

# Augustus Saint-Gaudens

Sculptor (1848 – 1907)

Saint-Gaudens was born in Dublin of a French father and Irish mother, but his family emigrated when he was six months old. He was apprenticed to a cameo-cutter but also took art classes in New York. At 19, his apprenticeship completed, he traveled to Paris and then Rome to study art and architecture. In Rome he met an American art student, Augusta Fisher, a fourth cousin of WINSLOW HOMER, and they were married in 1877. With Augusta, he had one son, HOMER SAINT-GAUDENS, and another son by his model and mistress.

In 1876, he received his first major commission; a monument to Civil War Admiral David Farragut, in Madison Square; his friend STANFORD WHITE designed an architectural setting for it. When it was unveiled in 1881, Saint-Gaudens' reputation was established.

The commissions followed fast: the colossal Standing Lincoln in Lincoln Park, Chicago considered the finest portrait statue in America; the Adams Memorial, the Peter Cooper Monument, and the bronze bas-relief that forms the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial on Boston Common. He labored on it for 14 years. Two equestrian monuments to Civil War generals are outstanding: to General John A. Logan, atop a tumulus in Chicago, and to General William T. Sherman at the corner of Central Park in New York.

Chosen by THEODORE ROOSEVELT to redesign the U.S. coinage, Saint-Gaudens produced a beautiful \$20 gold piece that was adapted into a flattened-down version by the U.S. Mint. In 1904, he was one of the first seven chosen for membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters. That same year his large Cornish, NH studio burned, with the irreplaceable loss of his sketch books, and many works in progress.

After initially being rejected, Saint-Gaudens was a member of the Century for 19 years till his death in 1907. His house and gardens are now preserved as National Historic Site.



In New Hampshire, Saint-Gaudens and his brother Louis created a lively summer colony of artists. The most famous included painters Maxfield Parrish and Kenyon Cox, garden designer CHARLES PLATT, sculptor PAUL MANSHIP, painters THOMAS DEWING and GEORGE DE FOREST BRUSH, and the American novelist WINSTON CHURCHILL.

