



HAWTHORNE Fine Art

PETER BAUMGRAS (1827 - 1904)

A portrait and still life painter, Peter Baumgras was from Germany where he studied at the Dusseldorf Academy and the Royal Academy in Munich. He emigrated to the United States in 1853 and beginning 1857, settled for about fifteen years in Washington DC to work on the decoration for the U.S. Capitol Building. A member of the sizable German community in the city, Baumgras was one of the founders of the Washington DC Art Association, taught at Columbian University, now George Washington University, and painted portraits and still lives. Although mostly active as a portrait painter, "he is now more distinguished as Washington's finest master of still life, who created lovely, often quite simple flower and fruit paintings in the engaging botanical manner of the period". (Gerdts, Vol I, 348-349)

During the Civil War, he was a surgical draftsman, and after the war taught at the Naval Academy at West Point. In 1865, he painted a portrait of Abraham Lincoln.

From 1869 to 1877, he was on the West Coast, spending much time in California where he painted mining scenes and landscapes of Yosemite in addition to portraits and still lives.

Having traveled from the eastern to western United States by ship via the Isthmus of Panama, Peter Baumgras, in 1872, exhibited paintings of Latin America at the San Francisco Art Association. From 1872 to 1874, he was painting portraits in Portland, Oregon, where he had originally visited in the summer of 1873. In 1900, he was back in Washington DC but returned to Chicago shortly before his death.

Sources:

Peter Falk, *Who Was Who in American Art*

Edan Hughes, *Artists in California, 1786-1940*

William Gerdts, *Art Across America, Vols. I and III* / From AskArt.com