



### **John H. B. Knowlton (1914 - 2013)**

John H. B. Knowlton was born in New York City in 1914. He attended Dartmouth College and continued on to graduate school, where he studied art history at the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University. He taught at Sarah Lawrence College before entering the Navy at the start of World War II. At the conclusion of the War, Knowlton returned to New York to continue his studies and complete his Ph.D. Though he wrote his dissertation on the graphic works of the French artist Gustave Doré (1832-1883), he would later specialize in Renaissance and Baroque art. While in New York, he met Joan Aldrich, who he married in 1948.

For their honeymoon, the couple spent a year in Italy where they absorbed themselves in the study of art. Upon their return to the United States in 1849, Knowlton began teaching as a visiting lecturer at Michigan State University. He would later teach at the University of Iowa and Finch College in New York, before joining the faculty of Connecticut College in 1967, becoming co-chairman of the art department in 1972. During his tenure as an art history professor at Connecticut College, he introduced film studies to the curriculum in 1974 and founded the Connecticut College Film Society. The film courses Knowlton developed served as the foundation for the College's current film studies program. Knowlton remained at Connecticut College until his retirement in 1983.



**John H.B. Knowlton. Harding's Beach, Chatham. 14 x 26 inches. Oil on canvas. Collection of Lyme Artist Association**

Knowlton's retirement allowed him to engage in his own artistic pursuits, and he devoted much of his time to painting the New England landscape near his Connecticut home and the family's summer



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house on Cape Cod. He was an artist member of the Lyme Art Association, as well as the Mystic Art Association, where he exhibited landscapes and seascapes executed in an Impressionist style, such as *Harding's Beach, Chatham*. Critics praised his use of color and expressive brushwork and admired the “bold spontaneity” of his artworks.<sup>1</sup>

Knowlton continued to travel widely throughout his retirement, returning to Europe on several occasions. He remained active in the Connecticut College community, and died at his home in Waterford, Connecticut in 2013 at the age of 99.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Burlingame, “Lyme Art’s landscapes cool viewers’ souls,” *The Day*, (New London, CT), Aug. 14, 1988.