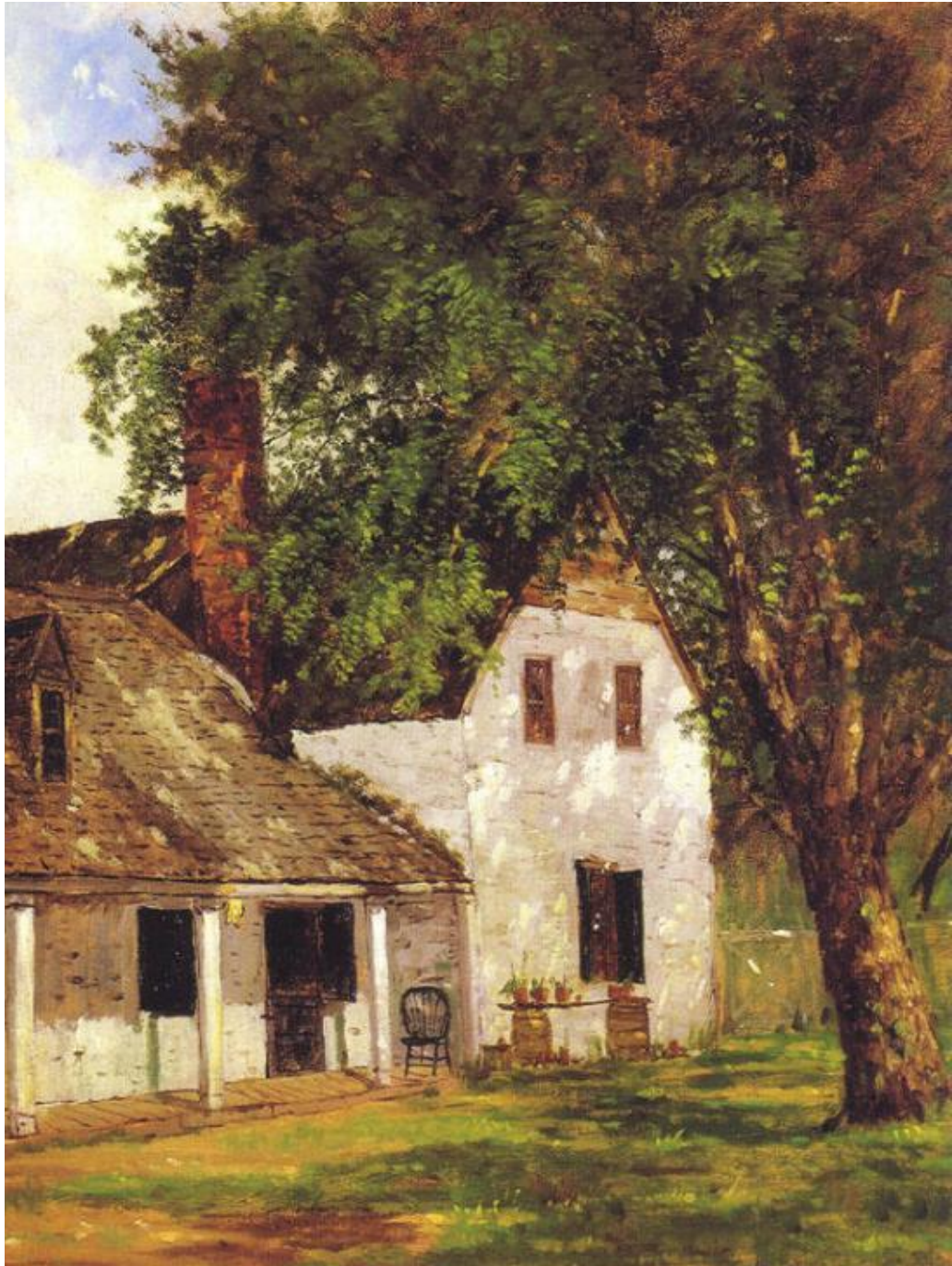


Basic Detail Report



Basic Detail Report



Title: Wynkoop House, Old Haarlem

Date: 1888

Primary Maker: com.gallerysystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@3efe6

Medium: Oil on canvas

Description: "Wynkoop House, Old Haarlem" represents a frequently misunderstood aspect of Tanner's oeuvre. Along with his characteristic biblical subjects, the artist depicted specific sites and buildings that have erroneously been seen by some writers on Tanner "as diversions from the intense work of composing elaborate biblical subjects intended for the Salon."⁽¹⁾ Recent research, however, has demonstrated that subjects such as "Wynkoop House" were important to the core of Tanner's symbolic civil-rights messages. At first glance, the title of our painting, "Wynkoop House, Old Haarlem", suggests that the building is in the Netherlands. However, a Wynkoop House also known as Vredens-Hof and Vrendens Berg existed at Northampton Township in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, not far from Tanner's home in Philadelphia.⁽²⁾ It was built in 1739 by Nicolas Wynkoop, who named the place Vrendens-Hof, "abode of peaceful rest."⁽³⁾ "When a house is distinguished by association with such sturdy and loyal characters as Vrendens-Hof has been, it assumes a greater dignity; Washington, Lafayette, and James Monroe having been guests, under its hospitable roof at the same time, at the close of the American Revolution."⁽⁴⁾ When it was owned by George Washington's abolitionist friend Judge Henry Wynkoop ⁽⁵⁾ the house would have been of interest to Tanner because Judge Wynkoop "treated his slaves so well that although he gave them their freedom, most of them remained on the farm and upon their deaths, according to legend, were buried under a tree" near Vrendens-Hof.⁽⁶⁾ Tanner emphasized the tree in the foreground of "Wynkoop House" and by so doing gave it the type of social underpinning found in his other site-specific works. Although Tanner's building is in basically the same architectural style as published photographs of Wynkoop House, it does not match exactly with any section of the mansion, even when remodeling is taken into consideration.⁽⁷⁾ On the other hand, an illustration in a book on Vredens-Hof published in 1908 shows individual, unattached structures on either side of the manse and behind it that call to mind the configuration at Washington's estate in Mount Vernon.⁽⁸⁾ In point of fact, Tanner's rendition of Wynkoop House may be seen as a sophisticated architectural version of the slave quarters at Mount Vernon. Stylistically, Tanner's approach in "Wynkoop House" is inconsistent with his working method in the late 1880s, as is the signature. The painting does not echo the drawing skill or spatial arrangement of the 1888 illustration "It Must Be My Very Star" and does not bear the monogram signature.⁽⁹⁾ Moreover, the treatment of Wynkoop

Basic Detail Report

is far removed from the confident handling of "Lion Licking Its Paw" (1886; Allentown Art Museum, Pa.). The overall style of the picture, however, is perfectly consistent with Tanner's treatment in "Boy and Sheep Lying under a Tree" (1881; private collection). The middle-ground compositions and palettes of these works match up very well. Even more compelling is the dabbled sparkling light in both works which presages one of the most beautiful aspects of Tanner's mature style. DFM

Bibliography: Henry O. Tanner, "The Story of an Artist's Life," "World's Work" 18 (June, July 1909): 11661-66, 11769-75; Marcia M. Mathews, "Henry Ossawa Tanner, American Artist" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Dewey F. Mosby and Darrel Sewall, "Henry Ossawa Tanner", exhib. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art; New York: Rizzoli, 1991); Dewey F. Mosby, "Across Continents and Cultures: The Art and Life of Henry Ossawa Tanner", exhib. cat. (Kansas City, Mo.: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art), 1995. Notes: 1. Mosby and Sewall, "Henry Ossawa Tanner", p. 132. 2. Julian G. Hammond Jr., "Vrendens-Hof: A Few Facts Concerning the History of an Old House" (Frankford, Pa.: Julian G. Hammond 3rd, 1908), p. 2. 3. Ibid., p. 3. 4. Ibid., p. 2. 5. Virginia B. Geyer, "Further Notes on Henry Wynkoop," "Bucks County Historical Society Journal" 1 (fall 1976): 1-12. 6. Ibid., p. 8. 7. See reproductions in Ibid. 8. Hammond Jr., Vrendens-Hof, fronticepiece. 9. Reproduced in Mosby, "Across Continents and Cultures", p. 25.

Dimensions: Frame: 23 3/8 x 18 1/4 x 2 3/4 in. (59.4 x 46.4 x 7 cm) Image: 18 1/2 x 13 1/4 in. (47 x 33.7 cm)