



Historical Society of Cheshire County

*Collecting, preserving and communicating the history of Cheshire County*

# BARRY FAULKNER, ARTIST

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## F. Barry Faulkner Biography

Barry Faulkner, born in Keene in 1881, was one of the most well known mural artists in his day whose works can be seen on the walls of public and private buildings from Rome to Oregon.

Faulkner grew up on School Street and enjoyed his childhood spent with family among the quaint settings and characters of 19th century New England. At the age of 16 Faulkner went to Philips Exeter Academy. By this time he already dreamed of becoming an artist.

This desire troubled his father, Keene attorney Francis C. Faulkner. After his graduation from Philips Exeter, Faulkner begged his father to allow him to attend art school. His father finally agreed that if he attended Harvard for one year and did not wish to continue, he could then study art. Faulkner kept his agreement with his father, attending Harvard for one year in 1899 before pursuing his dream to become an artist.

Faulkner studied art first with his cousin, Abbott Handerson Thayer of Dublin, and later in New York City. He worked in Cornish, NH in the studio of sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens and traveled to Florence and Cairo with Dublin artist George de Forest Brush to study ancient art and architecture. In 1907 he received a 3-year scholarship to study painting at the American Academy in Rome. It was there that he received his first mural commission.

In 1936, he renovated a farmhouse on Base Hill Road in Keene and added a studio. He spent summers there and kept a studio in New York City throughout his career.

Faulkner's best-known murals are located at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., the New Hampshire and Oregon state capitol buildings, the John Hancock Building in Boston and the large mosaic at Rockefeller Center in New York City.

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In Keene, NH, we can see examples of his murals created between 1943 and 1955: “Central Square” in Elliot Hall, at Keene State College; “Men of Monadnock” at Bank of America; “Advent of the Railroad”, and the study for the mosaic “Intelligence Awakening Mankind” (created in 1932) at the Historical Society.

This study was done in preparation for the creation of an 80’ long mosaic mural installed at the entrance to the RCA Building, illustrating the potential for the new global medium of radio to contribute to a better world.

Each of Faulkner’s’ murals involved a great deal of research on the subject matter, as well as pencil sketches and oil studies prior to completing the finished mural. He painted 100’s of figures in the many murals he created, studying their portraits, photos and descriptions carefully for accuracy. If there were no images, he used models dressed in period costumes to create characters instead.

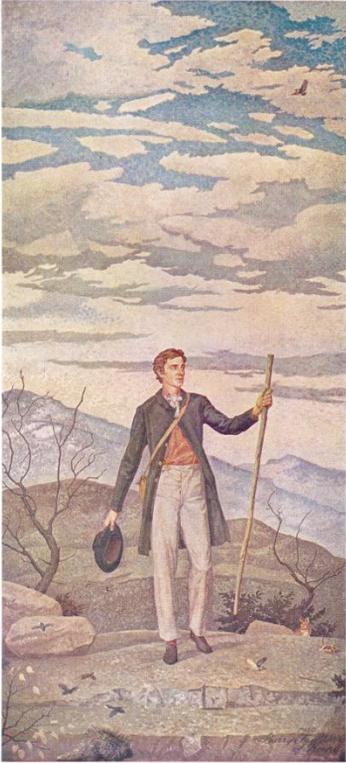
The Historical Society’s permanent archival and artifact collections include the study and mural mentioned above, large pencil sketches and the oil study for “Men of Monadnock, as well as other paintings, sketches, photographs and artifacts from his lifetime.

# Paintings

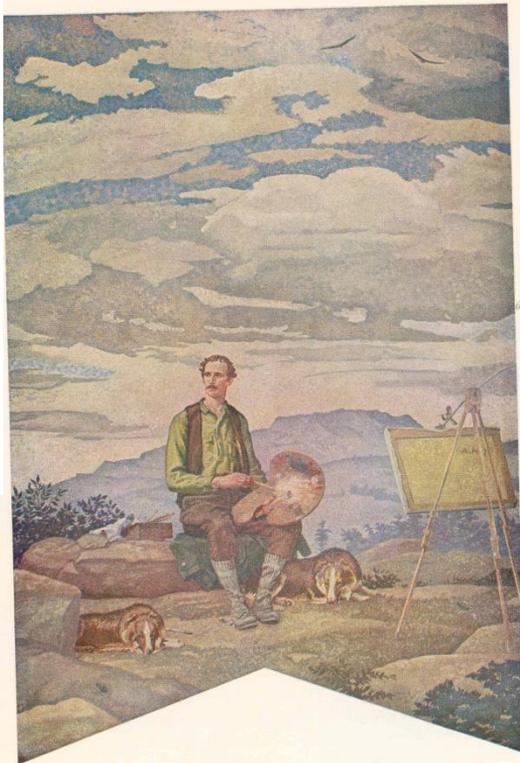


A study mural by Barry Faulkner for his 79' mosaic *Intelligence Awakening Mankind*, in the collection of the Historical Society of Cheshire County, Keene, NH

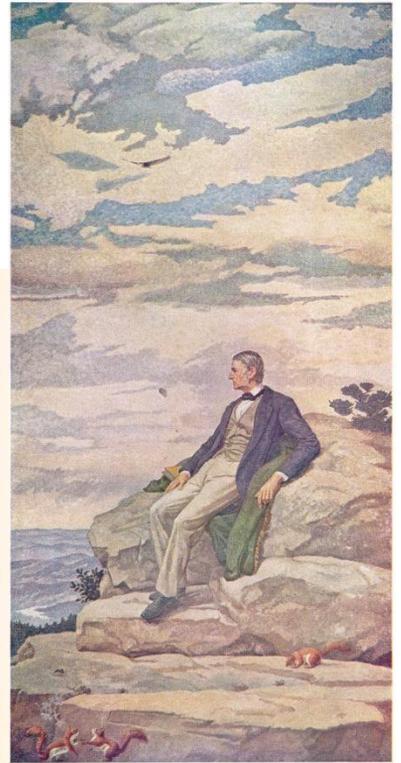
# Paintings- Men of Monadnock



Ralph Waldo  
Emerson



Abbott Handerson  
Thayer



Henry David Thoreau

# Paintings



Advent of the Railroad, 1848