Asher Brown Durand, American, 1796–1886

*Genesee Oaks*, 1860. Oil on canvas

Gift of the Women’s Council in honor of Harris K. Prior, 1974.5
Seeing Rochester and the Genesee Region Through Artists’ Eyes

Whether documents or nostalgic memories, the Memorial Art Gallery’s collection of American portraits, landscapes and decorative objects provide a glimpse into life as it was once lived in Western New York State.
Many groups of Native Americans lived in the Genesee Valley and along Lake Ontario.

Carl W. Peters, American, 1897–1980
Left: Study for "Seneca-Iroquois" Mural, ca. 1939–42
Right: Study for "Algonquin Fishermen" Mural, ca. 1939–42
Watercolor, gouache and graphite on 1/8" non-archival board
 Gifts in memory of the friendship of Ellen W. and Thomas H. Miller with Blanche and Carl W. Peters, 2009.16
Jo-nis-hi-yuh was the name given to the Genesee Region by the Native Americans, first settlers of the area. Big Tree was the name for their village, today Geneseo, New York.

Richard Beale
American, 1932–2019

**Big Tree I**, 1972
Etching

Priscilla Parker Memorial Fund, 1976.21.1
The Genesee River and Valley with fertile land and river transportation attracted many settlers.

Asher Brown Durand
American, 1796–1886
*Genesee Oaks*, 1860
Oil on canvas
Gift of the Women’s Council in honor of Harris K. Prior, 1974.5

Thomas Cole
American, 1801–1848
*Genesee Scenery*, 1846–1847
Oil on panel
Gift of Howard and Florence Merritt, 1994.40
This young man holds an 1831 copy of the weekly journal, Genesee Farmer, in which appeared, “No part of the world is more richly blessed with soil and climate…than the western part of New York.”

Lemuel M. Wiles  
American, 1826–1905  
*Genesee River Valley I*, ca. 1865–1870  
Oil on canvas  
Marion Stratton Gould Fund, 1971.8

Asahel Lynde Powers  
American, 1813–1843  
*Portrait of a Dark-haired Man Reading the "Genesee Farmer,"*  
ca. 1839  
Oil on canvas  
Virginia Jeffrey Smith Fund, 2001.1
On its way north from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario, the Genesee River flowed over the Upper and Lower Falls in the city of Rochester.

John Cousen
British, 1804–1880

*The Genesse [sic] Falls, Rochester (after W. H. Bartlett)*, 1838
Hand-colored engraving
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Frank Lovejoy, Jr., 1984.38
Nathaniel Rochester moved to the Genesee High Falls area in 1803, one of the first white settlers. He prospered as the area grew and the new city is named after him.

William Home Lizars
Scottish, 1788–1859
*The Village of Rochester*, 1829
Etching
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Frank W. Lovejoy, Jr., 1984.36

Unknown, American
*Colonel Nathaniel Rochester*, before 1831
Oil on canvas
Gift of Thomas J. Watson, 1934.1
The corn and wheat mills there earned Rochester the name, “Flour City.” Gideon Burbank made a fortune milling and shipping flour to New York City.

William Cogswell
American, 1819–1903
Portrait of Mary Burbank (1806–1888), 1863
Oil on canvas
Gift of Conrad Cobb, 1973.69.1

William Cogswell
American, 1819–1903
Portrait of Gideon Burbank (1803–1873), 1863
Oil on canvas
Gift of Conrad Cobb, 1973.69.2
In 1825 the Erie Canal linked Rochester and the Genesee River with communities in eastern and western New York State.

George Harvey
American, 1800–1878
Pittsford on the Erie Canal, 1837
Oil on panel
Gift of the Margaret M. McDonald Memorial Fund, 2005.33

George Leonard Herdle
American, 1868–1922
The Canal Boat, ca. 1915
Oil on canvas
Gift of Gertrude Herdle Moore and Isabel C. Herdle, 1989.55
The Erie Canal originally passed through Rochester on an aqueduct that carried the canal over the Genesee River south of the High Falls.

Seth C. Jones
American, 1853–1929
*Weigh Lock on the Erie Canal, Rochester, New York*
Watercolor, gouache and graphite on wove paper

Colin Campbell Cooper
American, 1856–1937
*The Aqueduct at Broad Street Bridge, Rochester, before 1927*
Oil on canvas board
Fred Bennett Fund, 1994.36
The 19th century was a time of great prosperity and population growth in the Genesee region. Businesses of all kinds flourished in Rochester—from local shops to an early car manufacturer! Shops and housing were built on the bridge over the river.

**Unknown, American**
*Weathervane: Aurora in a Cunningham Carriage*, late 19th century
Metal and paint
Gift of Peter F. Cunningham, 1976.7

**Colin Campbell Cooper**
American, 1856–1937
*Main Street Bridge, Rochester*, 1908
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mr. Hiram W. Sibley, 1926.20

**Attributed to Thomas V. Brooks**
American, 1828–1895
*Cigar Store Indian*, ca. 1870
Wood and paint
Marion Stratton Gould Fund, 1963.8
Prominent Rochester banker, Daniel M. Powers, displayed *West Wind* in his art gallery in Rochester. The sculpture celebrated the 100th birthday of the United States.

Thomas Ridgeway Gould
American, 1818–1881

**The West Wind**, 1876
Marble
Gift of the Isaac Gordon Estate through the Lincoln Rochester Trust Company, 1966.18
These children grew up in Canandaigua and Scottsville in western New York State.

William Sidney Mount
American, 1807–1868

**Antoinette Pierson**, 1830
Oil on canvas
Bequest of Antoinette Pierson Granger, 1930.56

Attributed to Milton W. Hopkins
American, 1789–1844

**Pierrepont Edward Lacey (1832–after 1860) and His Dog, Gun**, 1835–1836
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Dunn in memory of Ruth Hanford Munn and James Buell Munn, 1978.189
Rochester was home to Frederick Douglass and also was a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Alison Saar  
American, 1956–  
*Maquette for "Swing Low,"* 2007  
Bronze  
Maurice R. and Maxine B. Forman Fund, 2008.15

Hale Woodruff  
American, 1900–1980  
*Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln Discussing Emancipation*, 1942–1943  
Tempera on Masonite  
Marion Stratton Gould Fund, 2002.20
Rochester and the Genesee Valley played an important role in the rising prosperity, growth and influence of New York State.

The Dixon family lived along the Hudson River near New York City.

New York City became the center of trade and wealth in New York and the United States.

Attributed to Jefferson Gauntt
American, 1806–1864
Portrait of Sophia Josephine Dixon, circa 1850–1860
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. George Barlow Penny, 1942.45

Jonas Lie
American, 1880–1940
Morning on the River, ca. 1911–1912
Oil on canvas
Gift of Ruth Sibley Gade in memory of James G. Averell, 1913.6
These artists lived in or traveled through New York, recording what they saw. Many portrayed recognizable people and places.

William Home Lizars
Scottish, 1788–1859
*The Village of Rochester*, 1829
Etching
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Frank W. Lovejoy, Jr., 1984.36

Unknown, American
*Colonel Nathaniel Rochester*, before 1831
Oil on canvas
Gift of Thomas J. Watson, 1934.1
Other artists made changes to scale, color, details and other art elements, to give us “their” view.
Look carefully at the painting. What does the artist want the viewer to see? To feel? How can you tell?
Why are the trees so big? What do you think the artist wanted us to think about?

Comparing works of art helps us to see how different artists make choices and tell different stories.

This artist devoted half of the painting to the sky? Why do you think he chose to focus so much on the weather?

George Harvey
American, 1800–1878
*Pittsford on the Erie Canal*, 1837
Oil on panel
Gift of the Margaret M. McDonald Memorial Fund, 2005.33

What has this artist chosen to emphasize? How are the pictures different?

George Leonard Herdle
American, 1868–1922
*The Canal Boat*, ca. 1915
Oil on canvas
Gift of Gertrude Herdle Moore and Isabel C. Herdle, 1989.55
Artists often show us things from different points of view. Where do you think the artist is standing to see the backs of these buildings on the Main Street Bridge? How do you think the buildings would look if you were standing on Main Street? What do you think the artist wanted us to see and think about?

Portrait painters often included special objects to tell us more about the people in their paintings. What do you learn about these people from looking at facial expressions, gestures, clothes and other items?

Attributed to Jefferson Gauntt
American, 1806–1864
Portrait of Sophia Josephine Dixon,
circa 1850–1860
Oil on canvas
Gift of Mrs. George Barlow Penny, 1942.45

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Pierrepont Edward Lacey (1832–after 1860) and His Dog, Gun, 1835–1836
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Unknown, American
Colonel Nathaniel Rochester, before 1831
Oil on canvas
Gift of Thomas J. Watson, 1934.1
New York State was made famous by artists of the Hudson River School whose style of painting emphasized the grandeur and spectacular beauty found in the Hudson River Valley, the Catskills and other areas of natural beauty. These artists wanted everyone to know of the beauty of America.

Thomas Cole
American, 1801–1848
**Genesee Scenery**, 1846–1847
Oil on panel
Gift of Howard and Florence Merritt, 1994.40

John Frederick Kensett
American, 1816–1872
**A Showery Day, Lake George**, ca. 1860
Oil on canvas
Marion Stratton Gould Fund, 1974.29
Today the Genesee region is home to many artists whose work can be seen in Rochester and around the world, including at the Memorial Art Gallery.

Wendell Castle
American, 1932–2018

*Dr. Caligari*, 1984
Curly cherry veneer, ebony and gold-plated brass
Given in honor of Joan M. Vanden Brul by her family, 1988