

Barry Faulkner

Barry Faulkner was a famous artist who painted two huge murals to hang above two of our country's most important documents-- The Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution.

When did he do this? 1936

How old was he? 55 years old

Francis Barrett Faulkner

Born: July 12, 1881 in Keene, New Hampshire

Died: October 27, 1966 in Keene, New Hampshire

Biography

What was Barry Faulkner known for?

Barry Faulkner (1881-1966) was born and raised in Keene, NH, and became one of the most important painters of public murals in the middle of the 20th century. His two murals, *The Declaration of Independence* and *The US Constitution*, hang in the National Archives in Washington, DC. Many of his other murals can be found in Keene, New Hampshire.

Growing up in Keene

Barry Faulkner grew up going to school in Keene. As a teenager, he became interested in art thanks to the help of his older cousin, a famous artist named Abbott Thayer. Barry learned to paint from Abbott. He asked his father to let him go to college to study art. His father wanted Barry to become a lawyer like the other men in his family. Father and son made a deal. Barry should go to school for law for one year. If he didn't like it, he could switch to art.

Learning His Art

Barry Faulkner went to Harvard University for one year before leaving to study art. He traveled to Italy with famous painter George de Forest Brush to learn as much as he could. When he returned to the United States, Barry went to school in New York. In 1907, he won a student award. This allowed Barry to move to Rome, Italy to study ancient art for a while. He returned to the United States ready to open his own business in New York City.

Starting His Own Business

Barry Faulkner needed a very large space to paint his public murals for his customers. At one point, in the 1930s, he rented out the attic of one of the largest train stations in the country, Grand Central Station. Once he finished painting, his murals could get loaded onto trains and travel to customers.

Soon Barry Faulkner became famous for painting murals related to historical events and people. His paintings still hang today in important public spaces like state capitol buildings. In 1942, he was hired to paint four murals for the New Hampshire State Capitol building in Concord, NH. Each mural shows a different person in New Hampshire's history.

Barry's Most Famous Works

In 1933, Barry Faulkner was hired by famous architect John Russell Pope to paint two very important events in our nation's history. It took him three years to do research and paint two huge murals. They were hung in the National Archives where our country's most important documents are stored. Each mural shows Barry Faulkner's idea of what happened when the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution were signed. Each mural is about the size of a city bus! They are each 38 feet long and 14 feet high.

Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence was a document signed on July 4, 1776 by the Second Continental Congress. It announced to the king of England and the rest of the world, that a new country was to be formed, becoming the United States of America. In Barry Faulkner's mural he paints Thomas Jefferson handing over his hand-written Declaration of Independence to John Hancock. Other "founding

fathers" look at them. Some are excited. Some look worried about what was about to happen.

US Constitution

The US Constitution is a document that defines our government and the main laws of the country. It was written in 1787 by James Madison after long discussions with 55 of our country's founding fathers. In Barry Faulkner's mural James Madison of Virginia is presenting his hand-written constitution to George Washington who was president of that meeting but not yet president of our country. Josiah Bartlett of New Hampshire stands in the background.

Barry Returns to Keene

After a long career in New York, Barry Faulkner returned to Keene and opened an art studio at his home. He painted many public murals during the 1950s and 1960s which can be found around Keene today. One of his last murals, *The Advent of the Coming of the Railroad*, was completed at the age of 74. It shows what happened the day that the first train came into Keene in 1848. Barry Faulkner died at Keene in 1966 at the age of 85.