

KIECHEL FINE ART

AMERICAN REGIONALISM



COVER IMAGE

Dale Nichols, *After the Blizzard*

BACK COVER

Thomas Hart Benton, *Harbor Scene*

REGIONALISM

PAINTINGS & DRAWINGS 2007

K I E C H E L F I N E A R T

5733 SOUTH 34TH STREET, SUITE 300

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA 68516

T 402.420.9553

F 402.420.9554

GALLERY@KIECHELART.COM

WWW.KIECHELART.COM

Table of Contents

THOMAS HART BENTON	PLATE	CURRY CONTINUED	PLATE	WILLIAM WIND MCKIM	PLATE
Harbor Scene	7	Still Life with Flowers, Vase and Statue	27	Grandmother	34
Miner's Going to Work	8	Storm over the Missouri	17		
Mountain with Cabin at Base	9	Study After Peter Paul Rubens	23	DALE NICHOLS	
Study for Making Camp	10	Study for "Kansas Pastoral"	28	After the Blizzard	1
The Steamboat Cincinnati	12	Study for "Parade to War"	31	Morning Chore	5
Towboat	11	Study for "Prize Stallions"	15	The Morning Star	2
		Study for "Storm over the Missouri"	16	Ghosts of Halloween	4
JOHN STEUART CURRY		Study for "Tragic Prelude"	29	The Valley Farm	3
Battle of the Amazons	24	Study for "Tragic Prelude: Coronado"	30		
Café/Diner Scene	33	Study for "Westward Migration"	32	AARON PYLE	
Flowers in a Copper Jug #2	25	Sunset	21	Homesteaders	35
Melora in the Cart	19	Three Nudes	22		
Mississippi Noah	14	Valley of the Wisconsin	13	GRANT WOOD	
Morning (Brown Thrush)	18			Door to the Old Chateau	6
Mount Desert, Maine	20				
Still Life with Flowers	26				

Preface

DIRECTOR

Vivian Kiechel

GALLERY DIRECTOR

Frederic "Buck" Kiechel IV

Kiechel Fine Art has provided its clients with exceptional service and knowledge of the art industry for more than 20 years. Directors Buck and Vivian Kiechel possess expertise in Regionalism and have established an extensive collection from this period. This catalogue represents a selection from KFA's current inventory, including works from Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood and the John Steuart Curry estate.

DALE NICHOLS (1904-1995)

1 *After the Blizzard*

1967, Oil on canvas
30 x 40 inches
Signed and dated lower left

"Farm Life was all I knew for the first twenty years of my life. In painting these canvases, I felt again the vastness of endless skies; experienced again the penetrating cold of Nebraska winters, lived again as farmers live...in spirit, I am very much a farmer."

PROVENANCE

Private collection,
David City, Nebraska

Born in David City, Nebraska, and educated at the Art Institute of Chicago, Dale Nichols left his native state to become the first Carnegie visiting professor of art at the University of Illinois. After remaining in Chicago for 15 years, he succeeded Grant Wood as art editor for the Encyclopedia Britannica from 1942 to 1948. Nichols' work is known for its detail and affectionate portrayals of rural life; his paintings were selected for exhibition at the Century of Progress in Chicago as well as five World's Fairs. Nichols is represented in numerous museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



DALE NICHOLS

2 *The Morning Star (A man's work is from sun to sun)*

c. 1954, Oil on canvas

30 x 40 inches

Signed and dated, lower right

PROVENANCE

Private collection, David City, Nebraska



DALE NICHOLS

- 3 *The Valley Farm between the Bluffs*
(The system of harvesting is long gone)

1967, Oil on canvas

30 x 40 inches

Signed, lower right

PROVENANCE

Private collection, David City, Nebraska



DALE NICHOLS

- 4 *Ghosts of Halloween*
(*The buildings and many of the railway cars are ghosts*)

1967, Oil on canvas

30 x 40 inches

Signed, lower right

PROVENANCE

Private collection, David City, Nebraska



DALE NICHOLS

5 *Morning Chore (The frozen tank)*

1972, Oil on canvas

30 x 40 inches

Signed and dated, lower left

PROVENANCE

Private collection, David City, Nebraska





GRANT WOOD (1891-1942)

6

Door to the Old Chateau: Perigueux

1926, Oil on board

16 x 13 inches

Signed and dated

INSCRIBED ON VERSO:

Door to Old Chateau Perigueux

Cedar Rapids - Ia - April 19 - 1931

Mr Milton Rusch
5463 N Danbury
Road
Milwaukee, Wis.

Dear Mr Rusch:-

Following instruction
from Ronald Maehlmann, I
am sending you by Am. Ex.
prepaid a box containing
one of my french doorway
paintings. It is one of a
series of 38 that I exhibited
in Paris in 1926. There
are only four of the series
left in my possession &



LETTER FROM GRANT WOOD

Cedar Rapids - Ia - April 19 - 1931
Mr. Milton Rusch
5463 N Danbury Road
Milwaukee, Wis.

Dear Mr Rusch:
Following instructions from Ronald
Maehlmann, I am sending you by
Am. Ex. prepaid a box containing
one of my french doorway paintings.
It is one of a series of 38 that I
exhibited in Paris in 1926. There
are only four of the series left in
my possession & Ronald & I both
thought this one the best. Should you
not care for it (and I fully understand
the choices when one person
undertakes to select so intimate
a thing as a painting for another
person) please send it back. You
must feel under no obligation
If you decide to keep it, I would
suggest that you might have it
reframed to good advantage.
Thanking you very much for
the interest you have
taken in my work.
Sincerely,
Grant Wood.

If you decide to keep it, I
would suggest that you
might have it reframed
to good advantage.

Thanking you very much
for the interest you have
taken in my work.

Sincerely
Grant Wood.

P.S. If you ever find yourself
in Cedar Rapids please call
at my studio

5 Turner Alley - Cedar Rapids - Iowa

Reframed & sent through
this one the best. Should
you not care for it (and
I fully understand the
choices when one person
undertakes to select so
intimate a thing as a
painting for another person)
please send it back. You
must feel under no obligation
whatever. Should you
decide to keep it the price
is \$70.00.

It is still in its temporary
frame which I had made
for it for exhibition purposes.

P.S. If you ever find yourself
in Cedar Rapids please call
at my studio

5 Turner Alley - Cedar Rapids - Iowa

THOMAS HART BENTON (1889-1975)

7 *Harbor Scene*

1918, Watercolor
10 x 15 inches
Signed lower left

PROVENANCE

Boise Art Museum

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,
"American Realism: Twentieth Century Drawings and Watercolors"
November 7, 1985–January 12, 1986

Harbor Scene

BY DR. HENRY ADAMS

PROFESSOR AT CASE WESTERN
RESERVE UNIVERSITY

AUTHOR, THOMAS HART BENTON:
AN AMERICAN ORIGINAL

Harbor Scene is undoubtedly one of the watercolors that Benton made in the Navy, while stationed at Norfolk, Virginia.

In 1918, to avoid being drafted in the infantry, Benton used family influence to get a position in the Navy, safely off the battlefield. In September 1918, after being trained to understand naval signaling, and spending some time shoveling coal, he was assigned to the naval base in Norfolk, Virginia, where he made descriptive drawings of boats and construction projects for record-keeping purposes. Benton spent two days a week gathering information with a photographer and was supposed to spend the next three days finishing his sketches, but since he could not finish his drawings in less than an hour this left him a substantial amount of time for his own work. During the latter part of his stint in the Navy he was even permitted to live off base in a Norfolk lodging house. In December 1918, Charles Daniel staged an exhibition of Benton's Navy watercolors at his gallery in New York, which received excellent reviews

both in *The New York Herald* and *The New York Times*.

While not chiefly remembered as a watercolorist, Benton had an exceptional talent for this medium. He established the basic features of his watercolor style in 1907-08, when he attended the Art Institute of Chicago and was the star student in the watercolor class of Frederick C. Oswald.

While studying in Chicago, Benton learned to make watercolors rapidly and directly, with bold colors reminiscent of Impressionist or Post-Impressionist paintings (including the use of blue shadows). In addition, after seeing an exhibition of Japanese prints from the collection of Frank Lloyd Wright, he became interested in dramatic patterns, in the interplay of figure and ground, and in the use of evenly gradated tones of color in areas such as the sky.

While executed some ten years later, this *Harbor Scene* watercolor capitalizes on many of these techniques. The

execution is forceful and direct, and the colors bold. Shapes are often created through the clever articulation of figure-ground relationships, notably in the case of the background buildings, which are defined by the pattern they make against the sky. Flat color areas, such as the walls of the buildings, are played against areas with gradated colors, as in the sky and water. Benton's pattern making skill becomes evident when we study forms that are similar, such as windows, and note how he expresses them in different ways, often evoking the shape by outlining only a small part of the overall form.

What distinguishes the Navy watercolors from Benton's early work is a greater interest in rhythmic relationships of three-dimensional form. As a group, the Navy watercolors vary somewhat in their style, ranging from a Cubist-Futurist approach, probably inspired in part by the work of John Marin, to a somewhat more straightforward realism, as in this example. But even the more realistic, closely observed

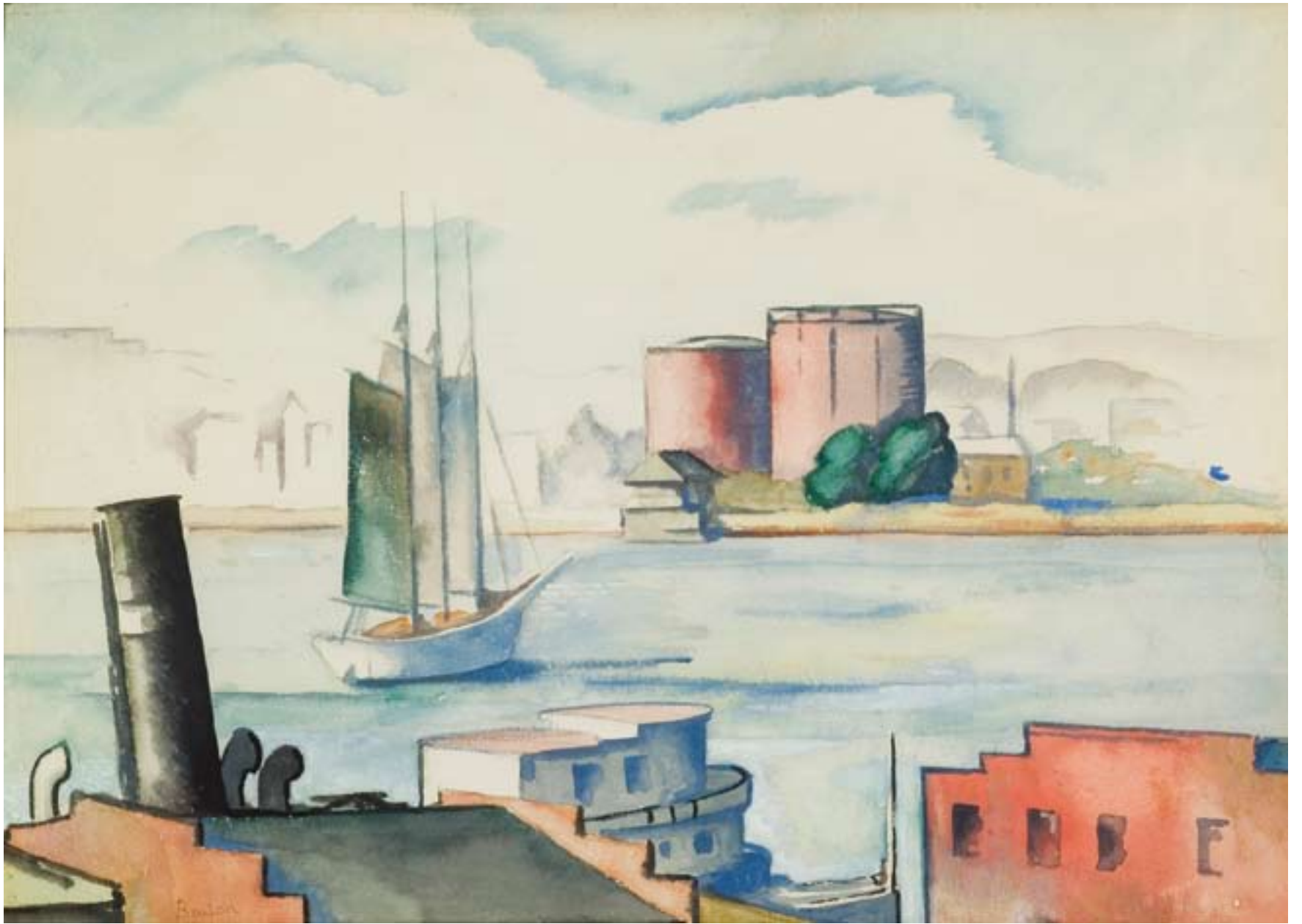
examples organize geometric shapes in a way which leads the eye through the composition in rhythmic pathways, such as the line of visual movement in this watercolor, which runs from the smokestack of the tugboat to the three-masted vessel to the storage tanks in the background.

Benton himself attached great importance to these Navy watercolors. As he later wrote in his autobiography, *An Artist in America* (4th revised edition, pages 44-45):

"This was the most important thing that, so far, I had ever done for myself as artist. My interests became, in a flash, of an objective nature. The mechanical contrivances of building, the new airplanes, the blimps, the dredges, the ships of the base, because they were so interesting in themselves, tore me away from all my grooved habits, from my play with colored cubes and classic attenuations, from my aesthetic drivelings and morbid self-concerns. I felt for good the

art-for-art's-sake world in which I had hitherto lived.

I had found that it was not necessary to look into myself and my 'genius' to find interesting things. I had found that these things existed in the world outside myself... I was released from the tyranny of the prewar soul which everybody so assiduously cultivated in the world of art and which was making of it such a precious field of obscurities."



THOMAS HART BENTON

8 *Miners Going to Work*

1940, Sepia, ink and pencil
14 x 17 inches
Signed, lower right

PROVENANCE

Thomas Hart Benton Estate





9



10

9 THOMAS HART BENTON *Mountain with Cabin at Base*, c. 1940, Watercolor & ink, 8 ½ x 11 ½ inches, Signed

10 THOMAS HART BENTON *Study for Making Camp*, c. 1930-40, Watercolor, ink, pencil and tempera, 11 x 14 inches



11



12

11 THOMAS HART BENTON *Towboat*, c. 1935-40, Sepia, ink and pencil, 8 ½ x 11 ½ inches, Signed

12 THOMAS HART BENTON *The Steamboat Cincinnati, A Sidewheeler on the Mississippi River*,
c. 1930-35, Sepia, ink and pencil, 8 ½ x 11 ½ inches, Signed

JOHN STEUART CURRY (1897-1946)

13 *Valley of the Wisconsin*

1941, Oil on canvas

13 x 25 inches, Signed, lower right

“For Christensens John Steuart Curry 1941”

PROVENANCE

Collection of Chris L. Christensen by descent



Born in Minden, Nebraska, Chris L. Christensen was named dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1931. Christensen, a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, shared the University president’s sentiment that America’s future welfare depended on a renewal of the rural culture. By hiring the like-minded John Steuart Curry in 1936, Christensen started the first artist-in-residence program in the United States and established a new direction in education, by encouraging rural citizens throughout Wisconsin to take an active interest in art.

Christensen and his wife, Cara, became close friends with John and Kathleen Curry. Among the several Curry paintings in the Christensen collection is *Valley of the Wisconsin*, the study for *Wisconsin Landscape* in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Chris L. Christensen, 1941, Oil and tempera on canvas

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin, Madison



JOHN STEUART CURRY

14 *Mississippi Noah*

1931, Watercolor

14 ½ x 21 ½ inches

Signed and dated, lower right

PROVENANCE

Collection of Chris L. Christensen



JOHN STEUART CURRY

15 *Study for "Prize Stallions"*

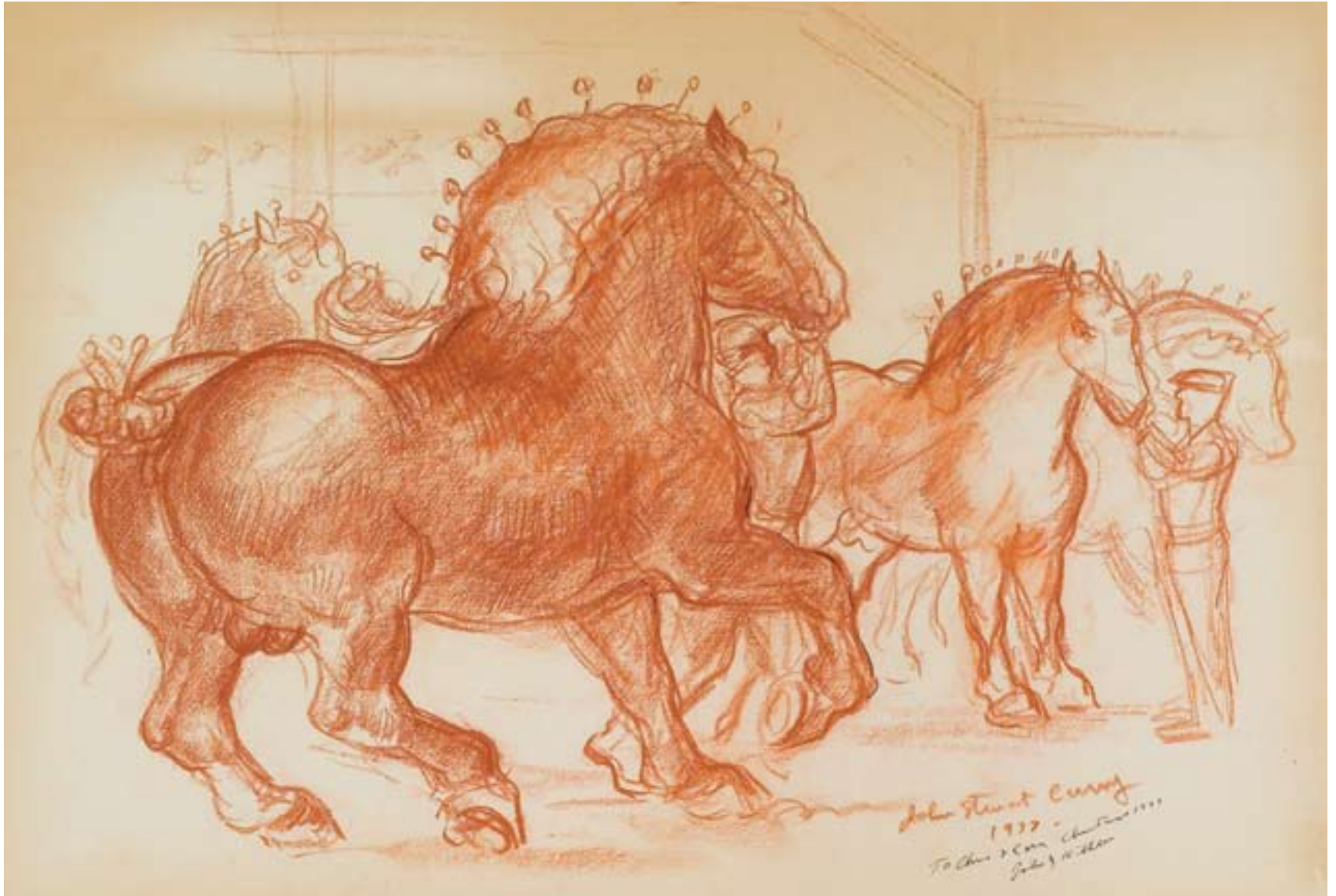
1937, Conté crayon

12 x 17 inches, Signed, lower right

"To Chris and Cara Christmas 1937 John and Kathleen"

PROVENANCE

Collection of Chris L. Christensen





16

16 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Study for "Storm Over the Missouri River,"* 1937, Watercolor, 9 x 13 inches, Signed and titled, lower right

17 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Storm over the Missouri River,* 1937, Oil on canvas, 30 x 39 inches, Signed, lower right





18 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Morning (Brown Thrush on Osage Branch Overlooking Kansas Landscape)*
1936, Oil and tempera on panel, 27 x 43 inches, Signed, titled and dated, lower right



JOHN STEUART CURRY

19

Melora in the Cart

From *John Brown's Body* by Stephen Vincent Benet
c. 1944, Tempera with oil on paper, 21 1/8 x 37 inches, Signed

The Ne'er Do Well [repainted in 1944 as *Melora in the Cart*] suggests economic upheaval. In the canvas Curry produced, in fact, one of American art's first images of the homeless taking to the roadways of Kansas and Oklahoma—an image that would within but a few years become emblematic of the Great Depression in America.

—Patricia Junker

John Stewart Curry, Inventing the Middle West



20 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Mount Desert, Maine*, 1944, Oil on panel, 28 x 51 inches, Signed



JOHN STEUART CURRY

21

Sunset

1934, Oil on panel

20 x 26 inches

Signed, lower right

An extremely simple composition in which the focal point is no longer the house or barn as in previous landscapes, but the sun itself, from which point a vigorous design of light streaks outward...This is the only real "sunset" that Curry ever did.

—Lawrence E. Schmeckebier

John Steuart Curry's Pageant of America



22



23

22 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Three Nudes*, 1942, Oil on canvas, 18 ½ x 10 inches, Signed and dated

23 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Study After Peter Paul Rubens, The Rape of the Daughters of Lysippus*

1938, Conté crayon, 10 x 13 ¾ inches, Initialed, lower right



24 JOHN STEUART CURRY *The Battle of the Amazons*, Also titled *Amazon's Battle*

1926-27, Oil on canvas, 33 ¼ x 39 ¼ inches



25



26

25 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Flowers in a Copper Jug #2*, 1944, Oil on canvas, 28 x 24 inches, Signed

26 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Still Life with Flowers*, c. 1940, Oil on panel, 30 x 24 inches, Signed



27 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Still Life with Flowers, Vase and Statue of a Cherub*
c. 1939, Oil on canvas, 35 x 47 inches



28 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Study for "Kansas Pastoral-The Unmortgaged Farm"*
Mural Study for Kansas Statehouse, Topeka, c. 1936, Graphite, 23 x 58 inches



29 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Study for "Tragic Prelude: The Plainsman, Coronado and Padre Padilla"*

Mural Study for Kansas Statehouse, Topeka, c. 1937, Graphite, 23 x 48 inches



JOHN STEUART CURRY

30

Study for "Tragic Prelude: Coronado"
Mural Study for Kansas Statehouse, Topeka
c. 1938, Oil on canvas, 20 x 26 ¼ inches

31

Study for "Parade to War": Soldier and Girl
c. 1933-39, Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 inches





32 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Study for "Westward Migration,"* Mural Study for the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.,
1938, Conté crayon, 9 ½ x 21 ¾ inches, Signed and dated



33 JOHN STEUART CURRY *Café/Diner Scene*, 1934, Watercolor, 17 ¾ x 24 inches, Signed and dated lower right



WILLIAM WIND MCKIM
(1916-1995)

34

Grandmother
1969, Oil on panel
18 x 13 inches



35 AARON PYLE (1909-1972) *Homesteaders*, c. 1968-70, Oil on panel, 18 5/8 x 26 1/2 inches, Signed



Works on Paper

SPRING 2007

Winslow Homer, *Fly Fishing, Saranac Lake*

GALLERY

5733 South 34th Street
Suite 300
Lincoln, Nebraska 68516
tel: 402.420.9553
fax: 402.420.9554

OFFICE

2341 Bretigne Drive
Lincoln, Nebraska 68512
tel: 402.423.0340
fax: 402.423.4270

WWW.KIECHELART.COM

GALLERY@KIECHELART.COM

DIRECTOR

Vivian Kiechel
vivian@kiechelart.com

GALLERY DIRECTOR

Buck Kiechel
buck1@kiechelart.com

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Gloria Garrett
gloria@kiechelart.com

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Josie Stauffer
josie@kiechelart.com



K I E C H E L F I N E A R T