

### **George Pearse Ennis**

Born: 1884, St. Louis, Mo.

Died: 28 August 1936, Utica, New York



George Pearse Ennis, a prominent early-twentieth century American artist, was known for his landscapes, marines, mural decorations, and achieved an international reputation for his watercolors. After turning down an appointment at West Point to become an artist, Ennis studied in St. Louis at the Art School of Washington University, the St. Louis Art Museum, the Holmes Art School of Chicago, and under William Merritt Chase at his school in New York.

Among the many awards Ennis received for his work were prizes at the Salmagundi Club, including the Shaw Prize, in 1922, 1923 and 1925; the Kramer Prize of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1922; the Isador Prizes in Watercolor and Pencil Drawing in 1924; the William Church Osborn Prize in 1926; the Gallatin Prize for landscape in

1927; the Dana gold medal from the Philadelphia Water Color Club in 1931; a prize at the Wilmington Watercolor Club in 1931; a prize at the New York Watercolor Club in 1932; and the Zabriskie Prize of the American Water Color Society in 1934.

Ennis founded the Eastport School of Art in Maine in 1922, and was a founder of and taught at the Grand Central Painters and Sculptors Gallery and School of Art in New York. In 1929 he was appointed Head of the John and Mable Ringling Art Museum at Sarasota, Florida. In October 1932, Ennis opened the George Pearse Ennis School of Painting in New York City.

He was a member of the Allied Artists of America, the American Watercolor Society, the Aquarelists, the Artists Aid Society, the Artists Fund Society, the Boston Art Club, the Florida Fine Arts Association, the Guild of American Painters, the New York Architectural League, the New York Watercolor Club, of which he was elected president in 1933, the New York Society of Painters, and the Salmagundi Club.

His works are represented in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the National Academy of Design, New York, the Brooklyn Museum, the George Eastman Collection, Rochester, New York, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, the Art Institute of Chicago, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo. He was also the author of the article on watercolor painting in the 1931 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Ennis also worked in stained glass, producing designs for windows at the New York Athletic Club, the Church of All Nations, New York, and in 1929 he designed five windows for the chancel of the Gothic chapel of the Methodist Episcopal Church Home at Broadway and 244th St. in New York. He also designed the Victory Windows for the chapel of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the Unitarian Church of Eastport, MAine, the Presbyterian Church of Cornwall, New York, the Calvary Methodist Church in Bronx, New York, the First Baptist Church in Jamaica, New York, and the Arts Club in Washibgton, D.C.

On August 6, 1936, George Pearse Ennis' career, described as one of the most fruitful in America up to that time, was cut short after a tragic automobile accident that claimed his life and severely injured his wife. He was 52 years old. At the time of his death, he was directing twelve artists of the Works Progress Administration in the execution of a stained-glass window showing important scenes from the life of George Washington, for Washington Hall at the United States Military Academy.

Following Ennis's death, a number of memorial exhibitions were held in his honor, including an exhibition of his watercolors at the Denver Art Museum in October, 1936, an exhibition of oils and watercolors at the Grand Central Galleries in New York in January, 1937, and at the American Water Color Society's annual in 1937.