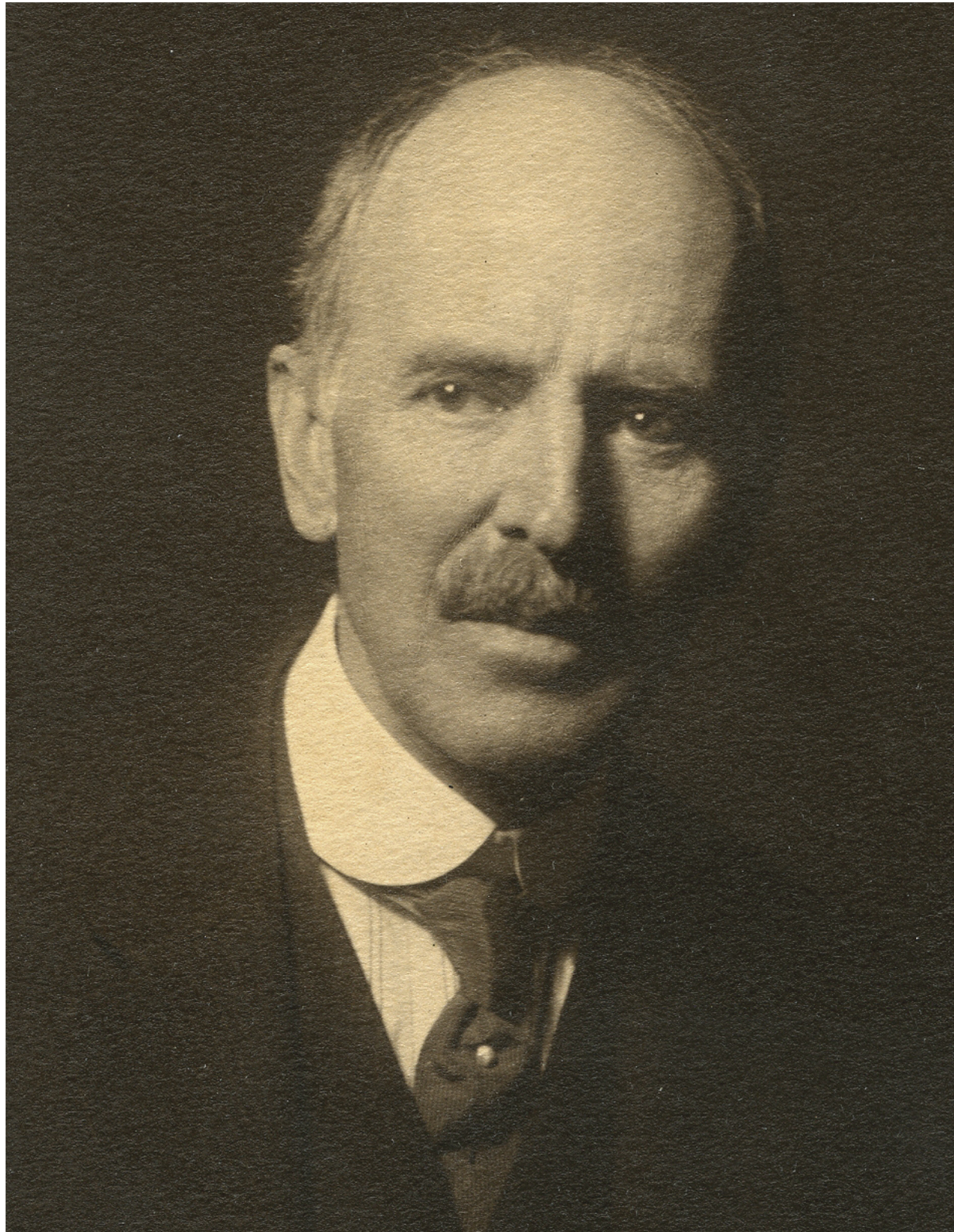


# Daniel Chester French

Sculptor (1850 – 1931)



French was born in Exeter, New Hampshire, to Henry Flagg French, a lawyer, Assistant U.S. Treasury Secretary and author of a book that described the French drain. Young French was a neighbor and friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the Alcott family, and his decision to pursue sculpting was influenced by Louisa May Alcott's sister, May Alcott.

After a year at MIT, French worked on his father's farm. While visiting relatives in Brooklyn, he spent a month in the studio of JOHN QUINCY ADAMS WARD, then at age 23, he received a commission from the town of Concord, Massachusetts. His well-known statue *The Minute Man*, was unveiled April 19, 1875 on the centenary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

In 1893, French was a founding member of the National Sculpture Society, and he became a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He also became a member of the Century (1894), the National Academy of Design (1901), the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Architectural League, and the Accademia di San Luca, of Rome.

In collaboration with Edward Clark Potter he modeled the George Washington statue, presented to France by the Daughters of the American Revolution; the General Grant in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, and the General Joseph Hooker statue in Boston. Potter, his assistant, later designed the lion statues at the New York Public Library.

In 1917, he designed the Pulitzer Prize gold medal presented to laureates. In 1922, the Lincoln Memorial, designed by HENRY BACON, was opened to the public in Washington. French's statue of the reclining Lincoln was an instant success and remains his most popular work. The 175-ton statue took four years to carve and is 19-feet high.

French died in Stockbridge in 1931 at the age of 81. Chesterwood, his summer home, studio, (designed by frequent collaborator HENRY BACON) and garden is now a museum.