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Chronology

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CHRONOLOGY

- 1840 Claude Monet born November 14th in Paris. "I am a Parisian from Paris. I was born there in 1840, under good King Louis Philippe, in a circle given over to commerce, and where all professed a contempt for the arts."
- 1845 The family moves to Le Havre. Monet's father, a grocer, does a large business with the French navy.
- 1854 Monet attends the Lycée at Le Havre. Learns drawing from Orchard, a pupil of David. Makes his greatest impression, however, by his rebellious character. "School always appeared to me like a prison, and I could never make up my mind to stay there, when the sunshine was inviting, the sea smooth, and when it was such a joy to run about on the cliffs."
- 1855 The young Monet becomes famous in Le Havre for his caricatures. He comes to the attention of Boudin, who had seen the caricatures displayed in a stationer's window. Boudin meets the young Monet at the stationer's and encourages him: "You are gifted, one can see that at a glance. But I hope that you are not going to stop at that . . . Study, learn to see and to paint, draw, make landscapes. The sea and the sky, animals, people and trees are so beautiful, just as nature made them, just as they are, with their character and being, in the light and air."
- 1859 Monet goes to Paris. With introductions from Boudin, he visits Troyon and Monginot. Troyon advises him to study with Couture. Instead, he prefers to find his own way. He joins the group of young and articulate writers and painters who frequent the brasserie in the Rue des Martyrs. Meets Pissarro and Courbet.
- 1860 Monet is drafted into the army and spends two years in Algeria. "In Algeria, I spent two really charming years. I always saw something new; in my moments of leisure I attempted to render what I saw. You cannot imagine to what extent I increased my knowledge, and how much my vision gained thereby. I did not quite realize it at first. The impressions of light and color that I received there were not to classify themselves until later, but they contained the germ of my future researches."
- 1862 Monet falls ill in Algeria and his parents buy him out of the army. He begins painting in Le Havre again during his convalescence and there meets Jongkind. "He asked to see my sketches, invited me to come and work with him, explained to me the why and wherefore of his manner, and thereby completed the teachings I had already received from Boudin. From that time on he was my real master, and it was to him that I owed the final education of my eye."

Caricature of Orchard, Monet's drawing teacher, done by the young Monet about 1856. Drawing, 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. Mr. and Mrs. Carter H. Harrison Collection.





Claude Monet by Albert André (1869–1954). Oil on canvas, 51x38 in. The Stickney Collection. In this portrait, deferentially painted in the master's own manner, André has posed the patriarchal Monet of 1912 in the luminous violet landscape of the garden at Giverny.

manner had shaped itself, but, after all, it was not revolutionary in character. I was still far from having adopted the principle of the subdivision of colors that set so many against me, but I was beginning to try my hand at it partially and I was experimenting with effects of light and color that shocked accepted customs. The jury that had received me so well at first, turned against me and I was ignominiously blackballed when I presented this new painting to the Salon.”

- 1868 The painter Daubigny helps Monet to get one of his pictures accepted by the Salon.
 - 1869 Rejected by the Salon. Becomes friends with Manet and is invited to join the group at the café Guerbois, where he meets Fantin-Latour, Cézanne, Degas, Duranty, the art critic, and Zola. Works with Renoir at La Grenouillère.
 - 1870 Monet marries his model, Camille, in June. At the beginning of the Franco-Prussian war, he leaves for London.
 - 1871 In London, he works with Sisley and Pissarro. He meets Daubigny there, who introduces him to Durand-Ruel. “Durand-Ruel was our savior. During fifteen years or more, my paintings and those of Renoir, Sisley and Pissarro had no other outlet but through him.”
 - 1872 After the war, Monet returns to Argenteuil. He decides to stop sending any more of his paintings to the Salon.
 - 1874 The first Impressionist group exhibition is held. Monet exhibits twelve paintings, one of which, called *Impression: Sunrise* gives the movement its name.
 - 1875 The Impressionists hold an auction at the Hotel Drouot on March 24. Police have to be called to control the disturbances caused by hostile spectators. The prices paid for the paintings are very low, averaging 144 francs.
 - 1876 The second Impressionist group exhibition is held at Durand-Ruel’s. Monet shows eighteen pictures, among them the Art Institute’s *Beach at Ste-Adresse* and *Argenteuil-sur-Seine*. Monet begins painting the *St. Lazare Station* series.
 - 1877 The third Impressionist group exhibition. Monet exhibits thirty paintings.
 - 1878 Monet settles in Vétheuil. His son, Michel, is born. Manet lends him 1000 francs, but Monet is so discouraged by his poverty and lack of sales that he has no interest in getting together his pictures for the fourth Impressionist group exhibition. Caillebotte, however, insists on getting 29 canvases for the show.
 - 1879 Renoir persuades Monet to exhibit at the Salon once more. Madame Monet dies in September.
 - 1880 Monet has a retrospective exhibition at *La Vie Moderne*. Duret writes a preface to the catalogue in which he describes his methods of working in the open air and un-
- 1863 Returning to Paris, Monet enters the studio of Gleyre. He finds the teaching there useless and irrelevant to his ideas, so he leaves the studio with three friends he made there, Renoir, Sisley and Bazille.
 - 1865 Monet shows two pictures at the Salon. He shares Bazille’s studio in Paris and becomes friendly with Courbet.
 - 1866 The Salon accepts Monet’s portrait of his model, Camille, *Woman in a Green Dress*. This portrait, now at the museum in Bremen, is much influenced by Courbet. It has a great public and critical success.
 - 1867 The Salon rejects his *Women in the Garden*, now in the Louvre. “It was in 1867; my

hesitantly places him among the great masters of landscape painting. One picture is sold from the exhibition. Together with Renoir, Sisley and Caillebotte, he refuses to exhibit at the fifth Impressionist group exhibition.

1882 Monet is persuaded to show 35 pictures at the seventh Impressionist group exhibition, but in a letter to Durand-Ruel he writes that the public and the newspapers have had quite enough of these group exhibitions, and that now it would be much more helpful to have one-man shows at suitable intervals.

The Cliff Walk, Étretat. In the early eighties, when Monet was beginning to gain some financial security through sales made to Durand-Ruel, he frequently visited the coast of Normandy. One of the places he liked best was Étretat, a seaside resort. In 1882, when this canvas was painted, Monet was going through a period of discouragement and dissatisfaction with his methods; he even went so far as to destroy some of his unfinished works. Nevertheless, this scene, conveying exactly the record of a sunny, breezy day at the coast, is filled with the joyous sparkle of the sun on waving grass and moving water: surfaces that always interested the artist because of the way they caught the fleeting light.





Bordighera. In 1884 Monet stayed at Bordighera on the Riviera where this canvas was painted. There is an assurance in this painting, as though he were positive of his ability to capture the flaming impressions of the blazing Riviera sun, so different from the paler lights of the Channel coast. The thick, virile strokes of high-keyed color and the composition, descending down from the twisted trees to the white city to the flecked, choppy waves do convey an amazing impression of the violence of sun and wind.



Still Life: Apples and Grapes. The subject indicates that this may be one of the paintings owned by the minor government official Victor Chocquet, who began collecting the paintings of the Impressionists in 1875. Chocquet owned ten paintings by Monet, bought when the painter was desperately in need of sales and encouragement. In this iridescent canvas, the painter has used short, broken strokes of glowing color to catch the intricate reflections of light and the color of light that each object casts on the other and on the white tablecloth.

Venice, San Giorgio. The view of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice was one of the last great impressions which set Monet's imagination on fire. When he first visited Venice in December, 1908, he wrote to Geffroy, his biographer: "My enthusiasm for Venice . . . grows all the time . . . It is so beautiful! What a pity I did not come when I was young, when I had all my powers . . ." Monet was sixty-eight at this time, but from his visit he produced a series of prismatic canvases from the web of reflections he saw in the colors and canals of Venice.



Waterloo Bridge. Here the contours are barely indicated; everything has dissolved in atmosphere. The invisible sun struggles through the smoke and fog, lights fitfully the traffic on the bridge, and loses its rays in the melting and iridescent shadows. Both the subject and treatment recall Turner, the great English forerunner of French Impressionism. Monet and Pissarro first saw Turner's pictures when they came to London in 1870, and Paul Signac has described how closely the two painters studied the English artist.





One day in June, 1920, Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson and Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Hutchinson went with Albert André and Joseph Durand-Ruel to visit Monet at Giverny. The two snapshots reproduced here are among some taken at that time by Mrs. Hutchinson. Above, the famous lily pond; below, Monet in his garden.



- 1883 Monet settles at Giverny. Durand-Ruel gives him a one-man show in his new gallery.
- 1884 Goes to the Riviera with Renoir. Visits Bordighera and Ventimiglia.
- 1887 Monet exhibits landscapes painted at Bordighera and Belle-Isle-en-Mer.
- 1889 Monet shows 65 pictures at the Monet-Rodin exhibition at George Petit's. Helps to organize the campaign for the public purchase and presentation to the Louvre of Manet's Olympia.
- 1890 Begins work on the Haystack series at Giverny.
- 1891 The Haystack series are exhibited at Durand-Ruel's. They are very successful; 15 pictures are sold in three days.
- 1893 Begins the series of paintings of the Cathedral at Rouen.
- 1895 The Cathedral series is exhibited at Durand-Ruel's. Monet begins painting the water lilies in his garden at Giverny.
- 1897 Monet works on the series, Mornings on the Seine.
- 1900 Visits London.
- 1901 Monet returns to paint Vétheuil on the Seine, a village where he had lived in the late seventies and eighties.
- 1902 The Bernheim Gallery exhibits six paintings of Vétheuil, depicted under various effects of light. The Art Institute's collection includes two paintings from this series, Vétheuil and Vétheuil at Sunset.
- 1904 Monet's London pictures, painted from 1900 to 1904 are shown at Durand-Ruel's. The 37 canvases are views of the Thames, Charing Cross Bridge, Waterloo Bridge and the Houses of Parliament.
- 1908 Monet visits Venice.
- 1909 The exhibition of Monet's 47 canvases of his water lilies series is a tremendous success at Durand-Ruel's.
- 1912 The 29 paintings of Venice are shown at the Bernheim Gallery. At Giverny, Monet builds a special studio for the execution of the twelve great panels on the water lily theme.
- 1921 The French nation, urged on by Clémenceau, accepts the gift of the twelve water lily panels for installation in the Orangerie. The Orangerie has been called by the painter André Masson "the Sistine Chapel of Impressionism".
- 1923 Monet's sight had been failing for several years, and now he has to undergo an operation for cataracts. He regains the sight in one eye, and continues to paint.
- 1926 Monet dies on December 5. Buried in the cemetery at Giverny. The pallbearers at his funeral are Bonnard, Vuillard, K. X. Roussel and Clémenceau.

The quotations in the text are from an interview with the painter printed in Le Temps, Paris, November 27, 1900, and reprinted in English in a pamphlet by Durand-Ruel, New York.