



## **Warren Francis Snow (1869—1962)**

Pair:

*Bermuda Scene with Gibbs Lighthouse*

Oil on board

8 x 12 inches

Signed in lower left corner: W.F. Snow

Inscribed and dated on verso: Bermuda/1940

*Bermuda Beach with Cedar and House*

Oil on board

8 3/16 x 10 inches

Signed in lower left corner: W.F. Snow

Inscribed and dated on verso: Bermuda/1940

Warren Francis Snow was an itinerant painter whose oil canvases feature the many locales to which his travels took him. From snowy winter meadows in New England to sunny Bermuda beaches, Snow's paintings consistently reflect the natural beauty of his environs.

Snow was born in Brewster, Massachusetts in 1869. Census records suggest that Snow's early life remained rooted to his family. His father, Zoeth Snow, was a blacksmith and a farmer, and documentation indicates that Warren lived at home with his parents to help with his father's business, as well as dallying in other various jobs; indeed, Snow's occupation in the 1900 census is listed as "undertaker." Snow began to paint professionally sometime between 1900 and 1910. His family had moved to nearby Cohasset, Massachusetts by this time, where he opened an artist's studio. He later relocated his



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studio to Meredith, New Hampshire sometime before 1930, perhaps following his parents' deaths. The paintings that Snow produced from this time depict the bucolic New England countryside that surrounded him, capturing in paint the majestic mountains and valleys tinged with autumn leaves for which the region is famous to this day.



Warren Francis Snow, *Mt. Tecumseh, Pemigewasset Valley*, oil on paperboard, 17 x 36 inches.

Beginning in 1931, at the age of sixty-two, Snow began to make annual—and sometimes biannual—trips to the Caribbean islands. His first venture was to Bermuda, which would become his most visited destination until his death thirty years later. During this time, Snow produced numerous colorful paintings of the islands' beaches and towns, applying the same skill of thoughtfully capturing the spirit of his local landscapes that he perfected in New England to his new Caribbean surroundings. Snow's Bermuda paintings' success, both on the islands and on the mainland, prompted a local politician to claim that Snow "had done more to advertise Bermuda in the United States through his pictures than any other artist." Several of his canvasses were turned into printed reproductions and sold at the Yankee Store in Hamilton, Bermuda.

In this pair of works one can certainly see what prompted this statement. The viewer vicariously feels the warmth of the sun through Snow's bright, light colors, and is led to the



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water's edge by way of the broad street running through the center of the composition. By the time that Snow painted these paintings in 1940, he was well acquainted with the island and its offerings, an intimacy that is perceptible in this work and causes the viewer to feel welcome within the scene. The style is Impressionistic in tone, the colors and brushwork reminiscent of Camille Pissarro's pastoral scenes. Snow purposefully captures quiet moments—the streets are empty, and the only hint at movement comes from the swirling clouds—perhaps an attempt to find and record a moment of serenity amidst the turmoil of World War II. In the far distance of one of the works, perched atop the promontory of the mountain in the center of the canvas, one can just make out a tall building, depicted with a single miniscule brushstroke of gray paint. This tower is Gibbs Hill Lighthouse, one the world's first cast-iron lighthouses built in 1844. Situated in the very center of the composition, it is clear that Snow intended for this landmark to locate his scene as that on the southern tip of the island, looking in towards the Great Sound in which the lighthouse stands. The Royal Naval Dockyard, the British naval base in Bermuda, was also located in the Great Sound, and was very active in coordinating trans-Atlantic convoys during the war. These ships are absent from Snow's depiction of the sound—the only indication of boat activity being suggestions of white sails of small crafts in the distance—which further supports the theory that the artist wished to record a feeling of peace and quiet despite the onset of war.

Snow routinely showed with the Bermuda Art Association in their annual exhibitions and various festival shows, as well as other venues such as the "Gunpowder Cavern" Museum and Gallery in St. George. While New England remained his home base—passenger lists record his return to New York and Boston after Caribbean stays of varying durations (indeed, one trip to the US Virgin Islands was only 4 days)—Snow also laid roots in Bermuda, purchasing a 6-acre waterfront property in Perinchief's Bay in 1948. Snow's dedication to his travels and his painted recordings of them is impressive, particularly



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considering he did so throughout World War II when much travel was difficult or even restricted. Indeed, his canvasses from his travels during this time are not only snapshots that document the beauty and calm of the Caribbean Islands, but also serve as reassurance that these qualities can both exist and persist in the face of war.