Thomas Bamford

1861-1941

Thomas Bamford was born in Liverpool, England, in 1861. After work in an architectural firm, and attending night school courses in art, he immigrated to Boston, Massachusetts in 1879, and settled in Victoria in 1882. Following work as a machinist at the Albion Iron Works, he was employed as a draughtsman and subsequently a timber agent with the provincial government.

Bamford amplified his earlier art training by instruction from Rene Quentin, a French artist who spent some time in Victoria during the 1880s, and was a charter member of the Island Arts and Crafts Society formed in 1909, serving two terms as its president, 1915-1919 and 1930-1934.Contributing to almost all the Society's annual exhibitions between 1910 and 1935, his work, like that of many of his fellow artists, was closely connected to the English landscape watercolour tradition in subject matter, medium and style.

Royal Museum of BC Archives C-07535

He was an inveterate on-the-spot sketcher, and from these drawings he produced a prolific series of finished watercolours and oils in his studio throughout his life. Although painting to professional standards, he was in fact the quintessential "gifted amateur", insomuch as he rarely bothered to sell his many paintings and was generous in dispensing them as gifts.

Thomas Bamford died in Victoria in 1941, remembered in his obituary as a "retired government servant and an accomplished artist."

Beacon Hill; Royal BC Museum Archives PDPOO140