, Physics, Foundry Work, Blacksmithing, Steam Engineering, Mechanical Drawing, Machine Design, Kinematics and Dynamics, Thermodynamics, Calculus, Modern History, Political Economy, French, and German.

1883

In addition to course load at MIT, CHW took life drawing at Boston Art Club. Sales of paintings and fees from teaching enabled CHW to pay all his school expenses and supplement his family's income.

Became youngest person ever elected to join the Boston Art Club.

1884

Won first prize for *The Tide River* at Boston Art Club.

The charm of the picture lies in the atmospheric effect, clear, crisp and gentle . . . It is painted broadly, in a peculiarly dashing style, and yet gives evidence of careful thought. "The Fine Arts," *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 1884.

Joined watercolor class at MIT taught by Ross Sterling Turner, noted watercolorist and new faculty member in architecture department. CHW later credited Turner for influencing his decision to become an artist.

1885

Summer, taught sketching class in Swampscott, beginning life-long tradition of teaching outdoor classes in summertime. Painted along the North Shore.

I used to go to Gloucester when I was young and gaunt and I worked all of the time from daylight to dark and thought of nothing but work. I have associations with the place and my friends [Charles] Steward and [C. E. L.] Green and of lugging heavy packs for miles to save a few cents — the smell of fish and salt pickle and the queer pointed roofs — tar and okum and the railways and the coming and falling tide. It was a good place then with the glamour of real artists here and there one might see passing if one were lucky. CHW to Elizabeth Ward Perkins

(EWP), ca. 1928. "Notes from Illustrated Letters to EWP from CHW" CHW Papers, Boston Public Library.

1886

Graduated from MIT with thesis, "Design of Builder Motion and Driving Mechanism of the Roving Frame," a discussion of mechanical processes involved in making cotton thread.



Charles painting in Katwijk, Holland, 1891.
Vose Galleries Archives



Marcia and Charles, ca. 1890
Courtesy of the MIT Museum

... I am in Paris, in the studio of a young artist. A large painting, yet unfinished, rests upon the working easel. The artist is engaged in posing and draping a model, a fair young maid in peasant costume. It takes him a long time to do this, for he is very particular. His name is Woodbury. Later I see the same painting on exhibition at the Salon, the talk of all Paris connoisseurs. It wins the first prize and the artist is famous ever after. Mechanical engineering hath for him no charms. Prophecy for CHW by one of his classmates, in *First Annual Directory of the Class of '86, MIT*, June 1887, p. 30.

Louis Prang published set of six lithographs from drawings by CHW.

Taught sketching class in Swampscott and classes at Lynn Evening Drawing School.

October, took studio at 22 School Street, Boston, continued taking in students and commercial illustration work.

1887

Studio at 22 School Street.

Had one-artist exhibition at J. Eastman Chase Gallery, sold thirty paintings.

Exhibited drawings at the Boston Architecture Club.

Was appointed to jury for Boston Art Club annual exhibition.

Taught at Lynn Evening Drawing School.

Summer, took sketching trip to Halifax, Nova Scotia with C. E. L. Green.

We have been at work every day and all day to very good result. . . . We are the swells of the place, of course imagine a swell in a flannel shirt, dirty shoes and clothes covered with paint! CHW to his mother, Aug. 19, 1887, CHW Papers, AAA, SI.

1888

Studio at 22 School Street.

Met Susan Marcia Oakes, whom he called Marcia, in Boston. Visited her at her family's home on York Beach and made first sketching trip to Ogunquit, Maine.

Became engaged to Marcia.

Summer, took second trip to Nova Scotia, made sketches, paintings and photographs.

I have not been a bit lonesome — I like to work alone and there has not been a minute that I have not known what to do with. CHW to his mother, [1888] CHW Papers, AAA, SI.



Marcia Oakes, ca.1888
Courtesy of the MIT Museum



Venice, 1890, Taken by CHW
Courtesy of the MIT Museum



Hotel room in Venice with Christmas tree, 1890,
taken by CHW
Courtesy of the MIT Museum

1889

Studio at 22 School Street.

Took trip to Quebec with his mother.

Moved to 3 Winter Street, Boston.

Between 1888 and 1899, CWH's etchings of Marblehead, Gloucester and Salem were published as illustrations in *Century Magazine*, *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, and *Scribner's Magazine*.

Exhibited etchings at Klackner, in New York, and J. Eastman Chase.

All my best pictures have been painted out-of-doors. I might say that all of my knowledge has been gained in the open air, since I have never attended art schools but have studied most carefully all the conditions of landscape painting from the scenes themselves. "Talks with Artists," *Boston Journal* (March 20, 1890.)

1890

Studio at 3 Winter Street.

June 24, married Marcia (MOW). They spent a year abroad, landing in Antwerp in August, and travelling through Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, through December.

The country through which we passed is interesting. A lot of little stone houses with tile roofs or thatch and here and there a windmill. It is so unlike what we know at home, so like a picture. CHW to his mother, [July 1890] CHW Papers, AAA, SI.

The red gates [of Sienna] are all standing and so it is more satisfactory than Quebec in that way. The color is distinctly Italian and I like it in the houses and walls but do not find the foliage to my taste. The greens are muddy and not nearly so good as those of Holland or of home. CHW to his mother, Sienna, Thursday [1890]. CHW Papers, AAA, SI.

1891

CHW enrolled in Académie Julian, January to June, while MOW attended classes at atelier of American expatriate Charles Lasar.

CHW's etching, *Un Ruisseau en Nouveau Angleterre* (*New England Brook*) was accepted at Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts.

Spent June to October in Katwijk, Holland, and returned to Boston in October. Opened joint exhibition of their Dutch work at J. Eastman Chase Gallery.

Opened studio in Evans House on Tremont Street.

I am afraid my constant dissatisfaction with the work has led you all into a mistake concerning my feelings in regard to our wedding trip. We have had a very happy time and have enjoyed every minute. CHW to his mother, Sienna, Sept. 29, 1890. CHW Papers, AAA, SI.

1892

Studio at the Evans House, Tremont Street.

June, CHW and MOW left for second trip, five months, this time to Holland and Switzerland. They traveled with artist Harry Van der Weyden, art students Miss Foster and Miss Due, and Mrs. Oakes. Returned in October.

1893

MOW spent winter and spring in South Berwick, Maine. CHW divided his time between Boston and Maine, took studio at 175 Tremont Street in Boston.

The minute they get acquainted with [Charles] they stand out for him and become his friends whether he will or no — and always with such enthusiasm — women and men both, and they swear by him from that time on. MOW to Amy Abramson, Jan. 19, 1893 (MOW Papers, AAA, SI.)

MOW and CHW prepared illustrations for Sarah Orne Jewett, *Deephaven*, published by



Marcia and David, 1896
Courtesy of the MIT Museum

Houghton Mifflin, 1893.

CHW exhibited two paintings at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

CHW's article, "Notes on a Talk on Wash Drawing for Process Reproduction," appeared in *The Studio* (July 15, 1893).

September, CHW and MOW left for fourteen months in Holland, spending most of their time in Volendam and Laren. CHW began *Mid-Ocean*, first major painting of the ocean that established his reputation as a marine artist.

Once more upon the unsteady deck, one stands and looks, holding the breath, while the ship sweeps down the long slope of a monstrous Atlantic billow, leaving its sinuous track boiling across that watery ridge, only to rise slowly to the crest of the next wave. W. H. Downes, "The Fine Arts," *The Sunday Herald*, January 20, 1895, p.5.

1894

Mid-Ocean appeared at Paris Salon under title *Un Serpent Vert*.

November, CHW and MOW returned home, CHW opened studio at 192 Boylston Street, Boston.

At first it was difficult for me to understand the change in your work, the aspect of nature is so entirely different here than in Holland and the method of rendering so unlike what I knew of your work that it took some little time to see what there was in the sketches but the more I see of them the better I like them and now they seem to me full of truth. Edward C. Cabot to CHW,

Dec. 23, 1894. CHW Papers, BPL



Charles and David, ca.1900
Courtesy of the MIT Museum

1895

Studio at 192 Boylston Street.

CHW and MOW exhibited with the Society of Painters in Water Colors of Holland at J. Eastman Chase, Boston.

CHW won gold medal for *Mid-Ocean* from Atlanta Exposition, Atlanta, Georgia.

Began teaching at the Art Students' Club of Worcester, during winter months.

June to November, CHW and MOW traveled to Holland for fourth time, spending time in Amsterdam, Volendam, Laren, and Drenthe.

MOW spent several weeks painting by herself in Volendam, as CHW reported, *It is very lonely and I don't like it but it seemed best for her to go in view of the fact that Volendam pictures are eagerly bought by the Boston public.* CHW to his mother, Laren, Oct. 14, 1895. CHW Papers, AAA, SI.

1896

Studio at 192 Boylston Street, Boston.

CHW and MOW exhibited paintings together at J. Eastman Chase.

CHW submitted Dutch painting, *The Forest*, to Boston Art Club.

But, after all, it is not among the prize-winners that one must look for the real masterpieces of the exhibition. Mr. Woodbury's "The Forest," one is still convinced after the week's reflection, is

head and shoulders above any other picture in the two galleries. "The Fine Arts, Some Additional Comment of the Art Club Show," *The Sunday Herald*, January 19, 1896, p.36.

CHW spearheaded efforts to raise money through the Paint and Clay Club, Boston, to purchase *Caritas* by Abbott H. Thayer for donation to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Joined Boston Water Color Club at the invitation of its members.

July 24, son David was born in South Berwick, Maine.

Charles put his head down beside mine and sobbed like a child. He and Mamma suffered as much as I did, I think. MOW to Amy Abramson, South Berwick, August 3, 1896. MOW Papers, AAA, SI.

December, traveled to Philadelphia to be member of jury for Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annual exhibition.

1897

Studio at 192 Boylston Street, Boston.

Mid-Ocean won second prize from the Tennessee Centennial.

Bought five acres of shorefront property along Perkins Cove in Ogunquit and built studio.

1898

Sold *Mid-Ocean* to the Berkshire Athenaeum and *Ground Swell* to Andrew Carnegie.

Maintained studio at 192 Boylston Street while adding house to Ogunquit property.

June, taught summer school in Annisquam.

July moved to Ogunquit and established Summer School of Painting and Drawing. CHW taught in Ogunquit, with a break from 1917–1923, until 1939.

It does not work by criticisms, but by opening the pupils' eyes to principles. On Saturdays he has a "concours" criticizing and enlarging upon the work that the students have done alone during the week. Each time he gives what may be called a problem, the object of which is to train their observation and powers for composition, etc: in fact for picture making. . . . He also has a very large special class in the winter for teachers, which proves to be of great benefit to them. "Husband and Wife Eminent Painters of Differing Subjects," *The Sunday Herald*, September 21, 1902, Mag. Section, p. 3.

1899

Studio at 192 Boylston Street.

Taught during winter and spring at Wellesley College, 1899–1906, and 1913–1914.

Elected member of the Society of American Artists.



David with one of Marcia's models in Holland, ca. 1904
Courtesy of the MIT Museum

Appointed member of Selection Jury for Paintings for the U.S. Commission to the Paris Exposition of 1900.

Won bronze medal for *Maine Coast* from the Pan American Exposition at Buenos Aires.

1900

Studio at 192 Boylston Street.

Had one-artist exhibition at Doll and Richards, Boston

MOW, in fragile health, and David made extended stay in Mount Pleasant, Tennessee, to recuperate. CHW joined them at end of stay. Spent summer and fall in Ogunquit, winter in Boston.

June, Frank W. Benson came to Ogunquit to paint.

From 1900 through 1930 CHW exhibited paintings regularly in all prominent national venues, including Boston (Boston Art Club, Boston Water Color Club, St. Botolph Club, Copley Society, Doll & Richards, and Museum of Fine Arts), Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, New York (National Academy of Design, Society of American Artists, American Water Color Society) Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Washington, DC, and Worcester.

1901

Moved studio to Harcourt Building, Boston.

CHW and MOW exhibited works at Paris Exposition Universelle. CHW won bronze medal for *Rock and the Shore*.

May, made first trip to Caribbean, visiting Jamaica.

Won bronze medal for *Maine Coast* from Panama-American Exposition, Buffalo.

Spent summer and fall in Ogunquit.

1902

Moved studio to Grundmann Studios, Clarendon Street, Boston. Neighbors included Hermann Dudley Murphy and Martha Silsbee.

Spring, made second trip to Jamaica.

Had one-artist exhibition at Art Institute of Chicago.

Late summer to October, MOW and CHW made fifth trip to Holland, first since birth of David.

1903

Studio in Grundmann Studios.

Won first prize for *The North Atlantic* from Worcester Art Museum.

May, MOW went to Veere in Holland by herself to recover from illness. September, CHW and David joined her.

I am glad to say she has grown a good deal stouter though for the past few weeks she has not been as well as at first. I am sure that the trip has done what we hoped it would for her and I hope that she will come back a good deal stronger. CHW to his mother, Sept. 9, 1903. CHW Papers, AAA, SI.

CHW spent part of November and December in Cornwall with Boston painter Alfred Herman Schroff.

1904

CHW, MOW and David returned to Boston in January, 1904.

Studio in Grundmann Studios.

One-artist exhibition at Durand Ruel, New York.

CHW appointed to Advisory Committee on Watercolors in Boston, with Joseph Lindon Smith and E. H. Garrett, for St. Louis World's Fair Exposition.

Won silver medal at St. Louis Exposition.



Charles painting in Ogunquit, ca.1900–1910
Courtesy of the MIT Museum

1905

Studio in Grundmann Studios.

One-artist exhibition at St. Botolph Club.

Won honorable mention for *The Cliff* from Carnegie Institute, which subsequently purchased painting.

Off Florida Coast by CHW was presented to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, as a gift of subscribers organized by Martha Silsbee, with whom CHW served on the Boston Water Color Club's executive committee.

Made painting trip to Mount Monadnock with Hermann Dudley Murphy.

September to December, MOW and CHW made seventh trip to Holland.

1906

Studio in Grundmann Studios.

Was elected Associate Member, National Academy of Design.

MOW in declining health; spent much of year in South Berwick and underwent operation in July. By October MOW was well enough to join CHW in Ogunquit.

I had hoped to write a better letter today but as I am all doubled up again with the stomach and good for nothing, can't see anything straight. I'm sure that the head is pretty steady now if this trouble could be stopped but anything out of order seems to claw in all the rest. And I can't sleep. MOW to CHW, South Berwick, Jan. 1906 CHW Papers, AAA, SI.

1907

Studio in Grundmann Studios.

January, MOW and David left for recuperative trip to Holland.

CHW won second prize for *At Sea* from Worcester Museum and sold *The North Atlantic* to Worcester Museum.

Elected full member of the National Academy of Design.

April, CHW arrived in Holland. Spent two months there and returned to Boston, June. Made addition to studio in Ogunquit.

Formed friendships with students Gertrude Fiske, Amy Cabot and others whom CHW called "Pine Hill Girls" because they all lived along Pine Hill Road in Ogunquit.

November, MOW hospitalized in Utrecht; CHW summoned.

1908

MOW very ill in Veere. American nurse sent for. In May, CHW, MOW, David and nurse returned to Boston.

Retained studio at Grundmann Studios, Boston.

Spent summer, fall and winter in Ogunquit.

1909

Spent winter and spring in Ogunquit with MOW and Marcia's mother.

Studio not listed in Boston.

Spring, CHW made third trip to Jamaica.

For all of their married life, the Woodburys moved constantly between Boston, Europe, and various locations in Maine. Opening and closing so many residences taxed MOW's dwindling strength, as she wrote, *I vowed that for one year I would stay in one spot — come what might. It has been much the longest time since I was married but poor Chas when spring came he wanted me to pull up and go off to Jamaica! He is going this year but I do not expect to go with him.* MOW to Amy Abraham, Dec.[1909]. MOW Papers, AAA, SI.

1910

Studio not listed in Boston.

Won silver medal at Buenos Aires Exposition.

Spring, made extended trip to the West Indies.

Spent fall and winter in York, Maine.



Charles and David in Holland, ca.1907
Courtesy of the MIT Museum



Marcia, ca.1907
Courtesy of the MIT Museum

1911

Studio not listed in Boston.

Spent winter and spring in York, Maine.

Won Evans Prize for *Evening* from the American Watercolor Society.

Solo exhibition at Folsom Galleries, New York.

The newer fads in art have passed Mr. Woodbury unscathed. He has gone his way with the obvious desire to render that which he saw and felt, regardless of momentary digressions, new tricks or novel fashions in using his pigment. Arthur Hoeber, "Charles H. Woodbury, N.A., A Painter of the Sea,"

International Studio 42, no. 168 (February, 1911).

Rhode Island School of Design bought *Green Wave* (watercolor).

Spent fall and winter in Worcester.

1912

Studio not listed in Boston; spent winter and spring in Worcester.

Corcoran Gallery of Art bought *Monadnock*.

Solo exhibition at Buffalo Fine Arts Academy.

Trip to the Azores with Hermann Dudley Murphy.

Summer, Ogunquit.

Rare is the power displayed by Mr. Woodbury of seizing those momentary aspects of the sea when it is most impressive in its action and making it actual. He has applied to this difficult problem of painting a very exceptional talent and intelligence, and has worked it out by a method entirely his own, invented and developed with a perfect adaptation to its purpose.

William Howe Downes, "The Ideas of a Marine Painter," *Art and Progress* 4, no. 1 (November 1912): 764.

Fall and winter took rooms at Hampton Court, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Dec. 30 – Jan. 11, solo exhibition at Vose Galleries, Boston.

1913

Studio in Grundmann Studios, Boston

Winter and spring at Hampton Court, Brookline; summer in Ogunquit.

Resumed teaching at Wellesley College after hiatus since 1906.

Whatever a painter may be, bright, stupid, or medium, his own personal view of things is the thing for him and for him alone. Thus in his teaching Mr. Woodbury tries to throw the whole question back to the personal efforts of each individual, and to train each pupil to know himself. This is a difficult thing to do, for very few people really know themselves, but it is the one thing to do and to hold on to — one's own personality and the understanding of it. William Howe

Downes, "The Ideas of a Marine Painter," *Art and Progress*, vol. 4, no. 1 (November 1912): 764.

Appointed to jury, Art Institute of Chicago
November 13, while CHW was in Chicago, Marcia died after long illness.
December, CHW took David to Bermuda.

1914

Studio in Grundmann Studios, Boston

February, became founding member of the Guild of Boston Artists, on governing board with Frank W. Benson, Ignaz Gaugengigl, Lilla Cabot Perry, Bela Pratt and Edmund C. Tarbell.

Organized memorial exhibition of works by MOW at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Took David to Panama to sketch Panama Canal.

July, first correspondence between Elizabeth Ward Perkins and CHW.

Won 2nd William Clark Prize and Corcoran Silver Medal for *Rainbow*.

I hear that there is a serious effort at St. Louis to buy the Rainbow but I have no idea that anything will come of it. . . . It would be quite convenient to sell it for we need a new automobile and a concrete room for the pictures at Ogunquit. CHW to EWP, Oct. 15, 1914 quoted in "Extracts from earliest letters written by CHW to EWP," CHW Papers, BPL.

Began *Panels of the Sea*, series of ten large paintings intended to be exhibited together.

There is some touch of success in it since it brings the mood each time I look at it. The joy of living — no facts — no complicated human relations — no horrors. We who write and paint and make music express what we have found best of all in our experience. CHW to EWP, Nov. 9,

1914 quoted in "Extracts from earliest letters written by CHW to EWP," CHW Papers, BPL.

David entered Harvard.

Had solo exhibition at Corcoran Gallery of Art.

1915

Studio in Grundmann Studios, Boston

Won gold medal for *Rainbow*, and medal of honor for watercolor, at Pan-America Exposition, San Francisco.

Exhibited *Panels of the Sea* at Guild of Boston Artists.

Mr. Woodbury has let himself go. His "Ten Panels of the Sea" form a veritable ocean symphony. It is his most lyrical performance. In this decorative and superbly rich series of marine pictures he sings with splendid abandon of the colorful and jocund seas, the rollicking and shining billows, the play of sunlight on the wave and spray, the exuberant and graceful romping of the leaping and diving porpoises, and the joy of the bold swimmer. "Woodbury's Ocean Symphony,"

Boston Evening Transcript, April 21, 1915.

Picked up etching after hiatus. Etched with Frank Benson in Ogunquit.

Made posters for U.S. War effort.

1916

Studio in Grundmann Studios, Boston

February, CHW's father died.

April, *American Magazine of Art* published article, "Charles Woodbury's Etchings."

Summer at the Stickney House on Gerrish Island, Maine.

1917

After Grundmann Studios was torn down, CHW moved to studio at 16 Arlington Street, Boston

February, spent in Savannah, Georgia.

Summer, taught last summer class in Ogunquit until 1923.

1918

Studio not listed in Boston.

Trip to Paris.

David graduated from Harvard.

June, CHW had an operation and convalesced at Oakwood, the home of Elizabeth Ward and Charles Bruen Perkins, in Jamaica Plain, Boston. Had second operation in December.

You know years and years ago, on that Swampscott beach, Miss Keyes and myself decided you were not only of genius order, but one who would be acknowledged — I now applaud our insight and foresight! . . . Thank heaven you didn't die that time years ago, because these late works add so much to the list of your achievements. Jean Nutting Oliver to CHW [ca. 1930]. CHW papers,

AAA, SI.

1919

Studio not listed in Boston.

CHW's first book: *Painting and the Personal Equation*, published by Houghton Mifflin, Boston. A compilation of six lectures given to students in Ogunquit.

Consideration of the psychological factor must be of the same importance in public appreciation [of art] as in technical performance. For this reason the recognition of these organic principles opens the new era in which they will be of equal value to the general public as to the

painter himself. There are as many realities as there are men. CHW, Preface, *Painting and the Personal Equation*.

From 1919 to 1923 CHW spent summers on Gerrish Island, Maine.

1920

Studio at 184 Boylston Street, Boston.

1921

January, exhibition of etchings at Grolier Club, New York City.

During visit to Boston, John Singer Sargent visited CHW in his Park Square Studio. The artists painted portraits of each other.

September, David married Margaret Lee.

1922

Studio not listed in Boston.

Served on jury for Carnegie Annual International Exhibition. Traveled to London and Paris.

I have seen the French pictures and they are bad. We are bringing back a poor lot to America I am sorry to say. CHW to EWP, Feb. 1922 in "Notes from Illustrated Letters to EWP from CHW" CHW Papers, BPL.

CHW's second book: *Observation: Visual Training through Drawing, First Book*, printed by Small, Maynor & Co. in Boston.

Summer on Gerrish Island, Maine.

1923

Moved into Riverway Studios. Fellow occupants included Frank W. Benson, Gertrude Fiske, William James, and William McG. Paxton. CHW retained Riverway studio until his death.

Won Dana gold medal from Philadelphia Water Color Club.

Made trip to Costa Rica, Havanna and Panama with mother, the first of annual trips made until Mrs. Woodbury's death in 1937, usually in company of friends.

Resumed teaching summer class at Ogunquit.

1924

Flew in open airplane to make color sketches.

I find no particular difficulty in working from a plane as I am used to quick observation and direct expression. My general plan is to slow down to seventy miles an hour and keep a straight course, and I prefer a coast line for the variety of color and form. CHW quoted in Arthur W.

Heintzelman, "The Works of Charles H. Woodbury," *More Books, The Bulletin of the Boston Public Library* (December, 1944).

Made trip to Puerto Rico with mother and friends.

1925

March, solo exhibition of etchings at Keppel Gallery, New York.

With EWP, CHW's third book, *The Art of Seeing: Mental Training through Drawing* is published by Scribner's, New York.

To see life directly and without preconceived ideas is the basis of individual expression. When a person has begun to look without fear and to make his personal choice, he is set in a direction to develop his full resources. CHW and EWP, *The Art of Seeing*, p. 12.

EWP and CHW became teaching partners. Perkins taught in Boston while Woodbury taught primarily at Ogunquit, renamed their schools "The Art of Seeing — Woodbury Course in Observation."

Mrs. Perkins had cooperated for five years with Mr. Woodbury in the development of laboratory methods of this course. It has been thoroughly tested and is being taught to all ages. Course brochure, 1925.

We always have a sense of accomplishment after a class, the proof of good teaching. CHW to EWP, not dated. CHW and EWP papers, AAA, SI.

1926

CHW's painting *Northern Sea* given to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Not an extra special sea but I managed to make a permanent record of it or of the way it might have been if it had been so which it wasn't but it is now as far as I am concerned — you know what I mean. CHW to EWP, "Notes from Illustrated Letters to EWP from CHW, CHW Papers, BPL.

1928

However hard a world it is, it's a bully fight and a great adventure. This teaching job has its uncertainties at which I am not surprised for I have had long experience and I am, in some of my mental ways, what it has made me. CHW to EWP, "Notes from Illustrated Letters to EWP from CHW, ca. 1928. CHW Papers, BPL.

Lent Riverway studio to artist Augustus St. John, while St. John painted Massachusetts Governor Alvan T. Fuller.

1929

November, death of EWP's husband, Charles Bruen Perkins.

1931

Won Henry B. Swope Prize for *Running In* from Society of American Etchers.

Produced series of seven oil panels recording changing light of an eclipse of the sun.

1932

Won Edward Palmer Memorial Prize for *The Changing Wind* from National Academy of Design.

David married Ruth Beatrice Ruyl (India).

[My father-in-law] was very distinguished looking . . . and not very tall, but he held himself well and he was an imposing figure. He wore knickers and sneakers so he could walk over the rocks without slipping. Practically always formally dressed with a tie and nice shirt, a wool jacket . . . he looked like an artist.

He had a second-story porch built opposite his studio room in the house and he'd sit up there and watch and listen and rest. He never was a very strong person, rather frail and small-boned and he didn't do anything to take care of himself. He smoked like a chimney . . . He'd paint and smoke at the same time. The smoke would go up his fingers but he'd hardly be conscious of it. When he sat, he'd always have a cigarette and he'd cross his legs and swing his foot. That was the only exercise he got! India Woodbury quoted in Louise Tragard, *Ogunquit, Maine's Art Colony* (Ogunquit: Barn Gallery Associates, 1986): 15.

1935

Retrospective exhibition organized by Charles Sawyer at the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts.

We find an artist who has been charting his own course, not unmindful of what has been going on around him, but affirming his own right to follow a road consistent with his own temperament and philosophy of painting. Charles H. Sawyer, "Charles Woodbury Painter and Teacher," *Art in America*, August 1936

1937

Mary Parker Woodbury died.

1940

January 21, CHW dies at the home of EWP, Jamaica Plain.

As a whole I do not think his work will ever be considered outmoded or dated, unless art should come to be regarded as a denial of nature. His zest for life brought constant gratitude for having been permitted to live in such a wonderful world, and is the subject matter of all his work. Charles Fabens Kelley, "Charles Herbert Woodbury," *Charles Herbert Woodbury Exhibition of Oils and Water Colors* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1945).



CHW-40 *White House*



CHW-19 *River Beach*



CHW-01 *Seascape*



CHW-62 *Outer Reefs*



CHW-20 *Low Tide*



CHW-38 *Sunset*



CHW-14 *Falling Tide — Yellow Rock*



CHW-22 *Rock Jetty*



CHW-11 *Ship in Danger*



CHW-51 *Two Bathers*



CHW-42 *Maids on Beach*



CHW-13 *Uncertain Footing*



CHW-32 *Girl in Black on Dune*



CHW-35 *Bathing Figure*



CHW-17 *Restless Sea*



CHW-36 *Red Rocks*



CHW-18 *Bathers — Edge of Sand*



CHW-49 *Cottage — Cornish Coast*



CHW-39 *Birch Tangle*



CHW-10 *Single Cedar*



CHW-37 *By the Shore*



CHW-21 *Study (Winter Scene)*



CHW-09 *Tree Trunks Upright*



CHW-34 *Sand Dune*



CHW-25 *West Indian Island*



CHW-60 *Surf on the Beach — Ogunquit, Maine*



CHW-56 *Island House*



CHW-57 *Three Bathing Figures — Maine Coast*



CHW-50 *Strawberry Bank*



CHW-54 *Autumn*



CHW-59 *October*



CHW-43 *The Hill*



CHW-24 *Douglas Hill, Maine*



CHW-29 *Marsh*

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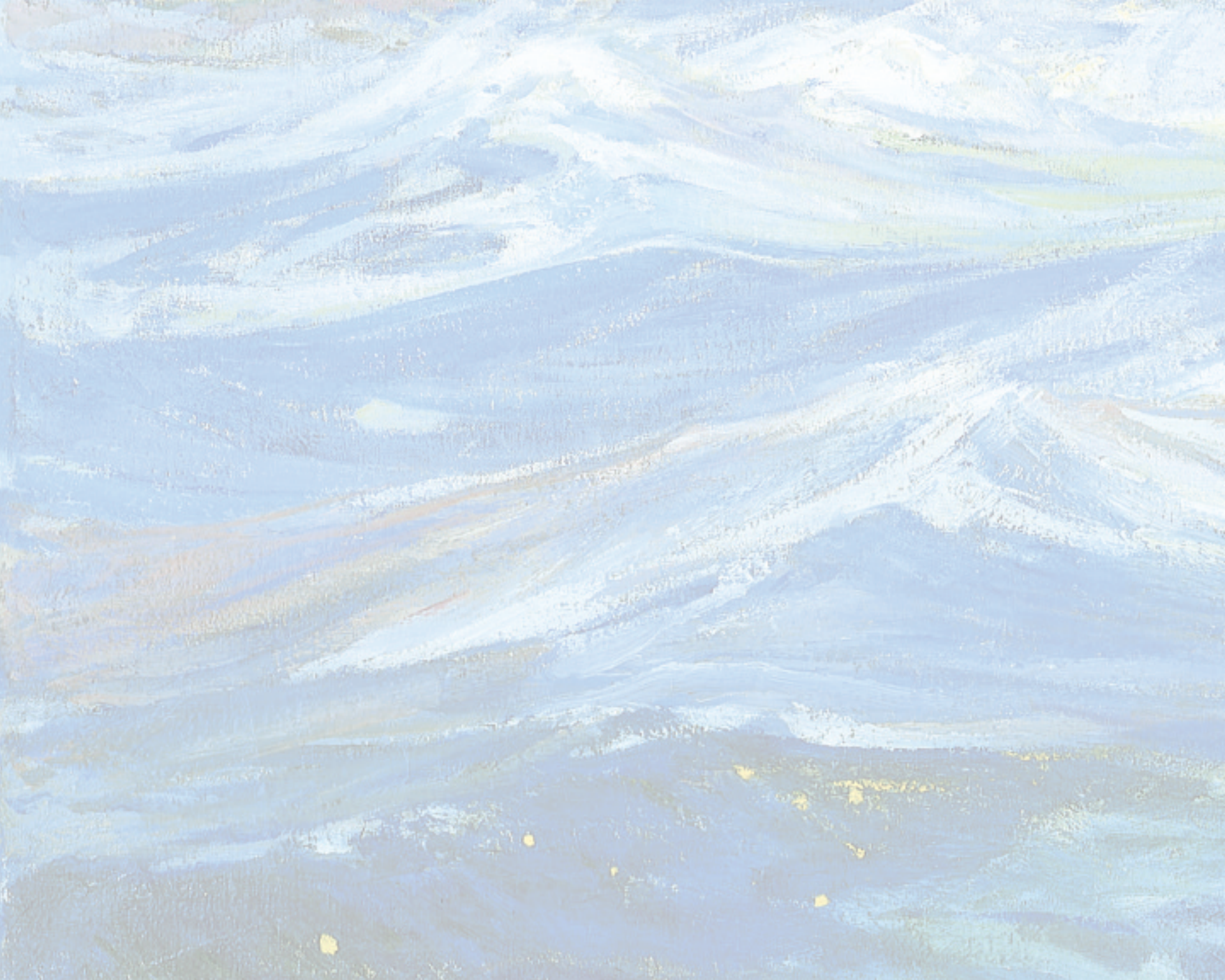
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