



Gibson Catlett (1866-1935)

Gibson Catlett was a prolific American artist who specialized in real estate landscape paintings used as advertisements.

By Rhys Stevens (rhys.stevens@uleth.ca), University of Lethbridge Library.
June 15, 2022



Gibson Catlett. *Miami Herald Sun* (1925, March 8).

Stephen “Gibson” Catlett was born on August 22, 1866 to parents Samuel “Gibson” Catlett (1819-1894) and Elizabeth McCormack (b.1837) in the small rural railway village of Catlett in Fauquier County, Virginia. Samuel Catlett was known as a wealthy and influential citizen who had come from a long line of Virginia planters and the family maintained a residence near Catlett’s Station.



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Location of Catlett, Virginia, birthplace of Gibson Catlett.

EARLY CAREER AS A NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER- ADVERTISER (ca. 1893-1905)

The younger Gibson Catlett was trained in journalism and, in 1894, by the age of 27, had established himself as a newspaper publisher-advertiser of New York City's *The Letter Carriers' Gazette* under the name Gibson Catlett & Co. (1894, May 30, New York Times). It was also in this same year that Catlett would marry his first wife, Josephine C. Griffin (1871-1943), in Holyoke, MA. Several years later they would welcome the birth of daughter Catherine Elizabeth (1897-1935) who was also born in Holyoke. The couple moved frequently due to the transitory nature of Catlett's work and, from 1894 to about 1911, they lived together as husband and wife in Holyoke, MA, Philadelphia, PA, Columbia, SC, Atlanta, GA, Birmingham, AL, Dallas, TX, Los Angeles, CA, and Portland, OR prior to their separation¹.

Thursday, February 1, 1900.

We have received the illustrated edition of the Spartanburg Herald, which gives a write-up of Spartanburg in an industrial way. It is rather a creditable edition, and was published, written and illustrated by Mr. Gibson Catlett.

Bamberg Herald (Bamberg, South Carolina), (1900, February 1).

Some of Catlett's advertising works published during the period 1894-1905 included a handsome 28-page publication for the Kansas City Board of Trade, *The Evening Telegram* newspaper (Spartanburg, S.C.), a special edition of the *Southern Tobacco Journal*, and an "industrial art" edition of the *Spartanburg Herald* newspaper which he also illustrated. He was also involved in both the "150,000 club"

booster campaign for the Dallas, Texas which issued the [Dallas Wholesalers promotional booklet](#) and a [directory of manufacturing companies in Los Angeles](#) for the National Lumber Company.

REAL ESTATE LANDSCAPE ARTIST - LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA (1906-1908)

In 1906, while in Los Angeles, CA, Catlett made a career

transition from a publisher of general advertising to one who focused exclusively on real estate promotional materials. This gave him the opportunity to combine both his advertising and artistic skills² and he billed himself as a producer of “real estate landscape paintings.” He worked alongside real estate salespeople and developers to carve out a niche creating unique artistic advertisements which were paintings from a bird's-eye perspective showing the locations of their proposed land developments and subdivisions. Catlett also employed a team of artists to assist him in the creation of paintings and advertisements³. One of these artists was Davis Francis Schwartz (1879-1969), a commercial illustrator who had moved to Los Angeles from Ohio in 1903 and who worked for the *Los Angeles Times*. Schwartz was also a landscape artist who had created bird's eye view advertisements for real estate developments and, like Catlett, was based at the Tajo Building in Los Angeles. Schwartz and Catlett would become lifelong friends and later work together in Portland, Calgary, Montreal, Toronto and Chicago.

One of Catlett's earliest known views produced while in Los Angeles was “Panoramic View of Searchlight, Nevada” for the McCord real estate company of Los Angeles which appeared in a 1906 promotional booklet. It was perhaps this painting that Catlett was describing when he boasted that, with its aid, nearly 1,300 lots in a town several hundred miles away from Los Angeles were sold in three months (1925, April 12, *Miami Herald*). Other surviving views created at this time were produced for the Federal Heights development in Salt Lake City, UT, the Poole & Jones Tract in southwest Los Angeles, and the Port Orange Harbor in Newport Beach, CA. One of the major benefits of incorporating landscape paintings into real estate sales



Los Angeles Herald advertisement (1908, July 12).

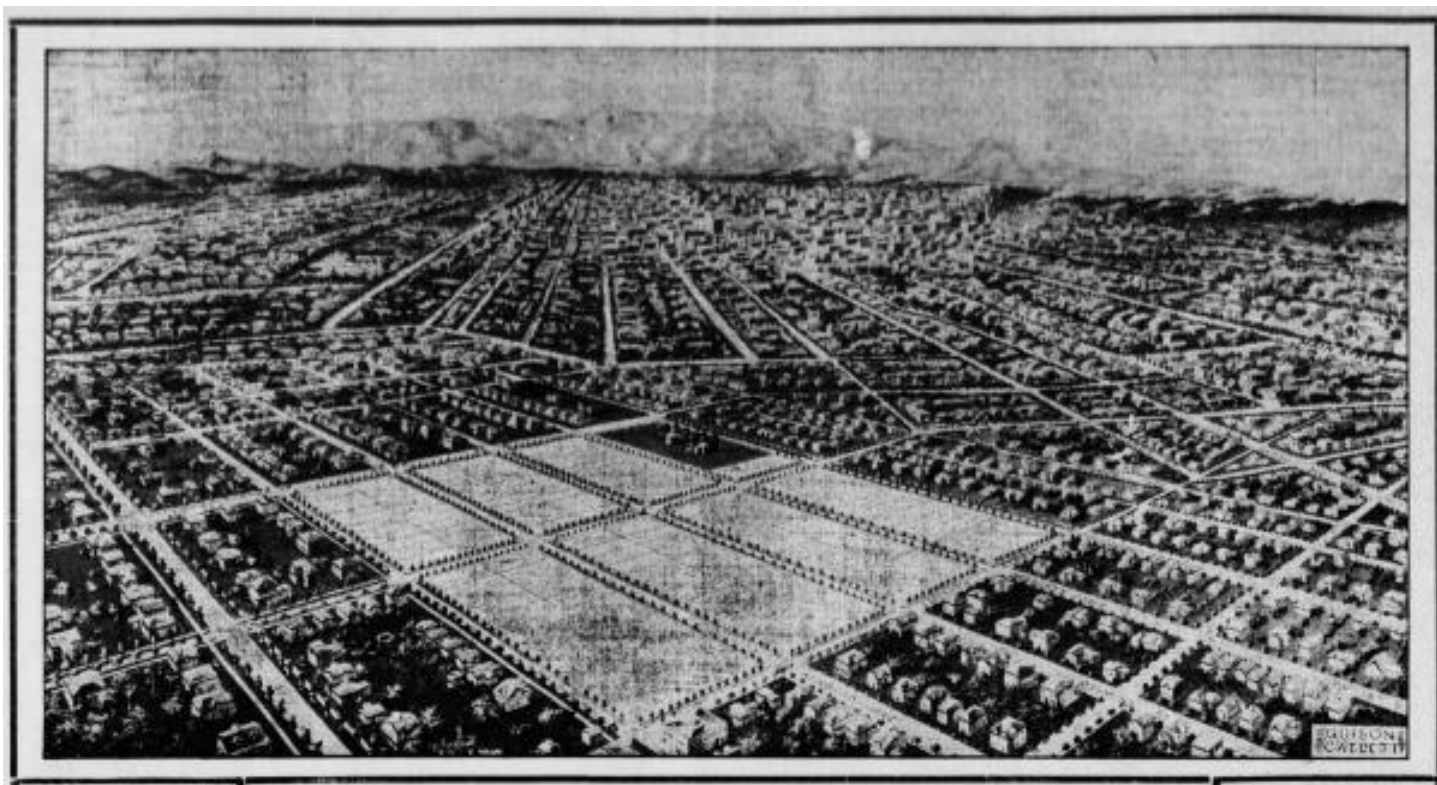
campaigns was to be able to sell subdivision lots directly from the pictures themselves.



panoramic View of Searchlight, Nevada, "The Camp Without a Failure," Showing H. H. McCord Co.'s Pro

This map by Gibson Catlett, illustrator, Los Angeles, California, was produced as a real estate advertisement for the Ormonds Addition properties in the southern Nevada mining boomtown of Searchlight, Nevada.

Catlett, G. (1906). *Panoramic View of Searchlight, Nevada. "The Camp Without a Failure." Showing H. H. McCord Co.'s Properties* [Advertisement brochure]. H. H. McCord Co., Los Angeles. [PBA Galleries Auction #735 - Lot 51 Real estate promo for Searchlight Nevada 1906.](https://www.pbagalleries.com/auction/735/lot/51)



An early Gibson Catlett view that appeared in a Los Angeles Times (1906, Dec. 30) newspaper advertisement for the Poole & Jones Tract real estate development in the "Southwest Section" of Los Angeles. The name "Gibson Catlett" is visible in the lower-right of the image.

Poole & Jones Tract [advertisement]. (1906, December 30). *Los Angeles Times*, p. 44.



An early Gibson Catlett painting appears as a reproduction in a newspaper article about the Port Orange Harbor which is now Newport Beach, California. The image caption reads, "View showing proximity of Port Orange to Los Angeles and the principal cities of Southern California." A label on the painting indicates "Gibson Catlett, Landscape Artist, 307 Tajo Bldg., L.A."

Port Orange of great value to Los Angeles. (1907, May 26). *Los Angeles Herald*, p. 3.

MAP ARTIST FOR THE OREGON-WASHINGTON RAILROAD & NAVIGATION CO. - PORTLAND, OREGON (1909-1910)

After a few years in Los Angeles, Catlett and wife Josephine headed north to Portland, Oregon in 1909 where he occupied offices on the tenth floor in the Board of Trade building in that

city. For the next three years, he would create “topographical landscape paintings” of locations in Oregon, Washington and Northern California which were much like his real estate landscapes, but which displayed far larger land areas. A number of these paintings were produced for the Oregon-Washington Railroad & Navigation Co. while Catlett was employed as the company’s map artist. Other paintings were commissioned by real estate firms, local Chambers of Commerce or city Boards of Trade. Catlett also sketched the cities of Seattle, WA and Portland, OR and Hood River, OR while employing landscape artists to complete the color work on the paintings. One of the artists who worked alongside Catlett in Portland was Henry Epting (1860-1911) who produced the color work for the paintings of Seattle and Hood River (*Hood River Glacier*, July 14, 1910).

BIG LAND GRAB

Best buy in Rogue River Valley. In my reconnoiter of the Rogue River Valley I have found 1,365 acres of fine Apple and Pear Land, 8 miles from Medford, 1/2 mile from the Potter Palmer Orchard, 4 miles from the Tronson & Guthrie (Apple Kings of America) Orchard, 3 miles to railroad, fronting 1 1/4 miles on the Rogue River.

All highly improved with houses and barns, alfalfa and grain, 4 miles of woven wire fence, about 35 acres 2-year-old Apple and Pear trees, the entire tract to be under irrigation from ditch to start construction this year.

Soil-experts in Medford say this is as good as the best Apple and Pear land in the valley.

I have in my office a painting of the entire valley from which I can show you exactly where this land is and what it looks like.

I honestly believe this to be the best subdivision money-maker in the country today. If you buy it I can make you the pictures that will sell it.

PRICE \$65 PER ACRE

If you want it, act quick. This price will only hold a few days.
Very liberal terms.

GIBSON CATLETT

Topographic Landscape Artist.
Real Estate Drawings Exclusively.
22-24 Ainsworth Bldg., Portland, Or.

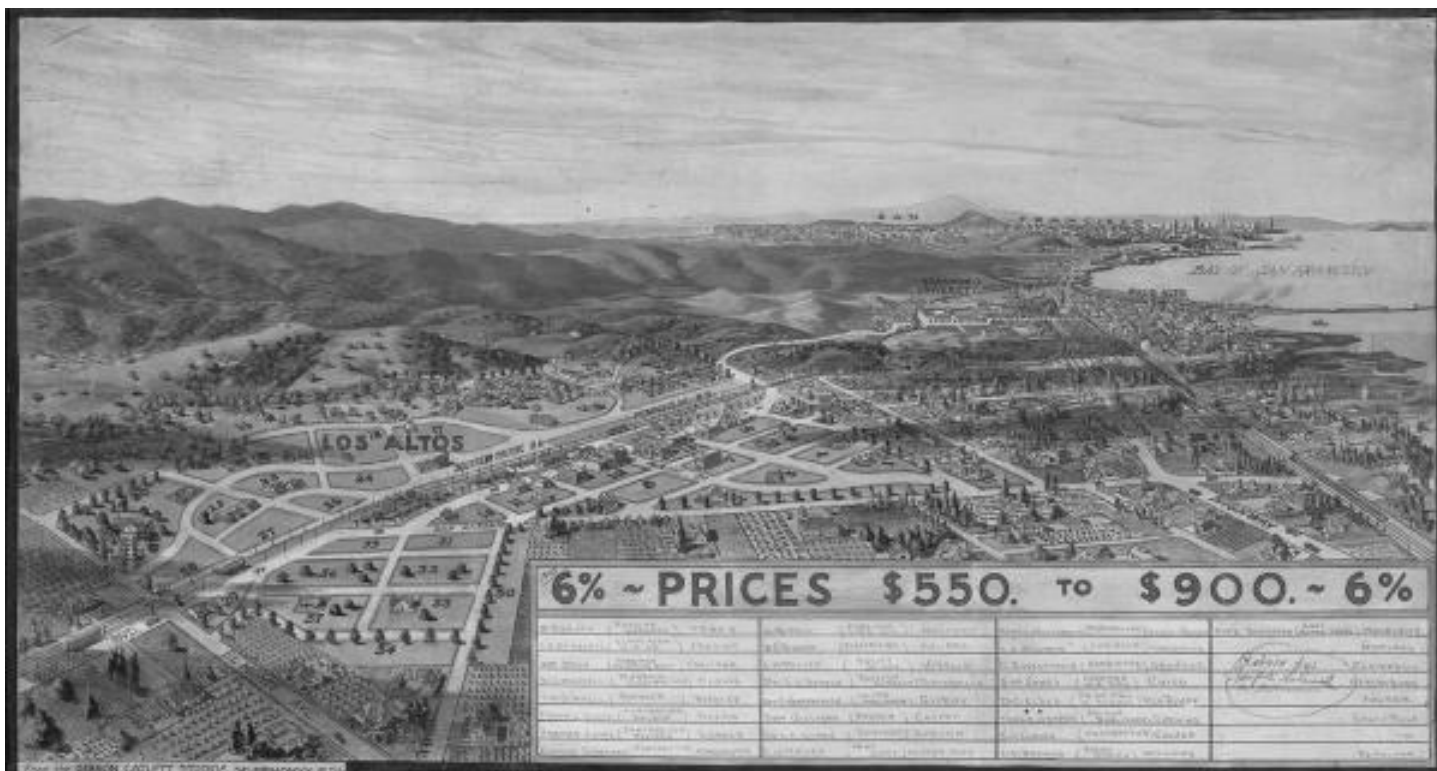
Phone Main 8719.

The Oregonian advertisement (1910, June 23)



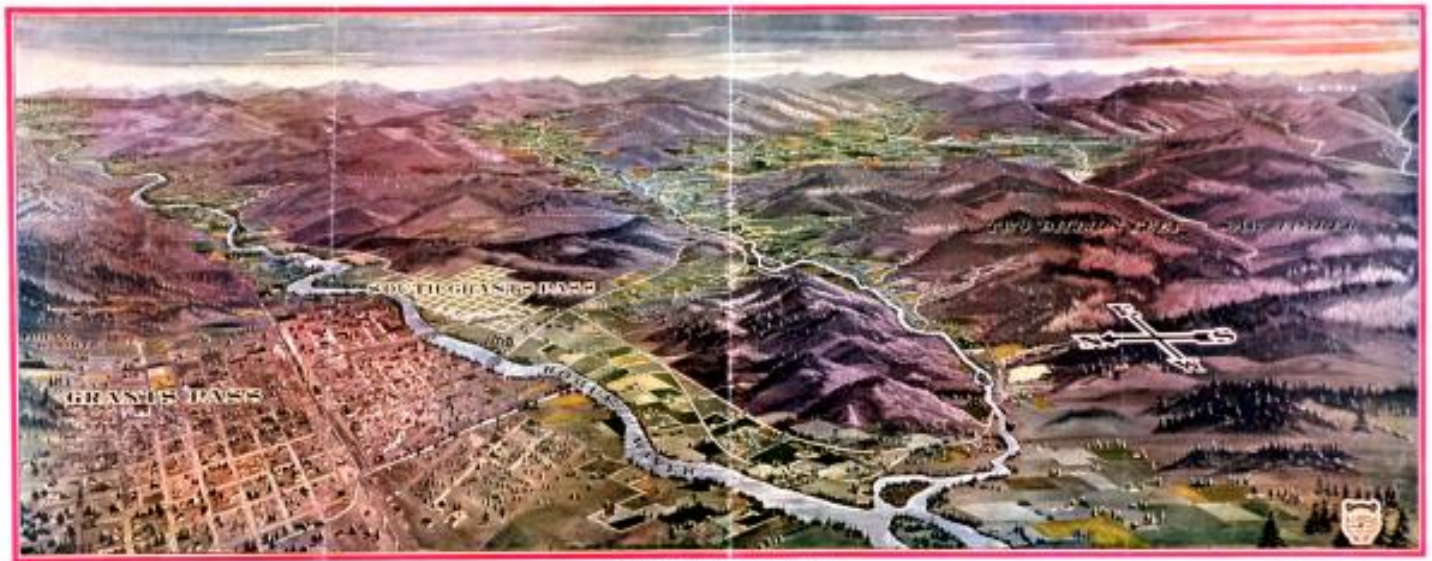
This painting is displayed at the Bisnett Insurance office in Hood River, Oregon. A label indicates it was painted by Gibson Catlett, Landscape Artist, 2224 Ainsworth Bldg, Portland for the Hood River Realty Co.

Catlett, G. (1910). *Columbia River Gorge from Hood River to Portland [painting]*. Copyright 1910 by Hood River Realty Co.



This landscape painting by Catlett Studios (341 Monadnock Bldg) was produced in about 1910 to advertise lots for sale in Los Altos, California.

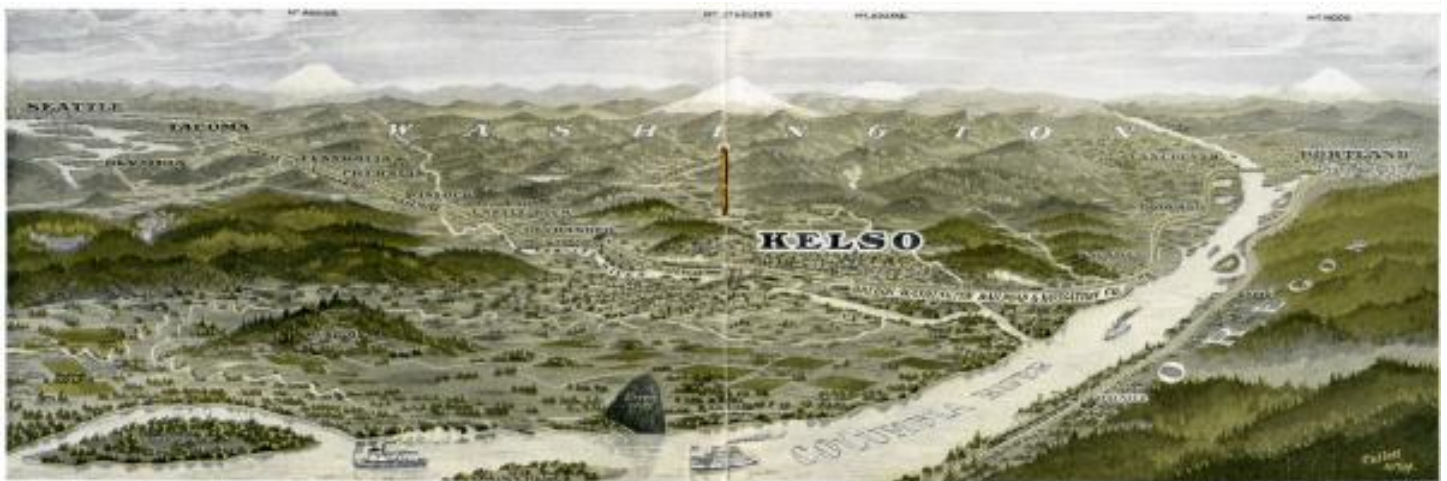
Catlett Studios. (1910). [Los Altos, California real estate advertisement]. Los Altos History Museum Collection #1993.068.014



THE FAMOUS ROGUE RIVER VALLEY
 This map was prepared by Gibson Catlett, a topographic landscape artist, for the purpose of showing the general character of the Rogue River Valley, Oregon, and the location of the proposed Grant's Pass and Rogue River R.R. The map was prepared by Catlett for the purpose of showing the general character of the Rogue River Valley, Oregon, and the location of the proposed Grant's Pass and Rogue River R.R. The map was prepared by Catlett for the purpose of showing the general character of the Rogue River Valley, Oregon, and the location of the proposed Grant's Pass and Rogue River R.R.

This bird's-eye view map of Grant's Pass near Medford, OR was created by topographic landscape artist Gibson Catlett for a railroad development company.

Catlett, G. (1910). *The famous Rogue River Valley* [cartographic material]. Portland, OR: Land Department of Grant's Pass & Rogue River R.R. [Oregon Historical Society Research Library G4293.J6A3 1910 .C38](https://www.oregonhistoricalsociety.org/research-library/G4293.J6A3%201910%20.C38).



This bird's-eye view of Kelso, Washington by artist Gibson Catlett appeared in a 32-page illustrated promotional booklet describing the town and its surroundings.

Catlett, G. (1911). Kelso, Washington. In *Kelso, Washington: Diversified farming*. Kelso, WA: Kelso Commercial Club.

PAINTER OF CITIES FOR RAILROADS AND LARGE REAL ESTATE OPERATORS – CANADA (1910-1914)



Gibson Catlett (center) and Austin Cooper (left) at Catlett's Studio in Calgary, Alberta, 1912.

Calgary, Alberta was one of many Canadian cities experiencing a boom in real estate sales in the early 1910s and this likely attracted Catlett north of the border in about 1910. Calgary city directories indicate that he maintained a residence and studio in the city's Cadogan Block from 1911 to 1912. Artists that Catlett employed at his Calgary studio included Austin C. Cooper (1890-1964), Adam Sherriff-Scott (1887-1980), and Davis F. Schwartz (1879-1969), all of whom went on to make significant contributions in the world of art.

While in Calgary, Catlett and his artists sketched and painted topographic views⁴ of most of the principal cities of Western Canada from Victoria, British Columbia to Winnipeg, Manitoba.

These views were extensively in advertisements used by the

The Record-Breaking Real Estate Selling Campaigns of Canada

have been made with

GIBSON CATLETT
Real Estate
Landscape Paintings

It is the most logical, truthful and profitable method to show and sell subdivided property.

—

GIBSON CATLETT
MANUFACTURER OF COMPLETE PICTORIAL SELLING CAMPAIGN MATERIAL

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Offices and Studios:

CALGARY Canada	PORTLAND Oregon	LOS ANGELES California
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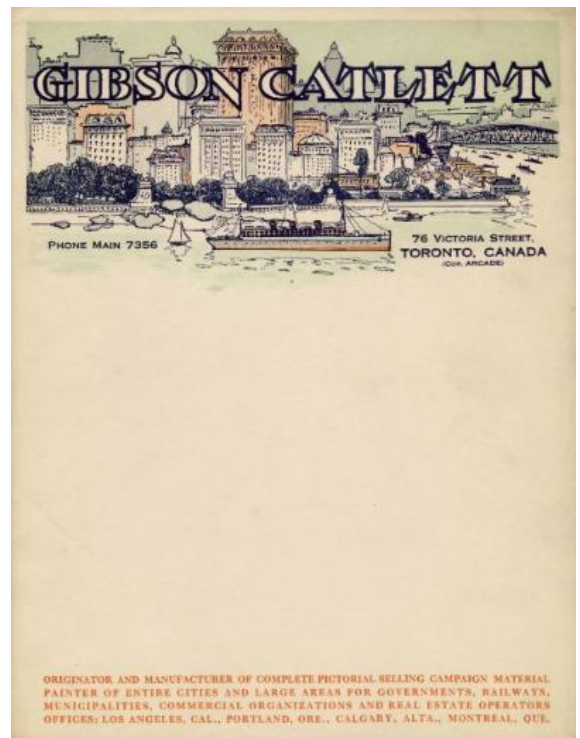
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Advertisement in 1912 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan real estate directory

city's most prominent and successful land promoters such as Calgary's Fred Lowes of F. C. Lowes & Co. and Edmonton's Frank Blackburn of B. F. Blackburn Co. They were also used by the Canadian Pacific Railway's Land Department to promote settlement on a tract of lands in Southern Alberta known as the "Irrigation Block." The view of the Uplands⁵ residential development in Victoria, British Columbia was produced as a colour lithograph advertisement commissioned by Rogers & Co., Limited.

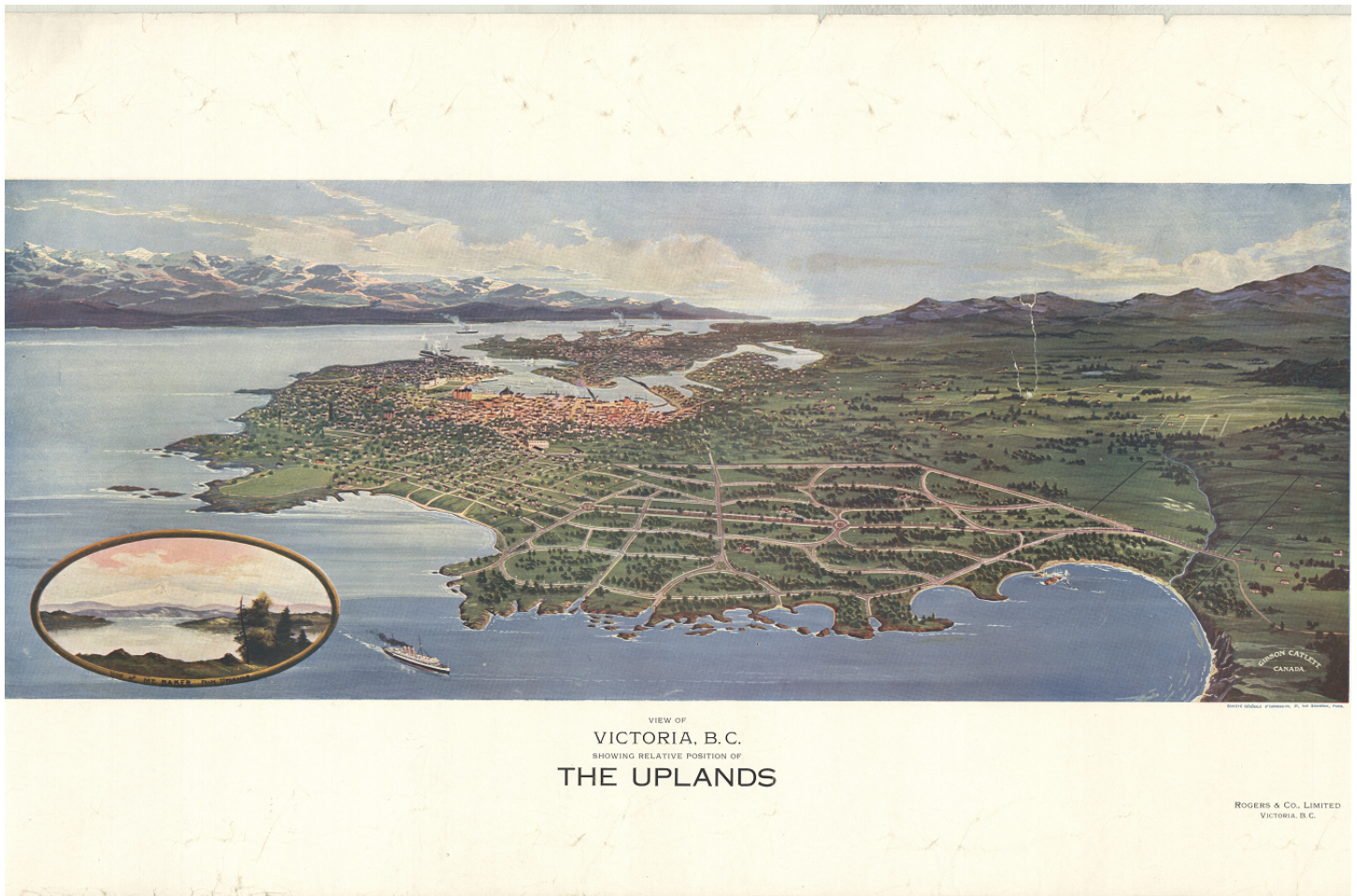
A free exhibit of Catlett's real estate landscape paintings was held in Calgary and was advertised in the *Morning Albertan* (1912, Sept. 5). In addition to advertising his paintings, Catlett appear to also be promoting his "selling campaign method" to real estate salesmen which, according to the advertisement, was as much a part of his work as the paintings themselves.

As the real estate boom in Western Canada fizzled out, Catlett and several of his artists relocated to Montreal, Quebec where he lived from 1913 to 1914. In those two years, views of Montreal, London, Waterloo, Detroit-Windsor, and Niagara Falls-Buffalo were created for real estate promotions. Other paintings were produced for the Intercolonial Railway (Canadian Government Railway) which included pictures of the Bras d'Or Lakes in Cape Breton, Chaleur Bay in New Brunswick, and an illuminated map showing points of interest along the railway in Canada's maritime provinces. The Chaleur Bay painting was signed "Gibson Catlett, Official Artist, Toronto" which indicated that, in 1914, Catlett also had offices and a studio in Toronto. It was while in Toronto that



Letterhead, Gibson Catlett, 76 Victoria Street, Toronto, Canada (ca. 1914). Public Domain, Courtesy of Toronto Public Library

Catlett and his artists were commissioned to create a massive 70 ft. by 9 ft. topographic landscape painting of the entire country of Canada which was incorporated into the Water Power Exhibit in the Canadian Building at the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 in San Francisco, California. The contracted cost for this topographic landscape painting as listed in Canada's 1916 Sessional Papers was \$3,800 and didn't include the price of an "auxiliary curtain" (\$850) or sundry models (\$550).



A view of the Uplands residential development in Victoria, British Columbia by Gibson Catlett appears in a color lithograph advertisement commissioned by Rogers & Co., Limited.

Catlett, G. (1911). *View of Victoria, B.C. showing relative position of The Uplands.* Victoria, B.C.: Rogers & Co., Limited.

Olmsted Archives, Frederick Law Olmsted NHS, NPS. Item Number: 03276-z1.



This large tempera painting by Gibson Catlett, topographic artist, displays the western, central and eastern sections of the Irrigation Block of the Canadian Pacific Railway located in southern Alberta.

Catlett, G. (1911). *Topographic landscape, irrigation block of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Alberta, Canada*. [tempera painting]. Object 60.17, Glenbow Museum Art Collection, Calgary, AB.



This is a photograph of a panorama painting created by Gibson Catlett Studios to advertise the Marlborough Heights and Regents Park real estate developments in Edmonton, Alberta owned by Tayler-Brydle, Limited.

Panorama drawing of Edmonton and Marlboro Heights, Edmonton, Alberta., 1912 (CU152406) by McDermid Studio.
Courtesy of Libraries and Cultural Resources Digital Collections, University of Calgary. Image is in the Public Domain.

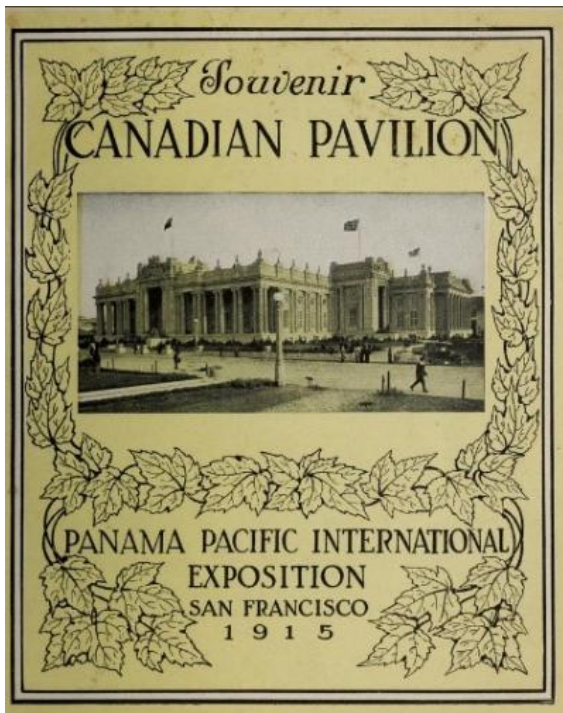


In the March 24, 1913 issue of Halifax's Evening Mail newspaper, it was reported that artist Gibson Catlett was visiting the city to paint a "huge picture of Halifax" for Carrick Limited.

Catlett, G. (1913). Topographic landscape of the City of Halifax showing the holdings of D. Lorne McGibbon [pictorial map]. In *Halifax: An old city with a brand new future*. Halifax, N. S.: Carrick Limited. Library and Archives Canada, Preservation Coll. C2346 .3 H338 1910z

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA & THE PANAMA-PACIFIC EXHIBITION (1915-1917)

Gibson Catlett left Canada for San Francisco to attend the Panama-Pacific International Exposition “world's fair” of 1915 for which he had painted much of the scenery in both the



Souvenir Canadian Pavilion Panama Pacific International Exposition San Francisco 1915, Internet Archive.

Canada building and the Southern Pacific building. He stayed in the city and over the next several years painted panoramas to promote real estate sales in various locations including the Monterey peninsula, Sacramento Valley, San Joaquin Valley, Seattle, Oakland and San Francisco.

One particularly large and impressive painting was his large bird's-eye view of the entire state of California which included numerous cities, mountains, valleys, railroads and automobile roads. Catlett's paintings were mounted in elaborate frames and equipped with canopies and electric lighting apparatus and exhibited throughout the state. One of these locations was in the Flood Building at the Panama-Pacific Exposition itself where visitors were invited to view a "free educational exhibit" promoting real estate sales for the Tunnel and West Peaks districts in San Francisco.



Exhibit of images titled "The Great State of California" and "San Francisco." Gibson Catlett, exhibit rooms, Flood Building, Edward A. Rogers collection of Cardinell-Vincent Company and Panama-Pacific International Exposition photographs, BANC PIC 2015.013:51543--NEG, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

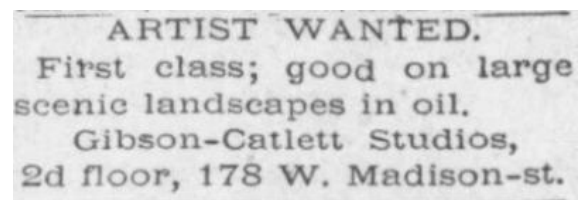
A surviving example of one of Catlett's real estate selling campaigns from this period was the advertising created in 1917 (©1918) for the Alderwood Manor farmland development near Seattle, Washington. The properties were being sold by the land department of the Puget Mill Company and included bird's-eye views of farmhouses and orchards at the Alderwood Manor demonstration farm.



Advertising for The New Life of the Land at Alderwood Manor (1917). Courtesy of Lynnwood-Alderwood Manor Heritage Association, Seattle, WA.

ESTABLISHMENT OF GIBSON CATLETT STUDIOS, CHICAGO (ca. 1919)

Gibson Catlett left San Francisco and moved to Chicago, IL in about 1919 where he first established his art studio. He was listed in the in the U.S. Census of 1920 as being one of several



Classified advertisement in *Chicago Tribune* (1919, December

lodgers living at the home of Robert Fiedler in the city's Ward 23

14).

enumeration district. Other lodgers included Catlett's friend and fellow artist Davis Schwartz, his wife Isabella (Bella) Schwartz and the couple's young son Stanley.



Gibson Catlett Studios at 178 W. Madison Street, Chicago. Postcard, Chuckman's Chicago Nostalgia and Memorabilia [ca. 1920s].

Once in Chicago, Catlett centralized his art business at 178 W. Madison Street though in 1924 he would eventually move it to a 5,000-square-foot location within the three-story Rainier Building at 3117 Logan Boulevard in the city's Logan Square neighborhood where he claimed to employ 20 artists (1926, Feb. 2, *Tampa Bay Times*). These Chicago studios meant that, instead of travelling with his artists and their equipment from place to place, he would now have a permanent location.

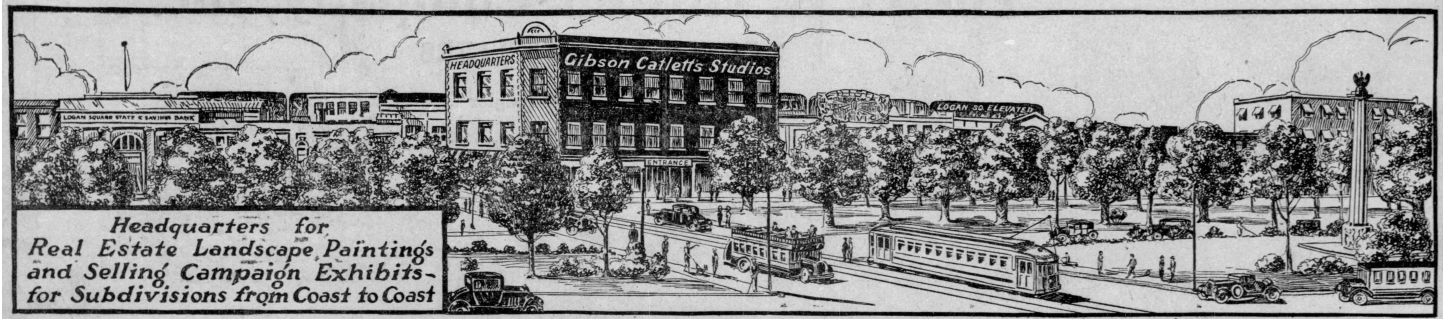
In 1919 and 1920, Catlett's studio produced views for real estate developments which included those in Akron, OH (High Grove Park), Hammond, IN (Morris Park & Dyer subdivisions), St. Albans, WV (Highlawn properties), Buffalo, NY (Homewood Beach & Homewood

Orchards) and Chicago, IL (Wm. H. Britigan developments).

Catlett was also commissioned by the Inland Steel Company of Chicago to paint a series of sixteen oil paintings that showed the operations necessary to manufacture open hearth steel. These paintings were re-produced in a handsome promotional brochure for the company which was published in 1919.

Catlett would call Chicago home for the remainder of his career though he would travel and work extensively

throughout the United States and continue to spend time at his old home estate in Catlett, Virginia. Though he called Chicago home, Catlett spent six to nine months of every year in Florida starting in about 1920.



Gibson Catlett's Studios were in the Rainier Building at 117 Logan Boulevard in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood. From advertisement in Miami Herald (1925, March 8).

MIAMI & THE FLORIDA REAL ESTATE BOOM (1920-1926)

Catlett's real estate landscape paintings attracted significant interest from real estate developers from across the country starting in the early 1920s. In early 1921, newspaper articles indicate that Catlett's Chicago studio had created large pictures of Miami and other places along the Atlantic coast of south Florida. Later that same year, it was reported in the *Miami Herald* (1921, Dec. 18) that Catlett had visited the Pacific coast and arranged to paint pictures for real estate developers in Los Angeles and San Francisco⁶.

One of Catlett's more notable early Florida works appears to have been a painting, twenty by four feet in dimension, depicting Miami, Miami Beach and the city's waterfront section from Fulford to



Montray corporation., Freeman, W. Coolbaugh. (1921). Miami. [New York: Printed by Brower-Mackey corporation.

Coconut Grove. It was originally made for famous Miami Beach developer Carl G. Fisher (Miami Herald, 1923). Another Miami painting was produced at a cost of \$3,000 for D. P. Davis of the United Realty Company and was used to sell Miami subdivisions. Similar paintings of Miami were produced for other real estate offices and exhibits. A copy, or perhaps even the original of his “famous” Miami painting was part of an exhibit at the Montray Corporation offices in New York City which appeared as a reproduction in an attractive advertising booklet published in 1921 entitled *Miami*. Duplicates of the Montray exhibition were also planned for Buffalo, Detroit and other cities in the northern U.S. according to an announcement in the *Miami News* (1921, March 28).



Advertisement for Gibson Catlett Studios, Professional Building, Miami. *Miami Herald* (1925, April 12).

Feb. 7).

Perhaps partly as a result of the success of the Miami painting, Catlett received commissions to paint views of other cities all over Florida including Cocoa (1921), Palm Beach (1921), Palm Beach county (1921), Hollywood Beach (1922), Miami-Dade county (1922), Coral Gables (1922), Oldsmar (1923), Orlando (1923), Manatee County⁷ [Bradenton] (1924), Pinellas county [Clearwater] (1924), Lake Okeechobee (1924), Fort Myers⁸ (1924), Fort Lauderdale (1925), and Key West (1925). In 1921, he even created a painting showing the entire State of Florida “...as seen from a great elevation over the east coast looking across the state, featuring the good roads system” (*Tampa Bay Times*, 1922,

In fact, so many orders for paintings came to him from Florida real estate developers that in 1925 Catlett opened branches of

his studios in offices at Miami's Professional Building and in Tampa at 412 Franklin St. where much of Florida work would have been undertaken (1925, April 12; *Miami Herald*; *Miami Herald*, March 8, 1925). As of 1925, more than 250 such paintings from Catlett's Chicago studio had been distributed throughout the state of Florida (*Miami Herald*, Nov. 24, 1925).



Inside the real estate offices of Buchanan & Burton - Miami, Florida (March 18, 1926). Catlett's Topographical view of Everjune Gardens, Miami is the painting in upper right, © January 11, 1926. Source: [State Library & Archives of Florida, RC03586](#).

One particularly notable Catlett Studios work created during the Florida boom was a semi-cycloramic picture of the Florida Riviera development in St. Petersburg for land speculator Eugene M. Elliott's Boulevard and Bay Land Development Company in 1924. It was eight feet high by one hundred and twenty feet long and was made in three separate sections which showed Elliott's grand visions for the property located along the North St. Petersburg shoreline. A *Tampa Bay Times* (1924, December 26) advertisement indicated the paintings were on display at Elliott's real estate office and lined both sides and the entire

back of the building's auditorium. This arrangement was meant to enable an individual to stand in the centre of the auditorium floor and, in turning from left to right, gain a conception of what the entire property would look like once completed.

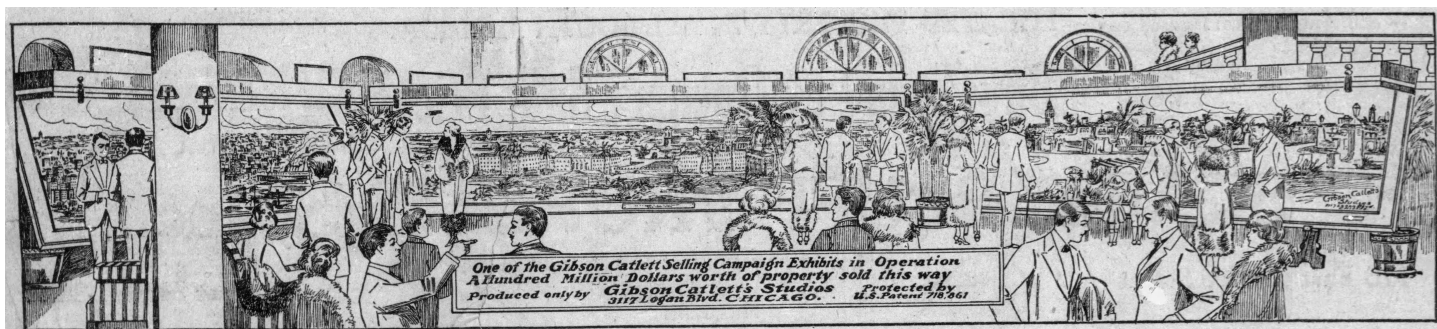


Illustration of large Gibson Catlett Studios cycloramic real estate landscape painting, possibly the planned Florida Riviera development, St. Petersburg, Florida. From advertisement in *Miami Herald* (1925, March 8).



Gibson Catlett's 16-foot painting of the Sequoyah Hills development in Knoxville, Tennessee on display in Sequoyah Hills office (ca. 1925). *Sequoyah Hills office*, Image Number N-1036, Thompson Photograph Collection, C.M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County, Tennessee Public Library.

Florida proved to be the state where Catlett found the greatest demand for his real estate landscape panoramas and it was his success there that attracted the attention of real estate developers from throughout the United States. Besides Florida, the U.S. Catalog of Copyright entries for years 1923-1926 lists Catlett's studio as also having produced views for

developments in Maryland, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin. But, in 1926, just as it seemed that the good times in Florida's real estate business would last forever, the giant bubble that was the Florida land boom that had been deflating since 1925, abruptly popped and dragged down real estate sales across the entire country.

FOR SALE—HAND PAINT-
ED BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF
M I A M I, SUITABLE FOR
REAL ESTATE OFFICE.
SIZE 4 FEET BY 21 FEET.
MADE BY GIBSON CAT-
LETT STUDIOS, CHICAGO.
UNITED REALTY CO., 807
PROFESSIONAL BUILDING.
PHONE 5527.

Classified ad in the *Miami Herald* (1925, October 25).



This color reproduction of a bird's-eye view of Miami, Florida appears in a promotional brochure and shows the landholdings of the Montray Corporation.

Catlett, G. (1921). [Miami, Florida painting]. In *Miami*. New York: Montray corporation. (pp. 11-12).



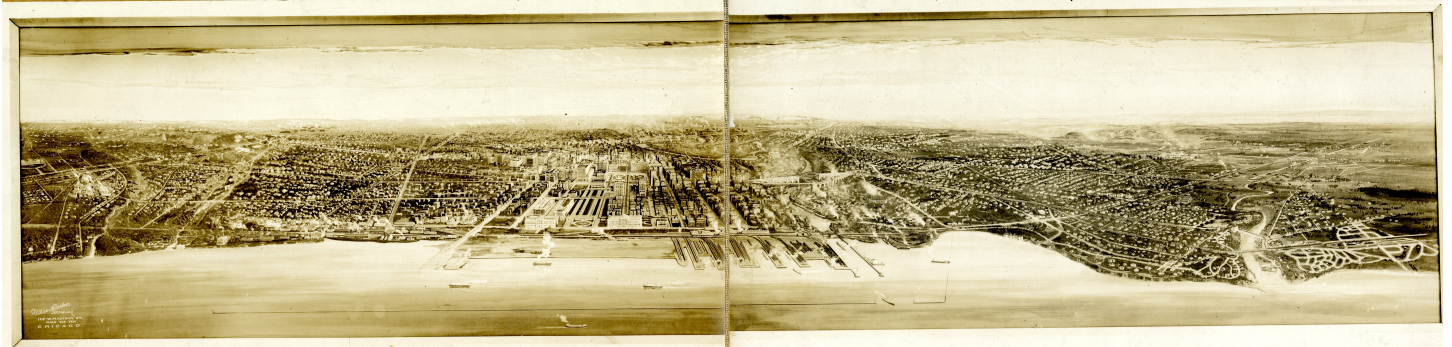
An article in the Fort Myers *News-Press* (1925, March 30) about the shows a Gibson Catlett painting with the caption, "Bird's-eye-view of San Carlos on the Gulf reproduced from painting visualizing the complete development."

Catlett, G. (1925). Bird's-eye-view of San Carlos on the Gulf [advertisement]. In *Suniland Magazine*, 1(4), Announcing San Carlos on the Gulf.



This 20-foot-wide panorama oil painting of "future" Oldsmar, Florida was created by Gibson Catlett Studios of Chicago for a real estate promotion by the Oldsmar Land Development Co., and Harry E. Prettyman.

Gibson Catlett Studios. (1923). *Panoramic Oldsmar [painting]*. TECO Hall, 400 St. Petersburg Drive E., Oldsmar, Florida.



A signature on the lower-left side of this bird's-eye view painting of Cleveland , Ohio (ca. 1926) indicates that it was created by "Gibson Catlett Studios, 178-W. Madison St., Main Six Ten, Chicago."

Gibson Catlett Studios. (n.d.). *[Bird's-eye view of Cleveland, Ohio]* [photograph of painting]. Chicago, IL: Author.



This reproduction of a painting of Baltimore, Maryland and its proposed harbor development appears in the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper (1924, Feb. 24, pp. 92-93).

Catlett, G. (1923). *Panoramic view of Baltimore and environs showing new piers and harbor development being constructed by municipal commissions* [painting]. © Merchants and Manufacturers Association and the Mayor and Council of Baltimore.

TEXAS AND THE GULF COAST (1926-1927)

The end of the Florida real estate bubble resulted in Catlett seeking new markets for his real estate landscape paintings. He ventured to Texas in 1926 and even established a studio at 404 Builders' Exchange Building in San Antonio. While in the state, he arranged to have landscape paintings produced for

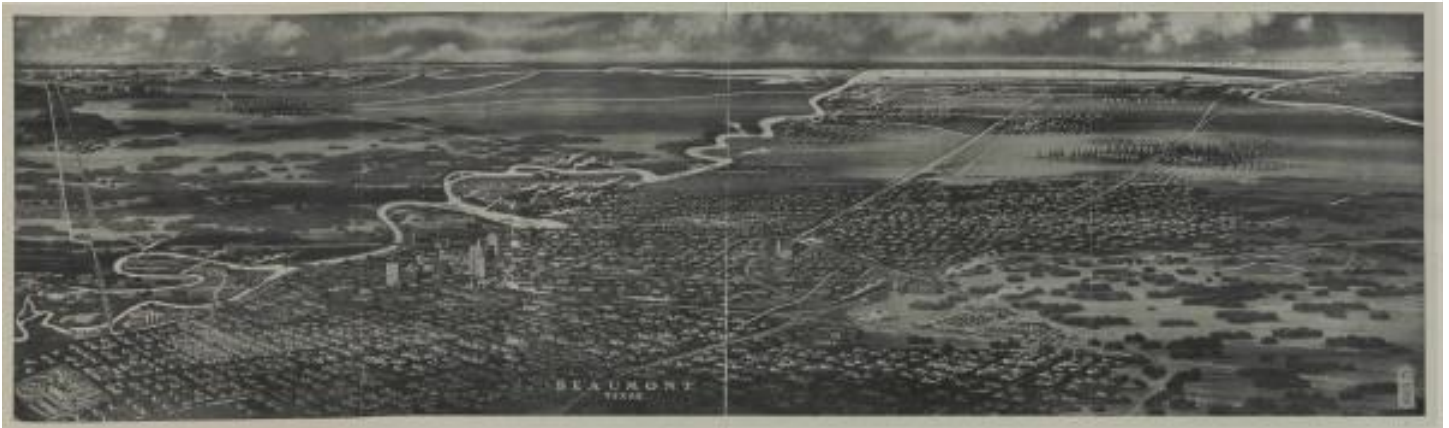
real estate developers in several cities including Amarillo (1926), San Antonio (1926), Brownsville (1926), Harlingen (1926), Houston (1927), McAllen (1927), Winter Garden, and Beaumont (1927). Catlett also visited Louisiana in 1926 where he was commissioned by developer R. E. Edgar deMontluzin to produce a city view of New Orleans in 1926, and to Biloxi, Mississippi where he spoke at a local real estate board meeting in March 1927.

It was also in 1927 that Catlett married Sarah (Essa) Dougherty (1869-1941) on July 12 in Chicago.



Label on Oakwood Memorial Park (High Point, NC)
painting by

Gibson Catlett Studios which indicated studios located in Chicago and San Antonio, Texas. Courtesy of High Point Museum, High Point, NC.



A photographic reproduction of a painting by Gibson Catlett, commercial artist appears in a promotional booklet for the Beaumont, Texas Chamber of Commerce. The painting shows the entire city and an article in the *Beaumont Journal* (1927, July 22) indicates that it was made at "considerable expense."

Beaumont Chamber of Commerce. (1927). *Beaumont : A 30-foot channel to the sea.* Beaumont, TX: Author. The Texas Collection - Texas Promotional Materials, Baylor University Libraries Digital Collection.



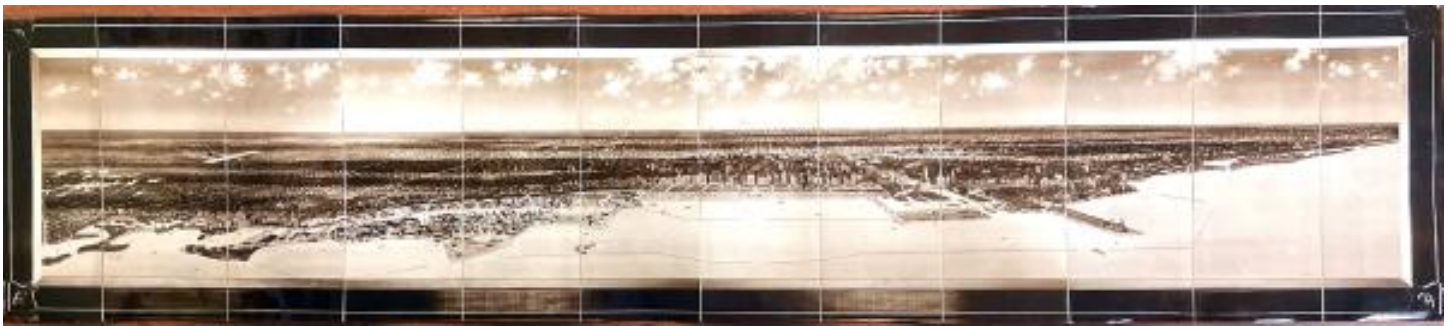
The November 15, 1926 issue of the *Amarillo Globe* newspaper contained an advertisement for John J. Harden's East Amarillo Development Company exhibit of an 18-foot long panorama painting of Greater Amarillo by landscape artist Gibson Catlett.

See the Greater Amarillo panoramic exhibit [advertisement]. (1927, January 2). *Amarillo Sunday News and Globe* (Amarillo, Texas), p. 7.

THE LAST OF CATLETT'S REAL ESTATE LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS (1928-1930)

Most of Catlett's real estate landscape work during 1928 and 1929 was for developments in Chicago and various other locations in the upper Midwest including Waukegan, IL (1928), Dayton, OH (1929) and Northern Michigan (1929).

One of his most notable works from this period was a large panoramic view and two companion paintings he created showing the proposed development of the 1933 World's Fair grounds and the Chicago skyline (©1929). They were put on display in the main concourse of the Chicago Union Depot and attracted interest of thousands of people daily. The exhibit was rotated to other railroad stations and major theatres in the city and were found to be an excellent medium for directing the notice of the travelling public to the 1933 fair according to J. R. Custer of the Chicago and North Western Railroad Company's Advertising Department.



Gibson Catlett painted a bird's-eye view of the City of Chicago (©1929) showing the proposed development of the fairgrounds for the Chicago World's Fair held in 1933-34 which was more formally known as 'A Century of Progress International Exposition.' It was placed on display in the main concourse of the Chicago Union Depot where it was viewed by 40,000-50,000 people daily.

Another interesting bird's-eye view painting by Catlett's studio in 1929 was a twenty-foot-long picture of the Trinity River reclamation project in Dallas, Texas which was made to represent how the project would look once completed. It was reported in the *Dallas News* (1930, May 24) that it was painted over the course of six months by four artists under Gibson Catlett's supervision using aerial photographs, maps and engineering data supplied by the project supervisors.

The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 put an end to the building of new subdivisions in most areas of the United States which severely curtailed demand for Catlett's real estate landscape paintings. Catlett continued work until

August 1930 before retiring from the profession to spent time with his wife Sarah at the Catlett family home in Catlett, VA.

On May 10, 1935, Catlett's daughter Elizabeth died in Holyoke, MA after a long illness. Two weeks later, on May 25, 1935, Gibson Catlett died at the age of 68 of arsenic poisoning in an apparent suicide. He was buried on his home estate in Catlett, VA.

[1] A legal notice in the *Springfield Republican* (1923, Aug. 21) from Josephine Catlett indicates that Gibson Catlett officially deserted their marriage on December 18th, 1918. It also lists the cities where they had resided together.

[2] In an interview for the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper (1923, July 29), Catlett said the idea of painting cities came to him after years spent in the advertising business. He had sketched and painted many small areas and from this conceived the proposition of spreading whole cities on canvas. His talent for painting and sketching was developed from an early boyhood interest.

[3] The *Los Angeles Herald* article "Catlett will make big picture of Los Angeles" (1907, July 21) indicates a picture of Salt Lake City was made by Catlett and his landscape artists.

[4] Surviving views include pictures of Victoria, Calgary, Bowness, Edmonton, Kelowna, Lethbridge, Saskatoon, Halifax and the Irrigation Block of Southern Alberta.

[5] Uplands was laid out as a residential district by prominent landscape architect John C. Olmsted of Brookline, Mass.

[6] Including the Atascadero project being developed by E. G. Lewis which located in in San Luis Obispo County, about midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

[7] The \$1,000 painting of Manatee County was jointly funded by local businessmen and the county's publicity fund. It was shown at the Florida exposition in New York City in 1924 and later used at fairs and real estate conventions.

[8] The painting of Fort Myers was produced to sell the San Carlos on the Gulf properties being developed by Thomas H. Phillips.

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