Born in 1896 in Santa Paula, California, Douglas Shively went to local elementary and high schools. He attended the University of Southern California and Occidental College before winning his only lottery, that being the Draft. Shively served in France during WWI and upon discharge returned home to finish his education, start a family, and eventually go into the banking business with his father.

Art had become an integral part of Shively's daily life and continued to become more than just a hobby when in the 1920s he began painting with artists from the Los Angeles area who eventually became nationally known. Their influence, as well as becoming acquainted with artists Robert Clunie, Jessie Arms Botke, and Cornelis Botke, led to the inspiration for the annual Santa Paula Art Show. The art show was sponsored for many years by the Chamber of Commerce and is now presented by the Santa Paula Society of the Arts.

Douglas made many sketching trips throughout Southern California with artists including John Cotton, George Otis, Cornelis Botke, Paul Sample, and Ralph Holmes. He made fifteen painting trips to Asia, Scandinavia, Great Britain, and Europe. He enjoyed a unique three-dimensional career as bank president, rancher and as an artist.