

BACKGROUND READING FOR PRESENTERS

***Grandma Moses (1860 – 1961) "It's Haying Time"***

Source: <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Grandma-Moses>

**Grandma Moses**, byname of **Anna Mary Robertson Moses**, original name **Anna Mary Robertson** (September 7, 1860, Greenwich, New York - December 13, 1961, Hoosick Falls), American folk painter who was internationally popular for her naive documentation of rural life in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Anna Robertson had only sporadic periods of schooling during her childhood. At age 12 she left her parents' farm and worked as a hired girl until she married Thomas Moses in 1887. They first farmed in the Shenandoah Valley near Staunton, Virginia, and in 1905 moved to a farm at Eagle Bridge, New York, near her birthplace. Thomas died in 1927, and Anna continued to farm with the help of her youngest son until advancing age forced her to retire to a daughter's home in 1936.

As a child the artist had drawn pictures and colored them with the juice of berries and grapes. After her husband died she created worsted-embroidery pictures, and, when her arthritis made manipulating a needle too difficult, she turned to painting. At first she copied illustrated postcards and Currier & Ives prints, but gradually she began to re-create scenes from her childhood, as in *Apple Pickers* (c. 1940), *Sugaring-Off in the Maple Orchard* (1940), *Catching the Thanksgiving Turkey* (1943), and *Over the River to Grandma's House* (c. 1944). Her early paintings were given away or sold for small sums.

In 1939 Louis Caldor, an engineer and art collector, was impressed when he saw several of her paintings hanging in a drugstore window in Hoosick Falls, New York. He drove to her farm and bought her remaining stock of 15 paintings. In October of that year three of those paintings were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in a show titled "Contemporary, Unknown Painters."

From the beginning Grandma Moses's work received favorable criticism. In October 1940 a one-woman show of 35 paintings was held at Galerie St. Etienne in New York. Throughout her lifetime Grandma Moses produced about 2,000 paintings, most of them on masonite board. Her naive style (labeled "American Primitive" by art historians) was acclaimed for its purity of color, its attention to detail, and its vigor. From 1946 her paintings were often reproduced in prints and on Christmas cards. Her autobiography, *My Life's History*, was published in 1952.

ART PRESENTER PROGRAM

***Grandma Moses (1860 – 1961) “It’s Haying Time”***

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you see in this painting? Where do you think this scene is? What season do you think this is?
2. Ask children to find the horizon. Relate horizontal to the horizon.
3. Have the children find curved lines, point to them, and follow them with their fingers.
4. Does this look like a photograph? How do you know this picture is a painting? How is this painting like a photograph or other pictures we’ve seen?
5. Explore colors in this painting. Ask children how many different colors they can identify.
6. Point out the different textures in this painting? Do they make things seem more real?
7. The name of this painting is “It’s Haying Time”. Why do you think the artist named it that? What is haying time?
8. What are the people in this painting doing? Do you see any tractors? Why do you think not? What is used instead?
9. What buildings do you see?
10. Do you like this painting? Why or Why not?

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

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Describing her process, she said, “I paint from the top down. First the sky, then the mountains, then the hills, then the trees, then the houses, then the cattle, and then the people.”

1. Grandma Moses Art

Materials: white paper, colored chalks or pastels (available to borrow from the BCA)

Using Grandma Moses Style, have the students draw a horizon (best as a hill.) Color in the sky, then the hills. Guide students as they add trees, houses, cattle (or other animals) and people, in that order.

2. Straw Painting

Materials: straw or hay, tempera paint (available at the BCA)

Have the children use pieces of straw for paintbrushes. Have them use different colors and see how they can paint with it and make it look different. When the paintings are finished, have them add the pieces of straw to their work for a different look.

3. Farm Collage

Materials: Magazines, construction paper, crayons

Have children cut out pictures from magazines or have them already cut out. Find pictures that would go with farms like barns, animals, etc. Have the children glue the pictures they choose on a piece of construction paper to make a barn scene. Have them use crayons to add things they would like that there was not a picture for.

