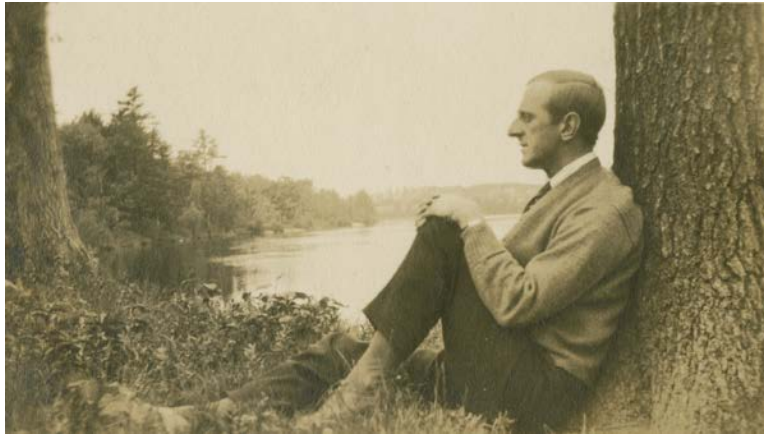


*Man and
Mountain*

*... I sit on the bank of the stream and watch
The grasses in amazement
As they turn to ashy gold.*

— *Fishmonger*,
(poem) by Marsden Hartley



“On the banks of the Androscoggin River
at Lewiston, Maine, my birth place.”

— *Courtesy of the Bates College Museum of Art, Marsden Hartley
Memorial Collection, Gift of Norma Berger, 1955.1.173 g*

Marsden Hartley

Kris Pastoriza

Painter, printmaker and poet, he was born in Lewiston, Maine in 1877, the youngest of nine children, born to parents from England. He was eight when his mother died and he was sent to live with an older sister. Seven years later, when his father married Martha Marsden, Hartley, fifteen, rejoined his family in Ohio, where he attended the Cleveland School of Art with the help of a scholarship. He changed his birth name (Edmund) to Marsden when he was in his 20s.

When he was twenty-two he moved to New York and studied at the National Academy of Design, spending summers working and painting in Lewiston and Lovell, Maine. In New York he met Alfred Stieglitz, artist, gallery owner and patron, who put on Hartley's first large exhibit in 1909 and gave him financial support to move to Europe in 1912. In 1930 Hartley returned to New England.

In 1931 Hartley wrote:

I had thought so much, in the intervening years of how much I should like to return to my native country, to renew the solid, comforting vision of the old, stately hills, recall to my eye and to my sense, the tang of the pine, the birch, the maple, the larch, and the great shaggy flanks of the hills themselves, and see once more the splendid pageantry of cloud formations, for New England is not only the country of the hill and mountain, it is the country of the cloud as well. [FN1]

The name of a dear gentleman, a real New England gentleman, Mr. Crapo of New Bedford, who has his farm at Sugar Hill, was given to me

by the Hardens — old friends of his. “Write to him and he will assist you all he can.”

I wrote to Mr. Crapo and received a most kindly reply: “Come and visit me — bring your friend too”— friend being a Polish friend I had known in Paris, who had found his way to America, and who had had a car — and we were to start off roughing it.

Arriving duly at Cooley Farm — a wondrously replete establishment with every comfort — Mr. Crapo designated his farm superintendent to take us out next day to look for a place. “It must be just camping,” I said. “There must be an old house somewhere, where the roof doesn’t leak.” A nice old deserted farm was found in the valley — in Franconia — under Sugar Hill proper. One end was in good condition — it had a grand cook stove in it — a real “range” — and the thing was settled and we moved in. It all looked very promising for the summer — and worked itself out plausibly.” [F2]

Few of Hartley’s paintings from this period are titled and the whereabouts of several are unknown, but resemblance indicates that during the summer he painted Lafayette and the crag above Beaver Pond in Kinsman Notch, Mt. Moosilauke and Mt. Blue. During this summer he wrote to his friend Rebecca Strand that though his heart was not good, “it can do a little mountain trails. I’ve done all the most trying trails, including Mt. Wash, Lafayette which is 5000 & some & Moosilauke which is 4800, the latter mountain . . . figures in four of my pictures . . . And I’ve done some magnificent cascades, and how I love falling water — no lake or pond ever gives me what a waterfall can.” [FN3]



Beaver Pond (*Hartley's Knob*)



Beaver Pond, Lost River Area, by Marsden Hartley (1930)
— *Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art*

“I did at least three decent pictures — one now in a private collection of an East Indian engineer living in Pittsburg, and a second of Kinsman Falls is in the Whitney Museum.”
[FN4]



Kinsman Falls, by Marsden Hartley
— *Courtesy of the Portland Museum of Art*



Kinsman Falls

Hartley appears to have used names casually, perhaps consistent with his distaste for the labelling of nature. He described his house in Franconia as “on the banks of the Ammonoosa . . .”, a river which doesn’t flow through Franconia or Sugar Hill. [FN5] His painting titled Kinsman Falls may not be of the waterfall currently called that, one which has had several names in the past.

Hartley wrote of wanting to return to Franconia Notch and paint more waterfalls, especially Georgianna Falls “simply magnificent — boulders piling to the sky & the stream tumbles out of the sky over them.” [FN6]

Hartley, however, found himself distressed by the tourists and tourism of the area:

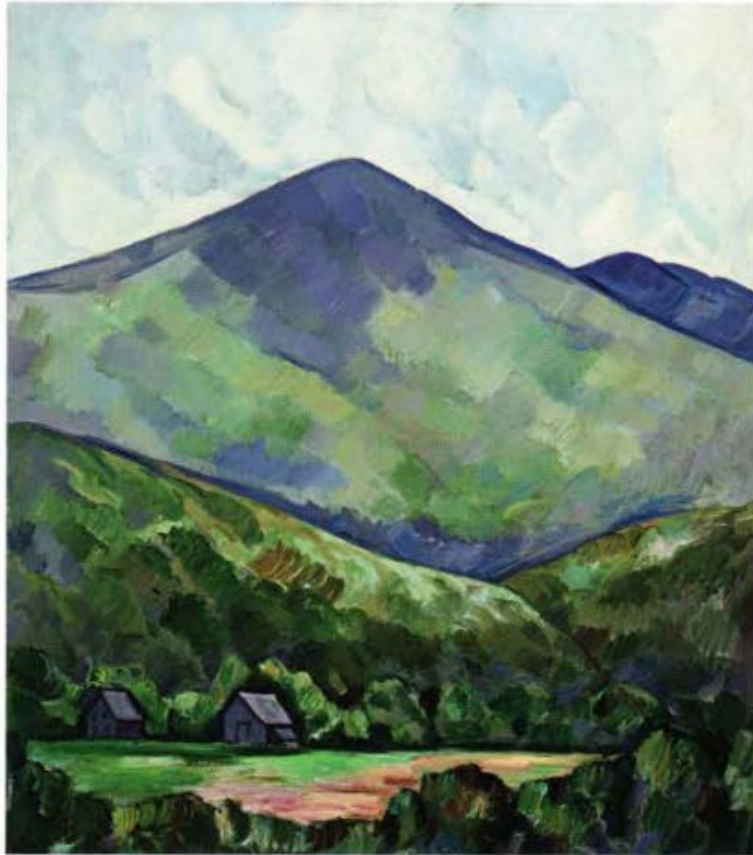
The worst of Sugar Hill and all that was that it was the tourist section — Franconia Notch, and when it wasn't thousands of Fords on the high roads, it was rich mansions and private golf courses — and no matter where you went — you came on one or the other. [FN6]

This spirit of commercialization of nature has crept into every crevice, spread itself out upon the brave face of nature to such an extent . . . that you are palled with the pressure of all this superficial show business. And what you knew of your native land is hardly to be recognized, so grotesque has it become with commercial invasion.

Nature is no longer herself, everything is ticketed, labelled, and duly classified by the social and commercial enterprise of state organization which, in this case, being New Hampshire, is obviously bent on developing the Yosemite of the east . . .

The shock was not a welcome one, not for a hopeful son who had waited too long to revive well cherished memories. [FN7]

Perhaps Hartley was drawn to the comparative quietness of the Wildwood area in Easton (south of Franconia) from which he sketched and painted Moosilauke.



Marsden Hartley

Mountain, Number 21, 1930

oil on canvas

34 x 30 inches

Private Collection, courtesy Alexandre Gallery, New York



A 1930s postcard by Clare T. Bodwell — “Moosilauke from Wildwood Inn, P.O.” — shows a silhouette of Moosilauke and a spur of Mt. Blue very similar to that in Hartley’s paintings.

It is likely a spur of Mt. Blue, in the center of the image, that Hartley described as “almost an exact pyramid.” Though higher in altitude, Moosilauke is the first of the smaller peaks to the right of this Mt. Blue ridge. That the “mystic looking” and “affable in appearance” mountain he called Moosilauke was probably a spur of Mt. Blue might well have struck Hartley as irrelevant.

As the summer passed, Hartley found himself socially isolated and oppressed by the terrain. In October “he felt done in with this incarceration . . . no escape day and night from facing nature constantly.” [FN8]

“When he was in the cities, he yearned for seclusion, yet when he was removed from the urban pulse he found the isolation dispiriting. This had become especially apparent after his return to the United States.” [FN9]



Marsden Hartley — Brilliant Autumn Landscape, #28, c. 1930
Oil on canvas, 25 in. x 31 1/4 in. (63.5 cm x 79.38 cm)
— *Courtesy of the Colby Museum of Art*
Gift of C. David O'Brien, '58, 1983.006

At the end of October Hartley “left New Hampshire for Brooklyn, intending to finish his summer paintings in a more hospitable setting, but he was so depleted on all fronts that he had neither the energy nor the money to retrieve his pictures from the freight company.” [FN10] According to Rebecca Strand, “it was Georgia O’Keefe who eventually paid to have Hartley’s paintings released by the freight company.” [FN11]

Hartley “. . . was filled with anxiety about how works such as *Mountains No. 19* would be received by the community of artists, collectors and critics. Yet his fears proved to be unfounded, as the exhibition of the summer’s work at Steiglitz’s newly formed gallery, *An American Place*, would produce sufficient income for another year.” [FN12]



Mountains, no.19, 1930
Marsden Hartley
Oil on board, 36 x 33 in.
— *Courtesy of the Dallas Museum of Art*
The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Art Fund, Inc
2008.24.McD

In 1931 Hartley applied for and was granted a Guggenheim Grant, and spent the next year in Mexico. As far as is known, he did not return to the Franconia area.



Helen Stein (1896–1964), Portrait of Marsden Hartley, c. 1934
Oil on cardboard
— *Courtesy of the Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, Mass.*
Gift of James F. and Jean Baer O’Gorman, 1986 (2545)

Marsden Hartley has long had a place in the canon of 20th century American Modernism and continues to garner international attention through major museum exhibitions and a long history of scholarly monographs, biographies, exhibition catalogues and articles on many aspects of the artist's work and life, both as a painter and writer.

Nevertheless, of the noted American artists of his generation, Hartley alone is without a publication of his oeuvre. Accordingly, in 2019, independent art historian and long-time Hartley scholar, Gail R. Scott and the Bates College Museum of Art inaugurated the *Marsden Hartley Legacy Project: The Complete Paintings and Works on Paper*. This comprehensive, annotated online catalogue of all known paintings and works on paper created by Hartley during his lifetime will establish a legacy befitting Marsden Hartley's place in American art.

— The Marsden Hartley Legacy Project, Bates College
Museum of Art

*Marsden Hartley died in Ellsworth, Me., on Sept 2, 1943,
after several years of declining health due to heart failure.*

**Oral History Interview with Hartley's Niece,
Norma G. Berger, June 18, 1973,
by the Smithsonian Archives of American Art**

Here we were in the room where the dent was in the pillow where his head was laying. It hadn't been touched from the time he had gone and so his body was sent to a crematory. I think it's in Brighton, isn't it, here? And we had to wait over in Maine at my cousin's in Auburn until the box came back and then he drove — we drove around to the — it wasn't practical to get to the ocean. So we went to the Anders-Skoggin River and we walked along there looking for a suitable place to do this and came to a place where there was a big rock on the ledge of the river and I decided that would be it.

So he handed me the box and I opened it and I turned it up to empty it and to my utter astonishment, and a soft breeze that was blowing, his ashes blew back into my face and all down my coat and then when it came to the bottom of the box, there were a lot of little pieces of what looked like broken dishes and they went clanking on this rock and we hadn't noticed the rock had projected out beyond the water, under the water. Well, my cousin and I both looked at each other with an expression of astonishment and neither of us said a word and he walked off a little ways and cut a branch from a tree and handed it to me and I pushed these little clinkers into the water and we

stood there for a minute and my cousin looked at me and I looked at him and there was a little peculiar expression around his mouth.

He said, “I guess Uncle Ed would have got a kick out of this.” I said, “He certainly would.” Because when we went down to the lake and he was asking me to promise to do this, he said, “Toss them out over the water and as they float away, say there goes Uncle.” His sense of humor was always right under the surface and no matter how — how sad or disconcerting the situation was.

1. *New England on the Trapeze*; Creative Arts 8, February, 1931
2. *Somehow a Past*, Marsden Hartley, p. 142
3. Hartley to Rebecca Strand, undated, fall 1935.
4. *Somehow a Past*, p. 142
5. Hartley to Rebecca Strand, July 4, 1930, quoted in an essay by Gail Scott, *American Paintings, Drawings & Sculpture*, Sotheby's, December 3, 2009
6. *Somehow a Past*, p. 143
7. *New England on the Trapeze*;
8. Hartley to Rebecca Strand 10/11/1930, quoted in *Marsden Hartley*, Barbara Haskell, 1980, p. 81
9. *Marsden Hartley*, Barbara Haskell, 1980, p. 111
10. *Ibid.*, p. 81
11. *Ibid.*, p. 143. footnote 232
12. *American Paintings, Drawings & Sculpture*, Christie's, May 25, 2006, Sale 1665, Lot 49, Auction Catalogue quotation