

A woman in a long, light-colored dress is seated on a dark, curved bench. She is positioned in profile, facing left, towards a large window. The room is filled with warm, golden light from the window, creating strong shadows on the wall behind her and on the floor. The floor appears to be made of stone tiles. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Augusta Homer
Saint-Gaudens
Stepping
Out of the
Shadows

Published in conjunction with the exhibition *Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens: Stepping Out of the Shadows*, curated by Henry J. Duffy for the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, July 20–September 2, 2019. This exhibition is sponsored through the generosity of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial in honor of its centennial in 2019.

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Front cover: Augusta Saint-Gaudens in the Little Studio pergola, Cornish, 1913 (detail). Autochrome. Photo courtesy Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, Dorros Collection.

Back cover: Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens, *Mt. Ascutney*, n.d. Oil on canvas, 17 x 15½ in. SAGA 2809. Formerly collection of Frank Spinney.

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Fig. 2: Courtesy of the State Library of Massachusetts Special Collections, Emerson and Nichols Families Papers

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FOREWORD

This year marks the centennial of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, a nonprofit organization incorporated in 1919 to “maintain a permanent memorial to the late Augustus Saint-Gaudens on the site of his homestead estate in Cornish, New Hampshire.” In 1964 the Memorial gifted that property to the federal government, and the National Park Service now operates the estate as the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, attracting some 40,000 visitors annually. Today the Memorial continues as an active partner with, and advocate for, the park. We encourage appreciation of the arts, past and present, through temporary exhibitions, Sunday afternoon concerts, artists’ fellowships, and educational programs. Our mission is to promote Saint-Gaudens’s legacy, and as we enter our second century, we are pleased to celebrate our rich history with the exhibition *Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens: Stepping Out of the Shadows*. We gratefully acknowledge the illuminating contributions of Henry J. Duffy, Curator and Chief of Cultural Resources, Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, and art historian Kathryn Greenthal to this accompanying publication.

Thayer Tolles
President, Saint-Gaudens Memorial

Augusta Saint-Gaudens by *Pan* fountain, Cornish.



INTRODUCTION

Kathryn Greenthal

As we celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, we honor its founder, Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens (1848–1926), the wife of the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848–1907), with an exhibition devoted to her life and work. She, with their son, Homer Saint-Gaudens (1880–1958), provided the impetus for incorporating the Memorial in 1919, converting the home, gardens, and studios in Cornish, New Hampshire, along with the collection of art, from a place of private ownership into one that visitors could learn from and enjoy—as they do today at the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park. She particularly wanted students and young sculptors to benefit from her largesse through exposure to Saint-Gaudens’s creative process. Precedents, especially the Musée Rodin in Paris, which officially opened in 1919, guided her.

We hope that visitors will leave the Picture Gallery with a more complete awareness of the force that Augusta Saint-Gaudens was, both during her husband’s lifetime and thereafter. Her contributions have generally been downplayed or simply overlooked, and a fairer assessment is warranted. A painter, she was essentially self-taught; nevertheless, she was a helpmate in modeling details on one of her husband’s major early

commissions. She regularly corresponded with museums, collectors, and fabricators regarding his oeuvre and oversaw households in New York, Paris, and Cornish. As the number of Augustus Saint-Gaudens’s projects multiplied and the extent of the studios’ operations expanded, she meticulously managed aspects of the business, notably arranging for the sale of his small commercial bronze statuettes and reliefs. Following his death, she orchestrated the careful reproduction and distribution of his sculpture and, to perpetuate his memory, made certain that prominent institutions, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum, acquired key pieces.

Augusta Homer (fig. 1), or Gussie, as she was called, first became acquainted with Augustus Saint-Gaudens in December 1873 in Rome. Compared to him, she was relatively well born. Raised in Roxbury, Massachusetts, she was descended from old Boston mercantile stock, although her father suffered financial reverses. Augustus Saint-Gaudens had spent his youth in New York, the immigrant son of a French shoe and boot maker and an Irish seamstress. Given their dissimilar backgrounds, it is hard to imagine that they would have met in America. Free of the constraints that they likely would have encountered in this country, they fell in love in Italy, where she was studying painting, and he was advancing his career as a sculptor. They wed in 1877. For his part, Augustus married up. In a photograph (fig. 2), possibly taken in Cornish,



Fig. 1 Augusta Homer, ca. 1870. Photograph by O. H. Warren & Co.



Fig. 2 Augustus Saint-Gaudens (third from left) and Augustus Homer Saint-Gaudens (far right), ca. 1885–95, possibly Cornish.

he lounges between Eugenie Homer (Emerson) (1854–1940), Augusta’s sister, on the left, and his wife on the far right. In joining the Homer family, he developed a close relationship with his niece, the garden designer and author Rose Standish Nichols (1872–1960). She was a daughter of Augusta’s other sister, Elizabeth Homer (Nichols) (1844–1929), who, with her husband, Arthur, also purchased a residence in Cornish. Recognizing her seriousness of purpose and her talent, Saint-Gaudens encouraged Rose’s instruction in painting and drawing. Later, she would play an important role as a liaison and an agent for her uncle with galleries such as Doll & Richards in Boston.

When Augusta Homer traveled from New England to Italy as an art student, she trusted that the milder climate would alleviate problems with her hearing; however,

her condition persisted for the rest of her life. She faced substantial challenges beyond her health. Difficulties ranged from the growing divide between her and Augustus and his circle, with him confiding in

Rose that “poor Gussie is so hopelessly uninterested in what interests me and my friends,”¹ to navigating disciplinary action against her headstrong son, Homer, over his dreadful grades at Harvard College.² She experienced miscarriages and lost a three-year-old grandson due to accidental poisoning. Most poignantly, she endured the knowledge that her husband had a longstanding mistress, Davida Clark, with whom he had a son in 1889. Although their marriage was strained, they had a rapprochement during the sculptor’s final years. Ill with cancer, Saint-Gaudens relied increasingly on his wife. At one point, he turned away everyone except her, with Augusta’s sister Elizabeth observing in a letter to her husband, “He refuses to see anyone but Gussie, not even Homer or Louis.”³ In one of his last reliefs, *Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens* (fig. 3), the sculptor inserted his self-portrait in the guise of a dog, standing faithfully by her side.⁴ In the end, Augusta came into her own after Saint-Gaudens died by assuming responsibility for all that had to be done—from handling monetary matters, to dealing with unfinished commissions, to enhancing his reputation.

Augusta Saint-Gaudens’s intensifying need to be in charge as the years wore on, coupled with an extreme Yankee thriftiness and the hardship of her deafness, led to her being viewed as controlling, formidable, and meddlesome. For example, in large measure not wishing to eclipse Homer’s envisioned publications about his father, Augusta

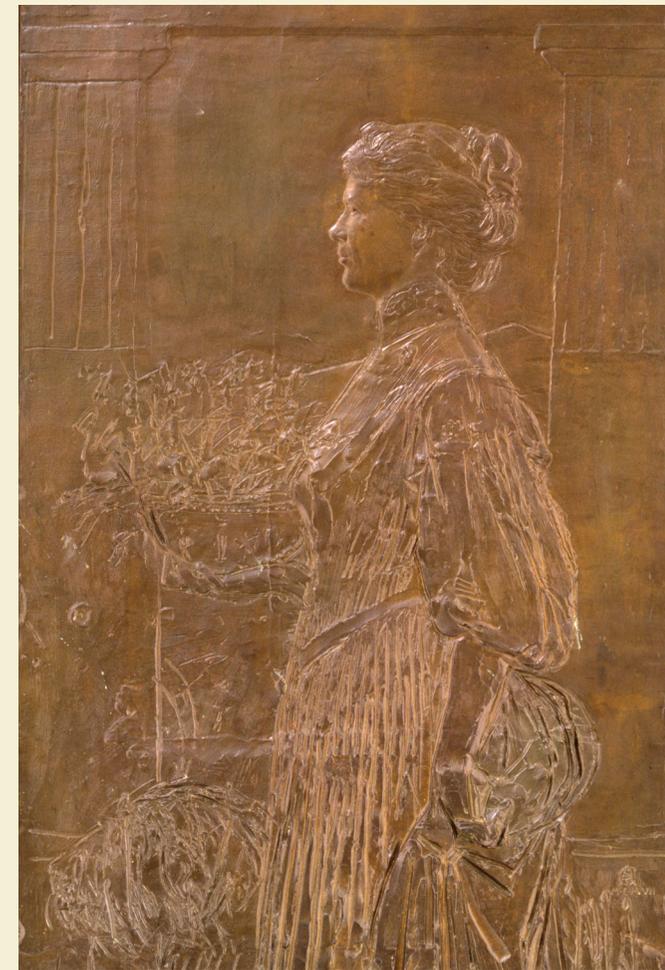


Fig. 3 Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens*, 1905–7. Bronze, 35¹³/₁₆ x 23¹/₄ in. SAGA 909.



went back and forth with consenting, withholding, and ultimately granting Rose permission to print in *McClure's Magazine* letters that Augustus had written to her. When Willa Cather, an editor at the periodical, omitted some changes Augusta had marked for correction to the proof of the article for the October 1908 issue, Augusta threatened an injunction. Cather wrote to Rose, "Our troubles with Mrs. Saint-Gaudens, it seems, are just beginning. . . . Probably, there will be even more trouble about the second article. There will be trouble until we are entirely through."⁵ At the same time, Augusta was in a dispute with the Metropolitan Museum of Art over the ownership of the 1905 portrait of Saint-Gaudens by Ellen Emmett Rand (1875–1941), which the museum had recently bought from the painter. In 1909 Augusta brought suit against the museum, only to drop it within a few weeks, perhaps realizing that the Metropolitan's prestige and its presentation of her husband's sculpture were crucial to her goal of adding luster to his image.⁶ In 1914 she tried to convince Henry Bacon, the architect of the Lincoln Memorial, that an enlargement of Augustus Saint-Gaudens's *Abraham Lincoln: The Man (Standing Lincoln)* (1884–87) in Chicago should be used for the planned monument in Washington, despite the fact it was already anticipated that Daniel Chester French (1850–1931) would sculpt the statue.⁷ Yet, her obstructive inclination to have her

way and her undeniable tenacity, instead of serving as a detriment, made her a shrewd businesswoman whose economies fostered enormous bargaining skills (fig. 4). Further, her ability to market high-quality estate casts of her late husband's sculpture furnished her with a steady personal income that fueled her very comfortable lifestyle in Cornish and in Coconut Grove, Florida, for the remainder of her days.

Augusta did not abandon painting and drawing. Her artistic aspirations, which never could be characterized as burning, were subsumed to marriage and motherhood and to supporting Augustus's ambitions. Her understanding and promotion of her husband's position in American art were profoundly focused and far sighted. If her modus operandi was heavy handed, it was effective; and, gender norms and expectations being what they were, had she been a man, the manner in which she ensured Saint-Gaudens's legacy would have been considered remarkably successful.

Fig. 4 Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens, ca. 1890. Photograph by George C. Cox.

NOTES

1. Augustus Saint-Gaudens to Rose Nichols, October 8, 1898 (transcription by B. June Hutchinson), Nichols Family Papers, box 2, unnumbered folder, Nichols House Museum, Boston, MA.
2. Harvard College student records, Undergraduates, Classes of 1887–1909, UAIH 15.75.10 mf, box 2, Harvard University Archives. Also see letters (in Augusta’s hand, signed by Augustus) from Augustus Saint-Gaudens to Dean Le Baron Russell Briggs, December 5, 1899; April 19, 1900; and October 1, 1900, in Records of the Dean of Harvard College, 1889–1995, “S” folder, 1899–1901, UAIH 5.33, box 215, Harvard University Archives; and letters from Dean Briggs to Arthur Nichols, July 24, 1900, and July 28, 1900, correspondence to Arthur H. Nichols, box 2, folder 39, Emerson and Nichols Families Papers, State Library of Massachusetts Special Collections.
3. “Louis” refers to the sculptor’s younger brother, Louis St. Gaudens (1854–1913), who preferred an alternate spelling of the family surname to distinguish himself from his brother. Elizabeth Fisher Homer Nichols to Arthur Nichols, [October 13, 1906], A-170, box 3, folder 47, Nichols-Shurtleff Family Papers, 1780–1953, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University. The date of October 13, added in a different hand, is presumably inaccurate, as the letter begins, “Wed. Evening”; October 13 was a Saturday.
4. Kathryn Greenthal, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master Sculptor* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), 166.
5. Willa Cather to Rose Nichols, August 29, 1908, Nichols Family Papers, box 2, folder 10, Nichols House Museum, Boston, MA. See related correspondence surrounding the publication of Augustus Saint-Gaudens’s letters in *McClure’s Magazine*, October and November 1908, edited by Rose Nichols, in Nichols Family Papers, box 2, folders 8, 9, 10, and 20, Nichols House Museum.
6. Thayer Tolles, “The Power of Profile: Ellen Emmett Rand and Augustus Saint-Gaudens,” in *Ellen Emmet Rand: Gender, Art, and Business*, ed. Alexis L. Boylan (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, forthcoming 2019).
7. See Harold Holzer, *Monument Man: The Life & Art of Daniel Chester French* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2019), 266, 353.

AUGUSTA HOMER SAINT-GAUDENS: STEPPING OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Henry J. Duffy

The story of Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens (1848–1926) is that of the evolution of a timid, small-town girl into an accomplished, independent woman of the world (fig. 5). Born to an established Colonial-era family and challenged by life’s adversity, Augusta has remained in the shadow of her husband, the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848–1907).¹ But a closer look reveals a woman who grew in personal strength, testing societal limits. Her acute business sense served her well, and her devotion to preserving her husband’s legacy contributed largely to our own knowledge of his art today.

Before the American Revolution, the Homer family settled in Roxbury, Massachusetts (fig. 6), set between the Atlantic Ocean and the inner waterways of Boston Harbor. It was a bucolic small town where the Homers maintained a tight social bond with the leading mercantile families.² Augusta grew up in comfort amid open fields and orchards whose spring blossoms drew visitors from the crowded streets of Boston. The certainty of tradition and close family and friends provided a lifelong anchor to the quiet young woman whose future seemed assured.³



Fig. 5 Augusta Homer, ca. early 1860s.



Fig. 6 The Homer family house, Roxbury, Massachusetts.



Sent to Europe by 1872 to finish her education, she took private painting lessons in Rome and visited the sites with her sister Eugenie (1854–1940). As a painter she progressed from an amateur copyist of Old Masters to an assured artist who captured the likenesses of friends and of the Italian peasants who worked as models in the art studios of Rome. Of the thirty paintings known to be by Augusta, the majority are portraits (figs. 7–12). A smaller number are landscapes (figs. 13–14), mostly of the places she visited, painted with a looser, softer stroke. She was stylistically conservative, seeming not to be interested in pushing her artistic expression beyond conventional taste.



Figs. 7–14 Paintings by Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens.

Left, top: *Copy of a Portrait of Queen Marie Antoinette by Marie-Louise-Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun (1755–1842), 1873. Oil on canvas, 31 x 23 in. SAGA 791; Copy of Beatrice Cenci by Guido Reni (Elizabetta Sirani), n.d. Oil on canvas, 27 x 21 in. SAGA 1563; Tyrolean Hunter, 1873. Oil on canvas, 19 x 15½ in. SAGA 1564.*

Left, bottom: Three portraits of Italian peasants, ca. 1873–75. Each oil on canvas, SAGA 4769, 1572, 4773.

Right: *Village and Castle of La Roche, Belgium, n.d. Oil on canvas, 11 x 10½ in. SAGA 4762; Landscape in Europe, n.d. Oil on canvas, 14½ x 11 in. SAGA 4765.*



Fig. 15 Augusta Homer in Rome, 1874.

Augusta Homer was striking in appearance, with dark auburn hair. Her clear blue eyes were her main feature—startling in their color and in the intensity of her gaze (fig. 15). Young men took notice; one ardent admirer, fellow American Frank Millet (1848–1912), would go on to greatness as a war correspondent and painter of renown, and finally would perish as a victim of the Titanic. But it was at a Christmas party in 1873 at the Palazzo Barberini, in the apartment of American sculptor William Wetmore Story, that she met the young man who would play an inescapable part in her life and shift the course of what had been expected for her. Augustus Saint-Gaudens belonged to the artisan class, but they had enough in common to draw them together. Augusta understood their class differences, but his cosmopolitan character—with an Irish birth and a French last name—made it seem acceptable. He was charming, funny, smart, and very talented as an artist. He was someone whose confidence seemed to be leading him to a great future, and he wanted her to make that journey with him.

Their attraction was such that Augusta’s nervous parents back in the United States withdrew her and Eugenie from Rome and sent them to the Azores, hoping their daughter’s ardor would cool. After a short time, Augusta expressed her strong desire to return to Rome, and from then on she and the man with virtually the same first name were inseparable. Their courtship was brief, with walks to the outlying areas of Rome, picnics, and attendance at social and cultural events. In February 1874,

on a starlit night fragrant with pine, they walked out the Appian Way, and, sitting amid the crumbling ruins of a long-past Empire, he proposed.

The couple were married in Roxbury on June 4, 1877, and then moved to Paris, where they set up house near the Luxembourg Gardens (fig. 16).⁴ He was working on an important commission for the monument to Admiral David Glasgow Farragut (1877–80, Madison Square Park, New York), and she was active as a partner in their marriage and in his career. From the start, she advised him on business and assisted him in the studio.⁵ While her aptitude for business was probably inherent, it must have been encouraged by her childhood experience when catastrophic reversals pushed her once-successful father, Thomas Homer (1813–1880), to the brink of financial insolvency. Picking up the threads, Augusta and her siblings had tried to carry on. In her new marriage, it appears that she saw a true partnership in all matters. She encouraged Augustus in etiquette as well, helping to ease his sometimes-awkward move into the social circles that would provide commissions for his art. As newlyweds, they worked together in the studio, Augusta contributing to the details of Admiral Farragut’s clothing. It was the only time she picked up sculpture tools and helped in the physical process of creating one of her husband’s monuments. In the flush of new romance, he called her “Darling Dimply,” and she called him “My Dear Husband.”⁶



Fig. 16 Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens, *Apartment in Paris*, ca. 1877–80. Oil on canvas, 27½ x 24 in. SAGA 3.



Fig. 17 Augusta Saint-Gaudens with Homer Saint-Gaudens, 1881.



Fig. 18 Augusta Saint-Gaudens with Homer Saint-Gaudens, 1884.

As Augustus's career blossomed, the couple found themselves expecting a child. Following tradition, Augusta returned to her parents' house in Roxbury to enter a long confinement. He settled matters in Europe and returned to establish their household and his career in New York. She fussed about where they would live, sending him detailed advice on how to find the right home near the right shops. She specified which direction the rooms should face and what she wanted to have provided from a local caterer for meals.⁷

The birth of their son, Homer (1880–1958), on September 29, 1880, provided Augusta with a new focus for her life (figs. 17–18). With the demands of motherhood, she largely gave up painting, which had brought her joy and a means of personal expression. Two unfinished portraits of Homer exist (fig. 19), along with some still lifes and a few landscapes. Her happiness in these years is expressed in a letter to her husband written about a month after Homer's birth: "I have a good husband that I love with all my heart. . . . I have a beautiful blessing in our baby. . . . [W]hen we are all together it seems as if my cup of happiness would be very much full."⁸ In the years following Homer's birth, the couple lived demanding lives. Augustus's career exploded, taking up much of his available time. Augusta was taken up with home and child, and began to travel, initially as an attempt to lessen the effects of a ringing in the ear that had grown worse with time.

In the early 1890s, the routine of work and family took a dramatic turn. Augusta learned of her husband's intimate relationship with one of his models, Davida Clark, with whom he had fathered a child, Louis Clark (b. 1889). The lives of the married couple, once so passionate, now read like a Greek drama. They found it better to live apart.⁹ While she seems to have spent more time traveling, he reacted by throwing himself into the demands of a flourishing career. Through the years of pain that followed, their frequent letters, always civil, might show the strain, but never stopped coming. In one of the most honest exchanges, they discuss their faults and share their feelings about each other. The complexity of the relationship is evident, as is the lingering affection. Augusta even confided in Augustus when her health was poor. In her pain she wrote that she was no good to anyone, and he quickly admonished her with a rebuttal.¹⁰

Travel became a balm for Augusta's strained nerves. Uncomfortable at home, and increasingly deaf, she grew more independent rather than withdrawing. Leaving the comfort of Europe and the East Coast, Augusta began to explore the wider world. From the frozen edge of the Arctic Circle to the searing sands of the Sahara, as the distance increased, her writing became confident and beautifully descriptive.¹¹ She traveled with one of her sisters, her mother, and sometimes with Homer (figs. 20–21). It appears from her annotated travel guides that



Fig. 19 Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens, *Homer Saint-Gaudens*, ca. 1885. Oil on canvas, 24 x 18 in. SAGA 1575.



Fig. 20 Augusta Saint-Gaudens, Homer Saint-Gaudens, and Augusta's mother, Mary Homer, early 1890s.



Fig. 21 Augusta Saint-Gaudens and Homer Saint-Gaudens at Bad Schwalbach, Germany.

she used the books to break away from the bonds of home, following the printed guidance to travel by ship and train, or by less conventional forms of transport—horseback, even camels in the Sahara.¹² Off the coast of Norway, she discovered that the cold air and rush of water against the boat lessened the sensation of ringing in her ears. Taking the advice of Baedeker's guide to Norway, she boarded a steamer in Bergen for the journey northward. On July 4, 1892, she reached the North Cape, at the gate of the Arctic Circle, beyond which lay the gray waters and floating icebergs of the polar ice cap. On land, she visited the Lapps and watched them herd reindeer. Along the coast, the ship stopped to visit a natural feature called Torghatten (the "Hole in the Hat"), a mountain pierced by an opening in the center. The hike up the mountain proved daunting, but she reported to Augustus, "I was the last to get there still I managed but the air was like so much champagne."¹³

A few years later, in November 1903, Augusta was in Spain, and at Gibraltar boarded a ship that crossed the strait to North Africa. In Tunis she ventured out into the surrounding countryside and entered the Cavern of Hercules. Her party

"rode thirty miles into the country far away from civilization with the great Atlantic rollers booming on one side of us. . . . [W]e came to some enormous boulders and there lying down were four camels and nearby two men dressed as in the time of Christ."¹⁴ She was also struck by the North African women she saw swathed from head to toe. Augusta explored Europe and the Middle East, and later the American Southwest and the California coast. Augustus and Augusta still maintained their New York townhouse, and would meet there and in Cornish, New Hampshire, where they spent summers from 1885 to 1897 among fellow artists, including Thomas Wilmer Dewing (fig. 22). She hoped they would visit Mexico together. At a time when unaccompanied women rarely ventured far, she showed remarkable confidence to push away from the strict social conventions of her youth.

By the turn of the century, Augusta relaxed the reserve she had shown early in her marriage, allowing herself to socialize more. The tinnitus and encroaching deafness that afflicted her had made social interaction awkward and difficult for her, but she adjusted better to it with time. Her letters to Augustus from Europe report encounters with a French aristocrat and famous authors. In 1904 she was the honored guest at a salon in Paris presented by Sara Tyson Hallowell (1846–1924), an American heiress and curator of art exhibitions credited as one of the people who introduced French Impressionism to the United States.¹⁵

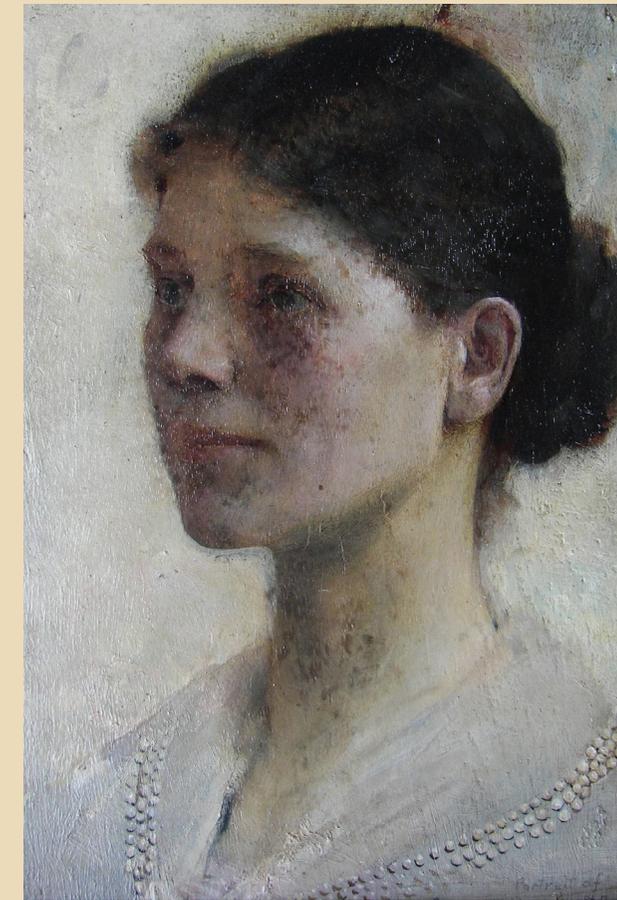
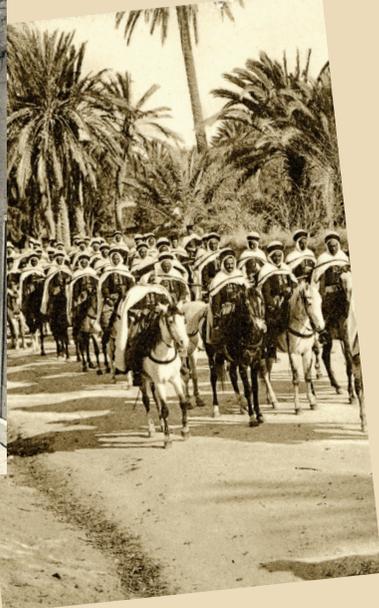
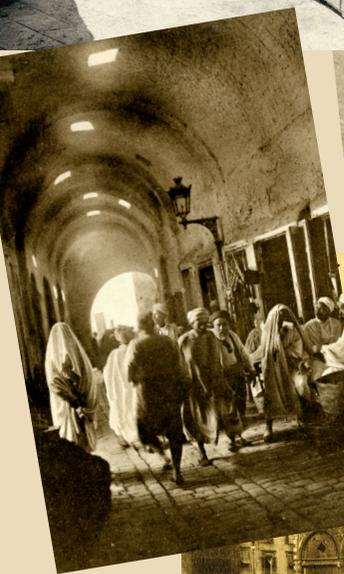


Fig. 22 Thomas Wilmer Dewing, *Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens*, 1886, oil on canvas, 12 x 10½ in. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Augustus Saint-Gaudens II, SAGA 1607.

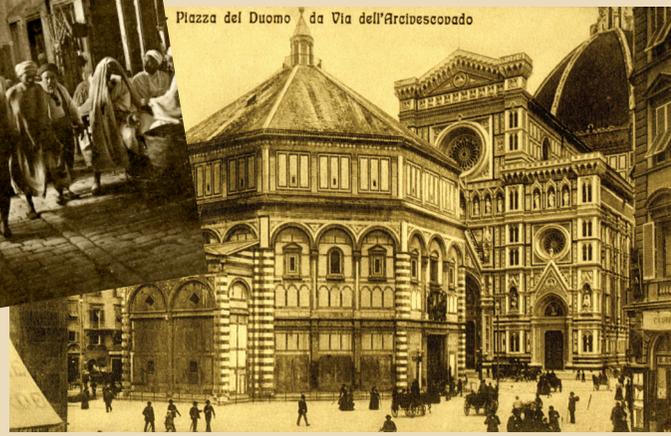


Through all this, Augusta never stopped writing to her husband (figs. 23-26). In return, he expressed joy in her successes, and pain about their lingering sadness.

When Augustus was diagnosed with cancer in 1900, the couple forgot their differences and came back together. Returning from Europe, where Augustus had achieved great success in the Salon of 1898 and the Exposition Universelle of 1900, they settled in Cornish, which became their permanent home. The situation of the mistress was settled—largely on Augusta’s terms—and she once again took up the role of protector and companion. In 1905 they took a trip to Spain together, the first time in years that they had traveled as a couple (figs. 27-28). In June 1905, as a celebration of their twenty years in Cornish, they were honored by the local community of artists with a mock-classical play called *AMasque*

of ‘Ours’: The Gods and the Golden Bowl. At the end of the performance, Augustus’s fellow artists presented him with a brass bowl to thank him for all he had achieved, and he was delighted to see that Augusta’s name was inscribed on it along with his own.

As his life ebbed away, she shielded him from pain and difficulty as she could. Upon his death on August 3, 1907, she was stricken by grief. At the private funeral in the studio



Figs. 23–26 Postcards from Augusta to Augustus Saint-Gaudens sent during her travels in Europe and North Africa.

in Cornish, Augustus’s ashes were placed in a ceramic vase made by his younger brother, Louis St. Gaudens (1854–1913), on a cloth embroidered by Augusta, with a wreath made and presented by members of his studio. She stood all in black, expressionless and somber.

While Augusta’s friends heralded her heroism in remaining true to a man they felt had deserved little consideration, she began to settle into life, alone and independent (figs. 29–30).¹⁶ Her grief is expressed in her letters. It was genuine, as she mourned the loss of a love that, despite the strain, had never ceased. This underlying emotion drove her to stay focused on the business of shaping and preserving her husband’s legacy. The inability of Augustus’s brother, a sculptor in his own right, to take over the management of the studio thrust that responsibility onto Augusta’s shoulders—a task she quickly embraced as she sought to minimize the upheaval brought about by the master’s death. Augusta moved assuredly to complete unfinished work on monuments to Marcus A. Hanna, Christopher Lyman Magee, Phillips Brooks, and George F. Baker, as well as the Albright caryatids, found new employment for the studio assistants (even housing some in hotels briefly), and settled into a successful business producing bronze reductions of her late husband’s principal sculptures. This casting practice



Fig. 27 Augusta and Augustus Saint-Gaudens aboard ship during their trip to Spain, 1905.

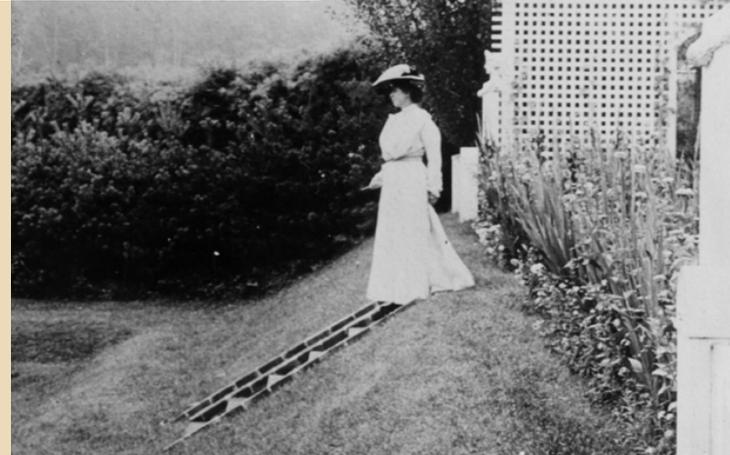


Fig. 28 Augusta and Augustus Saint-Gaudens in Europe.



Fig. 29 Augusta Saint-Gaudens with a prototype for the covered walkway at Cornish, ca. 1905. Photograph by De Witt Clinton Ward. SAGA 5702.

Fig. 30 Augusta Saint-Gaudens in the garden in Cornish, ca. 1905.



became a lifeblood for her financially, and she collaborated closely with studio assistants Elsie Ward (1871–1923), Henry Hering (1874–1949), and Gäetan Ardisson (1856–1926) to render these works, as closely as possible, according to her husband’s specifications. The process of reproducing these pieces followed the pattern established during Augustus Saint-Gaudens’s life, when reductions were not simply mechanically reproduced, but were reworked in the studio by the sculptor’s assistants. After her husband’s death, Augusta relied on the studio to continue producing pieces of the same quality established by her husband. Letters in

the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park collection show that she asked Ward and others to compare alternative casts to determine the right one. She carefully marked these works with her name and copyright to distinguish them from lifetime casts (fig. 31).¹⁷

Among the many memorials to Augustus Saint-Gaudens that occurred after his death was an important retrospective exhibition organized by sculptor Daniel Chester French (1850–1931) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 32). Augusta played a part in that project. The effort to assemble the most complete representation possible of her husband’s sculpture probably codified in her mind the idea of finding a permanent home for the work after the exhibition. During the months of preparation, Augusta did her best to give voice to what she understood to be her husband’s wishes regarding the presentation of his work. When she mentioned that he disliked displaying plaster casts, it involved the museum committee in delicate negotiations, as the exhibition was to be made up largely of plaster works alongside loans of bronze sculptures from private collections.

Fig. 31 Detail, Augusta Saint-Gaudens’s copyright mark on Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Abraham Lincoln: The Man (Standing Lincoln)*, 1884–87; reduced 1910, cast 1911. Bronze. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Fig. 32 *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, Hall of Sculpture, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, view looking south, 1908.





Fig. 33 The Saint-Gaudens house in Coconut Grove, Florida, ca. 1924. Gift of Abigail B. Homer, SAGA 7074.

That and other quality-related issues were resolved, and the exhibition of 154 sculptures in the museum's Great Hall was a success when it opened in March 1908, before moving on to the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, in December of that year. Subsequent venues included the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the John Herron Art Institute, Indianapolis, all opening in 1909.

In their later years, Augustus and Augusta Saint-Gaudens had been enticed to spend winters in Florida, and she built a substantial house in Coconut Grove (fig. 33-34). After Augustus died, Augusta continued to spend winters there, where she became the doyenne of society, opening the social season with a drive down the main street in her open Pierce Arrow with the family crest painted on the side (fig. 35).¹⁸ Through the early twentieth century, she continued to manage the studio and to travel, always with her husband's legacy in mind.¹⁹ As time caught up with her, she conceived the idea of creating a living memorial to him in Cornish.

First mentioned in Augusta's will in 1917, but not established until 1919, the Saint-Gaudens Memorial is a private foundation whose purpose is to retain the home and studio in New Hampshire where he spent his last years, and to exhibit and interpret his art to a wide audience.²⁰ From the start Augusta was clear in intent, with a list of

trustees already chosen and details of what would happen on the property described in her will.²¹ The buildings were to be open to the public and the property used "for the education of the public and sculptors." Early on, she considered opening a school with artists living and working on the property, but the expense and administrative burden seemed prohibitive. Nonetheless, the importance of this legacy has lasted to the present. Begun out of love, the Memorial today has developed into an organization devoted to preserving the memory of Augustus Saint-Gaudens and to fostering the arts and culture generally. Finding ways to join contemporary art with the spirit of the past has kept the artist's name alive and honors the dedication of a remarkable woman whose personal growth may yet be the greatest legacy of all.

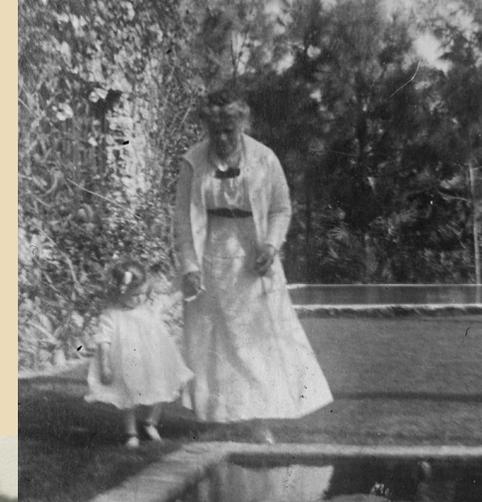


Fig. 34 Augusta Saint-Gaudens with her granddaughter Carlota in Florida, ca. 1919.



Fig. 35 Augusta Saint-Gaudens in her car in Florida, after 1907.

NOTES

1. Augusta Fisher Homer Saint-Gaudens has been side-stepped in the literature about her husband. The information about her life presented here is largely gleaned from the archives of the Saint-Gaudens family at Dartmouth College Library, Rauner Special Collections Library, which includes voluminous correspondence and some early diaries, as well as bills, financial records, and ephemera.
2. The extent of her friendships here is still being explored, but among her friends were Rose Hawthorne Lathrop (1851–1926), who became a Catholic “Servant of God” as Mother Mary Alphonsa, and Mabel Loomis Todd (1856–1932), who published the work of Emily Dickinson.
3. The Homers had a corner pew in the First Church in Roxbury. Augusta and her mother served as Communion aides in 1866. See Walter Eliot Thwing, *History of the First Church in Roxbury, 1630–1904* (Boston: Stanhope Press, 1908).
4. See David McCullough, *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), chapter twelve, 357–85; chapter fourteen, 425–52.
5. Augusta Saint-Gaudens to Augustus Saint-Gaudens, July 30, 1880, ML-4, box 28, folder 1, Augustus Saint-Gaudens Papers, Dartmouth College Library, Rauner Special Collections Library (hereafter, Saint-Gaudens Papers).
6. Augustus Saint-Gaudens to Augusta Saint-Gaudens, May 11, 1876, ML-4, box 28, folder 1, Saint-Gaudens Papers.
7. In the communication of the 1880s, especially around the time of Homer’s birth, one begins to see the intensity of her direction. Throughout the literature on Augustus and his career runs a thread of Augusta’s difficult personality. Both partners in the marriage seem to have been aware of this quality and tried, whether successfully or not, to make the best of it.
8. Augusta Saint-Gaudens to Augustus Saint-Gaudens, November 21, 1880, ML-4, box 28, folder 1, Saint-Gaudens Papers.
9. Divorce seems not to have entered their discussions—at least, there is never any hint of it in the correspondence. Her place in society and his Catholic upbringing may have shaped their decision to live parallel lives.
10. The shifting landscape of their relationship is evident in the letters. See ML-4, box 28, folders 11–15, Saint-Gaudens Papers, particularly an undated letter in folder 15.
11. See Augusta’s letters to Augustus from the 1890s, in ML-4, box 28, folder 2, Saint-Gaudens Papers.
12. The Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park collection includes several Baedeker’s travel guides, a number of them annotated by Augusta.
13. Augusta Saint-Gaudens to Augustus Saint-Gaudens, July 4, 1892, ML-4, box 28, folder 2, Saint-Gaudens Papers.
14. Augusta Saint-Gaudens to Augustus Saint-Gaudens, November 1903, ML-4, box 28, folder 6, Saint-Gaudens Papers. Augustus thanked her for this letter in a response dated November 30, writing that it was “all the pleasanter to me . . . that you seem to be in such good spirits.”
15. Untitled clipping from the *English and American Gazette*, January 1904, on file at the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park. Sara Hallowell appears to have been a lifelong friend of Augusta. At the salon in Augusta’s honor, society singer Charles Holman-Black sang opera

highlights, and the guest list included the great French sculptor Auguste Rodin, the Chicago lumber merchant and art collector Henry Harrison Getty, and his daughter, Princess Cantacuzène (Julia Dent Grant).

16. See ML-4, box 24, Saint-Gaudens Papers.
17. See Thayer Tolles, “The Puritan as Statuette,” in *In Homage to Worthy Ancestors: The Puritan / The Pilgrim* (Cornish, NH: Saint-Gaudens Memorial, 2011), 69–92.
18. In a telephone conversation with the author, in early spring 1998, Marjorie Stoneman Douglas clearly recalled that when she was a child, the season began with an announcement in the newspaper of Augusta Saint-Gaudens’s arrival.
19. For example, Queen Elena of Italy gave Augusta an audience in 1912 to thank her for donating of a set of miniature bronze casts of her husband’s portraits to the nation of Italy. The present location of the Saint-Gaudens reliefs is unknown.
20. See ML-4, box 23, Saint-Gaudens Papers. Previously published literature missed the 1917 reference.
21. The Memorial’s initial trustees, selected by Augusta and listed in her will, included Homer Saint-Gaudens, Herbert Adams, George Baxter Upham, Charles D. Norton, Glenn Brown, George A. Armour, James E. Fraser, and Philip H. Faulkner. Their names also appear in the Memorial’s charter, ML-4, box 23, Saint-Gaudens Papers.

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