



Homestead of Jacob H. Leerdia,

From a sketch taken by Jacob Stouff ex. July 19, 1879, during a visit; in company with Dr. E. S. Thurston; and enjoyed the kind hospitality of their host and his family. Presented in commemoration of that day by the dumbbells club, not as a matter of skill or beauty, but as a token of good remembrance.

July 20, 1879, at Leerdia, 17 year of age, 1879, 1879, 1879.

HOMESTEAD OF JACOB H. LANDIS

Jacob Stauffer (1808–1880)

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; 1879

Watercolor and ink on paper; 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ "

Promised gift of Ralph Esmerian, P1.2001.63

Photo © 2000 John Bigelow Taylor, New York

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE OBJECT

Artists often take inspiration for their artwork from events in their own lives. Having created this painting as a thank-you present, Jacob Stauffer probably never expected it to find its way into a museum. *Homestead of Jacob H. Landis* records the memory of a pleasant day spent visiting a friend at his farm and was presented as a gift to the farm's owner. We know that the painting was made after the trip but was based on sketches made at the farm. On the porch of the house, we see the artist, his traveling companion, and their host enjoying a conversation. The drawing is inscribed not just with Stauffer's signature but also with a message stating whom the painting is for and the reason why it was created—as “a token of fond memories.” The house is still standing today.

RELATED LESSONS

- “Stories from My Life” (pre-K–1)
- “Exploring Folk Art Through Poetry” (2–3)

STORIES FROM MY LIFE

PRE-K-1

GRADE LEVEL: PRE-K-1

NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS: THE ARTS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

ESTIMATED TIME: ONE 45-MINUTE PERIOD

OBJECTIVES

- Students will look at a folk art painting created to capture the memory and experience of a particular day in the artist's life.
- Students will tell the story of an event or experience from their own lives in words and pictures.

MATERIALS

- Images of *Homestead of Jacob H. Landis*
- Paper, tempera or watercolor paints, small and medium paintbrushes
- Writing materials

LESSON ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES

Introduction

- Discuss the different types of stories—stories that are read in books, narrated in movies, or told aloud. Often people tell stories about their own lives—stories about their families or friends and about places they've visited.
- Tell the students a simple story of your own, based on a memory from your life, and record this story on the board.
- Ask the students to share a story about their own memories of life events or experiences. You may guide the students' thinking by offering a more directed motivation. For instance, "Tell me a story about a time you were surprised or a special place you visited." Write down these ideas to refer to later in the lesson.
- Introduce the idea that in their works, artists also tell stories about their lives.

Discussion

Have the students look closely at a reproduction of *Homestead of Jacob H. Landis*, attending to the many details in the work. Because of the detailed composition of the painting, it may be best to work with multiple reproductions and have pairs or small groups of students share a reproduction. Have small groups or pairs of students discuss their observations of the artwork and the stories contained in it.

- What do you see? What is happening in this picture?
- Tell a story about this painting.
- Where's the artist in this picture?

- During or after the discussion of the artwork, introduce the information about the artist and the purpose of the painting, including the fact that the artist painted this picture after his visit to the farm based on his memory of the day.

Activity

- Revisit the students' previous ideas about stories they might like to tell in their own artwork.
- Discuss choosing a specific part of each student's story he or she would like to depict. Jacob Stauffer, for example, chose to paint himself, his friend, and the farmer sitting on the porch talking rather than another moment during the visit at the farm.
- You might demonstrate a picture that would illustrate an aspect of the story you told earlier, quickly sketching an image on the board.
- Have the students create a painting based on the story of their memory. Encourage the students to use the maximum level of detail consistent with their abilities, reminding them of the fine detail included in *Homestead of Jacob H. Landis*.
- Have the students write their stories in words as is appropriate for their grade level and writing ability. Transcribe the stories of younger students.

PRE- AND POST-LESSON ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- Storytelling is an exciting and accessible way for young children to develop an understanding of works of art. Choose other artworks that lend themselves to discovering or imagining narratives to explore with your students.
- Visit the American Folk Art Museum for a guided tour. Conduct this lesson before or after your museum visit.
- The "Painting the Town: Picturing My Community" lesson designed for grades 2–3 explores artists' paintings of their own communities and may be adapted for use with younger students and taught in conjunction with this lesson.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION METHODS

- Students closely observed the presented artwork and related their observations and ideas to one another in discussion.
- Students chose a memory about which they could tell a story, either verbally or in writing, depending on age level and writing ability.
- Students created paintings related to a story from their lives.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Recommended Books for Students

Aliki. *Marianthe's Story: Painted Words/Spoken Memories*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1998.

An autobiographical picture book comprised of two stories in which the author shares her memories of beginning a new school and undertaking a new language. With her teacher's encouragement, she learns she can share her stories through her art and eventually through her words.

Lyons, Mary E., ed. *Talking with Tebé: Clementine Hunter, Memory Artist*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998.

A picture-book exploration of Clementine Hunter's vivid, colorful paintings of her life memories, written at a level appropriate for upper-elementary and middle-school students. The artwork illustrations will appeal to younger children as well.

Nikola-Lisa, W., and Grandma Moses. *The Year with Grandma Moses*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000.

Grandma Moses's paintings of landscapes through the seasons, accompanied by her own words, excerpted from her memoirs.

Recommended Book for Teachers

Hollander, Stacy C. *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: American Folk Art Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 2001.

Catalog of this once private collection of American folk art, comprising hundreds of pieces of furniture, signs, ceramics, textiles, weathervanes, walking sticks, and other objects. *Homestead of Jacob H. Landis* is illustrated and discussed on pages 92 and 415.