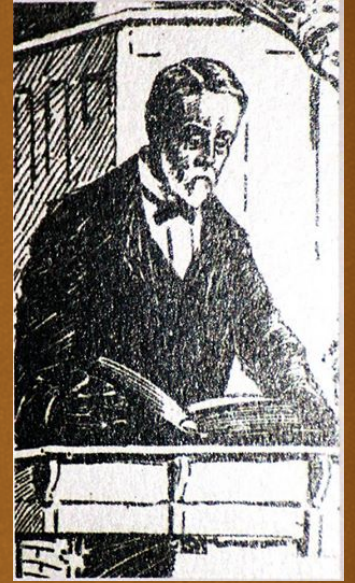


A Painter & a Pastor



*The Spiritual Arc
in William Keith's Later Art*

Swedenborgian Church, San Francisco

The “Four Seasons” Sanctuary Murals



Yosemite Valley, 1875



Elizabeth Emerson Keith

(married 1864; died 1882)



Detail from water color
sketch of his young wife,
Lizzie, by William Keith,
c. 1868

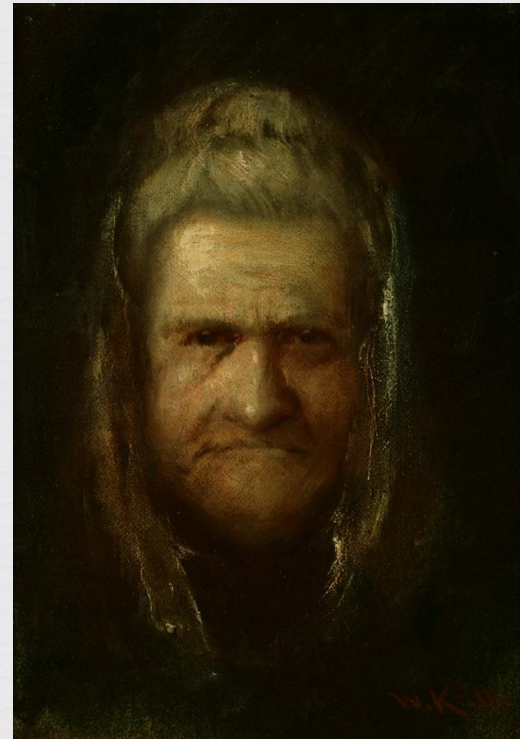
The Portraitist



Bavarian Girl, 1884



Margaret Miller, 1886



Beginnings of the New Style

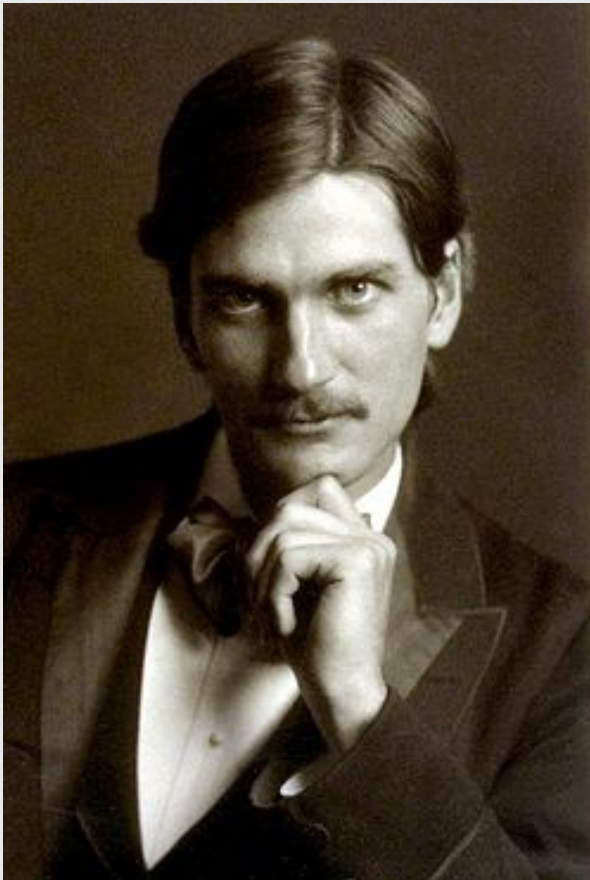


“Spring,” ca. 1885

“The Glory of the Heavens” (1891)



Charles Keeler (1871-1937), Author



Keeler, 1895

It was in Keith's studio that Keeler first met Worcester. He penned this impression:

"From the respect and deference with which Mr. Keith received him it was evident that he was no ordinary mortal ... It soon appeared that he exercised a powerful influence over Mr. Keith."

--Charles Keeler, public address to the Cosmic Society, *The Berkeley Gazette*, Feb. 15, 1927

Dr. Alfred Worcester, Nephew

Prof. at Harvard Medical School



ca. 1878



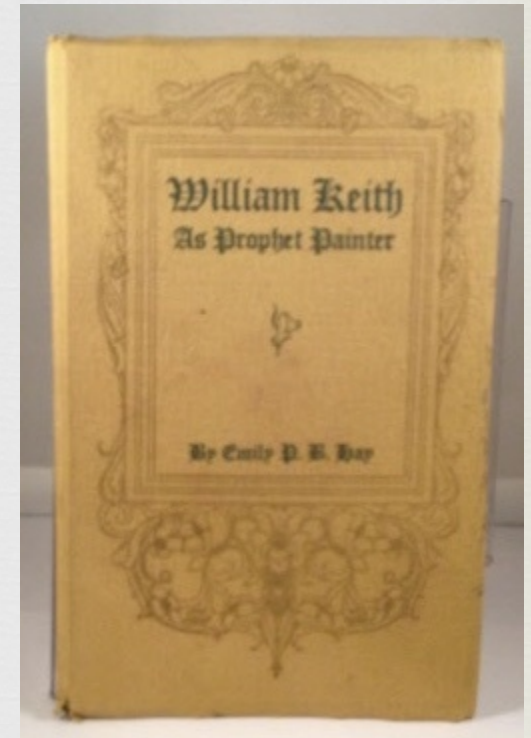
☞ *“On my daily walks with Uncle Joseph we often called on his closest friend, Mr. Keith [at his art studio]. Of course, I could not help hearing my uncle’s criticisms [of Keith’s art], and Keith’s imperturbable acceptance of them surprised me almost as much as the freedom with which they were given. On speaking to my uncle of this surprise, he said by way of explanation that Mr. Keith, who never was satisfied with his work, was as apt to cast aside as worthless what was really excellent as he was to keep working away upon what was not worth finishing.”*

☞ [1913 memoir of the 1902 trip to San Francisco]

Emily P.B. Hay (b. 1869), Keith art student on Worcester's presence



- ❧ “A light, accustomed step now sounds in the hall and Reverend Joseph Worcester, the Swedenborgian clergyman, appears, punctual to his usual hour. He will exert a powerful influence over the lives of some of us, for to our restless spirits will he prove an apostle of peace; what has he found and where has he found it – that *Something* which invests him with tranquility? We, too, will make search for that mysterious *Something*. ...”
- ❧ “Silently – for an hour, perhaps, Mr. Worcester sits lost in contemplation of a landscape forming on the Master's easel. Such prolonged absorption somewhat amuses Mr. Keith, for he, himself, has not yet sounded the depths of his own thoughts and emotions as read into forest and meadow by his devoted friend, the clergyman. No, the artist does not yet realize that this is the beginning of self-realization to culminate in ‘Gethsemane.’”



*William Keith
as Prophet Painter (1916)*

Emily Hay on Worcester's Spiritual Influence in Keith's Studio



“We follow him to forest-depths of introspection, there to discover him seated at the brim of a fountain which he interprets to us as the Fountain of Life. It is indeed, a well-spring of influences, including the Doctrine of Correspondences which reveal the natural world as but a shadow of the real or spiritual world. Later, finding the waters constrained by too elaborate usage of sculptured detail, namely, the *Arcana Coelestia*, we conclude that there must be yet other fountains where the waters well up more freely. So we continue search in the vast forest of religious experience, along little by-paths in tangled wildwood of ever-deepening consciousness, discovering not only more beautiful fountains, but that each and all are fed by one yet profounder Source.”

Psycho-spiritual states within the natural world



“Evening Glow,”
1898

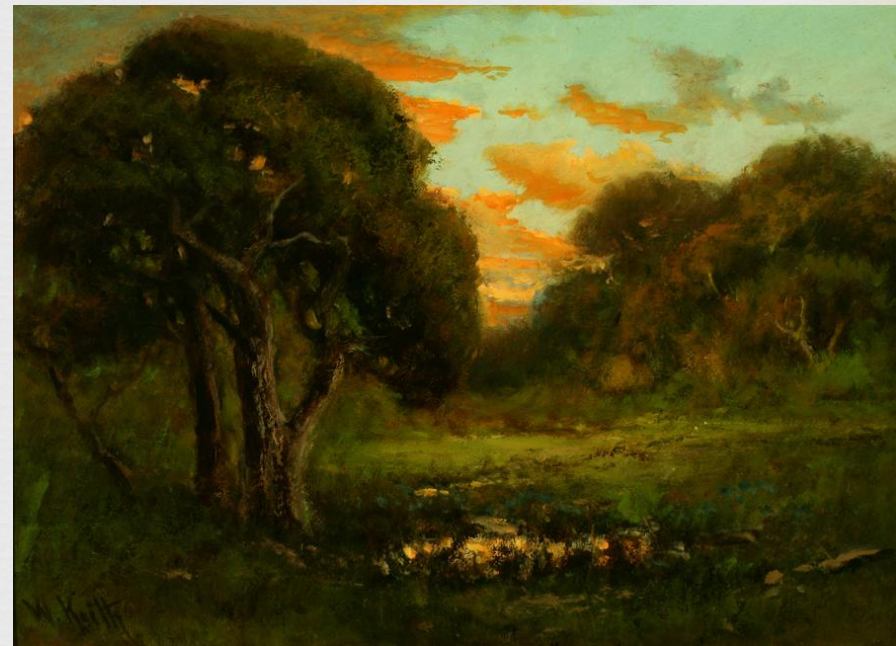
External Clarity & Internal Vision



Kings River Canyon, ca. 1878



Sunset Reflections, ca. 1906





Kings River Canyon, ca. 1875 (6 x 10 feet, Oakland Museum of California)

Charles Keeler on Keith's Two Styles



“Those who knew Keith's work best realized that it fell into two groups -- a comparatively hard, literal portrayal of the facts of landscape, and a free, impassioned outburst of impressionistic depicting of nature's moods. In his own heart he scorned the former and frankly gloried in the latter. His naturalistic sketches in color were either studies of underlying fact or potboilers for the uninitiated who were not up to his dream rhapsodies.”

From *Charles Keeler, Recollections of John Muir*, Sierra Club Bulletin, John Muir Memorial Number (January, 1916)

Lizzie's Death and Worcester's Entrance



"Sunset Beyond
Dark Woods,"
ca. 1906-1911 W



Part I



William Keith
(1838-1911):
Legacy as an Artist

“Twilight Hour,” 1891



The William Keith Room

Hearst Gallery, St. Mary's College of California



163 Keith paintings
reside in the
permanent
collection.

Year-round,
selections are
exhibited in the
William Keith
Room





Part II



Early Keith

*William Keith, painter.
Thomas Hensworth & Co. 12 Montgomery Street, S. F.*



Near Mt. Shasta, late 1860s



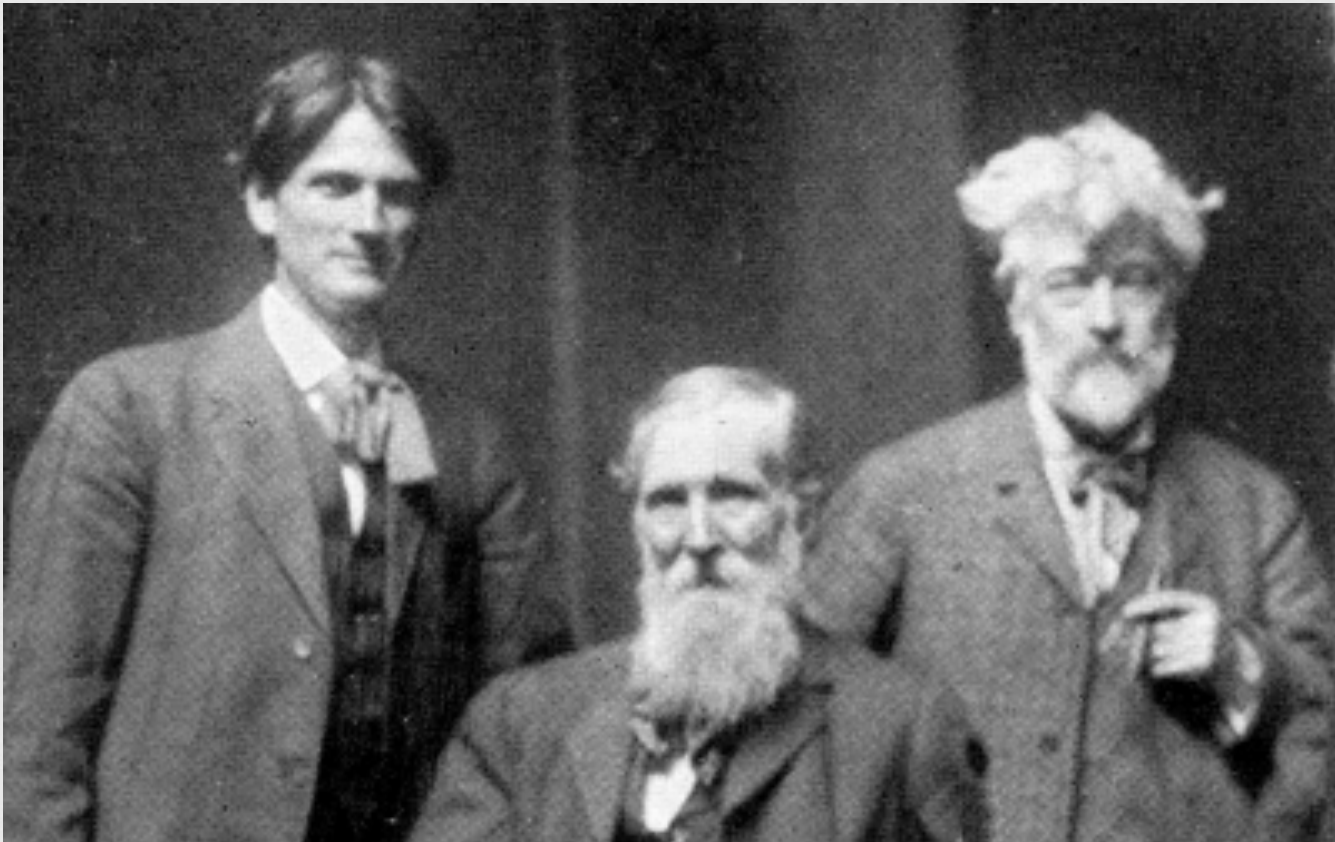
Early Keith
watercolor:
"Mountain
Cascade Near
Cisco," 1869

Dusseldorf Period: Move to Oils and Sharp Realism



Mt. Tamalpais, 1872

Friends Bearing Torches



1909

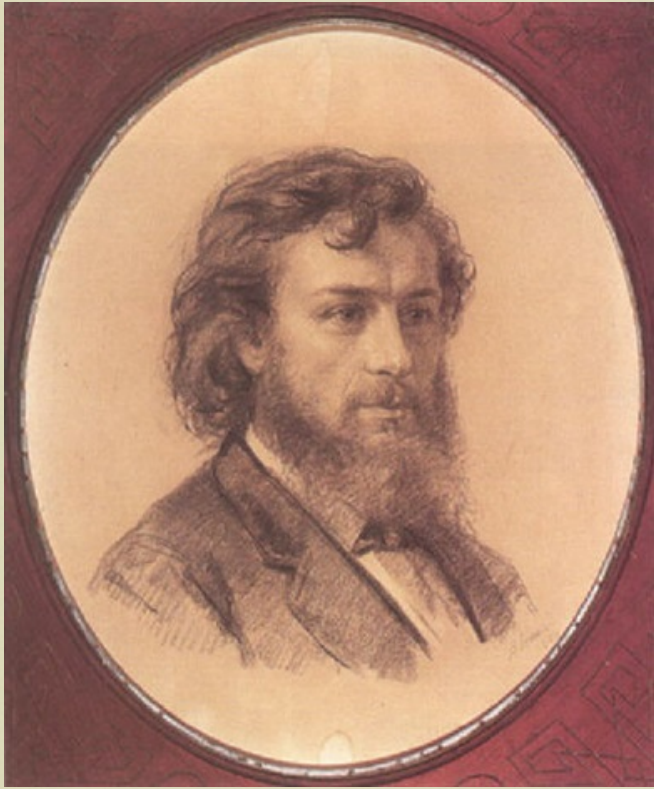
Charles Keeler, John Muir, William Keith

Dusseldorf Period: Mt. Lyell (Sierras), 1874



Headwaters of the San Joaquin River, 1878





Portrait by his earliest artist
friend Irwin Benoni

Part III



Crisis and Reconstruction

A New Friend: Joseph Worcester (1836-1913)



L: At the pulpit on opening Sunday 1895. R: With orphanage boys on his Vallejo St. overlook, 1906

A New Wife



Portrait of Mary McHenry by
William Keith

Mary McHenry Keith
(1855-1947)

First Woman Graduate
of Hastings School of
Law (1881)

Prominent California
Suffragette



Mary and
William
visit
Joseph in
the
Piedmont
cottage.

“We talked for a while over the frugal refreshment of strong tea and rye bread with marmalade and then both Mr. Worcester and Mr. Keith turned silent and somewhat lugubrious and gazed at the floor. Finally Mr. Keith went out to do some sketching while I remained with Mr. Worcester. But I felt a great repression, a sort of moral tension which seemed to be increased by the strong tea, and could hardly remain longer. I felt as if I must run out, and I was much relieved with Mr. Keith returned.” -Mary McHenry Keith

Germany: Letters Home



“You say that I write to you too much, but I can only say that it is necessary for me. I must do it. It is an anchor, or a link in a cable attached to the harbor. I told Mary the other night that if I should get into heaven and was asked why I was there, I could only say for excuse that I was acquainted with Mr. Worcester.”

Letter, William Keith to Joseph Worcester (December 30, 1883).
Original located at the Bancroft Library, Univ. of California at Berkeley.

The Old Master in his studio



“Moonlight on the Bay,
Sausalito,” ca. 1888



Part IV



An Extraordinary Muse

Hetch Hetchy Side Canyon, 1908



Two Scots: Muir & Keith

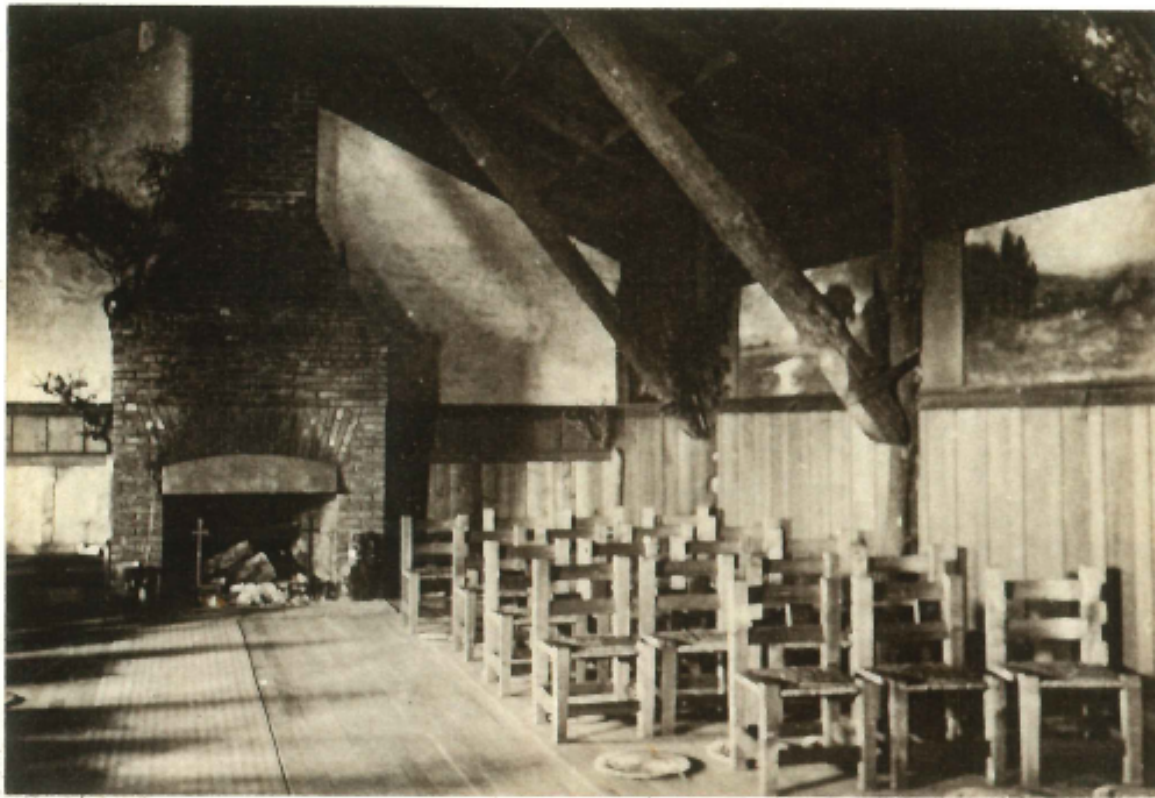


William Keith (c. 1865)



John Muir (c. 1869)

3 Keiths in Sanctuary, 1895



THE FOURTH PAINTING BY WILLIAM KEITH IS NOT YET IN PLACE.



"The Storm," George Inness (1885)

“I no longer want to die.”



❧ *“I no longer want to die since Inness has come. I have been feeling for a long time that I was just hanging around waiting. Now I want to work.”*

George Inness (1825-1894)



George Inness in
his Montclair, New
Jersey studio, 1890