

The origins of Edward Hopper's earliest oil paintings

Hopper's earliest surviving oils have long been valued as his first original works, and a number have been interpreted as scenes near his childhood home in Nyack, New York. The identification of one, 'Old ice pond at Nyack', as a copy of 'A winter sunset' by the Tonalist painter Bruce Crane has revealed that most if not all of these works are copies after paintings illustrated in popular American periodicals for amateur artists.

by LOUIS SHADWICK

RELATIVELY LITTLE IS known about Edward Hopper's youth in Nyack, New York, despite various attempts to piece together the story of the formative years he spent in the town where he was born in 1882. In large part, clues have had to be inferred from his few paintings and numerous drawings that depict local scenes and subjects, from boats along the nearby Hudson River to sketches of fishermen, trains and local churches; as Gail Levin wrote in her 1995 biography of the artist, these drawings 'document a childhood that Hopper barely referred to in interviews and for which there are few written records'.¹ Once Hopper had moved permanently to New York City in 1910, he never again sought out subjects in his hometown.²

For these reasons, Hopper's early landscape *Old ice pond at Nyack* (Fig.1) occupies a significant place in his work. Dated c.1897, it is thought to be one of his very few undoubted depictions in oil of the Nyack of his youth and one of his first signed paintings.³ The title refers to the old skating pond in Nyack, known by locals as 'the ice pond', which until the 1950s – when it was drained and replaced by the existing Thruway – was at the top of Main Street, only a short walk from the Hopper family home at 82 North Broadway.⁴ Postcards and photographs of the skating pond reveal its placid beauty in warmer weather and frenetic activity in the winter season, when it froze over and was thronged with skaters and ice cutters. Hopper's 1899 illustration *A pair of slippers* suggests his participation in this annual tradition, since it portrays two boys – one

of whom may represent the artist – slipping about on a frozen pond.⁵

It is uncertain precisely when the title *Old ice pond at Nyack* was given to the painting, although there is no evidence that it was provided by the artist. There is a parallel case in Hopper's first signed oil, now known as *Rowboat in rocky cove* (Fig.3), which the artist inscribed with the date 1895, when he was only thirteen years old. As with *Old ice pond at Nyack*, this painting has also been related by some commentators to Hopper's formative years spent in Nyack beside the Hudson River; indeed, after Hopper's death, the work was originally given the title *Rowboat on Hudson*.⁶

Throughout Hopper's lifetime, both *Old ice pond at Nyack* and *Rowboat in rocky cove* formed part of an extensive collection of his early paintings, drawings, letters and other material stored in the attic of his childhood home in Nyack, where Edward's sister Marion lived until her death in July 1965. After she died, Edward and his wife, Josephine (Jo), spent a month sorting through the house.⁷ Although they decided to retain the house and the family heirlooms, the meticulous record books of her husband's work maintained by Jo Hopper do not mention the works in the attic, with the exception of a group of oil studies of Paris made between 1906 and 1909 that Edward had given her for Christmas in 1958, many of which had remained in the Nyack house.⁸ At the time of Marion's death, or shortly thereafter, *Old ice pond at Nyack*, *Rowboat in rocky cove* and Hopper's other pre-art school oils – which to our knowledge number as many as six – were found in the attic by the preacher of the local Nyack Baptist Church, Arthayer R. Sanborn (d.2007), who had assisted Marion during her final years alone

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¹ G. Levin: *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography*, New York 1995, p.18.

² There is evidence that Hopper had made New York his 'winter home' by

1908, from a later correction the artist made to a biographical record of his life; see Levin, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.590, note 1; Hopper's one later painting made in Nyack is the commissioned *Pretty Penny* (1939; Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton MA), see G. Levin: *Edward Hopper: A Catalogue Raisonné*, New York 1999, III, p.268, no.0-311, which depicts the house of actress Helen Hayes; see Levin, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.318.

³ Levin, *op. cit.* (note 2), III, p.2, no.0-2.

⁴ See M. Hays: 'Nyack people and places: the skating pond', *Nyack News and Views* (27th December 2018) [https://nyacknewsandviews.com/2018/12/nyack-](https://nyacknewsandviews.com/2018/12/nyack-people-places-skating-pond-2/)

[people-places-skating-pond-2/](https://nyacknewsandviews.com/2018/12/nyack-people-places-skating-pond-2/), accessed 7th September 2020.

⁵ This illustration by Hopper has never been published. An auction record documents its having passed through Kennedy Galleries, New York, see Frick Art Reference Library, New York, Frick Digital Collections, available at <https://digitalcollections.frick.org/digico/#/archive/Photoarchive>, accessed 7th September 2020.

⁶ Levin, *op. cit.* (note 2) p.1, no.0-1. The painting was sold by Kennedy Galleries, New York, c.1968, as *Rowboat on Hudson*, see Frick Art Reference Library, *op. cit.* (note 5). It is described

as 'a small rowboat on the Hudson River' in H. Teschke: 'Edward Hopper: realist and melancholic', *Mare* 32 (February–March 2019), p.86.

⁷ Provincetown Art Association and Museum, J. Hopper: Diary, entry for the year 1965.

⁸ The Paris oils were bequeathed by Jo Hopper to the Whitney Museum of American Art, see Levin, *op. cit.* (note 2), pp.65–104, nos.0-127–0-174; see Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Frances Mulhall Achilles Library and Archives, Edward and Josephine Hopper Research Collection (hereafter WMAA), Edward Hopper Record Book, III, p.21.



1. *Old ice pond at Nyack*, here identified as *A winter sunset*, after Bruce Crane, by Edward Hopper. Here dated 1898–1900. Oil on canvas, 29.8 by 50 cm. (Heather James Fine Art).

2. *A winter sunset*, by Bruce Crane. 1880s. (Repr. *The Art Interchange*, 6th December 1890; photograph the author).

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in the house. He became a friend of hers, and by extension of Edward and Jo's, driving them between New York and Nyack and later officiating at Edward's funeral.⁹ Sanborn was eventually included in Jo's will as one of six beneficiaries who were to divide between them the residue of her estate that had not been bequeathed elsewhere.¹⁰ When Jo died on 6th March 1968, only ten months after Edward, Sanborn continued to tend to the house in Nyack on behalf of her estate until 1970, when it was sold. During this period he acquired the contents of the house, including *Old ice pond at Nyack*, *Rowboat in rocky cove* and Hopper's other earliest oils.

Sanborn's claim to the items in the Nyack house has been the subject of dispute.¹¹ For the purposes of this article, however, it is certain that Hopper's earliest oils remained in the attic until some time between late 1967 and June 1968, when Sanborn retrieved them, and that not long afterwards the works entered his collection.¹² It is equally certain that none of them had been intended for the art market during the Hoppers' lifetimes. It is for this reason that the paintings had remained untitled and, with one exception, undated, and were never included in the record books that Jo Hopper produced to document her husband's output.¹³

Old ice pond at Nyack was first exhibited in 1980, when it was included with this title alongside two other early oils in a touring show of items from Sanborn's collection, *Edward Hopper: The Early Years*, which travelled to over ten galleries between 1980 and 1983.¹⁴ In 1982 Sanborn published an article about Hopper's ancestry and boyhood in Nyack, in which he used the painting and several other early works to document the artist's connection to the town.¹⁵ In Levin's *Edward Hopper: A Catalogue Raisonné* (1999) it was given the title [*Old ice pond at Nyack*], the brackets indicating that this title was a late addition.¹⁶ The painting then returned to its original home in Nyack – now the Edward Hopper House Museum and Study Center – and was featured in two exhibitions, *Prelude: The Nyack Years* (2011) and *Edward Hopper: Early Nautical Scenes* (2012), for both of which the brackets were dropped.¹⁷ Both exhibitions drew attention to thematic and stylistic parallels between *Old ice pond at Nyack* and Hopper's mature oils.¹⁸ In 2019

the painting was listed for sale by Heather James Fine Art, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where it was exhibited alongside other items previously owned by Sanborn, with the brackets once again omitted from the title.¹⁹ *Rowboat in rocky cove*, which was sold by Kennedy Galleries, New York, in the late 1960s on behalf of Sanborn, has never been publicly exhibited.²⁰

It is clear that the title and date of *Old ice pond at Nyack* were provided by Sanborn, who made the visual link to the skating pond in Nyack and used the painting to evoke Hopper's boyhood in exhibitions, articles and talks. He evidently was also responsible for the original title of *Rowboat in rocky cove*, which was called *Rowboat on Hudson* when he consigned the work to Kennedy Galleries – again making a link to the Nyack scenery of Hopper's youth.²¹

In fact, neither *Old ice pond at Nyack* nor *Rowboat in rocky cove* bear any relation to Nyack since both, it can now be revealed, are copies of paintings by other artists. *Old ice pond at Nyack* is a copy of *A winter sunset* (Fig.2) by the Tonalist artist Bruce Crane (1857–1937), while *Rowboat in rocky cove* is a copy after a watercolour titled *Lake view* by an unknown painter (Fig.4). The first of these depicts a landscape in Long Island or Connecticut, and the second is inscribed 'Athelstane' and so possibly depicts one of the lakes in the vicinity of Athelstane, Wisconsin.²² These discoveries open up fresh lines of enquiry concerning Hopper's youth and early development.

Both of the works that Hopper copied were reproduced in the early 1890s as collectable colour plates in a widely read periodical for art amateurs and students, the *Art Interchange*.²³ *A winter sunset* appeared in December 1890 and the watercolour titled *Lake view* was printed in February 1891. In both cases, the colour plates were accompanied by comprehensive sets of instructions for art students for making copies. This probably explains the existence of several other contemporaneous copies of *A winter sunset*.²⁴ The instructions for copying were probably provided by Crane himself, since the text accompanying a reproduction of another of his works in a similar journal for art students, the *Art Amateur*, in March 1897, stated that 'we asked Mr Bruce Crane, in giving directions

9 On Sanborn, see Levin, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.577.

10 WMAA, will of Josephine Hopper, Box 4.4, Folder 4.040.

11 This dispute is a result of Jo Hopper's final bequest to the Whitney, which gave all of her and Edward's remaining works of art to the museum, save for specific exceptions named in her will. See R. Pogrebin and K. Flynn: 'Hopper expert questions how minister got an art trove', *New York Times*, 20th November 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/21/arts/design/gail-levin-hopper-expert-questions-sanborn-holdings-source.html>, accessed 3rd March 2020.

12 A letter sent to Hopper's gallerist on behalf of the executor of Jo's will makes it clear that some items had been removed from the Nyack residence as early as 23rd December 1967. See Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, Frank K.M. Rehn Galleries records 1858–1969, Box 7, Reel 5857 (hereafter AAA), letter from Loring K. Manley to John Clancy, 8th March 1968. Sanborn's son Philip recalled that the oils were taken by his father to Hopper's gallerist, John Clancy, for appraisal on the advice of the Bank of New York (the executor) and that shortly afterwards Sanborn purchased the contents of the Nyack house. A letter of June 1968 sent to Clancy on behalf of the executor confirms that the gallerist was asked to make 'an appraisal of all the unsold art work of Edward Hopper'. See Pogrebin

and Flynn, *op. cit.* (note 11); and AAA, letter from Loring K. Manley to John Clancy, 6th June 1968.

13 Jo used the record books to account for each work's provenance, exhibition history and other information. She recorded only works that were deemed suitable for the art market; most of Hopper's early drawings, illustrations and art school works were not included, nor were his pre-art school oils.

Hopper's Paris oils – including twenty-six unframed works in Nyack – are his earliest works featured, save for five portraits Hopper made at art school, c.1903–04. See WMAA, Edward Hopper Record Book, I, pp.50–51; and Edward Hopper Record Book, II, pp.74–75.

14 See P.C. Ritter: exh. cat. *Edward Hopper: The Early Years: from the Arthayer R. Sanborn Collection*, Melbourne FL (Brevard Art Center and Museum) 1980.

15 A.R. Sanborn: 'Edward Hopper: his Rockland heritage and his legacy', *South of the Mountains* 26, no.3 (July–September 1982), pp.2–8.

16 Levin, *op. cit.* (note 2), III, p.2.

17 See E.T. Colleary and A. Berman: *Edward Hopper, Prelude: The Nyack Years*, Nyack NY (Edward Hopper House Museum and Study Center) 2011.

18 Parallels were drawn between *Old Ice Pond at Nyack* and later Hopper works such as *Railroad sunset* (1929; The Whitney Museum of American Art; Levin, *op. cit.* (note 2) p.194, no.0-268) by the curatorial team behind these exhibitions. See S. Hodara: 'Celebrating

Hopper: a favorite son', *New York Times* (10th June 2011), <http://www.edwardhopperhouse.org/2011-a-year-of-edward-hopper-videos.html>, accessed 31st July 2020; and S. Gold: 'Long before "Nighthawks", a boy loved the Hudson', *New York Times* (12th July 2012), <https://nyti.ms/NlrCi>, accessed 31st July 2010.

19 The exhibition, *Edward Hopper*, took place at Heather James Fine Art, Jackson Hole WY, 1st July–30th September 2019. At the time of writing, the work is listed for auction on the gallery website, <https://www.heatherjames.com/artist-intro/?at=EDWARDHOPPER>, accessed 3rd March 2020. The establishment of a new Sanborn–Hopper Family Archive at the Whitney Museum of American Art was announced in July 2017. Over 4,000 previously unseen items such as letters, notebooks and photographs were given to the museum by the Arthayer R. Sanborn Collection Trust.

20 The painting was purchased by 'L. Rosenfeld'. Later it was purchased by Robert C. Atkins, who died in 2003, see Sale, Christies, New York, #5282: 'American Watercolours, Drawings, Paintings and Sculpture of the 19th and 20th Centuries', 18th March 1983. See Levin, *op. cit.* (note 2), IV, CD-Rom.

21 The work was later designated [*Rowboat in rocky cove*] in Levin, *op. cit.* (note 2), p.1, no.0-1, with the title bracketed to show that it was not Hopper's.

22 There is also an Athelstane Lake in Ontario, Canada. 'Athelstane' could

conceivably be a pseudonym for the artist. One possibility is the British colonialist and amateur painter Frank Athelstane Swettenham (1850–1946), who produced many watercolours of lakes and water bodies in British Malaya throughout the 1880s. See L.C. Keat and H. Barlow: *Frank Swettenham and George Giles: Watercolours and Sketches of Malaya 1880–1894*, Kuala Lumpur 1988.

23 See J. Ferone: 'Women and china painting at the turn of the twentieth century: an analysis of the influence of "The Art Amateur" and "The Art Interchange"', unpublished PhD diss. (University of Akron, 2006), p.40, where it is stated that throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the *Art Interchange* enjoyed 'significant readership throughout America'.

24 Three other copies of Crane's *A winter sunset* have been identified during the writing of this article. Two are signed 'Bruce Crane'. Charles Clarke and David Adams Cleveland have expressed doubts about the authenticity of at least one of these works, citing the existence of a number of fake Cranes that appeared on the market in his day, which we might suppose were copied from the reproductions, using the accompanying instructions, email correspondence between the author and Charles Clarke, 8th July 2020, and David Adams Cleveland, 7th July 2020. The unsigned copy was sold by Skinner Auctioneers, Boston MA, on 14th November 2013, lot 1261.



3. *Rowboat in rocky cove*, here identified as *Lake view*, after an unknown artist, by Edward Hopper. 1895. Oil on canvas, 25.4 by 34.9 cm. (Private collection; photograph Frick Art Reference Library, New York).

4. *Lake view* ('*Athelstane*'). 1880s. (Repr. *The Art Interchange*, 14th February 1891; photograph the author).

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for the copying of his spirited sketch reproduced as a [colour] supplement this month, to say something of what had specifically attracted him'.²⁵ His advice ranged from the type of canvas the artist should use to tips on drawing, paint application, colour mixes and drying methods.²⁶ Crane was nearing the height of his popularity when the reproduction was published, and at least twelve further colour reproductions of his work appeared in art journals for students between 1880 and 1900, attesting to his reputation and visibility during Hopper's youth.²⁷

The precise date of Crane's *A winter sunset* is uncertain, but the artist likely painted it during the early 1880s, following his return from Europe to New York in 1881. An 1885 article in the journal *Art Age* referred to the 'broad stretches of snowy landscape' in Long Island and Connecticut that Crane was known to paint regularly.²⁸ Several of Crane's many other winter landscapes date from this time and it was a subject he returned to in the late 1880s and beyond. A founding member of the Society of American Artists, an art teacher and a member and eventual president of the Salmagundi Club, Crane was well-known and respected within New

York's art circles as a leading representative of the Tonalist generation that dominated American painting during the late nineteenth century.²⁹ His work remained popular throughout the 1890s and early 1900s and regularly appeared in New York exhibitions and auctions alongside that of other prominent Tonalist painters such as George Inness and Crane's former teacher Alexander Wyant. According to an anonymous profile of Crane published in the *Art Amateur* in 1894, his work was 'in great demand', and an unnamed reviewer for *Brush and Pencil* declared in 1899 that 'Bruce Crane is so well-known, and his exhibition is so much like other things of his, that it would be repetition to say much'.³⁰

The fact that the two plates that Hopper copied were published within months of one another strongly suggests that his family bought or subscribed to the *Art Interchange* during the early 1890s. The magazine regularly advertised its subscription rates, and in 1890, for example, it offered annual subscribers a collection of twenty-six of the colour plates, which would have included both the reproductions that Hopper copied.³¹ In her biography Levin writes that Hopper was given books or magazines of drawing instruction by his parents to study and we can now posit that such materials were available to him from as early as 1890, when he was eight years old.³² Hopper's parents could also have purchased reproductions from illustrated catalogues of the *Art Interchange's* published colour plates, but these individual reproductions lacked the written instructions included in the magazine and not all previously published colour plates were made available through these catalogues.³³

Another reproduction that Hopper copied suggests that the Hoppers may have subscribed to the *Art Interchange* from as early as 1886, when

5. *Ships*, here identified as *A marine*, after Edward Moran, by Edward Hopper. c.1898. Oil on canvas, 30.5 by 50.8 cm. (Fosaner Art Museum, Melbourne FL).

6. *A marine*, by Edward Moran. 1880. (Repr. *The Art Interchange*, 14th August 1886).

7. *Church and landscape*, by Edward Hopper. c.1897. Oil on canvas, 25.4 by 35.5 cm. (Heather James Fine Art).

8. *Church and landscape*. Nineteenth century. Painted porcelain, 27 by 34 cm. (Private collection; photograph Bellmans Auctioneers).



Edward was only four years old. Hopper's early oil *Ships* (Fig.5), painted c.1898, can be revealed to be a copy after *A marine* (Fig.6) by the well-known American painter Edward Moran (1829–1901).³⁴ This painting had appeared as a colour reproduction in the *Art Interchange* in August 1886, again with copying instructions. If the Hopper family had already subscribed to the *Art Interchange* by then, this was probably not solely for the benefit of young Edward; the entire family was steeped in art and culture and Hopper's mother, Elizabeth, in particular encouraged both Edward and Marion to be creative from a very early age.³⁵ An amateur artist herself, Elizabeth would likely have approved of the *Art Interchange*, which was advertised as the 'most progressive art and household monthly magazine'.³⁶ Enjoying a middle-class, home-owning and predominantly female readership, the *Art Interchange* is now acknowledged to have played an important role in the democratisation and feminisation of art in America during the late nineteenth century. In addition to being one of the few American art magazines that printed good-quality illustrations and colour plates, it would have appealed to Elizabeth through its atypical focus on the decorative and domestic arts.³⁷

Hopper would, of course, have been too young to have painted his oils when the prints he copied were first published, explaining why several years passed before he produced his 1895 oil *Rowboat in rocky cove*. Presumably it was only when he had the confidence to work in this medium that he turned to the reproductions, which must therefore have been retained by his family. Tellingly, the instructions that the *Art Interchange* provided for artists to accompany *Lake view* stated that the painting was 'a very simple subject and well adapted to beginners'.³⁸ There is little mystery, then, as to why Hopper copied it for his first attempt at oil painting; indeed, his beginnings as a painter seem to have been more tentative than has previously been imagined.

In all three paintings, the artist made no acknowledgment that they were copies, signing *Rowboat in rocky cove* and *Ships* 'E. Hopper' and *Old ice pond at Nyack* with the initials 'E.H.'. Rather than an attempt to mislead, however, the signatures seem merely to suggest the artist's youthful pride in his earliest achievements in oil. Only one of Hopper's early oils from the Nyack attic, titled *Winter scene* by Sanborn and *Church and landscape* (Fig.7) in the catalogue raisonné, was unsigned.³⁹ Although its precise source remains unknown, *Church and landscape* can also be revealed to be a copy of an existing painting thanks to the discovery of a Victorian porcelain plaque on which the same scene has been painted (Fig.8).⁴⁰ It certainly does not portray 'a snowy Nyack Baptist church', as has been claimed.⁴¹

Two other oils from the period before Hopper attended art school – both also likely to have been stored in the Nyack attic – *Country road*



9. *Country road*, by Edward Hopper. c.1897. Oil on canvas, 23.5 by 33 cm. (Private collection; courtesy Mark Murray Fine Paintings, New York).

(Fig.9) and *Clipper ship being towed by tug* must be regarded with similar suspicion.⁴² *Country road* is reminiscent of late-nineteenth century landscapes of the kind produced by American followers of the Barbizon school such as John Francis Murphy and Leonard Ochtman; works by both these artists were reproduced as colour plates in the *Art Interchange* and the *Art Amateur*. *Clipper ship being towed by tug* – like *Ships* – was likely copied from a contemporaneous illustration or marine painting. It is possible, therefore, to advance the new conclusion that Hopper did not produce a single original oil painting until he enrolled at the New York School of Art in the autumn of 1900 and that no boyhood oils of Nyack by him exist.

Painted in 1895, *Rowboat in rocky cove* is the only one in this early sequence of oils that Hopper dated. Like *Old ice pond at Nyack*, both *Country road* and *Church and landscape* are dated c.1897 in Levin's catalogue raisonné, which also dates Hopper's *Ships* to c.1898. The c.1897 dating of *Old ice pond at Nyack* is brought into question, however, by a drawing that Hopper made c.1900, later titled *Artist's studio* (Fig.10).⁴³ This drawing depicts the completed *Old ice pond at Nyack* sitting on an easel in Hopper's attic studio in Nyack – where it would remain until 1968. Details of *Artist's studio* may confirm the c.1900 date the drawing has been given. The portrait of a woman that hangs on the wall behind *Old ice pond at Nyack*, for example, suggests the emphasis on portraiture in Hopper's work from mid-1900

25 'The wreck near the lighthouse', *The Art Amateur* 26, no.3 (March 1897), p.63.

26 'Instruction department', *The Art Interchange* 25, no.12 (6th December 1890), p.186.

27 The following identified colour plates by Bruce Crane appeared in art journals 1881–1902: the *Art Interchange* published *A spring morning* (March 1881), *November study* (November 1885), *Lily pond* (March 1897), *Winter landscape* (January 1900) and *Winter moonrise* (January 1902), and the *Art Amateur* published *Sunset in the village* (June 1889), *Winter landscape* (December 1891), *Apple blossoms* (July 1896), *Indian summer* (January 1897) and *Wreck near the lighthouse* (March 1897).

28 Quoted in D. B. Burke: *American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York 1980, III, p.310.

29 See H. T. Lawrence: 'A painter of idylls: Bruce Crane', *Brush and Pencil* 11,

no.1 (October 1902), p.10. Crane published a number of articles in art journals of the period, see, for example, B. Crane: 'Landscape sketching and painting', *The Art Amateur* 31, no.4 (September 1894), p.72.

30 'Bruce Crane and his work', *The Art Amateur* 31, no.4 (September 1894), p.70; 'The Society of Landscape Painters', *Brush and Pencil* 4, no.2 (May 1899), p.126.

31 See, for example, *The Art Interchange* 25, no.4 (16th August 1890), p.1.

32 Levin, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.16.

33 Colour reproductions could be purchased for between 20 and 30 cents each. See, for example, The Art Interchange Co.: *Catalogue and Illustrated Price List*, New York 1895, which offered none of the plates that Hopper copied from the 1886, 1890 or 1891 issues.

34 See Levin, *op. cit.* (note 2) p.4,

no.0-5. *Ships* was stored in the Nyack attic and became part of Sanborn's collection. In 1986 he gifted it to the Brevard Art Center and Museum, Melbourne FL, now the Foonsaner Art Museum, see J.P. Newcombe: *Framed: A Journey into Edward Hopper's America*, Sydney 2019, p.136.

35 Levin, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.16.

36 Advertisement for the *Art Interchange* in *Harper's Bazaar* 31, no.37 (10th September 1898), p.783; Ferone, *op. cit.* (note 23), p.40.

37 *Ibid.*, pp.29 and 48.

38 'Instruction Department', *op. cit.* (note 26), p.54.

39 See Levin, *op. cit.* (note 2) p.3, no.0-3.

40 This work was sold at auction by Bellmans, Sussex on 14 July 2018 for £15 (Lot no. 80). A sales record exists at <https://www.bellmans.co.uk/sales/sussex-saturday-sales/jul2018-2/view-lot/80/>, accessed 26th August 2020.

41 M. Hays: 'Nyack people & places: Christmas greetings from Edward Hopper', *Nyack News & Views* (13th December 2018).

42 For *Country road*, see Levin, *op. cit.* (note 2), p.3, no.0-4. *Clipper ship being towed by tug* was not included in Levin's catalogue raisonné and, as such, is not a fully authenticated Hopper oil. A record and image of the work exist, however, which document the work as having come to Sanborn directly from Hopper's collection, after which it was sold to Kennedy Galleries, New York. See auction record, Frick Art Reference Library, *op. cit.* (note 5). The work's technique and provenance are comparable with Hopper's other oils of this period.

43 This date for *Artist's studio* is that given by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, see <https://whitney.org/collection/works/9469>, accessed 26th August 2020.

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onwards, seen in paintings of his mother, sister and other female models. This portrait and the picture of a ship on the adjacent wall evoke Hopper's evolution from the nautical themes of his pen and ink illustrations (and two nautical oils) of 1898–99 to portraiture in 1899–1900.

The presence of *Old ice pond at Nyack* in the drawing suggests that its dating to c.1897 is too early and that it was probably completed between 1898 and 1900. Such a dating may be supported by the close visual match between the slanting 'E.H.' signature in *Old ice pond at Nyack* and that on *Clipper ship being towed by tug*, which has been dated to c.1900.⁴⁴ It may also be corroborated by the propped canvas with its back to the viewer in *Artist's studio*, which appears to be *Church and landscape*, judging from its relative dimensions and from the rough sketch of the stamp on the reverse of its canvas (Fig.11).⁴⁵ This is the palette-shaped stamp used by the New York art supplier F.W. Devoe & Co. from the early 1890s and since it does not appear on the back of *Old ice pond at Nyack* it is possible to infer, together with Hopper's proud display and more confident handling of paint in the latter canvas, that Hopper painted *Old ice pond at Nyack* after *Church and landscape*.⁴⁶

Yet Hopper's decision to feature *Old ice pond at Nyack* on the easel in *Artist's studio* is significant for more than just the work's date; it also suggests the symbolic value that the canvas held for the artist at this moment. Although Hopper may have intended the open paint box and easel in *Artist's studio* to indicate that the painting had recently been completed, the drawing's highly choreographed nature implies that its details are contrivances. Indeed, the work proudly and purposefully illustrates Hopper's attic transformed into a painting studio, with an easel, palette, brushes and a canvas propped up on the floor, together with such accoutrements as books, a mahl stick, a small figure sculpture and a pipe resting on the table. The scene appears manipulated specifically to evoke Hopper's self-image as a sophisticated artist in training. With, it now seems likely, no original oils to his name at this early stage, the prominent display of his copy of Crane's painting therefore functions as a manifesto of sorts, revealing his grand painterly ambitions shortly before he enrolled at the New York School of Art in autumn 1900.

The school was then still referred to by its original name, the Chase School, after its founder – and Hopper's first painting teacher from 1901 onwards – William Merritt Chase (1849–1916). Hopper's classmate and friend Clarence K. Chatterton recalled that in 1900 Chase was still 'the dominant figure in the New York art world as he was at the school'.⁴⁷ It may be telling that Chase was also a well-known representative of the Tonalist or aestheticist artistic philosophy and that as a teacher he played an important mediatory role between Hopper's generation and that of several major Tonalist artists.⁴⁸ Crane was one of these artists; Crane and Chase knew each other, were members of the same clubs and societies and regularly exhibited together. In *Artist's studio*, then, Hopper awarded pride of place to his copy after a Tonalist painter whose style was indicative of the pioneering aesthetic philosophy embodied by the Chase School, where Hopper would soon begin his training as a painter.

Hopper's implicit association of the Tonalist landscape style with his vision of his future career reflects the great popularity of Tonalism and its hold over the American art market at the turn of the twentieth



Opposite 10. *Artist's studio*, by Edward Hopper. c.1900. Pen and ink and graphite pencil on paper, 37 by 29 cm. (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York).

Above 11. Reverse of Fig.7, showing the stamp of F.W. Devoe & Co. (Heather James Fine Art).

century.⁴⁹ During this period Tonalism was recognised as a style in all but name, defined by its non-narrative emphasis on the intimate, often pastoral American landscape, prioritisation of the artist's subjective response and close attention to atmosphere over detail.⁵⁰ The impact of the Tonalists upon American modernism is a subject that is still being recovered by scholars, but Hopper's canvas provides a compelling example of the way he and his generation formed some of their earliest understandings of the American landscape genre through the prism of the Tonalist vision. In Hopper's recreation of Crane's frozen twilight landscape, here surely exists one of the clearest indications of his early engagement with American painting of his time. Moreover, the Tonalists' explicitly personal approach to the American landscape, so strongly evident in Crane's painting, would become a hallmark of Hopper's work throughout his career.

Hopper's earliest paintings require further investigation, since the evidence presented here suggests an openness to a wider range of artistic sources than has typically been recognised. Indeed, the often-inflexible categorisations of Hopper's work – perpetuated by his early literary champions and critics – have left little room for the myriad and often incongruous influences of his early career. As such, the rather constrictive prevalence of the realist paradigm in categorisations of his work has obscured the untidier truths of the origins of Hopper's idiosyncratic style. It becomes increasingly clear that his eventual, mature conception of realism was a composite derived from a broad spectrum of styles and movements. Perhaps the apparent incongruity of these early influences can help to explain the unfixed, disparate and dislocated sense of Americanness that so haunts Hopper's work.

44 *Clipper ship being towed by tug* has been dated to c.1900, 'according to subject matter used by Hopper around 1900 and also by style [...] related to the pen and ink drawings before he entered the New York School of Art', see Frick Art Reference Library, *op. cit.* (note 5), auction record. The work may, however, have been completed around the same time as *Ships*, c.1898, as Hopper produced many nautical-themed drawings and

illustrations between 1898 and 1900. In any case, the closeness in signature suggests that Hopper's *Old ice pond at Nyack* was produced later than previously envisaged, between 1898 and 1900.

45 Having been acquired by Sanborn, *Church and landscape* was, like *Old ice pond at Nyack*, listed for sale by Heather James Fine Art, which exhibited it in 2019. See note 19 above.

46 On the stamp, see A.W. Katlan:

American Artists' Materials Suppliers Directory, Nineteenth Century, Park Ridge, NJ, 1987, p.397.

47 C.K. Chatterton: 'There never was a school like it', <http://www.ckchatterton.com/html/chatterton2a.html>, accessed 31st July 2020.

48 For Chase's indebtedness to Tonalism, see D.A. Cleveland: *A History of American Tonalism: 1880–1920: Crucible of American Modernism*, New York 2010, pp.260–64.

49 *Ibid.*, pp.xiii–xxix.

50 For the original definition of American Tonalism, see W.M. Corn: exh. cat. *The Color of Mood: American Tonalism 1880–1910*, San Francisco (M. H. De Young Memorial Museum and The California Palace of the Legion of Honor) 1972, pp.1–3. David Adams Cleveland has since developed and refined the definition of the Tonalist movement, see Cleveland, *op. cit.* (note 48), p.xxv.