

George Caleb Bingham was born on March 20, 1811, in Augusta County, Virginia. Bingham craved more instruction in art. In 1838 he traveled east to study the canvases of other artists. Bingham was impressed especially by the genre paintings he saw. These paintings showed scenes from everyday life. After studying in Philadelphia and making art contacts in New York City, Bingham returned to Missouri with more artistic skill and some new ideas about what he could paint. He traveled extensively, painting portraits to support his family, Bingham started painting genre scenes that showed life on the frontier. Throughout his life, Bingham held strong beliefs about democracy and politics in America. He often used his artistic skills to portray his political views. The St. Louis Art Museum organized a major exhibition of his work in 1934, and Missouri artist Thomas Hart Benton promoted him. Bingham's drawings and paintings have since been given careful attention, and today he is considered one of America's greatest and most popular painters.

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