GEORGE W. HICHLSON
AMERICAN LANDSCAPIST
(1832-1912)

Compiled by: John R. Carrow
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GEORGE W. NICHOLSON  
(1832-1912)

George W. Nicholson, an American landscapist, was born October 17, 1832 near Salem County, New Jersey. 1 When young, he travelled to England, France, and Egypt. There is also evidence that he travelled to Germany and perhaps to other countries in Europe and the Middle East as well. 2 He made extensive sketches of the countryside in the lands which he visited. One of these, a sketch from nature of Windsor Castle, was exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1867. 3 From all indications, the aforementioned work was the only piece that Nicholson ever exhibited in a museum.

During his stay in France, Nicholson is known to have studied under the French painter, Eugène Louis Gabriel Isabey, an accomplished painter of landscapes and marine scenes. 4 I do not know the extent of Isabey's influence upon Nicholson's later work; but, the frequency of landscapes and/or marine scenes in Nicholson's paintings indicates at least a marked similarity of subject matter between the two artists.

Nicholson spent the majority of his career in Philadelphia. Although classified as a landscapist, he is known to have painted an occasional still life or farmyard animal as well. His landscapes often included people in the distance, involved in their everyday activities.

The last years of his life were spent in Hammonton, New Jersey, where he died on October 19, 1912. 5 Little has been written about his life other than several obituaries which appeared in various journals after his death (including an obituary in the Art Annual of 1911-1912 and in Hammonton News). Thus he remains a relatively unknown American artist. It would appear that the majority of his work is still hidden in private collections. His artistry has been left unstudied by scholars.
Whether this oversight has been intentional or a blind omission will remain to be seen. Nevertheless, there is much merit in the work of George W. Nicholson which has for too long been neglected.

FOOTNOTES


2Annual Art Sales Index 1971/1972 Season, ed. Richard Hislop reported the following:

A painting by George W. Nicholson was sold at Christie, London on May 12, 1972. The painting, signed and dated 1832 and with dimensions of 24 inches by 20 inches, was named "Street scene, north German town."

3Groce and Wallace, p. 472.

4E. Benezit, Dictionnaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs, Librairie Gründ, 1953, p. 351.

5Groce and Wallace, p. 472.
GEORGE W. NICHOLSON, Artist
(1832—1912)

by

DAVID FULMER KEELY, ESQ.
FORWARD

The record of George W. Nicholson is now before you. It is the fruit of many most enjoyable contacts and the joiner of many eloquent testimonies. That no one living was possessed of sufficient knowledge to greatly highlight this record is to be regretted. However, it is the only known compilation of facts, and believed to be true, regarding the life of this much beloved Artist.

Therefore, it is presented to Posterity, with full knowledge of its limitations and with a wealth of gratitude to Everyone who helped to make it a reality.

[Signature]
America in 1832 was still primitive, largely rural and with only about one-twelfth of its present population. Travel was by road, by canal-boat and by packet-vessel. Horse-cars, trolleys and subways were unknown. There was no ocean steamship, no trans-continental railroad, no electric light, no gas lamp, no camera, no telegraph, no sewing-machine, no cable or other means for the rapid transmission of news. Modern education and public schools did not exist substantially. Medical and hospital facilities were very meagre, with no anesthesia or X-ray.

Political unrest marked this period. There was a bitter contest between President Andrew Johnson and the Bank of the United States. There was much anti-slavery agitation and a consequent, rapid territorial expansion West and Southwest. This was the era of the illustrious trio: Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and John Calhoun.

In retrospect, the United States of America was on the eve of a cataclysmic advance, of which only glimmerings were then visible. Michael Faraday had just announced in England the fundamental principle of the dynamo. George Stephenson had just produced his first workable steam locomotive. Robert Fulton had succeeded in making his steamboat run from New York City to Albany; but many of the great inventions of the Nineteenth Century were still unborn. The phenomenal achievements in Industry, Transportation, Science, Medicine, Chemistry, Education, Research, Political Freedom and in Religion, had not yet been realized. Neither Lincoln,
Gladstone, Sismoni or Darwin; nor love, Field, Roentgen or Daguerre; nor Carnegie, Bell, Edison, Eastman or Pasteur; nor Foden, LeGouerret, Firestone, Ford and Marconi had yet made their several outstanding contributions to Mankind.

However, in Philadelphia, Pa., in 1832, the cherished hope of the eminent artist, Charles Wilson Peale (1741-1827), had been fulfilled. Mr. Peale had expressed the hope in 1807: "I wish Philadelphia to be the seat of Science and Art in America," and Philadelphia was in fact the center of Art in America and the bronze castings made by the firm of R. D. Wood were continuing to make Philadelphia famous the country over.

Accordingly, this City was celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the birth of George Washington, in 1832. It had also just received a munificent bequest for the foundation of its Will's Eye Hospital. It was also experiencing a very grievous Cholera Epidemic in which the fatalities were high. Its citizens were trying out "Old Ironsides" between Philadelphia and Germantown. They were planning to build Girard College and laying the initial bounds of the world-famous Fairmount Park, which then comprised a total of 24 acres.

New York City, in 1832, was witnessing the fact that Samuel Finley Breeze Morse (1791-1872), one of the most eminent portrait painters in America and one of the Founders of the National Academy of Design and for seven years its President, began to neglect a career that had already brought him fame and fortune to become obsessed with the powers of the galvanic fluid and to thus give his Friends great anxiety.

In Boston, Mass., in 1832, Lowell Mason (1792-1872), founded the Boston Academy of Music and wrote the music for five renowned

Indeed, it was also in the same year 1832, that Thomas Hastings penned his immortal lines, which pre-visualize the entire new era then dawning, at Home and Abroad—

"Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning,
Joy to the lands that in darkness have lain!
Hushed be the accents of sorrow and mourning,
Zion in triumph begins her mild reign."
From the standpoint of Pedigree, George W. Nicholson, was rich. He was a direct descendant of Samuel Nicholson, an English Quaker, from Nottinghamshire, England, who settled in 1675 in the 'Fenwick Colony', along the eastern shore of the Delaware River, in what is now the Township of Elsinboro, Salem County, New Jersey.

Furthermore, his ancestors have remained in this very area continuously since 1675 and accordingly, in due time, he was born on a farm in Elsinboro, N.J. the date being October 16th, 1832—the very same year in which Gustave Dore was born in Strasbourg.

The great, Salem Oak, in the Quaker Cemetery of Salem, N.J. is on land deeded by Samuel Nicholson et ux in 1681 for the use and benefit of the Salem Monthly Meeting and still stands—an eloquent testimony to the hardihood and the vitality and character of these rural people.

Since this was an era of predominantly large families, as well as very high infant mortality, George W. Nicholson was the twelfth child of Daniel and Mary Chambers Nicholson, in a total family of fifteen children. He passed his boyhood and grew to young manhood, on the farm in Elsinboro, N.J.

Therefore, his rich portrayals, on panel and on canvas in subsequent years, of creeks, trees, clouds, sunrise and sunset; of birds, farm-yard animals and nature generally, sprang naturally from things most familiar to him in this setting of American strength and virtue.

Though it has been reported that Mr. Nicholson was not an apt pupil in the Country School, his works of art evidence keen powers of observation. His sense of proportion was excellent. He had an easy and versatile pencil. Moreover, he possessed the invaluable asset of a deep love and reverence for all the creations and creatures of the
Since George W. Comanche, an artist of Salem, N.J. (1805-1882) had already exhibited his works at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, it is likely that he exerted a quiet influence over Mr. Nicholson. Furthermore, his subsequent successes unquestionably provided intensely interesting news in this rural district and it is very unlikely that Mr. Nicholson was immune thereto.

We do not know whether George Nicholson, as a lad of 10 years, went to Philadelphia, as did many others, to meet the renowned, English Novelist, Charles Dickens. He may well have been one of that uprooted company who shook hands with Mr. Dickens in the old United States Hotel, upon the first visit of that distinguished Gentleman to Philadelphia in 1842.

Moreover, there is now no way of ascertaining how greatly Mr. Nicholson was moved as a lad by the three revolutionaries in American Journalism, Swain, Abel and Simmons, who established the Philadelphia Public Ledger and in Baltimore, The Sun. Nor is it possible to ascertain whether he was stirred by the achievements of Louis Daguerre in the realm of photography, or of Samuel F. B. Morse in his Electric Telegraph, or by the invention of Elias Howe in the Sewing Machine.

It is possible that he witnessed, on June 11, 1845, the great fire which destroyed many valuable paintings and works of art in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, then located on Chestnut St., between 10th & 11th Streets. He may also have come to Philadelphia in 1848 for the large reception to Henry Clay, candidate for the Presidency of the United States of America. And certainly, he would have been among those, near and far, who beheld the tremendous glow from Philadelphia's most disastrous, water-front conflagration in 1850.
This much we definitely know. Both his Parents died in 1850—a sad event for a lad of 12 years. We also know that it was his eldest sister, Rachel G. Nicholson, who later married one William Thomson, who nurtured his interest in art and made it possible for him to journey Abroad for Study in 1856. Though the details thereof are missing, the good works which Mr. Nicholson subsequently produced are a most worthy memorial to her love and practical help.

And further, from credible sources, it is manifest that the efforts of Mr. Nicholson to gain an education in Art were exceedingly difficult.

There is a memorandum at the Alfred O. Deshong Memorial Art Gallery in Chester, Pa. to the effect that Mr. Nicholson came to Philadelphia in 1852. However, his name first appears in the current directories, in 1862, wherein he is listed as a Landscape Painter, with studio at 51 N. 6th St. There is also ambiguity regarding the inception of his relationship with his prospective Artist—father—in—law, Job F. Bray, of Philadelphia,(1805—1863).

Possibly, Mr. Nicholson, pressed for funds and constrained by ambition, started as a lad of 20 years(1852) in the employ of Job F. Bray, who had been a painter in Philadelphia since 1839.

At all events, extant records disclose that in the year 1850, Job F. Bray returned to England for a visit and for the study of Art in London and in Paris; that in consequence thereof, by the year 1857 and continuously until his death 6/29/1863, the Philadelphia Directory listed him as an "Artist" at 107 Walnut St., and other addresses.

He was of Welsh descent, had married one Jane Thomas(1810—1869?) and landed in New York City 10/15/1823, from England. Of this marriage he had four Sons and one Daughter, the latter, Jane Elizabeth Bray, who
was born in Philadelphia 3/29/1840, baptized in St. Peter's Church (P.E.) on 7/15/1840 and was subsequently to become the Wife of George W. Nicholson.

It is also evident that Job F. Bray was a man of some substance, either in his own right or by marriage. Passport #311 of 1850 is evidence of his journey Abroad in 1850; letters from the Continent evidence his presence there; his Daughter was able to travel into the State of Ohio in 1858, then remote from the Seaboard; and finally, there is record of certain Estate interests maturing in England in 1877 or thereabout.

This Daughter, Jane Elizabeth Bray, was an attractive, healthy young woman, whose photograph, in the style of a 'Brady Imperial' exists and has been verified. She doubtless met George W. Nicholson through his contacts with her Father. Nevertheless, while time has beclouded the details, they were to be married in the hectic month of May 1861—hectic, not only because of the Presidential Call for 75,000 Volunteers, but also as a result of the great excitement incident to the arrival in Philadelphia of the Hero of the Battle of Fort Sumter, Major Robert Anderson. The marriage was actually solemnized in Philadelphia, on May 28, 1861, the ceremony being performed by 'H. R. Price, Presbyterian Minister and Member of the General Assembly.'

A home was established by the Bride and Groom in old Philadelphia, 281 S. 5th Street, not far removed from the home of Joseph Jefferson, the Actor, who was a friend of Mr. Nicholson's. However, the family records made available for this study, indicate a continuing close relationship with the Folks in Salem, N.J. and Friends in Philadelphia.

It further appears from these records, that in 1863 Mrs. Nicholson was an expectant Mother and that her first and only child, George F.
Nicholson (1862-1945), was born less than two months after the death of her father, the day being August 31, 1868.

Accordingly, one must visualize the fact that George W. Nicholson, a rising, young Landscape Painter, was, in 1888, at the age of 30 years, about to become a father; that the death of his Father-in-law, after a protracted illness, culminated a period of great financial strain in addition to providing a deep concern for the well-being of his wife, so soon to have a child.

However, whatever these burdens and concerns may have been to him, they were trivial in comparison to that sudden, unexpected and devastating tragedy which befell him in the death of his dear wife, on September 5, 1868, one week after the birth of their son.

To have attained the full measure of his status as a Landscape Painter in 1882, in spite of very great handicaps, was most gratifying and most heartening; but to thus lose the wife of his youth was heartrending.

Nonetheless there is a quiet calm, a reticence in the manner of George W. Nicholson, which has veiled much of his deep sorrow in the stalwart ruggedness of his fine manhood. One little clipping, alone, among all the papers submitted for this study, probably affords the best key to his heart:

"Sometimes in this life we feel as though darkness had come upon us, and we are surrounded by a solid Stone Wall. The faint-hearted give up, sit down, are soon dead, so far as the outside world is concerned. The stronger will walk up to the Wall, put out a hand, and after continued search, a hidden spring is touched, a door opens and liberty, light and happiness is gained."
त्रैमाध्यको अध्ययनको एक अनुपात का रूप में दिखाया गया है। यह अहंकार व ध्यान योग्य भावनाओं की समानता को प्रदर्शित करता है। यहाँ देखा जा सकता है कि ऐसे अनुपातों का प्रयोग किया जा सकता है जो व्यक्ति की भावनाओं को अहंकारवत्ता या ध्यानवत्ता के तुलनात्मक हो सकता है।
within two years after the death of Mrs. Nicholson, records of
the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts for 1866, show that Mr.
Nicholson was a student at the Academy. He is catalogued as
"G. Nicholson." Furthermore, in the Annual Report of the Academy
for 1866, Mr. Nicholson is listed as an Associate Academician or
Member, along with E. C. Bispham, E. E. Cresson, Stephen J. Ferris,
George F. Holmes, Daniel R. Knight, Peter Moran, F. De Bourg Richards,

Then, as of 3/7/1866, a United States Passport #24517, was
issued to him and indicates a man 5' 7¾" in height, broad forehead,
hazel eyes, straight nose, medium mouth, chin square, hair brown,
complexion dark and an oval face.

That Mr. Nicholson actually visited England, Scotland, Wales, the
Netherlands, France, Italy and Egypt is unquestioned. One letter,
written in his own inimitable handwriting, refers to some of these
places and of his great delight in England and with Etruscat on the
French Coast. Moreover, his Sketch Book is replete with illustra-
tions therefrom.

Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume, from his absence from
Philadelphia in 1866 and his exhibit of a "Sketch from Nature, look-
ing toward Windsor Castle" in the 44th Annual Exhibit of the Pennsyl-
vanian Academy, # 252 in 1867, that this trip Abroad lasted about a year.

There is a possibility that Mr. Nicholson made later trips Abroad,
for he is not listed in the Philadelphia Directory for 1869-1871 and
again in 1877. In addition, the American Art Annual Vol. 10(1913)p.78
lists him as a Student of Isabey; and other evidence indicates that
he was a student of Trees while Abroad.

Notwithstanding, the probability is that there was only one trip
Abroad; that Mr. Nicholson entered England in the North, sketched 'Holy Island Castle', a fine painting now in the private collection of Dr. David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery, Washington, D.C.; that he journeyed south to Nottingham, from whence his progenitors had come to America; and thence, on to London, Rotterdam, the French Coast, Venice and Egypt, returning to England, Wales and Scotland before his departure for America.

In 1868, this was indeed a momentous journey for a young Artist and especially for George W. Nicholson.
A careful search has been made through all the records of Exhibitions of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts from 1862 until 1891, for the purpose of ascertaining when Mr. Nicholson exhibited his paintings there. Only one Exhibit was found, the same being w303 in the 43th Annual of 1887, entitled: 'Sketch from Nature, looking toward Windsor Castle--Possession J. John'.

There is a possible explanation of this strange fact, according to a Family tradition, in that it is reported that Mr. Nicholson strenuously objected to the place where his picture was hung, and, since he was of a very independent turn of mind, he refused thereafter to Exhibit.

Moreover, the National Academy of Design has advised that Mr. Nicholson exhibited in its Annuals in 1874—#208 of the 43th Annual—also, "Barneget Light" "Etraetat on the Coast of France" but that he was not a member of the National Academy.

This study, therefore, established the fact that Mr. Nicholson developed his own Clientele; that he was an indefatigable worker; and that he was able to sell the fine pictures he painted to distinguished persons and others who liked his paintings and cherished his friendship as an Artist and as a Gentleman.

It is also apparent that Mr. Nicholson, by his genial nature and intellectual resources, was a good advertiser of his own works and that the City Press of his day was duly appreciative of his talents and his personality.

"The Old Homestead" which was finished by him and on Exhibition in March 1892 in the store of Wanamaker & Brown, founded by John Wanamaker in 1861, at 8th & Market Streets, Phila., was and is today a permanent Exhibit of his skill and versatility as an Artist. In
addition, it proved to be a fine piece of advertising for which it would appear that Mr. Nicholson was liberally paid in advance.

Consequently, "The Old Homestead" ushered in the most active period in the Art Life of Mr. Nicholson in Philadelphia and brought him new patronage and eminence as an outstanding delineator of American Farm Life in the Nineteenth Century.

The Philadelphia Record of 3/5/1893 stated: "A fine oil painting from the brush of C. W. Nicholson* in its general effect, perspective and composition, the painting gives evidence of great merit."

The Philadelphia Press stated on 3/8/1892:

"The subject is excellently treated and one can almost imagine that the figures are real, so true are the colorings and so life-like."

'The Old Homestead' may still be seen in the rear of the store of William H. Wanamaker 1217-19 Chestnut St., Phila., where, for lack of appropriate wall space, it leans against a side wall. In spite of its size, its age and the hazards of time and removals, it still retains great charm and, in peculiar fashion, vitalizes the legacy of Mr. Nicholson to Posterity.
A number of newspaper clippings have been made available for this study which are interesting at this point in our narrative.

For instance, here is one from a Philadelphia Newspaper, of December 1861:

"Mr. Nicholson is one of the most modest and amiable of men, and his talent is of the most varied kinds. He can paint a remarkable landscape or marine, in which the figures are so well drawn and so intelli-
genously grouped that they may always attract the greatest admiration.

"His fruit pieces are wonderful for their color and reality, and are exquisite for their grouping.

"Mr. Nicholson's manner is not the exaggerated breadth which has been adopted to an extreme so often in the French School.

"I do not admire trifling work, he says to those who visit his studio; "I do not believe in being obliged to stand half a square off to obtain the effect of a picture. I do not go to one extreme or the other, and that, I imagine, is why my pictures please the majority."

Here is another quotation from an article referring to the return to New York of the Raleigh after the victory of Admiral Dewey at Manila Bay:

"There are several by the sterling artist, George W. Nicholson, a painter who has a warm place in the hearts of every Art lover in this and every city in the country where Art finds an abiding place.

"So versatile, indeed, is Mr. Nicholson, so facile of
crush, that he is equally at home upon all phases known
to the craft.

"To those who have seen his beautiful views of the Orient and
the tropics have not been delighted and felt the refining
influences of his Art?

"The world is better because of the existence of such men,
and Art has advanced because of their handicraft."

Many other laudatory comments regarding Mr. Nicholson have been
expressed in the course of this study and one of these, regarding the
latter years of Mr. Nicholson, should be recorded. It is a statement
from an Emmonton, N.J. friend:

"It was during the years 1909-1911 that I knew Mr. George
Nicholson, the Artist. In appearance he was quite dis-
inguished; he had a pleasant smile and kindly eyes; he
was a bit humorous and wore a beard.

"Of average height, though rather slender, he enjoyed
smoking a long, stem pipe.

"He was a very modest and retiring gentleman, with a
cheerful outlook on life. He was so modest he never spoke
of his notable Friends unless questioned; then he would
recount the men whom he had known intimately, among them
John Singer Sargent, Ulysses S. Grant, Joseph Jefferson,
the Actor, and Others, who had visited him in his studio.

"Mr. Nicholson in spite of his age seemed young in spirit
and outlook on life; always enthusiastic about painting.

"He was a master painter; his skies and clouds were es-
pecially notable. They ranged from brilliant summer skies,
through the different cloud formations to dark storm clouds hurrying before the wind. He gave the impression of movement and action in his pictures.

"At the time I knew him he seldom went out. During this period Mr. Nicholson was engaged in painting a series of large murals depicting 'Washington's Winter At Valley Forge'. On my visits he would show me the progress he was making with these murals, giving me a mirror in which I was to look at them to get the distant view by standing with my back to the canvas from across the Studio."

In his latter years, while residing at Emmonton, N.J. (1902-1912), Mr. Nicholson had many friends among the residents of that town, whose encomiums of praise concerning him have been freely and sincerely expressed.
As is shown the fact that Mr. Nicholson began his career in 1870, the Directory for Philadelphia listed just seven Landscape Painters: Leffel, Bridges, Dale, Lewis, Martin, North and George W. Nicholson; but it listed twenty Portrait Painters: Litchell, Penzel, Shipman, Evans, Tindell, Jr., Griner, Revith, Jones, Lemon, Lorrie, Merchant, S. P. A. M., Gods, Reed, Smith, Street, Welch, Wilkinson and Winter.

Moreover, most of the Artists then living had their Studios West of Tenth Street; some were West of Tenth Street and a few in the outlying Districts. These Artists comprised a notable group and it is an interesting fact that of all the Artists who were contemporaries of Mr. Nicholson in these early years, only three survived him, to wit: S. J. Ferris (1815) and Daniel R. Knight and Fidelia Bridges, both in 1884.

Among the number, Mr. Nicholson appears to have been a close friend of Frank D. Eriscoe, an eminent Illustrator and Painter; also, of J. Thorp Flaherty, a Restorer for the Hazeltine Galleries, Phila., and with J. R. De Young who is referred to in Family Diaries.

Furthermore, from the fact that in his later years in Philadelphia Mr. Nicholson was almost a daily visitor at the Hazeltine Galleries, it is evident that he was also very well acquainted with Charles F. Hazeltine, son of the Philadelphia Sculptor J. M. Hazeltine, whose Gentleman had been selling paintings in Philadelphia since 1870 and in the hey-day of Mr. Nicholson (1889-1908) he had the largest and finest Art Galleries for the sale of paintings in the World. Here Mr. Nicholson made delightful contact with his many Friends and derived inspiration from what he heard and saw. His own Studio was then located in a building owned by J. W. Davison, a Philadelphia Jeweler, at 718 Sansom St., Phila.
Just how Mr. Nicholson became acquainted with Mr. J. W. Davison
is not definitely known but they were good friends and had many in-
terests in common in the realm of Art. Perhaps, Mr. Nicholson met
Mr. Davison in 1872-73, when it appears that he was listed in the
Philadelphia Directory as an "Engraver". Probably an association of
some character existed during these two years with his brother-in-
law, John Bray, who was in the Jewelry trade from 1872-1876; and
during the business contacts made in this period, some were with Mr.
Davison. Be that as it may, no known engravings by Mr. Nicholson
have thus far turned up, though he had such a fine precision of line
as would favorably commend him to a try in this field.

However, in 1874 and from that date on, Mr. Nicholson devoted
his efforts to painting, deriving much benefit, for an indefinite
period, by an association with Richard S. Smith, a very successful
scenery painter, about the year 1890. There can be little doubt
but that this business affiliation gave Mr. Nicholson considerable
preliminary training incident to his own production, in 1892, of his
largest known canvas, 7' X 14', entitled: 'The Old Homestead'. He
also painted scenery for the Academy of Music during this period.

The warmth of his personality and the rising tide of his emin-
ence as an Artist, drew some very interesting friends around him.
Among these, was A. H. Lindenmuth, photographer and artist, late of
Allentown, Pa. who was a student of Mr. Nicholson in 1836-1837; also,
Harrington Fitzgerald, late of Philadelphia, Pa., a business man, who
also studied under Mr. Nicholson; also, Joseph Sorver, a business man
engaged in the tobacco trade, who studied under Mr. Nicholson and
Joseph Jefferson, the Actor, who made Rip Van Winkle famous.

For a time at least, Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Sorver and Mr. Jefferson,
shared a Studio in Philadelphia. Mr. Sorver specialized in painting
Chickens. Mr. Jefferson was both an illustrator and an artist. He produced nine acceptable illustrations for a book, by William Winter, 2nd rev. ed. (1911), entitled "My Trip to England" (James R. Osgood & Co., Boston). Of his paintings, the National Gallery at Washington, D.C. lists, "Coast of Maine" and "Massachusetts Bay"; while the Frick Art Reference Library, New York, lists, "Sip Van Tinkle's Rock in the Catskills", "Sunset Scene (Water Color)"; "Cow Grazing By Stream", "Old Mill by the Sea" and "Summer Thunderstorms". Probably the last was painted under the influence of Mr. Nicholson, who was a specialist in this particular field.

As Mr. Jefferson was on tour throughout the world during many years of his life, though born in Philadelphia, this friendship must have preceded 1891 to enable Mr. Jefferson, at that time, to state, 'I have several of your works which I value highly.' At all events, the friendship is evidenced by a newspaper clipping of November 1891:

"George W. Nicholson, who is well known all over America as one of our most talented artists, had a visit the other day from the great comedian Joseph Jefferson, who remained at the artist's studio 718 Sansom Street, several hours, talking art (for Jefferson is an amateur landscape painter) and admiring some of Mr. Nicholson's beautiful works which were about to be sent to their purchasers."

Mr. Sorver and Mr. J. W. Davison were also friends of Mr. Jefferson. Mr. Sorver, of the firm of M. J. Dalton & Co., was the Uncle of Robert M. Yahn, dec'd, a friend and owner and admirer of the paintings of Mr. Nicholson and corroboration of many of these facts was obtained through his widow, Jane F. Yahn, and other friends of Mr. Nicholson in Philadelphia and Hammonton, N.J.

Another newspaper clipping of the 1891-1892 period, throws additi
Light upon the friends of Mr. Nicholson, for this clicking reason:

'a charming reception in the studio of our well-known
Artist, George N. Nicholson, who has just finished a large
picture 'On the Delaware'**Mrs. Behrens, the accomplished
wife of Professor Behrens, assisted by Mr. George Harbort
**received the guests."

Then, a list of some thirty prominent individuals, from many walks in
life, is given; among the group Mr. Richard F. Bower and Colonel Thomas
Corwin

Colonel Donaldson.

Mr. Bower was secretary of the estate of William L. Elkins of
Philadelphia for many years and had purchased 'The Meadow Farm'
from Mr. Nicholson, "undoubtedly one of Nicholson's finest works".
Though the present whereabouts of this painting is not known, a
newspaper article describes it, as follows:

"It is quite large and gives a glimpse of a picturesque
farm. A boat lies lazily in a stream**and in it rests
a young lover, who is evidently murmuring his affections
to a pretty girl who sits on the bank. This episode is
in contrast to the groups of chickens and ducks that
make the picture bustling. Nearby stand a couple of
horses beside a wheat stack. The composition is admir-
able, the color refined and sufficiently rich, the draw-
ing skillful and everything about the picture is pleasing."

Corwin

Colonel Thomas Donaldson was a Philadelphia lawyer and former
Governor of Idaho, a versatile and interesting connoisseur of Paintings,
Autographs and Jurispr. He and Mr. Nicholson were good friends. They
had much in common. "Donaldson was the best story teller I ever came
across", said Mr. Nicholson, when commenting upon the death of his
Friend. "His memory was wonderful. There was not a subject
that he was unable to discuss intelligently. He could furnish information regarding anything. His stories were always interesting; those about the Indians, among whom he spent much time in study, told around brand-new camp-fires at their meetings, were especially so. I have spent many very pleasant hours with him."

Among the friends of Mr. Nicholson, it would also seem appropriate to include Mr. Alfred C. Deshong of Chester, Pa., if for no other reason than the fact that the Private Art Gallery later founded by Mr. Deshong possesses the largest Gallery Collection of works by Mr. Nicholson. Though some of these are manifestly early works of Mr. Nicholson, and in various techniques, the total group of over twenty, evidences a mutuality of interest between these Gentlemen. Moreover, it is a significant fact that the mother of John Wanamaker of Philadelphia, was of the Deshong Family, for it was the first John Wanamaker store—"Oak Hall"—which bought "The Old Homestead" from Mr. Nicholson in 1893.

His Friends of late years—his Harvonton, H.J. Friends, were few, but dear. They visited, they dined and they enshrined Mr. Nicholson in their hearts not only, but also upon the walls of their homes. Unquestionably, these were imperishable consolations to an old man. Here was true admiration and a responsive love.
From many unrelated sources of information contacted during this study, it has become plainly evident that John 'inner Sargent and George W. Nicholson were friends and that Mr. Sargent painted with Mr. Nicholson.

Among other things brought to our attention, Mrs. George Jerenbeck, who resided in Farmington, N.J. during part of the time Mr. Nicholson lived there, produced a newspaper clipping which supports the existence of a portrait of Mr. Nicholson painted by Mr. Sargent in Philadelphia.

This clipping is quoted as follows:

'Offer Sargent Here'

\{' A cut of Portrait\}

"Portrait of G. W. Nicholson Veteran
Artist of Philadelphia, now on exhibition at the Philadelphia Art Galleries"

"Portrait by Sargent to be sold at Auction"

"Picture of Nicholson, Philadelphia Artist, painted in Studio here"

"A Sargent portrait of a Philadelphia is to go on sale next Monday at the Philadelphia Art Galleries, where it is now on exhibition.

It is a portrait of George W. Nicholson, Philadelphia artist, and came to Philadelphia among the effects of the late Judge Jordan, of Sunbury, Northumberland County, into whose hands it fell. Sargent painted the portrait in this city at Nicholson's studio, so-
ccording to Judge Jordan's executor.

Sargent's signature at the lower right confirms
the master's touch seen in the portrait, that of a
patrician old man with snow-white hair and flowing
beard against a background of rich and shaded brown.
His tie beneath the beard is a dash of flame, and the
white and vagrant strands merge into dark back-ground
and ruddy flesh in pleasing contrast.

Nicholson himself will be represented in the sale,
which includes a number of paintings from the same
source and from the estate of Thomas E. Brown, of Wynoote,
and the household furnishings formerly belonging to
Mrs. Gertrude Lee Despart, late mother of the slain
physician, Dr. Duncan L. Leopold.

The eminent surgeon and nerve specialist, killed in
his office at 266 South 31st Street August 5, 1934, by
an insane patient, left an estate of nearly half a mil-

Unfortunately, it has been impossible to locate a catalogue
of this Philadelphia Art Gallery sale. However, from the Court
records in the Estate of Gertrude Lee Despart, who died 12/10/1925,
it is noted that the Philadelphia Art Galleries were paid 2/19/1926
for their Appraisal, that some household goods were sold 10/19/1926
and cash received from the sale of silver 1/12/1927. Accordingly,
it is reasonable to assume that this Sargent portrait of Mr. Nichol-
son was sold after 2/19/1926 or in early 1927 along with goods of
the said Estate. To whom it was sold is unknown, as well as the price paid
II. RESIDENCES

It may be of interest to some individuals, bent on research, to know where Mr. Nicholson resided and therefore the answer is given here, as follows:

From 1862-1878 (his 30th to 44th year) in Old Philadelphia, (downtown): 2815 5th St., 51 W. 5th St., 33 W. 9th St., 1157 Division St., and 255 N. 11th St.

From 1878-1888 (his 44th to 54th year), in what was then a high-class neighborhood: 6061 Merrick St., and 1257 and 1259 N. James St.

From 1880-1898, a period of great painting, Mr. Nicholson resided in Camden, N.J. with his studio in 1890-1891 at 907 Arch St., Phila., and from 1891-1898 at 712 Sansom St., Phila.

From 1897-1900, his residence was at 2142 S. Hicks St., Phila., where he probably maintained his studio. In 1901 he opened a studio at 727 Walnut St., Phila., but apparently returned to the South Hicks St. address in early 1902.

Late in 1902, or early in 1903, Mr. Nicholson took up his last residence in a cheerful home, built by his Son, in a quiet and lovely section of Hammonton, N.J. Here he resided until his death in 1912, painting and teaching and enjoying, with very genial contacts, the remaining ten years of his life. However, these latter years passed inconspicuously, due to the then remoteness of Hammonton. Moreover, Mr. Nicholson was the last survivor of his close friends of Philadelphia days. Therefore, when he died on 10/12/1912, at the age of 80 years, there were few to mourn his passing or eulogize his memory.
Interment was made in the Family Lot in the Oak Grove Cemetery, Trenton, N.J. and in 1914, his surviving son, had certain bodies removed from the Old Philanthropic Cemetery, at 11th & Passyunk Ave., Philadelphia, presumably those of his mother, Jane Elizabeth Bray, Job F. Bray and his wife, Jane Bray. These were re-interred in the Oak Grove Cemetery.
While the intangibles of life are the matters of primary value, 
there are many tangible which can be transmitted to posterity with 
great joy to descendant and beneficiary. Therefore, in the case of 
George W. Nicholson, Cheltenham, England: His Sketch Book, 
His Portfolio, His Dated and Undated Paintings and 'The Old Homestead'.

The Sketch Book turned up unexpectedly. It is a little, gold-
ebosed volume, 7¼" X 12", built-like-an-Album, containing some 50 or 
more pages of sketches, sometimes three or four to a page. Its pages 
are interleaved with tissue.

On the cover appear these words in gold lettering:

"Presented to Mr. Creaghile
by
His Friend G. W. Nicholson
London June 4th 1866."

The significance of this title is unknown. However, Mr. Nichol-
son was in London, on or about June 4th 1866.

The first sketch therein, signed lower left, "G.W.Nicholson" and 
titled "Lake of Como Morning" is 2 5/8" X 5 1/8" and is one of several 
scenes of Lake Como which Mr. Nicholson subsequently painted. Accord-
ingly, it can be stated with assurance that Mr. Nicholson was at Lake Como.

There are also scenes from Egypt, including drawings of the Sphinx, 
along the Nile etc., which, when linked with paintings made by Mr. 
Nicholson of these subjects, must definitely indicate that Mr. Nicholson 
was also in Egypt.

The whole Sketch Book is replete with unidentified Market Scenes, 
marine sketches, pleasant Landscapes, Sunsets in foreign ports etc. 
indicating rather extensive travel on the Continent.
There are also sketches indicating travel in the Low Countries.

Definitely a number of sketches relate to England and to Scotland. Some sketches are manifestly the basis for later paintings and generally speaking they substantiate the word which he wrote home to the effect that he was spending his time very largely in sketching as he traveled.

In this same Sketch Book other sketches are to be found which were made apparently done at a later date. One is dated 5/8/1882, another 1884, and still another in 1887, all showing a continuing practice of sketching throughout his active art life.

One notes that several sketches are titled:

"When the Swallows Homeward Fly"

"The Fox and the Crow"

"The Old Oaken Bucket"

and these titles probably indicate the names of paintings now lost.

The entire record is most interesting and clearly established the facility of Mr. Nicholson's pencil, his pen and his brush. However, these skills and other talents are perhaps more fully revealed in his Portfolio which turned up almost as unexpectedly.

The Portfolio is a book about 15 x 13" and though partially bound, evidences the removal of some pages. There still remain some 16 pages of 9½ x 11½" completed scenes, apparently in charcoal, and nearly all are signed and some quite beautiful. Some are landscapes with figures, storm-clouds, birds in flight &., others are marines; one is of Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday; and then there are Farm Scenes, Landscapes in Sepia and the beautiful impress of a missing page in charcoal.
Within the confines of the same Portfolio are a number of rough sketches of pictures painted by Mr. Nicholson:

"Old Mill
Fruit Piece
Interior Al
Rotterdam
Lake of Jonc
Norman Coast
Norway Fjord 30 X 46
Sinbad 30 X 40
Isle of Jersey 24 X 43
Barbary Castle 34 X 42"

There is also a Photogravure of "The Old Homestead", an uncompleted painting of Cairo, Egypt on canvas board, two sketches of the Sphinx and four small landscapes.

Therefore, one has this further evidence of the versatility of Mr. Nicholson as an Artist, his excellent line and chiaroscuro; and both the Sketch Book and the Portfolio, when inspected, generate the hope that they may not be lost to posterity.

In addition, it affords both joy and understanding to find some paintings of Mr. Nicholson either dated by him or facts regarding them which definitely indicate production as of a certain date. While these are relatively few in number, it is evident that he dated some. Among these are the following:

1878—An English Town—4151 Deshong Memorial Gallery
1880—An Ocean Surf Panel—Mrs. Joe E. Davidson
1881—Watermelon Li.,—Mrs. Oakford W. Acton

"Looking toward Windsor Castle", Ettertat on Coast of France"
were exhibited as of certain dates, as also "The Old Housemaid," as there is nothing informative concerning them. However, there is one painting at least which bears "'76 canvas," apparently without date, but it should be classed in the period 1852-1858. Perhaps, and let us hope, that other dated paintings may be found.

It has become quite apparent that

Finally, in the course of this study, almost every owner of a George W. Nicholson painting, who has been interviewed, cherishes his or her painting or paintings by Mr. Nicholson with a fondness and pleasure which is beautiful. Some have gone to great pains to preserve these paintings and with rare exception are they tucked away in a closet. Generally speaking, they are living room pictures and a fitting adornment to the home.

Mr. Nicholson painted in oils, in watercolor, in a wash technique, and probably employed old skills. He painted on panel of wood, on artist board, on canvas and on an imitation paper, developed about 1876, which are reliably informed was intended to replace canvas. His results were good and he sold his paintings widely. In fact, the present owners are scattered over the entire United States.

In the years to come it is quite likely that many more paintings by Mr. Nicholson will turn up, for today there are quite a number of "lost paintings" and apparently, from records seen, some of them are outstanding in character./\ Lost Painting

The lure of hidden treasure has ever motivated man and Dr. RUSSELL CONWELL built Temple University, Philadelphia, by proclaiming far and wide his "ACRES OF DIAMONDS". Therefore, this study also points to a quest and gives some clues to the interested.
1. "SUNRISE" and "SUNSET", two paintings formerly the property of Rama Dean, etc.

2. A LAM AT SUNSET, possibly 28" X 38" sold about 1947 by Winter Hall Galleries, Phila.—a very beautiful painting.

3. CANAL IN ROTTERDAM, sold 3/11/1948 by Samuel L. Freeman & Co., Phila. 25" X 30"

4. BARNEGAT LIGHT, of which a photograph is extant, described therefrom: In left center is the Light House, with building at its base. To the right, rough seas. People grouped at base of Light House. To right of same, a double team with one white horse, a high Victoria with driver. Two bathers and four separate groups of people on beach. Signed LL.

5. HOMESTEAD SCENE, of which a photograph is extant, signed LR "G.W. Nicholson 713 Sansom St.", and described therefrom: One left, a Fifty stone and frame house with door-stoop reaching to a pale fence beneath which are three figures: an elderly woman, who stands to left of a seated and bearded old man, with a younger man also seated. In center: an old Hickory Tree at foot of which is a young woman, with straw hat, her left arm over the mane of a saddled pony. At right center: two women by an Old covered well; and still further to the right, a barn with open door. A vista across fields between House and Farm, over a lattice.
A white pigeon is standing over keystone; 10
thousands in left foreground, with a dog and
thousands in center foreground; while, to the
right, are chickens, cows, turkeys and opossum:

6. "THE MEADOW FARM", formerly the property of Mr.
10/3/1903 and left his estate to his Widow,
Carrie S. Bower, who subsequently removed to
Atlantic City, N.J. where she died 11/12/1921.
This painting was described on page 81.

7. "ON THE DELAWARE", reported to be a large picture,
with elaborate details: "A number of figures
have gathered around an old wreck on the Dela-
ware Coast. There is a stormy sky, a vivid
glimpse of water dashing on the shore, above
which flutter sea-gulls"

8. "STACKING THE HAY", reported to be a large picture,
giving a view of the surroundings of a farm-yard,
with a group of children, a wagon loaded with
hay and men at work. "Worthy of praise for
composition, color and drawing—one of his best
efforts in delineating American farm life."

9. A LARGE CANVAS painted in Camden, N.J. late in life,
upon commission for some public building and from
a small photograph appears to be of a Revolution-
ary War subject.

10. Scene along Rocky Coast of ocean "seven people, unloading
10. "PARIS AND A FISHING SHIP"—these are horses standing by. "No sailing vessel shown in the rolling ocean—a dwelling house on the shore, with a ship high and dry in the background. Signed LL."—This painting is extremely clear picture and is housed in a very expensive frame. It was reported sold in Bristol, Va. in 1849.

11. "ITALIAN SCENE", sold by Mr. Nicholson to a Bostonian who has a fine collection of pictures and who saw several of Mr. Nicholson's pictures in New York came to Philadelphia, visited Mr. Nicholson's Studio on Sansom Street below Eighth and immediately purchased" the same.


13. PAINTINGS EXHIBITED at National Academy of Design in 1874-49th Annual Exhibition (2). (cf. ? No. 4)

14. PORTRAIT BY JOHN SINGER SARGENT described page 23.

15. PAINTINGS FROM THE ESTATE OF JOSEPH JEFFERSON, DEC'D, (1828-1906), who died in Palm Beach, Fla.

It is also possible that the Estate of Colonel Thomas Corwin Donaldson possessed some Nicholson's. He died in Phil., 11/16/1898 and some of his paintings were sold in Philadelphia and some in New York in 1899 and in 1905. It is also possible that the Estate of Mr. George Harbert of Philadelphia owned some Nicholson's; and while other estates might be mentioned, the foregoing list should provide sufficient urge for some time to come.
Lest Art lovers, collectors of paintings and those truly interested in Art, mention would be incomplete if it failed to state the present location of known paintings by Mr. Nicholson. Therefore, the names and addresses of the reputed owners of paintings of paintings seen is this study, are as follows:

Acton, Mrs. Galford W.  
Acton, Mr. Galford W. Jr.,  
Bayley, Mr. Newton  
Beale, Dr. Rupert  
** Breuker, Mr. Carl  
** Calza Art Gallery  
** Josdy, Mrs. Russell  
** Collins, Mrs. George  
** Crowell, Miss Anne  
** Davison, Mrs. Jos. K. Jr.,  
** Davison, Mr. Benj. F.  
Dennis, Hotel  
Deshong, Alfred O., Memorial Art Gallery—Chester, Pa.  
Eastman, Irving M.  
** Edelman, Mrs. Leighton  
Jabardt, Edwin M. Esq.,  
** Finley, Dr. David E.  
** Fisher, Howard D. Mr. & Mrs.  
Gaekhart, Mrs. Charles  
** Gerenbeck, Mr. Frank  
** Gerenbeck, Mrs. George  
** Goodwin, Est. of Henry, dec'd  
** Topper, Mrs. H. Z.  
** Hardy, Mrs. C. L.
Lacy, Mr. & Mrs. David Palmer           Philadelphia
Lazer, Miss Elsie                  Hammonton, N.J.
Lounsbury, Mrs. Charles          Kansas City, Mo.
Lounsbury, Mr. Charles Jr.       Wilmington, Del.
Mac Neille, Hon. Raymond        Philadelphia
Newman Art Gallery
Parkhurst, Mr. & Mrs. C. L.      Hammonton, N.J.
Peeples, Mrs. E. L.                     *
Rile, Mrs. Donald                Barto, Pa.
Schure, Mr. Jacques              Arlington, Va.
Scott, Mr. Thomas                Wynnewood, Pa.
Waddington, Mrs. J. E.           Salem, N.J.
Walker Art Center                Minneapolis, Minn.
Wanamaker, Mr. Mr. K. Jr.,     Philadelphia
Whiffin, Mrs. Amy J.             Hammonton, N.J.
Wood, Mrs. Warren                 *
Yahn, Mrs. Robert M.             Philadelphia

** Photographs received.
G. W. Nicholson, landscape and genre painter, was born in Salem County, NJ in 1832. His career was spent chiefly in Philadelphia. There he was made an Associate of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts as a tribute to his skill and devotion to his art.

In 1867, he exhibited his work from England at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts including a "Sketch from Nature, Looking Towards Windsor Castle". He also visited France, where he worked with Louis Gabriel Eugene Isabey, and later went on to paint in Egypt.

Nicholson's work is in many permanent collections, including the Deshong Museum in Chester, PA. At least 35 paintings are listed in the inventory of American Paintings prior to 1914 (National Collection of Fine Arts) kept by the Smithsonian Institution.

The artist was also an associate member of the Northwest Gallery of American Art.

George W. Nicholson died in 1912 in his home on Central Avenue in Hammonton, New Jersey.

George Nicholson was born in Salem County, New Jersey, on October 17, 1832. A landscape and genre painter, his career was spent chiefly in Philadelphia. He travelled extensively, visiting England, Egypt, and France, where he worked with Eugene Isabey. In 1867, he exhibited his work from England at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, including a Sketch from Nature, Looking Towards Windsor Castle. He was made an Associate of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts as a tribute to his skill and devotion to his art. He was also an associate member of the Northwest Gallery of American Art. He was awarded a gold medal at an American Art Society Exhibition in 1902.

Increasingly concerned about the state of his son's health, Nicholson chanced upon an advertisement claiming the curative powers of the pine air in Hammonton, New Jersey. About 1904, he purchased a home there on Central Avenue and set up his studio. (His son, George Jefferson, went to work for a local florist and lived a long and healthy life, dying in Hammonton in 1945 at the age of 82.)

Alfred O. Deshong, a wealthy art patron and Chester resident, frequently visited Nicholson in New Jersey, purchasing many of his paintings. There are 20 paintings by George Nicholson in the Alfred O. Deshong Collection, several of which appear to be small studies, in oil and tempera, for larger paintings.

George Nicholson died on October 19, 1912, in his home on Central Avenue in Hammonton, and is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery.
Mr. George W. Nicholson died on Saturday last, at his home on Central Avenue, Hammonton, of paralysis, aged 80 years. Mr. N. was an artist of unusual ability, painted many noted historical pictures, was made an associate of the Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, as a tribute to his skill and personal worth as a man. Years ago he made a foreign tour, visiting England, France and Egypt. Most of his life was spent in Philadelphia, and has lived here about ten years. He was born in Salem County, N. J. Funeral services were held on Tuesday, conducted by Rev. W. H. Davis.
An Artist’s Work Gets Its First Cataloguing and Show: [Review]
Genocchio, Benjamin
New York Times; Jul 20, 2008; ProQuest Central
pg. NJ.10

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

An Artist’s Work Gets Its First Cataloguing and Show
Biographical Details Pieced Together, and Among the Earliest Works, Portraits

Not a lot is known about George Washington Nicholson (1832-1912), a landscape painter who lived and worked in New Jersey and Pennsylvania in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He painted in a realistic manner, depicting landscapes as well as a wide variety of subjects he saw during his travels abroad. But the details of his life and career as an artist remain a mystery.

Kate Ogden, an art professor at Richard Stockton College in Pomona, spent several years researching Nicholson’s art and life for the show “From Cape May to Cairo: The Work of George Washington Nicholson,” at the Noyes Museum of Art, in Oceanville. It includes more than 50 oil paintings and sketches, most of them undated, and is the first examination and cataloguing of this artist’s work.

Through historical records, Ms. Ogden was able to piece together a few biographical details. Nicholson was born near Salem, N.J., in 1832, a descendant of Samuel Nicholson, an original Salem settler who came to the United States from England in the 1760s with John Fenwick’s Quaker colony. He was apprenticed to a Salem housepainter after the death of his father in 1846 and may have worked as a sign painter in Philadelphia in the 1860s and possibly studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Arts before traveling abroad in 1866.

Because so few of Nicholson’s paintings are dated, Ms. Ogden decided to hang the exhibition works thematically. This is logical but makes it extremely difficult to work out any sort of chronology or to follow developments in the artist’s work. It also means that on a single wall you are likely to find a mixture of terrific and bad works from very different points in the artist’s career. The unfortunate truth of this show is that Nicholson was a patchy painter.

What appears to be the earliest works in the show are portraits, among them an intriguing and not altogether unsuccessful image believed to represent his mother, Mary Chambers Nicholson. It is the only painting in the exhibition thought to be from the 1860s. It depicts an elderly, glass-faced woman in a black dress and shawl and lace white bonnet. Nicholson’s paintings are primarily landscapes. They tend to be generic in design and typically include figures (sometimes repeated from one image to the next) and scenes of everyday life. Most impressive are his coastal land-

FROM HIS CAREER

scapes, a handful of which depict locations across southern New Jersey. Especially good is “Morristown, Cape May,” reproduced on the exhibition cover. Stylistically, it is probably among the artist’s most impressionistic paintings.

Other landscapes depict specific, even identifiable locations in southern New Jersey. “Barnegat Lighthouse” and “Long Bar, Barnegat” come immediately to mind. They are fine paintings, the artist striving to depict the architectural details of the lighthouse and surrounding buildings. These views were proba-

Works on view that were painted abroad or based on sketches.

by painted for a wealthy local collector or visiting summer tourists. Bathers and groups of people at the beach were also popular subjects for the artist. “South Jersey Beach” is looser in handling than some other pictures, despite being very small in size, but it has a real freshness and immediacy that is intoxicating. Looking at this painting, you really feel as if you are on the beach looking past a group of seated figures out into the Atlantic.

About half of the works here were painted abroad or based on sketches made during the artist’s overseas travels. There are groups of Italian coastal and landscape scenes, English landscapes, views of Caribbean islands and a wall of North African paintings depicting typically Orientalist themes.

“A Moorish Bazaar Portal,” possibly from the 1890s, stands out among the North African pictures for its exquisite detail and intense golden-yellow light. Now and then, Nicholson’s paintings are really gorgeous. One is “Moonlight Harbor,” an oil painting on paper showing sailboats on glistening water in the hazy late-afternoon sun. Take the time to notice the sense of light and carefully painted reflections. It belongs to Wittenberg University, where it has been hanging, according to Ms. Ogden, in the university president’s bathroom.

Nicholson spent most of his career in Philadelphia. It is assumed that he had a living selling his depictions of American and foreign subjects to collectors. He continued to travel, New Jersey to see relatives and to paint the southern shore and marshes, and eventually retired there in 1902, spending the final decade of his life in the town of Hammonton.

*From Cape May to Cairo: The Work of George Washington Nicholson,” the Noyes Museum of Art, Lily Lake Road, Oceanville, through Nov. 9. Information: (609) 922-3880 or noyesmuseum.org.