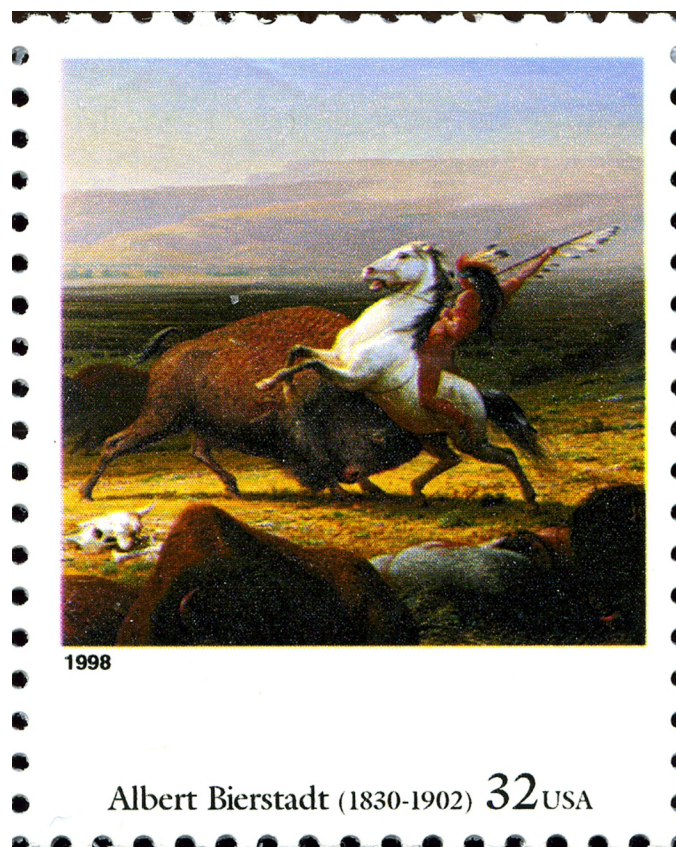




Albert Bierstadt

Artist (1830 – 1902)



"The Last of the Buffalo."

Mary (Mrs. Albert) Bierstadt gave the painting to the Corcoran Gallery.

Bierstadt “was among the most energetic, industrious, and internationally honored American artists of the nineteenth century” (K. Avery, *The World of the Hudson River School*). He was born in Solingen, Germany and brought to New Bedford, Massachusetts when he was two years old. In 1854 he returned to Germany to study painting, and while in Europe he made many field trips along the Rhine, in the Alps, and in Italy. He often painted with fellow artists WORTHINGTON WHITTREDGE and SANFORD GIFFORD.

On his return to New Bedford, he quickly became the city’s most prominent artist, organizing in 1858 a large exhibition of paintings—including fifteen of his own works—that brought him to national attention. In 1859 he was invited to join General Lander’s expedition to survey a wagon route to the Pacific, the first of his three trips west. While on these trips he would make oil sketches on paper and then return to his studio where they often became huge panoramic paintings. These works, especially of the Rocky Mountains, brought him immediate and overwhelming popularity that secured his renown as a “western” artist and as the foremost competitor of FREDERIC E. CHURCH in the field of monumental New World landscapes. Bierstadt’s most poignant image is *The Hetch-Hetchy Valley*, California (1874-1880). The valley is gone forever, inundated by the waters of O’Shaughnessy Dam in 1938.

After 1880, his reputation substantially declined in the face of changing tastes, and he experienced a series of personal misfortunes that included the destruction by fire of his country studio in 1882 and the death of his wife in 1893.