

GEORGE ELBERT BURR

(1857-1939)



THE ETCHED WORKS - A RETROSPECTIVE

GEORGE ELBERT BURR

(AMERICAN, 1857-1939)

“Gems of purest workmanship” was the description given to George Elbert Burr’s etchings in his 1939 obituary in the *New York Times*. At the age of 82, Burr had enjoyed a long and prolific career as an artist and earned an international reputation as a master of copperplate etching. Although he was a broadly talented draftsman who depicted a variety of subjects, he is best known for his exquisite landscapes of the vast desert and mountain regions of the American West. Employing a rich combination of drypoint and etching techniques, Burr rendered the trees, rocks, and cloudy skies that characterized his dramatic landscapes with a passionate intensity.

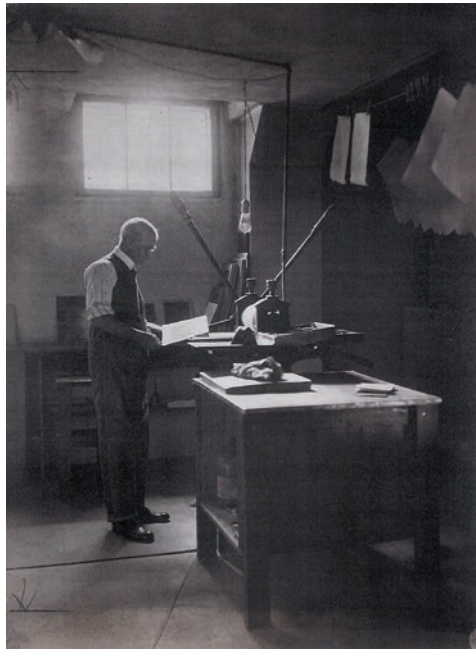


Interior of Burr's studio, Phoenix.

George Elbert Burr was born in 1857 in Monroe Falls, Ohio. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago for one winter, his only formal artistic training. Nevertheless, he enjoyed early success as a commercial artist, providing illustrations for *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, *The Observer*, *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, and *The Cosmopolitan*. In 1892 he began a four-year project illustrating a catalog of Heber R. Bishop's collection of jade antiquities for the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. This project, which involved producing etchings of over a thousand artifacts, paid well enough for Burr to embark on an extended tour of Europe with his wife upon its completion. Over the next five years, as they traveled in Italy, Germany, and the British Isles, Burr amassed sketches and watercolors that would provide the source material for his copperplate etchings of European scenes.

A few years after his return to the United States, an attack of the flu prompted Burr to move to Denver for the benefit of his health. It was there that he began to concentrate on the work that made him famous. During summers spent in a cabin studio in a steep wooded canyon with panoramic views of the Rocky Mountains, Burr diligently translated his surroundings into masterful etchings that synthesized the wild ruggedness of his subjects with the patient precision of a miniaturist. In 1924 the artist settled in Phoenix, where he would remain for the rest of his life. This change of scenery gave him the opportunity to round out his oeuvre of Western landscapes with expansive views of the Sonoran and Mojave deserts.

Today George Elbert Burr is remembered as one of the finest of the early 20th century American etchers, and is without parallel in the genre of western landscape. His prints are in a number of prominent collections including the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, the British Museum, the French National Print Collection, Luxembourg Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum, Berlin Museum, the New York Public Library and the Congressional Library in Washington, D.C.



Burr at his etching press, 1919.

The Antique Print Department at Davidson Galleries is proud to present an exhibition of etchings by George Elbert Burr. This comprehensive retrospective, which includes important works from every stage of Burr's career, was made possible by the participation of the family of Irving Burr, cousin and friend of the artist.

Information About Available Works

The following is a list of works by George Elbert Burr currently available through Davidson Galleries. The catalog numbers in the descriptions refer to Louise Combes Seeber's *George Elbert Burr (1859-1939): Catalogue Raisonné and Guide to the Etched Works*.

Although Burr seldom numbered his editions, he occasionally specifies edition sizes of 40 to 75, and it is generally accepted that the number of impressions of Burr's other subjects are less than 100. There are no known posthumous impressions in circulation, as "[Burr] and his wife scrupulously destroyed all copper plates with the exception of a few that were given to friends as keepsakes" (Seeber 88).

Except for a few instances of a date accompanying the monogram in a plate, Burr kept no record of when his etchings were completed, and dates are all but absent from Seeber's chronology. With some exceptions, the Colorado landscapes were executed between 1906 and 1924 at the artist's cabin studio near Denver, and most of the desert landscapes date from 1924-1939, when the artist was living in Arizona. Burr's etchings of European scenes were done in the studio from sketches taken between 1896 and 1901, the period when the artist and his wife lived abroad.

Larger images are available upon request. Please contact the gallery at 206.624.6700, email emily@dauidsongalleries.com, or visit us at www.dauidsongalleries.com to confirm prices and availability.



1. *Home of the Winds*. Etching. Signed and titled in pencil. Trial proof, final state. S. 132. 5-1/2 x 6-7/8 in. [28799c]

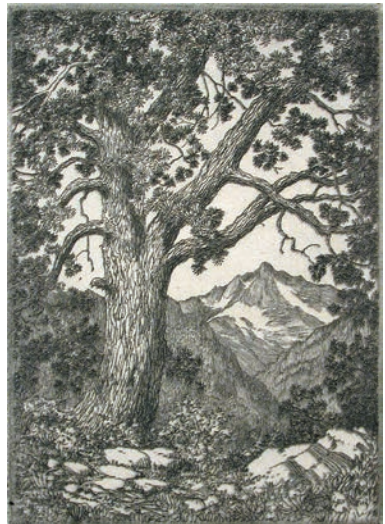
COLORADO AND THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS



2. *Timberline Pine*. Etching. Signed. S. 133. 5-3/8 x 6-7/8 in. [28800c]



3. *Evening*. Etching and aquatint. Signed. S. 124. 11-3/4 x 9-7/8 in. [28798c]



4. *Moraine Park, Colorado*. Etching. Signed. S. 181. 5 x 3-1/2 in. [28944c]



5. *Sentinel Pine*. Etching and drypoint, 1916.
Signed. Trial proof, final state. S. 135.
10 x 6-7/8 in. [28802c]

“I feel each thing in a different method. If I think of a deep toned evening cloud with full rich tones, I only see it as an aquatint. If the chief charm is form, then line—as simple as possible—seems the best way to express it. Some very rich old tree full of blacks I only think can be rendered by cutting deep slashes with a sharp dry point. Some very delicate distance or fleecy cloud, I would render with lines barely scratched on the copper with a fine sewing needle. A subject that has action, movement, or that I want to fix on the copper in a few minutes in the heat of excitement, I would do with a pencil on soft ground. To me, the etched line for careful drawing, the drypoint for character, and the aquatint for subtle poetic effects; while for shorthand expression of a sudden emotion, soft ground seems the best I know.”

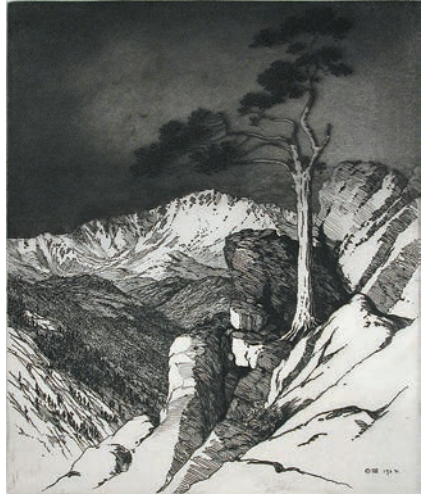
- George Elbert Burr



6. *Old Cedars and Spanish Peaks*. Etching, c. 1922. Signed. Ed. 50. S. 227. 9-15/16 x 11-7/8 in. [28804c]



7. *Bear Creek Canyon - Denver, Colorado*. Etching, 1922. Signed. S. 229 11-13/16 x 9-13/16 in. [28844c]



8. *Pikes Peak*. Etching, aquatint and drypoint, 1922. Signed. S. 226 11-3/4 x 9-7/8 in. [28841c]



9. *Timberline Storm*. Soft ground etching, aquatint, drypoint, 1922. Signed. S. 228. 9-13/16 x 11-15/16 in. [28805c]



10. *Woods in Winter.* Drypoint. Signed. S. 297.
9-3/4 x 7-7/8 in. [28885c]



11. *In Estes Park, Colorado.* Etching. Signed.
S. 276. 10 x 7-7/8 in. [28883c]



12. *Misty Moonlight - Estes Park.* Aquatint and soft ground etching. Signed. Edition 75. S. 280.
9-3/4 x 6-3/4 in. [28815c]



13. *Oaks in Winter.* Drypoint. Signed. S. 271.
9-1/4 x 6-3/4 in. [28814c]



14. *Old Pine, Estes Park, Colorado.* Etching and drypoint, c. 1922. S. 230.
11-7/8 x 9-7/8 in. [28884c]



15. *The Road to Bear Lake, Estes Park, Colorado.*
Etching and drypoint. Signed. S. 327.
9-7/8 x 7-3/4 in. [28828c]

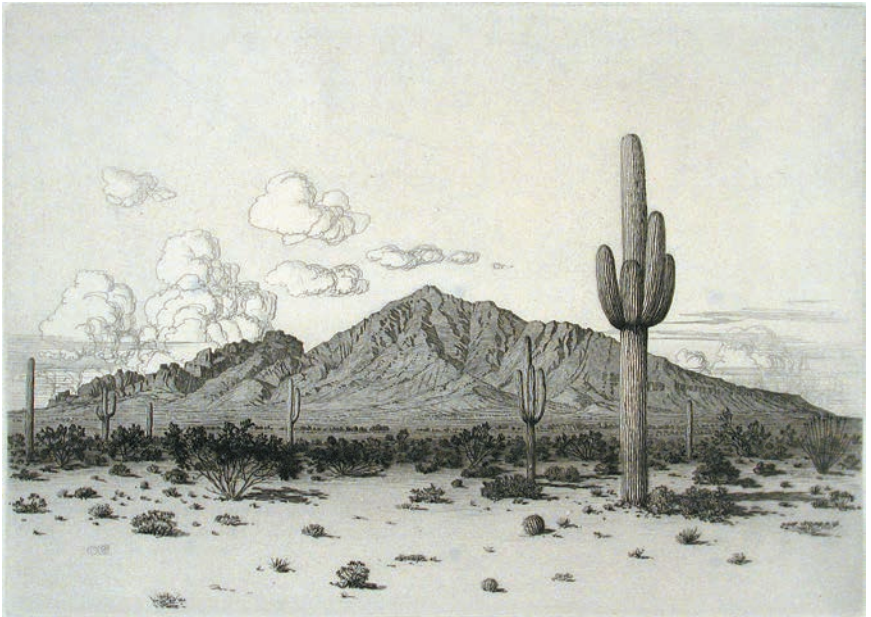


16. *Long's Peak - Estes Park - Colorado.*
Etching and drypoint, 1928. Signed. S. 328.
9-3/4 x 7-5/8 in. [28829c]

ARIZONA AND THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST



17. *Arizona Canal*. Etching and drypoint. Signed. S. 254. 5-7/8 x 8-13/16 in. [28810c]



18. *Camelback Mountain, Arizona*. Etching. Signed. S. 255. 7 x 9-7/8 inches [28811c]



19. *Summer Cloud, Apache Trail, Arizona*. Aquatint and drypoint. Signed. S. 265. 7-3/4 x 9-3/4 in. [28813c]



20. *The Little Canyon - Arizona*. Etching and drypoint. Signed. S. 257. 5-7/8 x 4-3/8 in. [28854c]



21. *Indian Homes - Verde River - Arizona*. Etching in sepia. Signed. 4-3/4 x 6-7/8 in. [28809c]



22. *Evening - Painted Desert - Arizona*. Drypoint. Signed. S. 269. 4-7/8 x 6-15/16 in. [28856c]



23. *Storm in Painted Desert, Arizona*. Drypoint, 1927. Signed. S. 258. 4-3/8 x 5-7/8 in. [28812c]



24. *Old Cedar - Ash Fork, Arizona*. Drypoint. Signed. S. 317. 9-7/8 x 11-15/16 in. [28849c]



25. *Cucumber Cactus - Arizona*. Etching and drypoint. Signed. S. 291. 6-15/16 x 4-15/16 in. [28848c]



26. *Ocotillo - Arizona*. Drypoint. Signed. S. 289. 7-7/8 x 4-7/8 in. [28818c]



27. *Evening, Navaho Country, Arizona*. Etching and aquatint. Signed. S. 293. 9-3/4 x 11-3/4 in. [28820c]



28. *Barrel Cactus, Arizona*. Drypoint. Signed. S. 288. 6-7/8 x 4-3/4 in. [28817c]



29. *Nest of Desert Wren, Arizona*. Aquatint and drypoint. Signed. S. 290. 7-7/8 x 4-15/16 in. [28819c]



31. *Sketch on the Apache Trail, Arizona*. Etching and drypoint. Signed. S. 298. 6-13/16 x 4-5/8 in. [28822c]



30. *Hassayampa River, Arizona*. Etching and drypoint. Signed. Notated "*Drink of this water, and you will never own a dollar; tell the truth, or leave Arizona.*" S. 299. 4-3/4 x 6-3/4 in. [28823c]



32. *Mesa Encantada - New Mexico*. Etching and drypoint. Signed. S. 320. 4-5/8 x 8 in. [28850c]



33. *Paradise Valley, Arizona.*
Etching and drypoint.
Signed. S. 319.
4-15/16 x 7-3/4 in.
[28824c]



34. *Desert Twilight.*
Etching and drypoint
in blue-black. Signed. S. 318.
4-3/4 x 6-3/4 in.
[28842c]



35. *Road to Navaho Reservation, Arizona.*
Etching. Signed. S. 294. 9-3/4 x 7-7/8 in. [28821c]



36. *Near Palm Springs.* Drypoint. Signed.
S. 321. 6-3/4 x 4-15/16 in. [28847c]

37. *The Land of Mystery*
- The Desert.
 Aquatint and drypoint.
 Signed. S. 324.
 6-3/4 x 9-1/2 in.
 [28826c]



38. *Superstition Mountain,*
Apache Trail, Arizona.
 Etching. S. 250.
 6-1/8 x 9-3/4 in.
 [28865c]



39. *Verde River, Apache*
Indian Reservation
Arizona. Etching and
 drypoint. Signed. S. 322.
 7-13/16 x 9-7/8 in.
 [28825c]





40. *Desert Monuments - Arizona.*
Etching, aquatint and drypoint.
Signed. S. 335. 9-3/4 x 11-3/4 in.
[28853]



41. *Indian Homes*
- Apache River Arizona.
Drypoint. Signed. S. 294.
7-3/4 x 9-7/8 in.
[28860]



42. *Road to Paradise Valley*
- Arizona. Etching. Signed.
S. 253. 5 x 7-1/4 in.
[28864c]



43. *Superstition Mountains, Apache Trail, Night - Arizona*. Etching and aquatint. Signed. S. 325. 11-7/8 x 9-7/8 in. [28827c]

“I always try to get my emotion on the copper at once, for an etching without conveying something of the artist’s joy and feeling for his subject becomes but a dry academic drawing of a place or thing.”

- George Elbert Burr



44. *New Moon and Evening Star - Arizona.*
Etching, aquatint and drypoint. Signed. S. 329.
9-7/8 x 7-3/4 in. [28836c]



45. *Grand Canyon, Arizona (Plate 3).*
Etching, c. 1930. Signed. S. 330.
9-11/16 x 7-5/8 in. [28831c]



46. *San Francisco Mountains, Arizona.* Etching, aquatint and drypoint.
Unsigned proof. Monogram in plate. S. 339. 7-13/16 x 9-11/16 in. [28867c]

EUROPEAN SCENES



47. *Florence from Monte Oliveto*. Etching, 1931.
Signed. S. 242. 11-3/4 x 9-3/4 in. [28870c]



48. *Old Fountain - Taormina, Sicily*. Etching.
Signed. S. 126. 9-5/8 x 7-3/8 in. [28845c]



49. *Temple of the Sibyl, Tivoli*. Drypoint. Signed.
S. 86. 9-7/8 x 6-7/8 in. [28869c]



50. *Capri from Sorrento, Italy*. Etching and
aquatint. Signed. S. 245. 10 x 6-3/4 in. [28808c]



51. *From French Academy, Rome*. Etching and drypoint. Signed. S. 247. 4-13/16 x 7-7/8 in. [28878c]



52. *Old Olive and Monte Carlo*. Drypoint. Signed. S. 249. 9-7/8 x 11-7/8 in. [28873c]

53. *Ventimiglia, Italy.* Etching and drypoint.
Signed. S. 240.
6-15/16 x 9-3/4 in.
[28807c]



55. *In a Village Near Mentone.* Watercolor.
Signed. 21-1/4 x 10 in. [28887c]



54. *From Via Appia, Rome.* Etching and drypoint.
Signed. S. 248. 6 x 8-3/4 in. [28598]



56. *Street in San Remo, Italy.* Etching and aquatint.
Signed. S. 76. 9-7/8 x 6-7/8 in. [28881c]



57. *Walpurgis Chapel, Nürnberg*. Etching. Signed. S. 128. 7 x 5-1/2 in. [28868c]



58. *Misty Day - Paul's Wharf, London*. Etching. Signed. S. 276. 10 x 7-7/8 in. [28880c]



59. *Venice - After Storm*. Etching, aquatint and drypoint. Signed. Ed. 23/75. S. 246. 9-7/8 x 11-13/16 in. [28834c]



60. *Fairy Glen, North Wales*. Drypoint. Signed. S. 72. 7-13/16 x 4-7/8 in. [28879c]



61. *Neuthor, Nürnberg*. Etching. Signed. Trial proof, final state. S. 127. 6-15/16 x 5-3/8 in. [28871c]



62. *High Street, Oxford*. Etching. Signed. S. 82. 9-3/4 x 11-3/4 in. [28876c]

DAVIDSON GALLERIES

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The Etched Works - A Retrospective



63. *Arizona Storm.* Etching and drypoint. Signed. Trial proof - first state. S. 256. 4-1/2 x 5-3/4 in. [28838c]

FRONT COVER IMAGE: 64. *The Edge of the Desert, Arizona.* Etching and drypoint, 1926. Signed and annotated in pencil. S. 284. 9-11/16 x 11-3/4 in. [28816c]

Price \$5.00