



# After A Hundred Years: The Life Of An American Artist, Ada Leonore Knox, 1861-1902

*Constance J. McChesney*

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Through family diaries, photographs and paintings, saved and passed down by three generations of women, the life of Ada Lenore Knox, an unknown nineteenth-century American artist is brought to light. A young woman of upper middle-class Midwestern background she goes off in 1881 on a year-long Grand Tour in the company of her sister, Mary, and other young women for a year. She and her sister remain for another year to study, then Ada stays by herself in Paris until 1886, having the adventure of her life, mastering the art of oil painting, and having a "brilliant romance" with a French officer. Returning to the States after five years abroad, she tries to recreate her life of freedom and artistic expression in Chicago, and succeeds for a while until family expectations, then failing health, send her down a very different path. Her intimate diary, written in the year before she died, and her artistic legacy reveal a courageous and talented woman.

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