



# Charles Keck

Sculptor (1871–1951)

Keck was born in New York City and studied at the National Academy of Design and at the Art Students League with Philip Martiny. He was an assistant in the studio of AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS from 1893 to 1898, helping the sculptor produce such works as his monument to James Garfield (1895) for Fairmont Park in Philadelphia. Keck won the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts' Rinehart Scholarship, which allowed him to travel to Rome, where he studied from 1899 to 1905. Returning to New York in 1905, he occupied Saint-Gaudens' former studio on West 36th Street.

In 1913, Keck designed a memorial plaque that was cast from metal that had been salvaged from the USS *Maine* after it was raised from the bottom of Havana harbor the previous year. Over a thousand of the plaques were cast and they are spread unevenly all over the United States in museums and private collections. That same year he modeled a full-length statue of George Washington, commissioned as a gift to the city of Buenos Aires from Americans who lived there. In 1922, his statue of Booker T. Washington was unveiled in Tuskegee, Alabama. In 1931, Keck completed the Great Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The obverse of the seal is still used to this day and appears on the state flag as well.

Keck continued working into the '30s and '40s. His best-known works include the life-sized bronze of Father Duffy, which was erected in Times Square in 1937, and his earlier figure of "America," the principal piece of sculpture of the elaborate Allegheny County Soldiers' Memorial, in Pittsburgh. His statues of the statesman Charles B. Aycock and Governor Huey P. Long are in Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol. Keck was a member of the Architectural League of New York, a fellow of the American Academy in Rome, and a member of the National Sculpture Society, where he served as president. His proposer at the Century was fellow sculptor HERBERT ADAMS.

